

## **SOFIA UNIVERSITY “ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI”**

### **OPINION**

**From:** Prof. Evgenia Ivanova Delcheva, PhD in Economics,  
UNWE / Department of Public Administration;  
Scientific specialty - "Organization and management outside the field of material production"

**Subject:** dissertation work for awarding a scientific degree

"Doctor of Science" in 3.3 POLITICAL SCIENCES (POLITICAL SCIENCE - PUBLIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES) at Sofia University.

**Author of the dissertation:** Tatiana Trifonova Tomova, Associate Professor, PhD  
Sofia University / Department of Public Administration

**Topic of the dissertation:** "The Bulgarian path in social policy",

**Grounds for presenting the opinion:** participation in the composition of the scientific jury  
for the defense of the dissertation according to Order RD 38-297 / 17.07.2020 of the Rector  
of Sofia University.

#### **1. Information about the author**

Assoc. Prof. presented for discussion her dissertation in the Department of Public Administration at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" according to art. 39 of Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. The disclosure of the procedure for the defense of the dissertation was made on the basis of: decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy, Protocol №17 / 07.07.2020.

- Assoc. Prof. Tomova was born in 1960. She obtained a master's degree in sociology from Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski" from 1979 to 1983. He works as a sociologist and lecturer in various organizations. Expert at NACID – Ministry of education.
- Acquired the scientific degree "Doctor" in Political Science in 2000. He holds the academic position of "Associate Professor" at Sofia University and since 2012 he has been the head of

the Department of Public Administration. Since 2019 he is also Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University. He specializes in Social Policy Analysis in Paris.

## **2. General characteristics of the presented dissertation**

The dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. T. Tomova on the topic "Bulgarian path in social policy" is structured in an introduction, three chapters, conclusion and literature from over 300 sources, mainly in English and French. The total volume of 328 pages is completely suitable for a dissertation.

The dissertation development is a phenomenon and a real achievement in the scientific literature in the field of public policies, and in particular social policy, transitology and the transition of Bulgaria to market development, democracy and European values. The scientific and practical reference of the chosen topic is based on several facts:

- The scientific literature lacks such an in-depth analysis of social policy as a tool of public management, richly backed by a literature review by over 300 authors and sources. In this sense, the dissertation development is innovative and provides both summarizing theses and views, and new knowledge about the content and process of the so-called transition in the economy and the social sphere.
- Social policy is an area with high social and political expectations and conflicting views which makes the dissertation socially necessary. It provides answers to real problems and trends in convergent and divergent processes in the reform of social policy.
- Despite the influence of external factors (European integration, social inclusion, European social model, etc.) on Bulgarian social policy after the 1990s, many of the newly introduced policies and practices do not lead to the desired results. As a result the income polarization deepens, the access to quality health services and the quality of education are declining. Deinstitutionalization in social services is controversial and shows a need to motivate and educate social workers.

Assoc. Prof. Tomova is an erudite and well-informed author who points out scientific literature from the most famous and authoritative sources in the scientific space. The scientific methodology of dissertation - purpose, tasks, thesis and working hypotheses, object and subject of research are presented correctly.

### **3. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results**

In her work, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tatiana Tomova appears as a purposeful and in-depth researcher, whose main research interests are in the field of public policy and management, as well as in social policy as a major tool in the hands of politicians. She also convincingly enters the sectoral areas - healthcare, social and health insurance, social assistance and social services, successfully integrating her knowledge as a political science expert with the searches of the public administration professional.

In her dissertation Assoc. Prof. T. Tomova presents the complex and diverse matter of normative assessment of social reforms and liberal market changes in post-socialist countries and in particular - in Bulgaria, the regulatory impact of the state on the market of social and medical services, unresolved issues in sectoral policies, citizens' expectations for more justice and quality, etc. The author answers to four research questions - the first is about the content of social policy; the second is for social policy models in European countries; the third is about the model of social policy in Bulgaria and the fourth is about the impossibility to predict the development of the Bulgarian model due to the presence of a number of factors. Bulgaria is reforming its social policy, adopting a market model that is the result of a global diffusion of policy ideas. The model thus adopted is formed as a result of convergent factors. This is a convergence to an ideal model that sets the tone for reforms in Western welfare states, but is nowhere fully realized.

The results of the research and analysis of the different models of social policy contribute to the objectification of public policies and public management, to the assessments of social reforms and their cost.

### **4. Evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions**

The author's scientific achievements are located in the space of several scientific fields - political science and public administration, social policy and transitology.

It can be argued with confidence that Assoc. Prof. Tomova contributes to the adaptation and specification of the matter for the models of social policy in Bulgaria and other countries with emphasis on the models of Kingdon, Zacharidis and others. Its development is in line with the market changes in social practice, with the failures of the free market and the subsequent state intervention. Moreover, it helps to realize the need for new approaches in

the practical management of social institutions, for the development of modern training programs for social staff.

We rank the candidate's contributions in four areas. We will also apply a more integrated approach to their identification by presenting them more compactly:

- In the field of public policy research, she proves that they are unpredictable and depend on random factors; reveals the difference between the process and the content of public policies and the interrelationship between them; introduces an instrumental approach to policies that is applied by all political forces; justifies the concept of "policy reference framework" - values and ideas at the heart of social development; develops a system of criteria for typology of social policy instruments.
- The author distinguishes territorial and temporal models of modern social policy by connecting them with the processes of convergence and divergence; she identifies the market model of social policy in the former socialist countries, incl. and Bulgaria, which is based on the paradigms of neoliberalism and the new public management.
- She researches and analyzes the transition of social policy in the 1990s with an emphasis on the path and "searching for guilt" of political forces.
- The author develops the characteristics of the new market model of modern social policy in Bulgaria with the dominance of convergent over divergent trends; the main external and environmental factors influencing the model are derived, as well as the dependence on the path leading to the "locking" of the model in the "reference frames" of the transition.

## **5. Evaluation of the dissertation publications**

Assoc. Prof. Tomova has cited 12 scientific publications on the problems of her dissertation and work. Three of them are in English. In eight of them Assoc. Prof. Tomova is the first or main author.

## **6. Evaluation of the abstract**

The abstract contains the main accents, those and contributions of the dissertation.

## **7. Critical remarks, recommendations and questions**

On page 207 in the analysis of the health reform a mistake was made that the medical

establishments are traders without profit. Their status is to work for profit under the Commercial Act and the Cooperatives Act. In practice, most of them have losses and liabilities to suppliers and others.

I recommend Assoc. Prof. Tomova to continue her research in the field of social policy with opportunities for positive analysis of development and reforms.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the substantive, structural and complex evaluation of the presented dissertation by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tatiana Tomova, I can summarize that:

- The dissertation contains results representing scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the field of public administration and political sciences;
- It contributes to the solution of significant managerial and political problems (market transition in social policy with successes and failures, models of social policy development, derivation of good practices from other countries, convergent and divergent trends, etc.) in social policy;
- It helps to introduce modern approaches and technologies for analysis;

Therefore, I recommend to the esteemed jury at Sofia University to award Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tatiana Tomova the scientific degree "Doctor of Political Science".

10/08/2020

Sofia

Signature: .....

(Prof. Dr. Evgenia Delcheva)