

## **REVIEW OPINION**

by **Prof. Dr. Preslav Mihailov Dimitrov**,

Professor at the Faculty of Economics of the South-West University "Neofit Rilski" - Blagoevgrad, in his capacity as a member of the scientific jury, according to Order No. 3 -RK-302 / 07.08.2023 of the Rector of New Bulgarian University under the procedure for public defense of

**Adelina Savova Savova** on the topic:

**"Educational Ecotourism Research in the Experience Industry Context"**

for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional direction 3.9 "Tourism", in the scientific specialty "Tourism"

### **I. Overall assessment of the candidate:**

The candidate for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" Adelina Savova Davova was born in 1995 and completed her secondary education at 7 "Sveti Sedmochiselnitsi" Secondary School, Sofia, majoring in English and German. Regarding her higher education, Adelina Savova has acquired the following educational and qualification degrees: (i) bachelor's degree in the Bachelor's program "Biology - general and applied" with specialization "Microbiology" at New Bulgarian University; (ii) Bachelor in the Second Bachelor's Program "Ecology and Environmental Protection" - New Bulgarian University and (iii) Master in the Master's Program "Environmental Expertise and Control" - New Bulgarian University. She also acquired an additional professional qualification in "Pedagogy of Biology Education".

In the period 2020 - 2023, Adelina Savova Savova is a doctoral student in the doctoral program "Tourism", Professional direction 3.9 "Tourism" at the New Bulgarian University

For her participation in the public defense procedure, Adelina Savova Savova has submitted: 1.) A developed dissertation in the volume of 211 pages of computer typed text; 2.) Eight publications, of which – seven co-authored and one single-authored; 3.) Abstract of the dissertation work. In the presented scientific publications and abstract, in fact, reflective problems are considered in the dissertation work, with an emphasis on separate, specific scientific searches.

The dissertation work, presented by Adelina Savova Savova examines **current problems for Bulgarian spa and wellness tourism**. Regarding its structure and content, it should be noted

that it is structured in an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of the literature used, and two references . The bibliographic reference is respectively 10 pages long and includes 127 titles, of which 59 are in Bulgarian and 68 in a foreign language (Latin) and 15 Internet sources. The volume of the appendices, 2 in total, is 53 pages and includes a survey card published in "Google Forms" , the results obtained from it and a survey questionnaire used on paper.

**The structure** of the dissertation chosen by the doctoral student shows an effort to **meet the requirements for compositional integrity and proportionality** of its individual parts. As a logical framework, the adopted structure ensures the necessary connection between the components of the dissertation work and contributes to the achievement of completeness and completeness of the conducted research. The large total number of bibliographic sources indicates a desire to study a maximum volume of the leading international publications related to the topic of the dissertation.

## **II. Evaluation of the scientific and practical results and contributions of the dissertation work:**

In the thesis submitted by the candidate Adelina Savova Savova on the topic "Educational ecological tourism research in the context of the experience industry", the following **scientific and scientifically applied contributions can be** highlighted:

- (i) New opportunities for diversifying tourist trips by strengthening the educational element in them have been identified;
- (ii) The place of experiences in ecological tourism in the direction of its development has been established, and especially in relation to the role of experiences in increasing the attractiveness of a given tourist location;
- (iii) A model is proposed for the development of new eco-trails with an educational purpose and an emphasis on experiences;
- (iv) An online platform has been developed for the creation of ecological tourist products and the formation of tourist experiences.

The candidate's scientific contributions formulated in this way are the work of independent and purposeful scientific research and further develop in a theoretical and practical aspect the existing scientific knowledge in the field of management science in relation to its specific application in the tourism industry. Here, a particularly positive impression is made by the fact that Adelina Savova Savova purposefully tried to touch on an interdisciplinary area regarding Bulgarian

ecological tourism, such as its presentation online and its interaction with the experiences of users in an online environment.

### **III. Critical notes and recommendations**

Regarding the dissertation work, some critical remarks can be made, **which by no means do not reduce** its quality as a scientific paper, as follows:

1. The dissertation would only benefit if the word "research" were removed from the name of almost every one of the author's figures presented in the dissertation, since it is clear that they are the product of the author's research, but it is not possible for each individual figure to be a separate study;

2. The use of the first person, plural in the dissertation work, although characteristic of the Bulgarian scientific tradition in general, is a bit puzzling when presenting a scientific work that is the work of a single author who is fully qualified to express and defend his scientific pursuits. especially since the results achieved are real and he has every right to be proud of them.

### **IV. Conclusion**

In view of the above, I declare my unequivocal positive assessment for the presented dissertation work on the topic "Research on ecological tourism with educational purposes in the context of the experience industry" with author Adelina Savova Savova. The same meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for its implementation, as well as the established internal rules and norms of the New Bulgarian University , which is why I propose to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to award Adelina Savova Savova the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Professional direction 3.9 "Tourism".

**25.10.2023,**

**Member of the scientific jury:**

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**Sofia city**

**Prof. Dr. Preslav Mihailov Dimitrov**