

O P I N I O N

by Prof. Krasimira Tosheva Benkova, Ph.D.

related to the dissertation of **Dimitar Vasilev Shterev** on the topic
"Organizational and functional models in the Social Security and Social
Assistance Systems"

Subject: Award of a Doctoral degree in the scientific specialty "Organization and management outside the sphere of material production (Social activities)", professional area 3.4. Higher education field of Social activities 3. Social, business and legal sciences.

By virtue of Order No. 3472 dated December 16, 2019. of the Rector of Trakia University of Stara Zagora I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury in connection with the defense of the dissertation of **Dimitar Vasilev Shterev**, a doctoral candidate in independent form of study in the professional area 3.4. Higher education field of Social activities 3. Social, business and legal sciences, scientific specialty: Organization and management outside the sphere of material production (Social activities), for the award of the Doctoral degree. In the first meeting of the Scientific Jury I have been assigned to prepare an opinion on his dissertation.

Dimitar Vasilev Shterev has enrolled as a doctoral candidate in independent form of study in Organization and Management outside the field of material production (Social activities) at the Department of Social Activities of the Faculty of Medicine at Trakia University in 2016. His study has been extended by one more year. After presenting his dissertation, which was

discussed in a meeting of the department and successfully passing the internal defense, Dimitar Shterev has been granted the right of defense by Order No. 3475 dated December 16, 2019 of the Rector of Trakia University as of December 10, 2019.

In pursuit of the Order of the University Rector and the decision of the Scientific Jury, I, being guided by the requirements of the Law on the Development of academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its implementation, hereby propose to the attention of the honorable members of the Scientific Jury the following findings and inferences, as well as a conclusion, justified thereby.

The set of materials presented by Dimitar Vasilev Shterev contains: a CV, an Order for doctoral candidate enrollment, certificates of successfully passed doctoral examinations following an individual curriculum, a dissertation, an Order that grants the right for defense, a list and copies of scientific publications by Dimitar Shterev related to the topic of his dissertation and a statement of the originality of the research.

Relevance of the dissertation and general description

The problem of social security and social assistance in the context of the demographic processes and the European integration has been the subject of increasing research interest in the recent years. The relevance of the topic is related to the possibility of theoretical and practicable contribution of the suggested analyses, conclusions and recommendations.

The dissertation contains 189 pages. It includes an introduction, five main chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices.

The dissertation presents a conceptual framework of the theoretical basis of the research. The main key concepts are outlined in a meaningful manner. **The**

purpose, tasks, subject and object of the study are relevantly presented. The results of the social security models studied as well as the results of the analysis of social security and social assistance in Bulgaria are well systematized, supported by comments on the current institutional approaches and mechanisms for social protection system management. In the context of this analysis, the candidate has demonstrated a high level of knowledge of the organization and functions of the social protection system in Bulgaria. The doctoral candidate shows critical thinking and develops a realistic viewpoint regarding the various components of the systems being analyzed. The immaculately selected and analyzed statistical and administrative information is completely relevant to the dissertation. It meets the objectives and tasks of the dissertation research. A matter of special contribution is the suggestion developed by Dimitar Shterev, for renewal of the institutional structure and management of the social security and social assistance systems. The suggestion is formulated as “a new organizational and functional model in the social security and social assistance systems”. The advantages of the model proposed by the doctoral candidate are supported by sound proofs.

Methodological parameters of the research

The subject and object of the study are precisely defined. The study is focused on the main research objective of exploring different organizational and functional models in order to prove that the transfer of the Non-Employment Pensions Fund from NSSI to the Social Assistance Agency would provide for fairer and more successful management of the financial resources and the cash flows. The main research tasks are well designed towards achieving this goal.

Appraisal of the scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation

The dissertation of Dimitar Shterev reveals in a highly persuasive manner a thorough knowledge of the theoretical and practical aspects of the issues of social security and social assistance as systems. I accept the contributions made by the doctoral candidate.

The abstract of Dimitar Shterev contains all necessary elements, and the list of scientific contributions provided by the candidate expresses exactly what the dissertation has achieved.

There are some imperfections and inaccuracies noticed in the dissertation but they do not diminish its scientific value. In my opinion, more precision is needed in formulating the suggestions related to the possibility of implementing the doctoral candidate's proposal for "a new organizational and functional model in the social security and social assistance systems". Subject to clarification and justification of some of the theses, I think that the dissertation deserves to be made publicly available as a separate scientific publication, and a comprehensive study would be useful not only for the researchers in the field of social security and social assistance but also for and people actively involved in such issues.

In conclusion, I assess this dissertation positively, bearing in mind that it contains scientific contributions that make an original contribution to social science, as well as thorough theoretical knowledge of the doctoral candidate and his capacity for independent research.

Dear members of the Scientific Jury,

Bearing in mind the qualities of the dissertation, I believe that it has indisputable merits and demonstrates an in-depth analysis leading to theoretical conclusions, which is why I propose with deep conviction to the honourable Scientific Jury to award a doctoral educational and scientific degree to Dimitar

Vasilev Shterev in the higher education field of Social, Business and Legal Sciences, professional area of Social Activities, scientific specialty: Organization and management outside the sphere of material production (Social activities).

February 20, 2020

An opinion given by

Prof. Dr. Krasimira Benkova