REPORT

By Associate Professor Dr. Siyka Kostadinova Kovacheva, Plovdiv University "P. Hilendarski"

of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "**doctor**"

by: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences,

3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences

Author: Irena Sashova Georgieva

Theme: Attitudes toward parenthood in the focus of family policies and the changing gender relations in the family. An international comparative analysis

Research supervisor: Associate Professor, Dr. Elitsa Dimitrova, BAS

1. General impression of the dissertation

The work of doctoral student Irena Georgieva has the characteristics of a valuable scientific product with an adequately constructed theoretical framework applied to the analysis of a large database, from which conclusions enriching the research area are drawn. The topic of the presented dissertation is very relevant for European societies in the first decades of the 21st century – the changes in people's reproductive behaviour, many of which have negative demographic and economic consequences. The author examines these current challenges through an innovative lens, as influenced by factors such as work-family balance and family life satisfaction. A comparative approach was applied to the analysis of attitudes towards parenting in Bulgaria and Germany with a focus on the division of household work and raising children between partners in the family, as embedded in a specific socio-cultural and institutional context.

The first chapter of the dissertation is an elaboration of the theoretical perspective of the study, starting with a presentation of the typology of social policy regimes according to the Esping-Anderson model based on the specific combinations of the role of the state, the market and the family, followed by examination of the new developments in the understanding and research of welfare states. A thorough distinction is made between rational theories explaining demographic changes with individual factors and gender-sensitive explanatory patterns of combining work and family responsibilities. The proposed theoretical model demonstrates the

doctoral student's skills for analysis and synthesis of rich scientific literature and her in-depth knowledge of the problem and previous research on the topic. The second chapter is devoted to the comparative analysis of the social contexts of Bulgaria and Germany. The comparison, based on official statistical data, includes highlighting similarities and differences in the demographic behaviour of parents in the two countries. Along with highlighting the many economic and cultural differences, emphasis is rightly placed on family policies. The empirical study of Irena Georgieva is presented in the third chapter. The chosen methodology of secondary analysis of the large database of the European Quality of Life Survey is suitable for achieving the set goals and for confirming or rejecting the formulated hypotheses.

2. Research results and scientific contributions

The in-depth theoretical framework and the applied descriptive and regression analysis of the empirical data allow the author to formulate meaningful generalizations. Irena Georgieva's work shows developed skills for complex statistical analysis, academic reflection and interpretation and reaching scientific and applied achievements. I want to highlight two of them in particular: the comparison between the social roles of fathers in the two countries and the conclusion that family policies in Bulgaria reinforce the traditional gender division of household work and child care practices. I would recommend to the doctoral student a bolder and more concrete formulation of recommendations to the social policy in Bulgaria with the aim to support parents to achieve a better work-family balance.

3. Evaluation of the quality of scientific publications

The PhD student has three scientific publications on key aspects of her research and four presentations in scientific forums. Their high quality reinforces the impression of developed skills for independent scientific work and fully meet the requirements.

4. Conclusion

The dissertation has reached scientific and applied results that represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. I strongly recommend the scientific jury to award the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" to Irena Georgieva.

19.06.2023 Associate Professor Dr. Siyka Kovacheva