

Scientific area: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

Professional field. 3.3 Political Sciences

Faculty of Philosophy,

Department of Political Science

Department of Politics, Faculty of Political Science, Sofia University.

STATEMENT

for

DOCTORAL THESIS:

**"Crisis - Covid: Institutional Communication and Legitimacy –
Bulgaria and the EU"**

Doctoral candidate: Denitsa Plamenova Gatsinska

for

the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

in professional field 3.3. PhD in Political Science.

by

Assoc. Prof. PhD. Yordan Stoyanov Doykov

The dissertation thesis of the doctoral candidate Denitsa Gatsinska is 243 pages long. It includes an introduction, five chapters, conclusion, appendix and bibliography. The bibliography consists of a total of 178 sources, of which 142 in English and 36 in Bulgarian. These include monographic studies, articles, research papers, reports, regulations, internet sources, etc.

The dissertation is conceived through a complex goal-setting, the main objective of which is to clarify the nature and role of institutional communication at national and European level during the co-dependency. I find the structural decomposition of the factual aim of the dissertation into four operational objectives to be substantively relevant, finding such an approach particularly relevant in terms of structural clarity. PhD candidate Gatsinska satisfactorily defines the object of research in the dissertation - it is "...institutional communication as a tool for managing the co-dependent crisis and for preserving the legitimacy of national and European institutions."

The proposed object of the research - "the ways of communication between national institutions and citizens, European institutions and citizens, and between national and European institutions, as well as the role of health diplomacy as a specific communication tool" - is intricately defined as the substantive functionality of at least four serious problematisations in theoretical and applied terms. Thus, the PhD student has given the structural scope of her research.

To be more precise, the PhD student Gatsinska suggests that "the pandemic is a test of the sustainability of the liberal order, democracy, freedom and civil rights, leading to a reassessment of the entire political debate on human rights and freedoms and the cases in which their restriction is allowed", which as an imperative expression carries a certain theoretical problematic.

At the same time, the author has paid particular attention to the analysis of concepts and the definition of such as crisis, crisis management, pandemic, health management and health crisis. The PhD student has made a thorough review of the leading publications and analyses on the topic at this stage. Here, definitely as a positive point in the dissertation, I note the analysis of the historical experience in the fight against such health crises, as well as the contemporary dimensions of this

fight in the twenty-first century. And most of all on the political aspects of the crisis that the pandemic causes, as outlined by Denitsa Gatsinska.

Offering opportunities for a comparative comparison of adopted models of communication relations between national institutions and citizens, European institutions and citizens, and between national and European institutions, as well as the role of health diplomacy as a specific communication tool, the PhD student Gacinska directs us to the current problems and perspectives in the implementation of communication strategies in the management of pandemic phenomena in our country and around the world.

Her research expands its perimeter with an analysis of the political dimensions of the comovement crisis in terms of the limitations of citizens' rights; with an exploration of the politics of pandemic control and the dimensions of the crisis that are outside the health sector, at the level of the nation-state; with the interpretativeness of the pandemic studied from the positions of established sociological theories and with an analysis of the Bulgarian model of comovement crisis management. The author offers us conclusions that I take to be relevant without excluding the necessary discussion on them.

There is no doubt that the dissertation addresses a topical problem of our times. It is a fruit of independent work of the doctoral candidate. The dissertation reflects the author's original ideas and high professional skill to approbate them in political practice. It is evident from the proposed bibliography that Denitsa Gatsinska is up-to-date with the theoretical views and practices of institutional aspects of communication in national, foreign and especially in comparative aspects, corresponding to the topic and objectives of the research. The author's claim to knowledge of the problem and her contributory interpretation of it are fully justified. The conceptuality of the proposed work is structurally sound.

On the basis of the above considerations, I propose that Denitsa Plamenova Gatsinska be awarded a PhD in the professional field 3.3. Political Science and I strongly recommend that the dissertation be published as a monograph.

MEMBER OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY:

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Sofia