

Statement

**for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the Field of
Higher Education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.8
"Economics",**

PhD program "Economics and Management of Tourism"

In the Academy of Arts "D. A. Tsenov" – Svishtov

Prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Genka Ivanova Rafailova, PhD

Author of the dissertation: Siana Plamenova Spasova

Topic of the dissertation: "Diversification of the tourist product through the organization of events"

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Lyubka Mincheva Ivanova, PhD

I. General presentation of the dissertation:

The dissertation is 203 pages long, based on 123 sources, of which 52 are in Cyrillic and 71 in Latin, and includes 11 tables and 13 figures. The primary focus of the study is the opportunities for diversifying the tourist product through the organization of events. The PhD student has developed the topic into a dissertation, which has a classical structure – an introduction, a central part with three chapters, and a conclusion. The first part provides a theoretical analysis and overview of the tourist product, event tourism, and diversification of the tourist product. The second presents the methodology of the study, and the third presents its results and approbation of the author's model for diversifying of the tourist product through the organization of events. The work is logically connected and consistent, with smooth transitions between chapters and paragraphs. The individual chapters are balanced, although the third chapter includes five sections, which are two more than those in the other chapters.

The primary objective of this scientific study is to examine the impact of organized events on the development of the tourist destination. It is achieved through the implementation of excellently formulated research tasks.

The literature used is diverse and encompasses a range of significant literary sources, as well as key organizations in the global tourism industry.

The dissertation includes four appendices that complement the main text, which contain a questionnaire related to indicators for assessing the effect of events, aggregated tourism indicators, and challenges to event organization.

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

The dissertation presents a study of current issues. The scientific problem related to the diversification of the tourist product through the organization of events is highly **relevant** in the modern conditions of tourism for several main reasons:

1. **Increased competition and the need to differentiate destinations** through unique experiences to attract and retain visitors
2. **Overcoming seasonality:** One of the most significant problems in many tourist destinations, including Bulgaria, is pronounced seasonality. Organizing events outside the peak season is a proven strategy for attracting visitors throughout the year.
3. **Economic and social benefits:** Events stimulate the local economy, contribute to social cohesion, and enhance the quality of life for the local population.
4. **Changing consumer attitudes:** Modern tourists are seeking more than traditional holidays – they crave authentic experiences, cultural immersion, and opportunities to engage.

The problems of diversification of the tourist product and the role of events in this process are thoroughly explored in the dissertation through the use of appropriate scientific tools. A theoretical analysis and overview of the tourist product, event tourism, and diversification of the tourist product is made. A model for diversification of the tourist product through the organization of events is presented, which has been tested in the municipality of Svishtov.

The abstract accurately and effectively reflects the theoretical justification, methodology, and results of the research presented in the dissertation.

The content is scientifically sound, drawing on a wide range of Bulgarian and international authors. The presentation is clear and understandable, with adequate terminology.

III. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation.

The dissertation includes significant scientific and applied contributions to the management of tourist destinations.

- **Theoretical contributions:**

1. An in-depth theoretical analysis of the essence and scope of the tourist product, the specifics of event tourism, and the interaction between tourism management and event organization has been carried out.
2. The relationship between the resource potential and the opportunities for strategic positioning of the destination has been clarified.

- **Scientific and applied contributions:**

1. An analytical model for assessing the effectiveness of the event diversification of the tourist product has been developed and tested. The model integrates

inputs, process activities, and outputs, enabling a strategic interpretation of the impact of events through key performance indicators (KPIs).

2. Tourist resources with potential for event activity in the Municipality of Svishtov have been identified and evaluated.
3. Based on the implementation of the model, specific measures and recommendations have been formulated for the implementation of event tourism as a tool for diversification of the tourist product at the municipal level.

IV. Questions for the dissertation

1. What are the main challenges in collecting data to assess the effectiveness of events, especially when it comes to long-term social and cultural effects, and how does the model you propose address these challenges?
2. Given the established limitations related to the territorial scope and focus on cultural and entertainment events, what are the opportunities to extend the diversification model to other types of events (e.g., sports, congresses) or other tourist destinations?

V. Summary assessment of the dissertation and conclusion.

The dissertation of Siana Plamenova Spasova is an in-depth and up-to-date study of the possibilities for diversification of the tourist product through the organization of events. The author has successfully developed and tested a model for evaluating the application of event tourism in a real environment. A high degree of theoretical validity, a clear methodological framework, and a practical orientation distinguish the study.

The scientific and applied contributions are significant for both the field of Economics and Tourism Management, and for the practice of managing tourist destinations, which must maintain and develop their competitiveness and sustainable development. The dissertation demonstrates the excellent theoretical training of the PhD student, analytical thinking, and skills in scientific research and generalization.

I believe that the research meets the requirements for a dissertation to be awarded the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor", as stipulated by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its Implementation.

I give a **positive assessment and** propose to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to **Siana Plamenova Spasova** in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.8 "Economics" under the doctoral program "Economics and Management (Tourism)" at the Academy of Economics "D. A. Todorov" Svishtov.

Date: 11.07.2025

Prepared by: ..
(Assoc. Prof. Genka Raitilova, PhD)