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OPINION

By Assoc. Prof. Anton Kolev Tachev, PhD – Head of the Department "Composition of Food and Consumer Products" at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses,
Member of the Scientific Jury according to Order No. RD - 180/02.04.2026 of the Director of the National Center of Public Health and Analyses (NCPHA)

Regarding: holding a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sports", professional field 7.1 "Medicine", scientific specialty "Hygiene", for the needs of the Department "Composition of Food and Consumer Products", at the Directorate "Analytical Laboratory Activities" at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses, announced in the "State Gazette" No. 15/06.02.2026 and published on http://ncpha.government.bg/ on 06.02.2026.

The only candidate in the competition is Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova Petrova, PhD, from the Department of "Composition of Food and Consumer Products" at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses.

Svetla Petrova graduated in 2009 from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry, and in 2011 she successfully completed a Master's degree in the specialty "Medicinal Chemistry" again from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". She has a total work experience of 14 years in the specialty in the field of analysis of preservatives, dyes and other contaminants migrating from food contact materials. Immediately after graduating from the university, she worked and successfully specialized in scientific research in the field of chemical analysis of food contact materials and in particular the migration of harmful ingredients from polymeric food contact materials, chemical analysis of sweeteners and preservatives from food additives, analysis of cosmetic products. She is a participant in a number of prestigious courses and trainings on technical competence of laboratories and control bodies, procedures and schemes for conducting interlaboratory comparisons and tests, validation and verification of methods, measurement uncertainty and many others.

In 2005, she graduated from secondary school 96 "Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy" with excellent results. From 2012 to 2013, she was appointed as a specialist chemist in the Toxicology Department of the Public Health and Health Risk Directorate of the National Center of Public Health and Analyses. From 2013 to 2017, she was appointed as an "expert" in the Chemical Substances and Mixtures and Food Contact Materials Department of the Public Health and Health Risk Directorate of the National Center of Public Health and Analyses. From 2017 to 2020, she was a chief expert in the Chemical Substances and Mixtures and Food Contact Materials Department of the Analytical and Laboratory Activities Directorate. In 2019, she successfully defended her dissertation on the topic "Specific migration of monomers from polymeric materials for food contact with intended for the Bulgarian market" and was awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Hygiene" with code 03.01.32. After successfully completing specializations in 2020, she acquired the specialty "Medical Sanitary Chemistry", and in 2024 the specialty "Toxicology".

Chief expert Svetla Petrova, PhD shows evidence of a highly qualified scientific worker and in 2021, after an announced competition, she was elected to the academic position of "Chief Assistant" in the Food Composition and Consumer Products Department of the Analytical and Laboratory Activities Directorate at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses. For all her work experience at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses, Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD has successfully developed her scientific career and is now one of the best specialists in our country in the field of chemical analysis related to the migration of toxic substances from polymeric materials coming into contact with food. She masters all the latest methods for the analysis of chemical contaminants and food additives and at a modern, highly professional level scientifically interprets the results obtained (preparation of expert opinions, development and improvement of new chemical methods for the analysis of toxic substances migrating from packaging in contact with horseradish), studies related to the analysis of ingredients for leather products, etc. An important role in her growth as a researcher and highly erudite specialist was played by the significant number of courses, trainings and specializations in which she participated, which were organized by renowned scientific organizations and institutions, such as the World Health Organization, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", the European Commission, the Ministry of Health, etc.

Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD actively participates in the scientific and applied activities of the department, such as performing liquid chromatographic analysis of food additives, materials in contact with food, activities related to the work at the Health Testing Center, in accordance with the requirements of the Bulgarian Standards ISO/IEC 17020. She provides high-quality and precise expert and advisory assistance to the Ministry of Health and other organizations, preparing expert opinions for the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency on cosmetic products and food additives. She participates as a lecturer in courses on postgraduate courses and lecturer in continuing education courses for higher medical and non-medical personnel at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses. She participates in working groups at the national and international level, works on the harmonization of Bulgarian legislation with EU legislation. She participates as a representative of Bulgaria in working groups at the European Commission on "Food Additives" and "Flavorings". Participates in the European Network of National Reference Laboratories for Food Contact Materials (FCM) - with suitability tests, opinions, participation in the development of FCM methods, prepares annual reports on the laboratory's activities to EURL-FCM. Participates as a deputy in the Council on Plant Protection Products at the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority.

Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD participated in the development of a large number of scientific and scientific-practical developments reflected in a total of 26 publications, of which 24 in Bulgarian journals and 2 in foreign journals, as in 13 of the publications she is the first author, and in 5 she is the second. 15 of the publications of Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD are in editions, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information, and 11 are published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes. From all this, the enormous personal contribution in the presented scientific publications is clearly visible, which shows that the candidate Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD can work very well in a team, as well as lead scientific teams in carrying out diverse scientific research. The author's articles of Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD, has been cited in 11 publications abroad and 1 in Bulgaria. Her works, including abstracts from prestigious scientific congresses in the country and abroad, have been published in authoritative scientific publications, including those with a high impact rank.

Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD is a highly regarded scientific worker – expert and specialist, not only in our country, but also in a number of other countries, which is evident from the large number of participations with reports, posters and scientific communications in a total of 21 congresses, symposia and conferences, 19 of which were held in Bulgaria with international participation and 2 were abroad. Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD has a significant share in the educational and teaching activities of the National Center of Public Health and Analyses. Her main contribution relates mainly to the postgraduate studies and the improvement of the qualification of specialists from the hygiene network in the country in the field of chemical analysis and assessment of exposure and risk in the field of migration of toxic chemical agents from food contact materials, the analysis of preservatives and additives in food and for specialists in the field of Medical Sanitary Chemistry and Nutrition and Dietetic. She participates in and supervises the conduct of postgraduate training in the following main thematic courses:

Lecturer in 2 main courses for acquiring a specialty – Medical Sanitary Chemistry (Module 3, Section "Food") and Nutrition and Dietetics (Module 2 Food Control and Safety); • Lecturer in 4 courses from the NCPHA program courses for continuing education of medical and non-medical specialists; • Conducted 3 individual practical trainings in high-performance liquid chromatography – training of specialists under the TAIEX project on the topic "Chemical contaminants in food for employees of the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia" (2014); practical liquid chromatography training of an intern (2016); practical training (semester internship) of a full-time student from the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands (2017). Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD has made a significant contribution to the development of medical sanitary chemistry and in particular in the areas of chemical analysis of the migration of toxic substances from materials and objects in contact with food, chemical analysis of various types of sweeteners, flavorings and preservatives in food. She is actively involved in the implementation of European and national legislation in relation to the requirements of European directives in this area.

The main contributions of Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD can be grouped in the following areas:

- Identification and analysis of monomers from polymer packaging and materials for contact with food;

- Methods for analysis and hygienic assessment of ingredients in cosmetic products;

- Chemical analysis of food additives;

- Training and professional development of postgraduate students in the specialties: "Medical Sanitary Chemistry" and Nutrition and Dietetics".

Shief Assistant. Svetla Petrova, PhD is the deputy head of the laboratory 03 "Chemical Pollutants and Food Additives" at the Testing Center "Health" at the National Center of Public Health and Analyses. The competence of the methods in terms of analysis of the migration of toxic substances from materials and objects for contact with food is evidenced by the participation of Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD in prestigious interlaboratory comparisons conducted in some of the most authoritative laboratories abroad - interlaboratory tests for specific migration of monomers - melamine, formaldehyde and bisphenol A, from materials and objects intended for contact with food. The results of these authoritative interlaboratory tests have always been very good. My personal impressions of Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD are for a very erudite scientific worker, a true professional in his field, a modest, hardworking, moral and ethical person. All the achievements of Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD in scientific, applied scientific, teaching and administrative activities highlighted above are indisputable and well-founded. The criteria of "The Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic Bulgaria " and the „Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic Bulgaria", as well as the Regulations on the conditions and procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions in the National Center of public Health and Analyses have been met and even exceeded.

All this gives me reason, with conviction, to recommend to the esteemed scientific jury that Chief Assistant Svetla Petrova, PhD be elected to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 7. "Health and Sports", professional field 7.1 "Medicine", scientific specialty "Hygiene", for the needs of the Department "Composition of Food and Consumer Products", Directorate "Analytical Laboratory Activities" at the National Center for Public Health and Analyses.

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18. 05. 2026

Assoc. Prof. Anton Tachev, PhD