

R E P O R T

on on the dissertation of **Petya Dimitrova Pavlova** on the subject

“Turkey in Bulgarian politics (1989–2004)”

for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in scientific specialty 2.2.

History and Archaeology, doctoral program “History of Bulgaria” - Contemporary Bulgarian

history, with academic supervisor prof. Dr. Evgenia Kalinova

by Prof. Iskra Baeva PhD, Lecturer in Contemporary History at the Faculty of History,

Sofia University „Kliment Ohridski“

1. Personal data of the contest participant

Petya Dimitrova Pavlova was born on October 21, 1994. As a graduate of the National High School for Ancient Languages and Cultures, she continued her education at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," where in 2013 she enrolled in the then-new bachelor's program "Past and Present of Southeast Europe" (History of Southeast Europe). She graduated in 2017 with full honors and continued her education in the master's program. She graduated in 2017 with honors and continued her education in the master's program "Modern Bulgaria: State and Society (late 19th – early 21st century)", which she completed in 2019 with the defense of her master's thesis "Bulgarian-Yugoslav Relations (1969-1975)". After winning a doctoral competition, Petya Pavlova was enrolled as a doctoral student in the Department of Bulgarian History at the Faculty of History, with Prof. Evgenia Kalinova as her academic supervisor, with whose help she developed the dissertation presented for defense.

2. Characteristics of the dissertation

The scientific problem addressed in Petya Dimitrova's dissertation—the perception of Turkey and its role in Bulgarian politics—is not new to Bulgarian historiography as a whole, but it has not been studied for the period to which the doctoral candidate has devoted her research efforts. The choice of this aspect of Bulgarian politics, specifically for the fifteen years following the fall of communism in Bulgaria in 1989, has enabled Petya Pavlova to become a pioneer in many of the issues addressed in her dissertation.

The dissertation is extensive, even excessive, as it comprises 498 pages. It is structured in four chapters, the **first** of which is fundamental because it presents the most important political relations for bilateral relations (137 pages), while the other three are devoted to different aspects of Turkey's role in Bulgarian politics: the **second chapter** – to cooperation in defense and security (98 pages), the **third chapter** – to economic relations (138 pages), and the **fourth** to cooperation in the field of culture, education, and science (75 pages). The chapters outline the main directions of Bulgarian policy towards its large southeastern neighbor, but it is only the specific presentation of the numerous issues featured in the paragraphs of each chapter that gives a complete picture of Petya Pavlova's meticulous research.

The aim of the dissertation is formulated in several different ways, but overall it is rather modest. As an example, I will cite the following quotes: *"an attempt to reconstruct and analyze the main elements determining Turkey's place in Bulgarian politics in recent times," "to build on what has already been achieved in Bulgarian historiography, both chronologically and thematically," "to trace the events that have been of significant importance for the formation of Bulgaria's attitude towards Turkey and the political line it follows in its contacts with it"* (pp. 3-4). The objective is further developed in the description of the subject of the study.

Petya Pavlova used a huge amount of high-quality source material to write her dissertation, especially considering how close to our time the period in question is. The most impressive are the archival materials, which include not only the documents already available for use from the Central State Archives of the state administration and the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also documents from the Archives of the Presidential Administration (from the Consultative Council for National Security). These have allowed Petya Pavlova to include in her analysis of Bulgarian politics the presidential institution, which during this period often differed from the positions of the government. The scientific literature and other types of personal testimony are presented in a very conscientious manner, and not only for the chronological period indicated in the title of the dissertation.

These prerequisites for good research are realized in the text of the dissertation, in which Petya Pavlova has demonstrated excellent knowledge of the complex history of Bulgarian-Turkish relations and the policy of the Bulgarian state towards Bulgarian Turks. With regard to the first 15 years of transformational change in Bulgaria, the doctoral student has traced practically all internal, external, and international aspects of Turkey's role in Bulgarian politics,

starting with the role of Bulgarian Turks in bilateral relations and moving on to the difficult restoration of relations, the conclusion of the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness, Cooperation, and Security, frequent diplomatic problems, relations between the two countries during the Yugoslav crisis, Balkan disputes, border disputes, cooperation in the military sphere and in the process of Bulgaria's accession to NATO, economic contacts, Turkey's participation in the privatization processes in Bulgaria, and many others.

The dissertation is an encyclopedia of Bulgarian-Turkish relations, with Petya Pavlova devoting much more attention to certain aspects and analyzing them extremely carefully, tracking the differences on controversial issues between Bulgarian governments and presidents with opposing political profiles, as well as between political parties, including the DPS. The conclusions at the end of each section of the work deserve special attention.

3. Assessment of scientific results, contributions of the dissertation and other publications by the doctoral candidate

Petya Pavlova's dissertation is undoubtedly a valuable contribution. First, because it presents a complete picture of Turkey's complex position and role in Bulgarian politics during the first 15 years of profound transformation after 1989 in Bulgaria. Second, because the dissertation is based on rich and previously unused archival material. Third, because it presents a very complete and comprehensive overview of certain issues, such as Bulgaria's position in the process of preparing for the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Fourth, because it offers original assessments of the actions of Bulgarian politicians on most issues in bilateral relations throughout the entire period under review.

The abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation, and its format complies with academic requirements.

Petya Pavlova has eight publications on the topic of the dissertation. They are in serious scientific publications – magazines, yearbooks, etc., and one is in a collection published in New York. They are devoted both to the problems with the Bulgarian Turks and bilateral relations, but also to purely Turkish issues, which demonstrates Petya Pavlova's ability to view relations from different perspectives.

In addition to these publications, Petya Pavlova has numerous other articles in scientific publications, conference participations, and one study.

4. Critical remarks and recommendations

As a criticism, I would point out the excessive detail with which Petya Pavlova presents the issues—she seems to be trying to present all the documents she has come across, and this has led to the large volume of her dissertation. So, my recommendation is that when publishing the dissertation, she should reduce the unnecessary details to make the future book more readable.

5. Evaluation of the scientific indicators

The assessment of Petya Pavlova's scientometric indicators is positive. She received 50 points for her dissertation, and her publications related to the topic of the dissertation, which have been published, are eight in number and earned her another 85 points, for a total of 135 points. This means that doctoral student Petya Pavlova exceeds the scientometric requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree of "doctor."

5. Conclusion

Petya Dimitrova Pavlova's dissertation thesis "Turkey in Bulgarian Politics (1989–2004)" demonstrates her ability to research, use, and analyze various primary and secondary documentary material, to effectively utilize historiography on the subject, and to independently develop issues related to the historical development of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey during the first 15 years of Bulgaria's transition and the changing political scene in Turkey. The research is thorough, detailed, and analytical, demonstrating the doctoral student's maturity in the field of professional history.

All this gives me reason to state my position that Petya Pavlova has brilliantly fulfilled the academic requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "doctor", for which I will vote.

11 September 2025

Reviewer:
(Prof. Dr. Искра Баева)