

## **OPINION STATEMENT**

### **On Dissertation Thesis**

**Topic: KOSOVO-SERBIA CONFLICT, FROM NEGOTIATIONS FOR FINAL STATUS RESOLUTION TO POLITICAL DIALOGUE (2006-2016)**

**Presented by Bujar Deskaj**

**By**

**Assoc. Prof. Teodora Ivanova Kaleynska, PhD**

**Veliko Tarnovo University "St.st. Cyril and Methodius"**

Bujar Deskaj has presented a dissertation thesis of a total of 169 pages, of which 154 are the main text, the rest are a list of references and sources, as well as two appendices and a list of interviews. The volume of the work allows to sum up the researched information, to fulfill the logic of the dissertation research and to have a completed scientific research. A sufficient number of sources were used - over 150 sources in English, Internet resources, periodicals and archival units. The dissertation thesis follows a well-defended logical model; the research is arranged in five chapters, introduction and recommendations, formed as a conclusion. The proposed internal content of the dissertation thesis is balanced, there is internal logic, the structure is well arranged, scientific language and style are used.

Bujar Deskaj's presented doctoral thesis examines a problem that has indisputable significance in scientific and scientific-applied terms. The topic is focused on a current issue in contemporary international relations, namely the presentation of the Kosovo-Serbia conflict in the period 2006-2016. Although the study has set its time and territorial limitations, it is important to note that the Kosovo case will continue to have impact on the modern development of the countries in the region and will influence the international policy of the 21st century. The study of the influence of international factors / EU and UN / on the conflict allows the research to be a complete, presenting the problem in breadth and multilayers. What makes the research done originally and fruitfully is the research in archives, official and personal documents and interviews and their skillful interweaving in the text, which, in my opinion, gives special value to the text we have received. The author uses over 70 letters, addresses, official documents, court decisions, interview transcripts, which enriches his thesis research. The author explains in detail the research methods he works with. He defends successfully the political science

approach with the strong and successfully made conclusions and summaries, both at the end of each chapter and in the recommendations in the Conclusion.

Deskaj's success is the very good and accurate formulation and realization of the goal of the dissertation thesis, which is "focused on the implications and impact of political negotiations on bilateral cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia and strengthening the international subjectivity of the Republic of Kosovo through these negotiations ..... and analytical framework to study the mediation effectiveness of the European Union"(p.12). The thesis, in a very general and objective way, examines various studies that analyze the multifaceted process of the Kosovo-Serbia conflict and, in comparative terms, the role of the EU and the UN as a mediator in the peace negotiations. The author evaluates and compares the different points of view and successfully integrates in his research the substantial conclusions and those drawn in them. He successfully applies them in the theoretical part of the dissertation thesis, where he analyzes the essence of many specific concepts, explores techniques for resolving conflicts, offers evaluation of policies of international organizations. The bibliographic reference is prepared precisely and meets the requirements. The number of authors used is convincing and representative enough. Main literature sources are considered, as well as numerous researches, reports, official documents, archives, personal documents, personalized interviews and scientific works of specialists in the field, as well as developments and publications of prestigious international organizations and publications. It can definitely be argued that Bujar Deskaj's study has its own contribution to the collection and analysis of the data used successfully.

The theoretical context of the research is presented in five chapters, the research methodology is logically presented and its use is defended. The theoretical chapter deals with the management of modern conflicts; the origin and chronology of the conflict and the negotiations to resolve Kosovo's final status resolution is explored and presented; a broad-based review of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue; as well as the influence of international organizations / UN and EU / in comparative terms and their role in the negotiation process. This multi-layered comparative plan definitely deepens the perception of the dissertation thesis as a convincing research product. The theoretical model of the research is clearly distinguished in the well-structured conclusions in each of the chapters, which are clearly marked both in the text at the end of each chapter and in the conclusions at the end of the whole work. The proposed division of research chapters allows a detailed review of the development of the negotiation process in Kosovo and a comparative review of the role of international organizations, in this case the EU

and the UN, and their contribution to it. The dissertation thesis concludes: "Kosovo is a unique case that requires a unique solution and does not set a precedent for future unresolved conflicts."

Related to this statement is my question: - The author, as a result of his analysis, points out that the EU plays the role of mediator in the peace negotiation process to ensure progress and peace in the ten years /2006-2016/. In the conclusions and recommendations, you clearly state that the role of the EU is largely "problematic" and you point out a number of shortcomings of the organization in its support for democratization and Europeanization (work with civil society, support for democratic initiatives, etc.). How you see the development of the processes in the next ten years, and in the context of the stated address by Kosovo to the EU member states not to approve the status of a candidate for membership in Serbia?

I believe that the dissertation thesis of Bujar Deskaj is a completed scientific research and study, which offers research on a series of issues of theoretical, methodological and applied nature. The methodological tools which Deskaj presents, are sufficient to achieve the set goal and research tasks. The dissertation has a clear scientific-applied character. I accept the contributions formulated by the dissertation, although they could be consolidated and better summarized. I think the thesis text is a good result, very relevant and dynamic, also due to the fact that it is evolving in our time, with high dynamics and dynamics of internal and external relations, which further strengthens my support for the thesis, presented by Deskaj. I would like to emphasize that, given that the author decides to publish his work, I would encourage the expansion of the research towards the role of other international actors on the ground, such as the OSCE, of course Russia and the United States, as well as China.

The abstract /avtoreferat/ is written according to the academic requirements and meets the required structure and presents the dissertation in full. The publications are in sufficient quantity and are closely related to the topic of the dissertation thesis.

The dissertation thesis proposed by Bujar Deskaj meets the requirements of Article 6, paragraph 3 of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and Article 27 of the Regulations for its implementation. As a member of the scientific jury, I give a positive assessment of the dissertation of Bujar Deskaj for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty Political Science, research field 3.3. Political Sciences.

May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Veliko Tarnovo

Signature:



/Assoc.Prof. Teodora Kaleynska/