STATEMENT

from

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Metodiev Petrov,

Department of History, Faculty of Law and History, Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski", external member of scientific jury

on dissertation for defence and acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, field of higher education 2. Humanities.

Author of the dissertation: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Spas Angelov Tashev, Section "Historical Demography", Department "Demography", Institute for Population and Human Studies - BAS.

Thesis topic: "Bulgarian Communities in Albania and Kosovo. Socio-political processes and demographic consequences (1913 - 2023)".

1. Brief biographical data.

Spas Tashev was born in 1967 in Peshtera. In 2015 he defended his dissertation in statistics and demography "Immigration Policy and Demographic Perspectives of Bulgaria". Since 2013 he has been working at the Institute of Population and Human Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, since 2018 he is an associate professor and since 2022 he is head of the Department of Demography of that Institute.

2. Relevance of the problem

The dissertation deals with such a topical issue as the existence of Bulgarian communities in Albania and Kosovo and the efforts made by the local population and the Bulgarian state to preserve their identity. These are some of the oldest historical Bulgarian communities, while the Bulgarian national minority in Albania was only recognized in 2017 and the Bulgarian community in Kosovo is in the process of being recognized.

3. General opinion on the dissertation structure

The dissertation is constructed according to the rules for this type of work. The correlation between the different parts has been respected. The total volume of the dissertation is 265 pages:

Introduction with literature review, combined with the aim and objectives of the study, methods used and methodology developed - 28 pages, three chapters - 193 pages in total. There is a logical connection between the individual parts, the information is dosed and

presented competently. At the end of each chapter the main conclusions and contributions are stated. The work has a conclusion 7 p., a list of sources and references used - 13 p., a list of abbreviations 1 p. and appendices 22 p.

The dissertation is illustrated with 6 figures, 11 photographs, 25 tables, 18 facsimiles. All figures and tables are made precisely with modern information products, the design of their layout is appropriate. The dissertation is written in good professional language.

4. Significance and relevance of the results and discussion made

The proposed dissertation represents the first comprehensive interdisciplinary study that traces and analyses the changes in the number and territorial distribution of the population of Bulgarian origin in the studied countries over a long period. The unfolding of the socio-political processes in Albania and Kosovo in the period 1944-1990 and their impact on the demographic situation are little known in Bulgarian science. A number of factors that have a specific impact on the development of Bulgarian communities in these countries have been elucidated, on the basis of which the contemporary problems faced by people of Bulgarian origin in Albania and Kosovo have been highlighted.

In practical and applied terms, Spas Tashev's dissertation can assist Bulgarian state institutions in developing policies to support Bulgarian communities in the Western Balkan countries. The author proposes an algorithm that can practically ascertain the Bulgarian origin of the representatives of the studied communities in Albania and Kosovo according to the requirements of the current Bulgarian legislation and thus solve a long-standing problem in the work of the state administration.

5. Conclusion

The dissertation work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Spas Angelov Tashev represents a fully completed scientific study, which contains a number of contributions in outlining the demographic picture of the Bulgarian communities in Albania and Kosovo. For these reasons, I vote "YES" in the procedure for awarding to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Spas Angelov Tashev the scientific degree of Doctor of Sciences.

Sofia,

12.12.2024 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Petrov