**Review**

prof. Rusi Marinov, D.Sc.

as a member of the Scientific jury by Order of the Rector of NBU № З-РК-244 from 28.07.2021 for the defense of the doctoral dissertation, in the Professional field: 3.5. Public communications and information science for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor",

with candidate Maria Angelova Cholakova

**Dissertation topic**: The role of public television in crisis situation

*The thesis of dissertation* is that in time of crisis, the role of public media, especially television, as a reliable source of information is increasing. This has been proven internationally. This study will prove or disprove whether this is true for the Bulgarian National Television.

*The purpose* of the thesis is to analyze the features of the media environment, take into account the specifics of public media on a global scale and propose a system of approaches how to improve Bulgarian National Television, as well as to improve the editorial media policy in the coverage of crises. Other goals are to create an effective model for improving overall social function BNT and increasing public trust to the institution.

*Research methods used:*

To clarify the current situation in crisis coverage from Bulgarian national television are used the following methods: case studies, document analysis, polls and interviews, interviews. Four focus groups were selected for the study: people working in the media, those who do not work in the media, students of the bachelor’s program in Mass communication at the New Bulgarian University, and facebook users. The questions asked in the surveys are related to the desire of public service broadcasters and their managers to take adequate steps crisis situations.

*The main scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation:*

The dissertation shows that the candidate has deep theoretical knowledge in the field of communications and the development of modern media, the work also shows the ability for independent research. The dissertation defines the main characteristics, features and development potential of the Bulgarian National Television. The specifics of public media in the England, EU member states and third countries are presented.

The main contributions are divided into two groups: scientific and practical and they are the following: a detailed analysis of the digital services offered by the EU Member States and the United Kingdom is presented; an analysis of issues at BNT and how it is perceived as a public media; and an investigation of internal issues at BNT. The applied contributions are expressed in proposals to amend the Law on Radio and Television in the part related to funding; changes in the criteria for electing the general director; clarifying the values ​​associated with the public mission of BNT that would be important to society; and original ideas for modifying the quality of content on public television.

The abstract has a volume of 29 computer pages, the content meets the basic university and academic requirements. At the end there are attached publications related to the topic of the thesis, 5 in total, two of which were published in the Collected papers of the Department of Media and Communications, one material in the collection of the summer school in 2019, and two articles in other online, professional magazines. Some of the most important publications include “New functions of Public Media” and “The Crisis in Public Media. Approaches and solutions”.

*Publications related to the topic of dissertation*: at the end of the dissertation, we have a bibliography, related to the research, consisting of 60 references, most of which are in Bulgarian. The abstract of the thesis was developed in accordance with the requirements of the university and consists of 29 pages. The abstract indicates the main theses, object and subject of research, tasks, goals, research methods, scientific contribution, and a list of major publications. There are five publications related to the topic of dissertation: 2 are in Annual paper of department of Media and communications, 1 in Collected papers of University Summer school, and two are in the professional online journals. Two of the publications are related to crisis management models, the main topic of the thesis. Some of the publications are the following: “New functions of public media”, ”Crisis in public media: approaches and decisions”.

*Opinion, recommendations, and notes*

An important condition for getting out of critical situations is the unity of actions in crisis situations; building a flexible and multidisciplinary infrastructure; search for partners; environmental control and monitoring; efficient allocation of funds; effective communication with victims. Protecting people at all stages of the crisis. Information during crises should be distributed freely and without restrictions for society, any delay leads to a failure to act in a crisis situation. It is necessary to take into account the reliability capabilities of new computer systems in the dissemination of information and data storage, as well as in the implementation of interaction with affected groups and citizens. From the media training point, it is important to note the importance of motivation for journalists to participate in improving the process of preparing managers to respond to crisis and emergency situations; it is necessary to achieve greater interactivity in the organization of training; the use of pre-developed interactive scenarios and games that describe typical, potential risk situations and possible reactions to actions; a selection of interesting stories and cases; listeners can participate in the training at any time and from anywhere; transition to mobile options for transferring knowledge. The results of the doctoral research show, the country underestimates the professional training of media specialists in order to responding the crisis; to improve this process requires special attention in the future so that the media can successfully implement their public functions and mission.

Some of the *notes* to the presented work are as follows:

• The first chapter can be shortened to a lesser extent, as some of the issues discussed are well known in the professional literature, such as mission, history, development, definitions, and functions of PSB. The dissertation should pay more attention to issues related to the reputation and freedom of the media in our country.

• One of the questions and part of the content of the work is entitled "Public goals of television and radio in the information society", since the topic is quite relevant, but the nature of the information society and the role of information, especially in problematic and critical situations, there is not enough attention in the presented work.

• Some contributions (especially scientific ones) can be summarized and reduced to fewer.

*Conclusion*

In conclusion, I believe that the topic chosen as the object of research is relevant, reflects modern models, realities, and trends in the development of public television and, and their role in the system of crisis management, is developed competently and meets basic academic requirements. and the scientific requirements for such work. This is a valuable work on issues that are poorly understood in Bulgaria. The dissertation contains original scientific-applied results and shows that the candidate has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the area of media communication. In my opinion, the thesis fulfills all the conditions for gaining the Ph.D. degree in the field of “Public communications and information science” therefore I recommend to Scientific Jury to give Maria Cholakova educational and scientific level “Doctor”.

Date: October 12 Signature: