

# STATEMENT

**by Associate Professor PhD Dimitar Milchev Dekov, Associate Professor at Law Faculty of Plovdiv university**

Dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree „**Doctor**”,

In: Field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.6. Law PhD programme: International Law and International Relations)

**Author:** Tanya Nikolaeva Kostadinova

**Topic: International Legal Aspects of Child Trafficking**

**Scientific supervisor:** Associate Professor PhD Gergana Gozanska from the Department of Public Law of the Faculty of Law of Paisii Hilendarski University

## **1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student.**

By Order No. RD- 21-2053/15.11.2024 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University, I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury in connection with the procedure for the defense of the dissertation of doctoral candidate Tanya Nikolaeva Kostadinova from the Department of Public Law at the Faculty of Law of Paisii Hilendarski University. During the first meeting of the Scientific Jury I was assigned to participate in the procedure by writing an "opinion", which I present here.

In accordance with the requirements, I will briefly present the procedure and the doctoral candidate. Tanya Nikolaeva Kostadinova is a graduate of PU, having successively obtained a Bachelor's degree in Bulgarian Language and History from the Faculty of Philology of PU, a Master's degree in International Relations and a Master's degree in Law from the Faculty of Law of PU. She is enrolled as a full-time PhD student at the Faculty of Law of PU, as of 01.09.2020. She has been dismissed with the right to defence as of 01.09.2023. During her studies, she successfully completed the activities provided for in the individual study plan of the PhD student. In the meantime, she has been appointed as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Law of the PU, where she has been assigned to teach Public International Law and EU Law.

After the presentation of the draft dissertation, a meeting of the Departmental Council of the Department of Public Law was convened, at which an internal discussion was held and at which the CC decided to refer the dissertation for public defense. Tanya Kostadinova submitted the documents

related to the procedure in due time /Motion to the Rector for the opening of the procedure, CV, dissertation and abstract, Reference for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements, electronic copies of published articles on the topic of the dissertation (3 pcs.), Declaration of originality and credibility from 08.07.2024/. From the enclosed documents it can be concluded that she fulfils the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the Law on Research and Development for scientific field 3. Law.

## **2. Relevance of the topic, knowledge of the problem, research methodology**

The relevance and importance of the topic is undeniable. The study of the international legal aspects of child trafficking is a topic that requires the attention of a number of institutions and the whole society. It is an extremely important topic to study because the problem concerns the legal situation and protection of children, who are among the most vulnerable groups. This topic, formulated in this way, is dissertationable. This topic is sensitive, because child trafficking is not only a crime, but represents violations of the rights of the child.

The author shows a long-standing interest in the problem under study. The dissertation shows the experience and knowledge that Kostadinova has acquired during her work in the Local Commission for Combating Human Trafficking, Plovdiv, the numerous trainings, organizing preventive activities against human trafficking, etc.

## **3. Characteristics and evaluation of the thesis and contributions**

The dissertation has a classical structure - the content consists of three chapters, an introduction, a conclusion, a list of abbreviations, a bibliography with the sources and references used. The three chapters are balanced, consisting of sections, with the third chapter being more voluminous, and the total length is 207 pages.

The limited length of the opinion does not allow analysis of the individual chapters. Therefore, I will indicate some impressions and observations from the dissertation. The introduction is structured correctly and meets the requirements as the doctoral candidate clarifies the subject, object, aims and research objectives. Different methods have been used, both those typical of legal science and interdisciplinary ones, and I believe that they have been chosen appropriately. It is evident from the introduction that the author has set himself research tasks which are the subject of his research interests. The sources used /Bulgarian and foreign/ are appropriately selected, a review of the Bulgarian literature on the subject is made.

The main objective of Kostadinova's dissertation is clearly stated: by clarifying the

international legal aspects of child trafficking to explore the most appropriate measures for their protection at the international level. The three chapters deal with different aspects of the topic. In chapter one, the focus is an examination of the legal regulation of the issue of child trafficking in international law. In the three sections of the chapter, the author historically examines the international legal instruments on child trafficking with a focus on the instruments adopted by the League of Nations and the United Nations. Also of interest is the analysis of the definitions of slavery, trafficking, and sale of children in international law, which are the subject of Section 2. The focus of Section 3 is on an examination of the definition of "child" in international law instruments on protection from trafficking. The second chapter constitutes the 'core' of the thesis. It focuses on the relationship between trafficking and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among the many interesting issues addressed here, analyses of the Palermo Protocol and its relationship to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and other instruments have been successfully undertaken. In the last chapter, the focus is on the study of bodies and institutions for the protection of children from trafficking at universal, regional and national levels. The existing national instruments for the protection of children from trafficking are examined /Section 3/, and the author has chosen to examine the protection of children's rights in the Republic of Bulgaria, the USA and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The findings and conclusions are acceptable and reflect the author's personal opinion.

Kostadinova's contributions are faithfully reported and I accept them.

I will point out some of the more important contributions - scientific and applied.

1. Among the most important scientific contributions is that the dissertation represents a comprehensive study of the problem of child trafficking, which is absent in our country;
2. The systematization of the sources of the international acts in the field of child trafficking is of contributory character;
3. The recommendation to unify the definition of "child" as a guarantor of its protection at the national and international level is also of a contributory nature;
4. The clarification of the terminology on trafficking in children and, in particular, the clarification of the difference between "trafficking in persons" and "trafficking in persons" based on an analysis of various international instruments is of a contributory nature;
5. The dissertation also has scientific and applied contributions. A positive impression is that Kostadinova explores the legal aspects of the problem, but at the same time addresses the

historical, political, social aspects of the problem, which enhances the practical-applied value of the research.

6. The research can be used in various fields /for the purposes of the educational process, to serve as a help to legal practitioners, social workers and in state institutions dealing with the problems of child trafficking/ and thus the range of users is expanded and goes beyond science and the educational process in higher education.

Despite the positive qualities and a number of merits of the dissertation, it omits some important international acts related to the topic such as the basic acts of the Council of Europe. It is not desirable to make grammatical mistakes in such a scientific study. These remarks do not overshadow the overall positive impression of the dissertation.

#### **4. Assessment of publications and personal contribution of the PhD student**

The enclosed copies of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation /3 pcs./ demonstrate the doctoral student's long-lasting interest in the researched topic. They meet the requirements for scientific papers and have been published in academic journals. The author's opinion and evaluation is present in the publications and is proof of originality.

#### **5. Abstract**

The abstract meets the requirements - as a structure, as a volume and is accepted in this form. It faithfully reflects the main features of the thesis. It is presented in Bulgarian and in English translation and is 32 pages long.

I find no plagiarism in the thesis, abstract and publications on the subject of the thesis proposed for review.

#### **6. Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results**

I wish Tanya Kostadinova to continue working on the dissertation topic and, after the necessary editing and enrichment of the content, to publish a book on the topic.

#### **7. CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the above, I believe that the dissertation contains scientific and applied contributions and meets the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the regulations for the implementation of the Law for the

Development of Academic Staff of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. This gives me a reason to give a **positive evaluation** for the dissertation. I urge the esteemed members of the scientific jury, upon a convincing public defense, to award the degree of Doctor of education and science to **Tanya Nikolaeva Kostadinova** in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.6. International Law and International Relations.

Plovdiv

Date: 24.01.2025

**Opinion prepared by:** .....

(signature)

(Assos. Prof. PhD Dimitar Dekov)