

## OPINION

**Subject:** the dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree „Doctor“ in the doctoral program "Political Economy" at the Academy of Economics „D. A. Tsenov“ - Svishtov.

Prepared the opinion: **Assoc. Prof. Dobrin Ganchev Ganchev, PhD**

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Scientific specialty: „Economics and Management“

**Grounds for writing the opinion:** according to order № 209 of 29.04.2021 of the Rector of Academy of Economics „D. A. Tsenov“ – Svishtov

**Author of the dissertation:** Tanya Ivanova Risemova

**Topic of the dissertation:** „SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISTRICT ON THE BULGARIAN DANUBE COAST – STATE AND PROSPECTS“

### I. General presentation of the dissertation

The scientific paper presented for an opinion covers 187 pages. It consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of used literature sources and appendices. The bibliographic reference covers 108 sources - both Bulgarian and foreign, of which 49 with electronic sources. For the purposes of the study, the proposal includes 31 tables, 35 graphs and 3 figures. In addition, outside the main text, it contains 27 appendices in a volume of 20 pages.

The topic of the dissertation is extremely relevant and is dedicated to a significant economic problem, seeking its solution in scientific and practical terms.

The structure is well balanced between the theoretical and the practical part.

The introduction formulates the subject, object, thesis, purpose, tasks, methods and restrictive conditions related to the dissertation research.

**The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical and methodological approaches to socio-economic development.**

The author skillfully interprets and analyzes significant theoretical views on the categories of „economic development“ and „economic growth“. Special emphasis is placed on modern theories of socio-economic development through the prism of different views of researchers. The connection between regional development and local self-government is considered. The European experience and traditions in local self-government and their

„projections“ in our country have been studied in depth. Indicators are structured through a selected system of indicators, and in this original way it is possible to determine the problems and prospects for the development of the Danube region and the important role of the Danube River.

**In the second chapter** the doctoral student analyzes the problems of the socio-economic development of the districts on the Bulgarian Danube coast.

For the purposes of his research, the PhD student has performed an empirical study, on the basis of which the areas of the Bulgarian Danube coast are analyzed in socio-economic terms. It focuses its attention in six areas - demographic problems, problems in education, health and culture, labor market dynamics, income and working conditions, entrepreneurship development and the state of investment, the state of transport and tourism infrastructure.

Based on the in-depth analysis, the author outlines the main problems of the areas on the Bulgarian Danube coast - the demographic, the decrease in the number of students and the number of schools, the health status of the population, the decrease in the number of employed and the increase in the number of unemployed. He points out that income inequality is a significant obstacle to the development of entrepreneurship and investment. The lack of appropriate transport infrastructure creates obstacles to the development of economic relations and tourism.

**The third chapter is dedicated to the prospects for socio-economic development of the districts on the Bulgarian Danube coast.**

The author considers the possibilities for development of the districts on the basis of cluster analysis, aptly applying a specific grouping of the districts and municipalities with access to the Danube River. Uses indicators such as population (number), unemployment rate (in%), average annual salary of employees and employees (in BGN), relative share of employees in industry in the total number of employees (in%), which play a different role in the formation of clusters. On this basis, the developed areas, the middle developed and the lagging areas are determined (p. 112).

The applied SWOT analysis makes it possible to outline the picture of the general socio-economic condition of the districts on the Bulgarian Danube coast. Due to the predominant relative share of rural areas, emphasis is placed on the application of the Leader and VOMP approaches for the future development of the agricultural sector.

The perspectives for development are determined on the basis of the implementation of specific policies in respective priority sectors and directions.

The author proves with his analyzes and research that the development of the Bulgarian Danube coast is important for the formation and defense of national priorities.

In the conclusion the most significant results of the research are formulated and presented. Correctly used sources are cited.

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

The chosen topic is **relevant and significant** in both theoretical and practical aspects. **The subject of the study and the object of the study** were successfully distinguished.

The research thesis advocated by the PhD student is that the available potential and opportunities for development of the regions on the Bulgarian coast of the Danube can be proposed to solve socio-economic problems.

**The main purpose is formulated correctly** - to study the state of the regions along the Bulgarian bank of the Danube through a detailed socio-economic analysis for the period 2007-2019 and to highlight the prospects for their development.

The achievement of the purpose was achieved through a review of **four specific research tasks**.

In accordance with the purpose of the study, several important restrictive conditions have been adopted - territorial, temporal, certain indicators that are confidential or with limited access, specific infrastructure that is related to national security.

The language and style show a thorough knowledge of the specific terminology in the research field.

Various methods, methods and techniques have been used in the development of the methodological tools - methods of induction and deduction, multifactor analysis, comparative analysis, documentary analysis, cluster analysis and SWOT analysis.

The presented abstract in a volume of 42 standard pages reflects to the necessary extent the structure and content of the dissertation. The dissertation is accompanied by four publications - one article and three reports, all of which have been developed independently. They are dedicated to the problems discussed in the dissertation and are relevant to the period of its completion.

The presentation of a declaration gives confidence for independent research and scientific results achieved by the PhD student.

It is necessary to evaluate the dignity and role of the scientific guide Assoc. Prof. Lyudmil Nestorov PhD in the process of research.

### **III. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions to the dissertation**

The developed dissertation work is performed by the set goal and research tasks. The following important scientific and applied contributions can be highlighted:

1. On the basis of in-depth knowledge, analysis and critical attitude to modern theories of socio-economic development, the relevant conclusions and conclusions have been made for the areas of the Bulgarian Danube coast;

2. The groups of the Bulgarian Danube coast with access to the Danube river are grouped into developed, medium developed and poorly developed on the basis of specific cluster analysis, which allows clear disclosure of their problems and development of specific management solutions.

3. The conducted SWOT analysis helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the areas, as well as the opportunities and threats in their development and guidelines for future impacts.

4. The perspectives for the socio-economic development of the districts along the Bulgarian Danube coast are researched and designed and proposals for minimizing possible negative consequences are specified.

### **IV. Questions on the dissertation**

1. What is the level of foreign direct investment in the areas of the Bulgarian Danube coast?

### **Summary assessment of the dissertation and conclusion**

In conclusion, I believe that the dissertation submitted for defense meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for the application of the Act in Academy of Economics „D. A. Tsenov“.

This gives me reason to give a positive assessment and to recommend to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to vote for the award of the educational and scientific degree „Doctor“ in the doctoral program "Political Economy" to its author - **PhD student Tanya Ivanova Risemova.**

Date: 03.06.2021

Prepared the opinion:

(Assoc. Prof. Dobrin Ganchev Ganchev, PhD)