

## STATEMENT OF OPINION

By Prof. Nikola Yordanov Kolev, MD, PhD, DSc,  
Vice-Rector for Postgraduate Education,  
Head of the Department of General and Operative Surgery, Faculty of Medicine,  
Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna,  
First Clinic of Surgery at "St. Marina" University Hospital, Varna, Bulgaria

**Regarding:** A competition for the academic rank of "Professor" in the scientific specialty of Oncology — comprising one 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) position for the needs of the Clinic of Medical Oncology at "St. Marina" University Hospital, and one 1.0 FTE position for the Department of Oncology, Faculty of Medicine at the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, as announced in the **State Gazette, Issue No. 102, dated November 28, 2025.**

### 1. Overview of the Selection Procedure

By **Order No. R-109-71/January 28, 2026**, issued by the **Rector** of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna, and pursuant to a resolution recorded in **Minutes No. 52/January 12, 2026**, of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine, I have been appointed as an internal member of the Scientific Jury. This appointment is made in accordance with **Article 4, Paragraphs 1 and 2**, and **Article 29a, Paragraph 1** of the **Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act**, as well as **Article 6, Paragraph 1**, and **Article 139, Paragraphs 1 and 3** of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the Medical University – Varna.

The procedure concerns the competition for the academic rank of "Professor", announced in the **State Gazette, issue No. 102/November 28, 2025**. Furthermore, pursuant to **Minutes No. 1/February 10, 2026**, of the meeting of the Scientific Jury, I have been designated to provide this **Statement of Opinion**. The competition is for the academic rank of "Professor" in the specialty of "Oncology", within the professional field of 7.1. Medicine, area of higher education 7. Healthcare and Sports. The positions include a 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) position for the Clinic of Medical Oncology at "St. Marina" University Hospital – EAD, and a 1.0 FTE position for the Department of Oncology, Faculty of Medicine at the Medical University – Varna.

A single candidate has submitted documents for participation in the competition: **Associate Professor Eleonora Georgieva Dimitrova-Gospodinova, MD, PhD.**

### 2. Brief Biographical Data of the Candidate

**Associate Professor Eleonora Dimitrova-Gospodinova, MD, PhD**, was born in 1972 in Varna, Bulgaria. She graduated from the **Medical University – Varna** in 1996 with **summa cum laude** (highest honors).

She commenced her professional career in 1997 as a resident physician at the Clinic of Pneumology and Phthysiology of "St. Marina" University Hospital – Varna, where she practiced for ten years. She obtained her board certification in Internal Medicine in 2002 and in Pneumology and Phthysiology in 2004.

Following her board certification in Oncology in 2008, she joined the Clinic of Medical Oncology at "St. Marina" University Hospital – EAD, Varna, where she continues to practice to the present day. Her academic career began in 2015 at the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine, where she successively held the positions of Assistant Professor and Chief Assistant Professor. Since 2018, she has held the academic rank of Associate Professor within the same department.

In 2017, she successfully defended a doctoral dissertation entitled "Beclin-1 Expression as a Marker of Autophagy and its Prognostic and Predictive Value in Patients with Metastatic Colorectal Cancer," for which she was awarded the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" (PhD).

From 2018 to 2020, she served as Head of the Department of Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine, and since 2020 to the present date, she has held the position of Head of the Department of Oncology.

She is proficient in Russian and English.

She is an active member of several professional organizations, including the **Bulgarian Medical Association (BMA)**, the **Bulgarian Oncology Scientific Society (BOSS)**, and the **European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)**.

### 3. Research Activity

For the purpose of this competition, the applicant, Associate Professor Eleonora Dimitrova-Gospodinova, MD, PhD, has submitted the following scientific output:

- **Doctoral Dissertation** entitled "*Beclin-1 Expression as a Marker of Autophagy and its Prognostic and Predictive Value in Patients with Metastatic Colorectal Cancer*" (**Indicator A1**) – **50 points**;
- **Monographic Work:** "*Personalized Approach in Patients with Colorectal Carcinoma*" (**Indicator B3**) – **100 points**;
- **Publications and Reports** published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information – **11 items (Indicator G7)** – **86.70 points**;
- **Publications and Reports** published in non-refereed journals with scientific peer-review – **10 items (Indicator G8)** – **161 points**;
- **Full-text Publications** in scientific journals and proceedings, beyond the minimum national scientometric requirements;
- **Citations** reflecting the applicant's research impact (**Indicator D10**) – **113 citations** – **1,695 points**.

- **Cumulative Impact Factor (IF)** of the journals in which the applicant has published – **Total IF points: 153.00.**

To date, Associate Professor Eleonora Dimitrova, MD, PhD, has authored two monographs and is an author or co-author of over **60 scientific publications.**

The themes of the research papers and contributions submitted for this competition are focused on the following research areas:

- **Colorectal Carcinoma:** The submitted monograph and scientific publications examine contemporary understandings of tumor biology, heterogeneity, and the pathways of genomic instability. They further explore the characteristics and significance of the tumor microenvironment, as well as current genomic research methodologies relevant to the selection of a personalized therapeutic approach. The potential of modern drug therapies is presented, with an emphasis on immunotherapy, alongside potential future therapeutic options such as tumor reversion, CAR-T cell therapy, and others.
- **Lung Carcinoma:** The research elucidates the impact of travel burden to oncology centers on clinical outcomes, based on the findings of a large-scale retrospective study conducted in Bulgaria. Furthermore, it presents contemporary therapeutic options for the treatment of KRAS G12C-mutated NSCLC (Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer), as well as documented long-term survival in a patient with metastatic NSCLC achieved through the sequential application of various therapeutic modalities.
- **Breast Cancer:** The presented studies investigate the prevalence of PIK3CA mutations within the Bulgarian patient population, alongside their significance for progression-free survival (PFS) and overall survival (OS). The efficacy of endocrine and targeted therapies in the treatment of elderly and comorbid patients is also demonstrated.
- **Genetics and Oncology:** The works highlight the clinical significance and the role of **genetic counseling** within the framework of modern oncology.
- **Modern Therapeutic Options:** Comprehensive reviews of contemporary treatments for common and socially significant oncological diseases.
- **Clinical Experience:** Documentation and analysis of extensive practical expertise in the field.

The submitted body of scientific work meets the minimum national requirements for the appointment to the academic rank of "Professor" and demonstrates the broad spectrum of the applicant's research interests.

#### **4. Teaching and Pedagogical Activity**

Associate Professor Eleonora Dimitrova-Gospodinova, MD, PhD, is actively involved in the education of third-year medical students as a lecturer in the discipline of "Propaedeutics of Internal Medicine." She conducts the lecture courses and practical exercises in "Oncology" for fifth-year students majoring in Medicine and participates in the training of medical interns during their pre-graduate state internship.

She serves as the supervisor for residents specializing in "Medical Oncology" and delivers the fundamental course "Selected Chapters of Internal Medicine" as part of the medical oncology residency program. The applicant's teaching workload for the past five years totals 1,521 hours. Furthermore, she is the Chair of the State Examination Board in Internal Medicine and a member of the National Board of Examiners for the awarding of specialty certification in "Medical Oncology."

### **5. Diagnostic and Clinical Activity**

Associate Professor Dimitrova-Gospodinova is actively involved in the operations of the Clinic of Medical Oncology at "St. Marina" University Hospital – Varna, providing comprehensive care for oncology patients. She performs consultative examinations, facilitates the clinical decision-making process regarding pharmacological treatments and their administration, and oversees patient follow-up and palliative care activities.

She is a member of the General Hospital Oncology Board, as well as three other specialized oncology sub-boards, the Oncology Board for Chemotherapy, and the Committee for the Prescription of Endocrine Therapy. Furthermore, she serves as a member of the Medical Review and Audit Committee and the Committee for the Control of Quality, Safety, and Rational Use of Blood and Blood Components at "St. Marina" University Hospital – EAD, Varna.

### **6. Conclusion**

Associate Professor Eleonora Georgieva Dimitrova-Gospodinova, MD, PhD, is an established specialist in the field of Medical Oncology with diverse research interests. The submitted body of scientific work is sufficient in volume and meets the minimum national requirements. It strictly complies with the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, its Implementing Rules, and the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff of the Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov" – Varna.

Based on the above, I hereby grant my positive assessment of the candidate. I confidently recommend to the honorable members of the Scientific Jury to vote in favor of appointing Associate Professor Eleonora Georgieva Dimitrova-Gospodinova, MD, PhD, to the academic rank of "Professor."

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Prof. Nikola Kolev, MD, PhD, DSc**