

STATEMENT

by **Assoc. Prof. Irena Emilova, PhD**, Professional Field 3.9. Tourism,
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regarding the doctoral dissertation authored by **Vanya Georgieva Manikateva**
entitled: **“Tourism Policy and Regulations for Sustainable Development”**
submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree **“Doctor”**

1. Relevance and Significance of the Research Topic

The topic of the doctoral dissertation is undoubtedly **highly relevant and socially significant**, both from a theoretical and an applied perspective. In the context of increasing ecological, social, and economic imbalances, as well as the growing pressure on tourist destinations worldwide, issues related to **tourism policy, regulatory frameworks, and sustainable development** occupy a central place in contemporary academic and governance-related debates.

The author approaches tourism **not as an isolated phenomenon**, but as an integral component of a complex socio-economic system, governed by the principles of sustainable development and multi-level public governance. This conceptual approach significantly enhances the **scientific and practical value** of the research.

2. Object, Subject, Aim, and Research Tasks

The object and subject of the research are **clearly defined, logically substantiated, and fully aligned with the stated research aim**. The aim of the doctoral dissertation is formulated in a clear and realistic manner and is consistently pursued through well-defined research tasks.

The working hypothesis is **appropriately formulated** and corresponds to the overall research logic, placing a particular emphasis on the role of the state and the coordination among stakeholders in the process of sustainable tourism development.

3. Structure and Content of the Dissertation

The dissertation is characterised by a **clear, logically coherent, and well-balanced structure**, comprising an introduction, five main chapters, a conclusion, an extensive bibliography, and appendices. Particularly noteworthy are;

- the **in-depth theoretical analysis** of the concepts of “sustainable development,” “sustainable tourism,” and “tourism policy”;
- the **systematic review and comparative analysis** of tourism policies and regulatory frameworks within the European Union and selected European countries;
- the **detailed analysis of tourism governance and tourism policy in Bulgaria**, based on both secondary and primary data;
- the formulation of **concrete guidelines, recommendations, and a roadmap** for the development of tourism policy aimed at sustainable tourism in Bulgaria.

The style of presentation is **academic, clear, and consistent**, with precise and appropriate use of specialised terminology.

4. Methodology and Empirical Research

The author applies an **appropriate and diversified set of research methods**, including document analysis, comparative analysis, statistical data processing, and semi-structured interviews. The methodological approach is **well-argued and fully adequate** in relation to the research aim and objectives.

The empirical research contributes to the **enrichment of the analytical framework** and provides a deeper understanding of the actual challenges and deficiencies within Bulgaria’s tourism policy.

5. Scientific and Applied Contributions

The following key contributions may be identified in the doctoral dissertation:

- systematisation and further development of the theoretical framework of tourism policy within the context of sustainable development;
- a comparative analysis of tourism policies and regulatory instruments in the European Union and Bulgaria;

- identification of major deficiencies in national tourism policy with regard to sustainable development;
- formulation of concrete guidelines and a model (roadmap) for improving tourism policy in Bulgaria, demonstrating clear practical applicability.

6. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

The critical remarks addressed to the dissertation are **mainly of a recommendatory nature** and do not diminish its scientific merits. In future research, it would be beneficial to:

- expand the empirical base through a larger number of interviews;
- further deepen the analysis of policy monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- define more clearly measurable indicators for assessing sustainability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I consider the presented doctoral dissertation to be a **completed, independent, and scientifically sound research work**, fully meeting all the requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**”.

The author demonstrates **thorough theoretical knowledge, strong analytical skills, and the ability to formulate applicable solutions** in the field of tourism policy and sustainable development.

With full confidence, I propose that the esteemed academic jury award **Vanya Georgieva Manikateva** the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**” in Professional Field 3.9. Tourism.

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Irena Emilova

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