

REVIEW

in a procedure for defense of dissertation on:

„An Empiric Reconstruction of the Political Interactions in the History of Bulgarian Integration in the European Union (Research on the Memories of the Participants in the Process)”

For acquisition of educational and scientific degree “doctor of science” of the candidate:

Prof. Georgi Dimitrov Dimitrov, PhD

Area of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

Professional field: 3.3. Political sciences (European studies)

Faculty of philosophy, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (Sofia University)

The review is prepared by: Prof. Ekaterina Mihaylova, PhD, lecturer of History of state and law at the Department of Law at New Bulgarian University, in my capacity as a member of the scientific jury, appointed by the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” with Order No. ПД-38-193, dated 12.04.2022, and Resolution of the Faculty panel, dated 05.04.2022, protocol No.11.

Overview of the dissertation and the presented materials

The submitted dissertation on the topic: „An Empiric Reconstruction of the Political Interactions in the History of Bulgarian Integration in the European Union (Research on the Memories of the Participants in the Process)” covers 827 pages and consists of 10 chapters, bibliography and annexes. The content is logically sound and reveals the depth of the study dedicated to reconstruct the overall historicized picture of the interaction between Bulgarian and EU within the European integration process. In the research have been used 38 works, indicated in the bibliography.

The aim of the study is to face the challenge that the European integration of Bulgaria discloses an issue for the future of EU outlined in two directions – for the quality of the EU

integration and for the result of the Eastern enlargement, derivative from the EU enlargement policy. The author has emphasized that his interest to the EU integration of Bulgaria was kindled by his strive to comprehend the general logic and the specific mechanisms of one extremely important process in the European macro-history.

The methodology of the empirical study, used by the author, is based on the memories of some participants with key roles in the EU integration of Bulgaria. The respondents have participated at different stages of the EU integration process in various professional and institutional capacity – 47 in total, including Prime Ministers, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, as well as other persons, Heads of institutional units on EU integration within the state administration.

Candidate's Data

Prof. Georgi Dimitrov Dimitrov, PhD, graduated his higher education in sociology at Sofia University. Afterwards he has become a candidate in philosophical sciences with a dissertation on the topic “Socialization as an issue in the general theory of sociology”. In 2000 he has been awarded PhD in sociology with the dissertation: “Modernity and sociology. Socio-cultural and subjectological conditionality of the sociological approach”. He has been an Associate professor in sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University in the period 1992-2001, and ever since 2002 – professor in sociology there. Prof. Georgi Dimitrov, PhD, has many specializations in Germany, Netherlands, USA etc. He has supervised successfully doctoral students and have conducted multiple scientific studies (most of them in the area of EU integration processes). He is a lecturer in the basic academic courses in sociology on European themes. He is also one of the founders of the major “European studies and social sciences” in Sofia University. In 2014 he has been awarded the national prize “Pythagoras” for his substantial contribution to the sciences by a distinguished scientist in the social sciences and humanities). He is an author of various scientific publications, reviews, as well as many public lectures.

Analysis of the scientific and scientific-applicable achievements of the candidate, contained in the dissertation and the publications, included in the procedure.

The study and the analysis made on its basis represent the process of EU integration that takes place in Bulgaria in its different stages and with its particularities. A contribution in itself

(both scientific and scientific-applicable) is the very resource material of multiple interviews with persons that have a substantial role in this process. On the base of these interviews the author has made his own systematic and in-depth conclusions.

I would like to highlight some of the questions that the research has raised by putting the emphasis on two of them – the political and legal aspects which are exceptionally important for the EU integration process.

In the context of the current events in Europe the analysis of the political motivation for the EU enlargement with Bulgaria and Romania is very substantive, especially that initially the Eastern enlargement of EU have not included these two countries. The author emphasizes on the fact that the integration process of Bulgaria radically changes after the Kosovar crisis due to the political conduct of the Bulgarian government with a view to the geopolitical stakes for the security of Europe. I identify with the finding of the author that the EU integrational significance of Bulgaria arises, in the first place, from its contribution to the security of South-Eastern Europe, and, respectively, to the European security.

Also, worthy to note is the political analysis of the author in the direction of the EU integration of Bulgaria and the relations with Russia. The conclusion is that in the end of 1990 Russia has not actively opposed the EU integration, but within the Kosovar crisis it has become clear that Russia's "policy towards Bulgaria is clearly distinguished as one of metropolis towards a dominion", and it is supported with the findings in the whole study. The author also outlines the complexity of the starting point of contradiction –Bulgaria has become more attractive because of the higher stakes for the Common European security, of the one part, but Bulgaria appears as a very unstable partner, of the other part.

In his research Prof. Georgi Dimitrov, PhD, has reached the conclusion that the issue for the accession of Bulgaria to EU has become dependent on the external context of the relationship between EU and NATO, and this is the reason for the unity of the EU and NATO integrational process on the basis of its geographical situation, and the historical preconditions, but mostly the unity of the politically set objectives.

With reference to the legal aspect of the EU integrational processes for Bulgaria prof. Dimitrov correctly notes that the theme Justice, rule of law and the mechanism for cooperation and monitoring is the issue that was especially difficult for resolving in the preparation for the membership in EU, although at that time it has not attracted the attention of Bulgarian public.

The Study however shows that, on one side, the European Commission has developed an increasing sensitivity on this theme, and on the other side, the persons, directly involved in the EU integration process devote significant attention to it. It is recognized that the problem with the necessity for judicial reform has been worsening continuously within the enlargement policy of EU, because of the internal insecurity due to the weak judicial system, systemic corruption on all levels, including the highest political level, and the resulting strong organized crime, which affect our borders making them permeable for smuggling and other types of traffic.

The political scientific conclusion on the preceding subject made by Prof. Georgi Dimitrov are profound and clearly defining the distinct polarization in the views of our EU integrators depending on their understanding of the objectives and the meaning of the EU integration, namely, some see it only as “harmonization of the law”, others – as full engagement in the EU membership that goes beyond the axis to “left” or “right” respectively.

I accept and share the contributions, made by Prof. Georgi Dimitrov, and I will point out the following:

- In-depth and well-founded analysis of the EU integrations as a political interaction between Bulgaria, that has carried out its own accession policy, and the EU, that has implemented its enlargement policy, on the basis of the memories for the EU integration of Bulgaria, created for the purposes of the study.
- The explanation of the historic-political logic of “diversion between the accession requirements and the obligations of the EU membership” still initially on the enlargement policy which predetermines the way in which the preparation for membership has been carried out. In details have been clarified the specific political relationship between the institutions and the members states of EU, on the one side, and Bulgaria through its governments, ministries, the institutional mechanism for interinstitutional coordination, diplomacy, integrational teams and working groups, and in the NGOs, on the other side.
- It clarifies how the political resolution for the accession of Bulgaria to EU has been found because of the strategic interest for European security, as a result of which it has been synchronized with the accession of Bulgaria to NATO with a view to the conduct of the government within the Kosovar crisis. At the same time the research has taken into account the civilization difference between the Western-European

societies and the post-communist societies, one of which is Bulgaria.

- The political importance of the accession of Bulgaria to NATO has been explained also in another context, namely, as a part of the solution to the problem of security in Europe that has non-military aspects in the fight against the international traffics (of human beings, weapons, drugs and smuggling).
- An emphasis is placed on the issue of internal insecurity of Bulgaria due mainly to two indicators, namely: a) high degree of criminalization of the economy, politically patronized organized crime and corruption, and, resulting inefficiency of the judicial system, as well as, б) highly problematic relationship resulting from the policy of Russia towards Europe, and the region in particular.
- The study reveals the differentiated political attitudes of the member states of EU towards the accession of Bulgaria.
- The historic-political logic has been clarified so that the accession of Bulgaria to EU is conceived as a value choice, while the political efforts in the preparation is directed mostly to the legal harmonization of the EU law (acquis).
- It is established that the Bulgarian path to EU membership demonstrates that that the main reason for the long duration of the negotiations on chapters was mostly in the burden of our own political issues beyond the legal norms.

The study can serve as a conceptual-methodological framework for evaluation of the EU enlargement policy in the countries from the Western Balkans.

Approbation of the results

Prof. Georgi Dimitrov, PhD, applies for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “doctor of sciences” not only with the dissertation but also with additional 28 publication on the theme of the dissertation. I would point out among them the monograph that has not been used as basic work for habilitation with the title: “How Did Bulgaria Pass into the EU?” (Как България се промуши в Европейския съюз? София, Издателство на СУ „Св. Кл. Охридски“, т. I, II, III, 2022 (under print). The publications are related to the theme of the dissertation and have been published in distinguished Bulgarian and foreign editions. For the collective publications have been presented division protocols that show the contribution of the candidate.

The candidate has presented a reference for compliance with the minimum national requirements of Art. 2b, para 2 and 3 of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), respectively the requirements of Art. 2, para 5 DASRBA, as well as a reference for the original scientific contributions with the respective proofs, laid down by the law and the rules for its application, and the Rules of Sofia University. Prof. Georgi Dimitrov has collected in total 1320 points in all the indicators and that is in multiple times more than the required 350 points. From the above one can reach the conclusion that the candidate meets the minimum national requirements, and, respectively, the additional requirements of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “doctor of sciences” in the scientific area of higher education 3.3. Political sciences (European studies) in the professional field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences.

The results of the dissertation and the scientific works, presented by the candidate do not match such presented in previous procedures for acquisition of scientific title and academic position.

There is no duly proved plagiarism in the presented dissertation and scientific works in this procedure that is evident from the protocol for check and analysis for the originality of the dissertation in the system of prevention of plagiarism.

Quality of the abstract of the dissertation

The abstract of the dissertation provided by Prof. Georgi Dimitrov, PhD covers 97 pages and fully meets the requirements for its drafting, and it truly and correctly presents the results, conclusions and the content of the dissertation. The contributions, bibliography, publications on the theme of the dissertation have been outlined in the abstract.

Conclusion

After a review of the dissertation and the accompanying scientific works, submitted in the procedure, and after an analysis of their significance and the scientific and scientific-applicable contributions in them, I confirm that the dissertation and the scientific publications, as well as the quality and originality of the results and achievements in them, meet the requirements of the DASRBA, the rules for its application, and the Rules of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for the candidate’s acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “doctor of

sciences” in the scientific area of higher education 3.3. Political sciences (European studies) in the professional field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences. The candidate satisfies the minimum national requirements in the professional field and no plagiarism has been established for the scientific works in the procedure.

For the reasons stated above I recommend to the Scientific jury to award to Prof. Georgi Dimitrov the educational and scientific degree “doctor of sciences” in the scientific area of higher education 3.3. Political sciences (European studies) in the professional field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

09.06.2022.

Author of the Review:

Prof. Ekaterina Mihaylova, PhD