

LETTER OF OPINION

by Prof. Atanas Haralampiev Dermendzhiev, Dr. Habil
about dissertation work on topic:

„Regional analysis of the spread of infectious diseases among farm animals in the southern border territories of Bulgaria“ by Katrin Evgenieva Gotsova, PhD student at the Department of Regional and Political geography at Faculty of Geology and Geography, SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“

Field of higher education: 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics
Professional field: 4.4. Earth Sciences (Economic and Social Geography – Regional Development of Industrialization)

1. Data on the PhD student

Katrin Evgenieva Gotseva is enrolled as a PhD student at the Department of Regional and Political Geography according to order №20-141/18.01.2019 of the Rector of SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“.

He completed his secondary education in 2012 at the National School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics „Acad. L. Chakalov“.

In 2018 he graduated as Master of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry, Sofia.

She went through courses in veterinary medicine and medical geography, as well as language training.

She is a member of the Bulgarian Veterinary Union.

The theoretical and practical training in medicine received during the studies is a serious basis for orientation towards the interdisciplinary topic of the dissertation work, which corresponds to the professional preparation of the PhD student and on the problems of medical geography.

In the period 2019-2022 the procedural actions required by the law were implemented – PhD minimums and examinations have been carried out.

Katrin Evgenieva Gotseva is deducted with the right of defense by order of the Rector SU – RD-20-446/17.02.2022.

2. Data on the doctoral studies

According to the procedure for the defense of the dissertation work, the required documents are presented according to the law of the ZRASRB and the Regulations of SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“: dissertation; dissertation abstract; orders regulating all stages of the legality of the procedure; minutes of the respective sessions; orders determining the composition of the scientific jury; order regulating the date of the final jury session.

I believe that all the requirements of the ZRASRB regarding the legitimacy of the procedure have been met.

3. Data on the doctoral work

The total volume of the presented work is 212 pages. The information sources include 110 titles in Cyrillic and Latin, 16 internet addresses, 43 figures, 13 tables and 4 appendices.

The dissertation abstract in a volume of 38 pages reflects the nature of the work and is a correct reduction of its content.

The structure of the dissertation includes an introduction, 3 chapters and conclusion.

The introduction has the required theoretical attributes of scientific research: relevance of the topic, object and subject of the research, main objective, main hypothesis, methodology and methods, geographical scope, structure of the dissertation work.

The task to achieve the goal are appropriately ordered and ranked.

A significant set of approaches and methods has been selected an applied – a complex, spatial and systematic approach, statistical analysis of the elements of the system, „medical geography“, etc. In the course of the study, they played their role in reaching objective scientific conclusions.

Chapter one – „Theoretical foundations of regional research on disease diffusion“ is essentially a theoretical and methodological basis of the study. In it Katrin Gotseva makes an attempt to clarify the essence of the fundamental concepts in medical geography and in particular in veterinary-medical geography. The conclusions made, although brief, are correct and reflect the simile of the content.

Chapter two – „Factors and conditions for the spread of diseases of farm animals“ examines the diffusion of infectious diseases in space with emphasis on the elements of the epizootic process.

The analysis, although devoid of geography, corresponds to the main objective and is the basis for the content of the next chapter – „Analysis and trends of the geographical spread of selected infectious diseases on farm animals“.

In essence, it is the core of the dissertation work. A regional analysis of the prevalence of three selected diseases on farm animals in the southern border regions of Bulgaria was carried out. The trends for their territorial diffusion are highlighted through the prism of diffusion on a global scale.

The conclusions drawn reflect the real picture and have scientific and practical value.

The conclusion corresponds to the main results of the study.

Although the medical text has a significant preponderance over the geographical text, we believe that the main task stated in the introduction has been fulfilled. This is helped by precisely developed figures and applications that both support certain ones in the dissertation work and quite convincingly replace them. This has largely achieved the stated objective. With the present work, a serious request for the further activity in the chosen direction has been given.

4. Scientific contributions

Katrin Gotseva presented an up-to-date dissertation work. As a main contribution we highlight the clarification of the modern place of medical geography among the other scientific directions of socio-economic geography, as well as the proven importance of geographical location and geographical environment in conducted medical-geographical research. At the same time, we note that analysis is not a contribution, but a process/means/tools to achieve it.

5. Publications and participation in scientific forums

The approbation of the dissertation work of Katrin Gotseva includes dissertation abstract and two independent scientific publications in a Collection of articles from the scientific conference „Geography and Regional Development“ and in the magazine „Geopolitics“. They reflect some of the basic scientific achievements on the doctoral student.

6. Conclusion

On the basis of the documentation provided, confirming in a categorical way the qualities of the candidate, justified by the thesis on „Regional analysis of the spread of infectious diseases

among farm animals in the southern border territories of Bulgaria“, I propose to the honorable jury to vote „**FOR**“ for award of the educational and scientific degree „Doctor“ in field of higher education: 4. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Informatics, professional field: 4.4. Earth Sciences (Economic and Social Geography – Regional Development of Industrialization) by Katrin Evgenieva Gotseva.

Veliko Tarnovo

25.04.2023

Prof. Atanas Dermendzhiev, Dr. Habil