

ИКОНОМИЧЕСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ – ВАРНА  
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### OPINION

on a doctoral dissertation for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3.8. "Economics", doctoral program "Economics and Management (Tourism)", according to a procedure announced by the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

**Prepared by:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgina Lukanova

This opinion is prepared based on Order No. 587 of the Rector of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, dated 04.07.2025, for inclusion in the composition of the Scientific Jury, and a decision of the meeting of the Scientific Jury held on July 8, 2025 for the preparation of an opinion. The opinion follows the standard structure adopted by the Academy for preparing an opinion for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

**Author of the dissertation:** Siana Plamenova Spasova

**Topic of the dissertation:** "Diversification of the tourism product by organizing events"

**Supervisor:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyubka Mincheva Ilieva

#### I. General presentation of the dissertation

The scientific research submitted for opinion meets the specific requirements for the format and volume of a dissertation. The work has a classical structure, developed in a logical sequence and with a balanced volume. The main text includes an introduction (5 pages), exposition in three chapters (Chapter I – 60 pages, Chapter II – 50 pages, Chapter III – 54 pages), a conclusion (7 pages), and a list of references (9 pages).

The bibliography includes 123 sources, of which 52 are in Cyrillic (Bulgarian and Russian) and 71 in Latin script (English). Most of the sources are contemporary and relevant to the topic; citations are generally accurate and conscientious (with a few exceptions, e.g., source 107). The content of the bibliography indicates that the PhD candidate has a good command of both Bulgarian and foreign literature on the topic.

The text is illustrated with 11 tables and 12 figures. The dissertation includes 4 appendices.

A declaration of originality is attached.

## **II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation**

The dissertation of doctoral student Siana Spasova is a complete independent study of an interdisciplinary nature, addressing a current topic focused on the role of events included in the tourism product in achieving competitiveness and sustainable development of tourist destinations.

The research is based on studies by leading Bulgarian and international authors in the fields of territorial planning, destination marketing, and event management. For conducting an independent empirical research, the candidate uses a methodology that is appropriate to the stated scientific goal and formulated research tasks. The study's limitations are correctly identified.

The structure and content of the dissertation fully correspond to the stated research objectives and tasks. There is a good logical sequence of the structural elements. The writing style is concise and precise, using clear academic language. A careful review of the dissertation shows that the candidate possesses theoretical knowledge of the topic and can conduct independent empirical studies, successfully interpreting and summarizing the results obtained.

The abstract is 43 pages long and accurately reflects the content of the dissertation.

The list of publications related to the dissertation includes the necessary number and type of publications for acquiring the "Doctor" degree (47.67 points according to MN standards).

## **III. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation work**

The submitted report on the usefulness of the dissertation contains five contributing points:

- Of theoretical nature: Enrichment of the theoretical framework for the diversification of the tourism product.
- Of methodological nature: A developed model for diversifying the tourism product by organizing events.
- Of applied nature: Development and application of a system of indicators for

assessing the impact of organized events on the diversification of the tourism product in a destination.

The contributions summarized in the dissertation's conclusion reflect the actual scientific and applied work done by the candidate. After analysis of the dissertation, I confirm the stated contributions.

#### **IV. Critical notes, recommendations and questions**

No significant theoretical, logical, or methodological errors were found in the doctoral thesis of Siana Spasova. Some inaccuracies inherent in this type of scientific research were noted, such as in the specification of research methods (e.g., the Likert scale is not an independent research method), bibliographic descriptions of cited sources, etc. The author's critical approach could be strengthened and expanded regarding both the theoretical propositions presented and the analytical part of the dissertation.

The above comments in no way diminish the value of the dissertation or reduce its significance.

**Question to the doctoral student:** What, in your opinion, are the most significant barriers facing the municipality of Svishtov in effectively diversifying its tourism product by organizing events?

#### **V. Conclusion**

The dissertation developed by PhD candidate Siana Spasova represents a complete original research study that contains contributions in both theoretical-methodological and applied aspects. The research tasks have been fulfilled, and the scientific objective has been achieved. Based on the overall assessment made in this opinion, I believe that there exist convincing grounds for me to give a positive conclusion and to advocate for the conferment of the educational and scientific degree of "doctor" to doctoral student Siana Spasova.

July 21, 2025

Author of the opinion  
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgina Lukanova)