

## OPINION

from

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Library Studies and Information Technologies university,

member of the scientific jury under Order No. RD-09-504/07.11.2022 of  
the Director of IFSN, BAS

for

the dissertation work "Risks and Threats of Islamism for the National  
Security of Bulgaria" by Gancho Kostadinov Ganev for the acquisition of  
an educational and scientific degree "doctor" according to the 2.3.

Philosophy, Doctoral Program "Philosophy of Religion and Religious  
Studies"

## I. General characteristics of the dissertation work

The scientific work "Risks and threats from Islamism for the national security of Bulgaria" submitted for opinion by Gancho Kostadinov Ganev from a structural (introduction, four chapters, conclusion and bibliography with a volume of 216 pages) and content point of view meets the subject, criteria, requirements and the specifics of a professional direction 2.3. and the specificity of the doctoral program "Philosophy of Religion and Religious Studies".

The publications and documents presented by the candidate in connection with the acquisition of a scientific degree "doctor" are in accordance with the Rules of the National Assembly of the IFS, the Regulations for the conditions and procedures for the acquisition of scientific degrees and for the occupation of academic positions at the BAS and the Regulations for the implementation of ZRASRB .

The relevance of the topic of the dissertation work "Risks and threats of Islamism for the national security of Bulgaria" is indisputable, even more so considering that Islamist ideas, especially in the last few decades, have a serious effect on public debate and political practices in a number of national countries, not only in the Balkans, but also in Europe. In this sense, I accept the objective set by the candidate, namely to prove the existence, identify and explore the environment and conditions under which Islamism as a religio-political model and its influence in terms of risks and threats to non-Islamic countries, and in particular to Bulgaria. From this point of view, the object of the study is correctly defined, namely Islamist parties and movements, as well as radicalized communities. In the context of the above, I consider that the scientific research methods chosen by the candidate are adequate and effective. The bibliography for the scientific work "Risks and threats from Islamism for the national security of Bulgaria" meets the requirements. The number of sources used is impressive - 141, and a significant part of them are the works of proven authors in the field of religion and national security.

It is clear from the presented dissertation that Gancho Ganev fully meets the requirements for a group of indicators for the acquisition of the scientific degree "doctor". In this regard, I will emphasize the developed thematic lines, namely: Laying the ideological foundations of Islamism; Specificity of Islamism, depending on the characteristics of the national territories where it develops; The ideological transformations of Islamism,

giving rise to various religio-political forms, including radical Islamism; Specificity of radical Islamism on the territory of the Western Balkans and characteristic features of its propaganda; Specificity and peculiarities of rice groups in Bulgaria susceptible to the influence of radical Islamism. To the above I will add my positive assessment regarding the candidate's effort to present the issues comprehensively and seek systematicity regarding the risks and threats of Islamism.

I positively evaluate all three scientific articles that are directly related to the topic of the dissertation work.

The submitted Abstract meets the requirements.

I have not detected any plagiarism.

## II. Assessment of scientific achievements and contributions in the dissertation work

In researching the problem areas, the candidate has successfully developed and defended the following basic scientific and scientific-applied propositions:

An analysis and assessment of the history of Islam and the emergence of Islamism. In this regard, I will note as a particularly important point the developed question of the religion-politics correlation.

The defined ideological foundations and positions of Islamism. Here I will note the important point about the spread of Islamism internationally.

Analysis of the specifics of the spread and establishment of Islamism in Turkey. Here I will point out the well-developed issue of Turkey's foreign policy doctrine and its influence on political life in individual countries and specifically in Bulgaria.

Defining the characteristics and systemic nature of Islamism, suggesting the emergence and spread of radical Islamism in the Western Balkans. I will note the well-developed issue of the promotion of radical Islamism, and in particular the Islamic State, among radicalized communities and the consequences of this - radicalized individuals joining the group.

Analysis and evaluation of the problems arising from the influence of radical Islamism and the functioning of its inherent organizations. I will point out here that the candidate has thoroughly developed the question of methods and means against the influence of radical Islamism.

Analysis of the specifics and character of the Muslim community in Bulgaria. Here, the issue of the risks of the spread of radical Islamism among Muslims in Bulgaria is well developed. In this sense, the candidate analyzes the re-Islamization among the Bulgarian Muslims, but

also the risks arising from socio-economic factors, implying precisely radicalization.

Analysis and assessment of countermeasures against radical Islamism. The well-developed issue of the real likelihood of recruitment by jihadist organizations is striking here.

As a conclusion, it can be said that Gancho Ganev in his work "Risks and threats from Islamism for the national security of Bulgaria" brings up the topic of the need for a lean policy, implying not just a physical, but also an ideological opposition to the influence of Islamism in all its forms and manifestations, which actually represents a new aspect of national security. This is the basis of the understanding of prevention against the risks and threats resulting from the impact of the theses and ideas of Islamism and the actions of its inherent organizations.

I accept the contributions indicated by the candidate, noting that I consider the following particularly significant: Defining the problem of Turkey's transformation into an expansionist power under the influence of neo-Ottoman religious nationalism, as a specific form of Islamism; The definition of a system of specific measures against the risks and threats to Bulgaria's national security arising from the spread of radical Islamism; The developed proposals for revising the attitude towards radical Islamism and the creation of a qualitatively new political program to oppose Islamism in the interest of the stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bulgaria.

Bearing in mind what has been said, I believe that in the scientific work "Risks and Threats of Islamism for the National Security of Bulgaria" submitted for opinion, evidence has been found to support the hypotheses put forward by the author. This undoubtedly leads to the conclusion that the scientific results achieved by Gancho Ganev enrich the existing knowledge in the field of religion, political science and in the field of national security. And this means that there are opportunities for specific application in practice.

### III. Critical notes

I have no particular criticisms except:

The issue relating to communication links and relations in the context of the opposition to Islamism and its various manifestations is poorly touched upon.

The question regarding the creation of conditions and an environment for

the formation of a new type of culture in relation to the religious groups threatened to fall under the influence of radical Islamism should be clarified more thoroughly.

Of course, the notes indicated here in no way reduce the scientific and scientific-applied significance of the scientific work "Risks and threats from Islamism for the national security of Bulgaria" submitted for opinion. They are indicated only as recommendations in order to increase the scientific-applied value of the scientific work.

#### IV. Conclusion

Bearing in mind the above, as well as the obvious scientific and scientific-applied merits of the dissertation work "Risks and threats from Islamism for the national security of Bulgaria", as well as the contributions made in the field of religion, political science and in the field of national security , I confidently propose to the respected scientific jury to award Gancho Kostadinov Ganev the scientific degree "Doctor" according to the above. 2.3. Philosophy.

Jury member:

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/prof. PhD Nikolay Palashev/