



## STATEMENT

Statement written by **Associate Professor Desislava Borislavova Serafimova, Ph.D.**, Department of Management and Administration, Faculty of Management, University of Economics – Varna, Bulgaria, 77 Knyaz Boris Blvd, e-mail: [serafimova\\_d@ue-varna.bg](mailto:serafimova_d@ue-varna.bg)

**Regarding:** dissertation work for obtaining a scientific-educational degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.7 Administration and management

**Grounds for preparing the statement:** participation in a scientific jury to defend a dissertation according to the order of the Rector of the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics - Svishtov № 364/28.05.2024

**Author of the dissertation:** Izabela Filipova Jonkova, PhD candidate in the doctoral program "Organization and management outside the sphere of material production (Public Administration)", D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

**Dissertation topic:** INFLUENCE OF THE ETHICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE FUNCTIONING OF PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

### I. General presentation of the dissertation work

#### 1.1. Subject

The relevance of the thesis and the under-researched issues in it are argued very well, justifying the subject of the study – the degree of construction of the elements of the ethical infrastructure in public sector organizations. The purpose of the dissertation work is clearly formulated, and the research object is well specified. The formulated thesis and seven working hypotheses are logically linked and are presented in a reasoned and logical manner by the author

#### 1.2. Content

The dissertation is 279 pages long, of which 62 pages are appendices. It contains an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and appendices.

#### 1.3. Structure

The text is presented in the format of a monographic manuscript, and the structural balance and logical sequence between its parts are divided. In the first chapter, the concepts are characterized, the conceptual apparatus for ethics and peculiarities of ethical relations in public administration are clarified, and the applicable models of ethical infrastructure are examined. Special attention is paid to explaining the understanding of ethical infrastructure and presenting good practices in the public sector. In the second chapter, the normative, strategic, and

methodological framework for studying ethics in the public sector is characterized. The empirical research methodology is justified, and the research hypotheses are defined.

In the third chapter, a conceptual model of the ethical infrastructure in the public sector is presented, its elements and the process of their implementation are clarified, and a methodology for qualitative self-assessment of the influence of the ethical infrastructure on the functioning of public sector organizations is also derived. Finally, the author presents his view on the possibilities for improving the ethical environment in the public sector.

#### **1.4. Literature**

The bibliographic reference contains 243 literary sources, of which 139 are in English and 104 in Bulgarian.

#### **1.5. Appendices**

Six appendices present questionnaire maps of the empirical study, summaries of the in-depth interviews of officials from different municipalities, information from the focus group discussion, and statistical data characterizing the proof of hypotheses.

## **II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation**

### **2.1. Assessment of the relevance and development of research in the scientific problem of the dissertation.**

The degree of problem investigation from a theoretical and pragmatic perspective is well presented and characterized thoroughly. The relevance is presented undeniably.

A focus is placed on studying the peculiarities of ethical relations in public administration, and the specific and most important unresolved issues are brought out, arguing for the research interest in the topic and in the defined subject and object of the dissertation work. The existing models of ethical infrastructure are critically analysed, and the role of some of their elements, such as e.g. the regulation of the ethical behavior of employees through ethical codes, their commitment to ethical issues, control, and accountability, etc. Based on the analyses carried out, the author makes findings regarding the elements covered in the existing ethical infrastructure models, their applicability in practice to date, and the need for their improvement.

### **2.2. Assessment of the language, volume and instrumentation of the dissertation work**

A very good writing style, with a well-chosen and purposefully interpreted theoretical foundation, is demonstrated. Literary sources of considerable volume and quality were processed, and scientific good faith was demonstrated by correctly quoting foreign concepts. The dissertation student has the skills to express justified critical opinions on the researched issues. Based on his theoretical knowledge and his own experience, she formulates problems and draws conclusions and generalizations on the researched topic. Established research approaches, methods, and appropriate tools for gathering information and testing research hypotheses were used. Appropriate statistical analyses were applied, and their information was interpreted correctly and purposefully.

Based on this, I believe that the doctoral student has successfully demonstrated her skills in conducting and correctly presenting the results of her own research, making generalizations, and arguing for practical recommendations.

### **2.3. Evaluation of the abstract**

The abstract, which is 34 pages in total, meets the requirements for structure and content. It precisely presents the dissertation work in a synthesized form and the most important results of



the research, including achieved contributions. It lists four publications related to the subject of the dissertation. Two of them were developed independently, and two were co-authored.

### **III. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation work**

I accept the contributions made by the PhD student. According to my personal judgment, the proposed conceptual model of ethical infrastructure in the public sector can be evaluated as the most significant scientific contribution. I would also highlight the benefit of the described iterative process for implementing the elements of the conceptual model. Of great practical value is the proposed methodology for qualitative self-assessment of the influence of the ethical infrastructure on the functioning of public sector organizations, as well as the formulated recommendations for improving their ethical environment.

### **IV. Notes and questions to the PhD student**

I could not make significant critical comments on the content, technical layout, and presentation of the dissertation work.

I have the following **question**:

1. The regulation of the ethical behavior of employees through ethical codes is not always unambiguously accepted by employees. It does not always guarantee an increase in their commitment to the most pressing ethical issues of organizations. How do you think these limitations could be overcome and the utility of using ethical codes in the public sector increased?

### **V. Summary evaluation of the dissertation work and conclusion**

Based on the above, I believe that the work presented on the topic INFLUENCE OF THE ETHICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE FUNCTIONING OF PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS represents a completed scientific study and meets all legal requirements and the relevant Regulations of the Dimitar Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

The author demonstrates excellent theoretical and practical skills in conducting independent research using traditional and modern scientific methods. The proposed dissertation contains scientific and scientific-applied contributions.

The presented arguments give me full conviction in proposing to the members of the respected scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to the doctoral student Izabela Filipova Jonkova in the field of higher education: 3.7 Administration and management.

24.06.2024  
Varna

Statement prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(assoc. prof. D. Serafimova, PhD)