

REVIEW



on a dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty Organization and management (agriculture and industries)

Author of the dissertation: AVNI ILMİ GASHI

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Topic of the dissertation: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF AGRICULTURAL POLITICS IN BULGARIA AND KOSOVO

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Stela Todorova - AU, field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; professional fields: Economics, Administration and Management; scientific specialties: Economics and Management (Agriculture), National Economy.

appointed a member of the scientific jury by order № RD-16-1077 / 25.11.2020 by the Rector of AU.

1. Brief introduction of PhD candidate.

The doctoral student Avni Ilmi Gashi studied for a doctoral program at the Department of Management and Marketing at the Agricultural University in the scientific specialty Organization and Management of Production. The training is carried out in an independent form of preparation. Avni Ilmi Gashi holds a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Pristina. He has a rich pedagogical experience - he works as a teacher, principal of a primary school for almost 9 years, a teacher at the Business College in Pristina. The doctoral student has gone through various forms of training - capacity building in educational management, training for principals, ECDL - 7 modules and others.

2. Relevance of the problem.

The comparative analysis of the agricultural policies of the countries is an extremely topical topic that has always excited researchers around the world. What is special in this case is that the agriculture of Bulgaria and Kosovo in their development show a number of similar features. Forced collectivization is taking place in both countries with attempts for centralized planned management of the industry. Their economies and trade are closely integrated with those of the

Soviet Union and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance countries. Both countries began radical reforms in the transition to a market economy after 1989.

Both in Bulgaria and in Kosovo there is a widespread privatization and liberalization of economic activity and adaptation of countries to the new world economic order. As a result of these policies, an unprecedented transformation of agriculture is taking place in both countries.

The models of agricultural transformation of Bulgaria and Kosovo have their own specifics related to the scope of reforms, the way of their implementation, the socio-economic results of them, which in turn allows for a very good comparative analysis of agricultural policies of these countries.

Agrarian policy is part of the economic policy of society and is characterized as a way of government action on economic and social processes that take place in agriculture. I think that the topic chosen by the doctoral student is extremely relevant.

3. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and research methods.

The main purpose of the study is to analyze in a comparative plan the agricultural policies of the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Bulgaria and on this basis propose approaches to improve the agricultural development policy of the Republic of Kosovo. The tasks set during the research are the following:

- Conceptual explanation of the essence of the agrarian policy as a tool for development of the agrarian sector;

- Literary review of the approaches, policies and measures applied to promote the agricultural sector;

- Adaptation of methodology for research, analysis and evaluation of the agricultural policy of the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Bulgaria;

- Collection, structuring and synthesis of empirical information on the impact of the agricultural policy of the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Bulgaria on the agricultural sector of the two countries;

- Identification of the directions for adaptation of the agrarian policy of the Republic of Kosovo to the European one, through transfer of good practices and policies by the Republic of Bulgaria.

The comparative method was used to summarize the main similarities and specifics of the agrarian reforms in Bulgaria and Kosovo. Other methods that the doctoral student uses are the survey, SWOT analysis, statistical methods for establishing the strength of influence of individual factors in the process of comparison and analysis, etc.

4. Visualization and presentation of the obtained results.

The dissertation submitted to me for review is 133 pages long and includes an introduction, two main chapters (each chapter consists of 3 parts), conclusions, conclusion, used literature and appendices. The study is very well illustrated with 18 figures, 21 tables and relevant appendices.

5. Discussion of the results and used literature.

The main similarities and specifics of the implemented agrarian reforms in Bulgaria and Kosovo are summarized and the comparative analysis on the basis of which they are derived includes the following elements: state of agriculture before the reform; nature of land reform; implementation and results of the land reform; farm restructuring; progress and results of the restructuring; public sector reform.

For the formulated main elements of the SWOT analysis, a survey was conducted between specialists in the system of the Agricultural Academy and other departments related to the development of the agricultural sector. For each of the advantages, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the surveyed specialists give an assessment in a certain assessment scale (from 1 to 6).

A comprehensive assessment was made and the strength of influence or possible influence of each factor on the development of Bulgarian agriculture and the creation of conditions for development and increasing the competitiveness of Bulgarian agricultural products was measured. The obtained average scores for each factor, advantage and disadvantage allow to highlight the most important of them. The aim of this analysis and assessment is to better manage the sector: to focus agricultural resources on impact measures that allow the full use of its most important advantages and opportunities and to slow down to some extent the impact of the most pronounced weaknesses and threats.

The conducted SWOT analysis characterizes the conditions in which Bulgarian agriculture develops and its advantages (strengths). The obtained average estimates of the main advantages of Bulgarian agriculture allow their ranking according to the strength of influence or possible influence. They are differentiated in a relatively wide range - from 3.8 to 5.6 and are shown in Table 18. In this case, the fluctuation range is from 1 to 6, but with a predominance of high values. Unfortunately, the economic practice in the country shows that these potential strengths are not sufficiently realized in practice.

The summarized results show that the greatest influence has and is expected to have advantages related to the existing objective data of agricultural production in Bulgaria: available appropriate soil and climatic conditions for growing a wide range of crops; experience and traditions for agricultural activity; conditions for the development of more intensive productions (vegetables, orchards), as well as the production of some specific products with characteristic quality and identity.

Regarding the weaknesses in agriculture, they are related to the insufficient funding for intensification of production (4.4), improvement of technologies and problems related to the organization of producers in order to create better conditions for the sale of agricultural products (4, 4). With regard to funding, the under-utilization of funds under various programs is also emphasized (4,2). Apart

from the high weighted average scores for most of the weaknesses, the level of fashion (from 4 to 6) is also impressive, with the range from 1 to 6 being the result of only single lowest scores (1).

The possibilities for increasing the competitiveness and improving the condition of the agricultural sector are outlined (a SWOT analysis has been made and the strength of the influence of the factors included in it has been determined). They have a relatively equivalent force of influence from 3.8-4 to 5.2, which can be seen in Table 20.

The positive and negative impact of the CAP was compared, concluding that the balance was too sensitive. The doctoral student sees that positive changes could be sought mainly in changing the way European and national funds are used. The old member states do not need strong incentives to expand production and direct funds to other areas (income, rural development). Bulgaria needs a large increase in production along with increasing competitiveness.

The monopolistic behavior in the purchase of agricultural products and the unresolved problems in their implementation, as well as corruption and unresolved problems with all possible subsidies from the EU stand out as a significant threat.

The PhD student outlines the possibilities for improving the competitiveness of Kosovo agriculture by using the SWOT analysis and conducting interviews with a number of experts in the field of agricultural policies. In this way, the internal strengths and weaknesses of the industry are identified, as well as the opportunities and dangers of the external environment for the development of Kosovo's agriculture.

The most important internal attributes of Kosovo agriculture, which help to raise its competitiveness, are: the favorable natural and climatic conditions for the development of various sub-sectors and industries; the good traditions and skills of farmers in agricultural production; low costs of labor, materials, services, renting land, etc.; the existence of available cheap agricultural land and labor resources in the main production areas; strong private incentives for farmers to increase production efficiency and adapt to market demand; the established good reputation on the international markets of Kosovo agricultural products such as cereals and industrial crops, vegetables and fruits.

The most important internal attributes that hinder the competitiveness of Kosovo's agriculture are: high vulnerability to various natural disasters (droughts, floods, storms); small, fragmented and poorly organized farming; the lack of modern market, storage, transport, hydro-ameliorative and telecommunication infrastructure in the rural areas; the distribution of obsolete equipment, technologies and low-yielding varieties; excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in some industries; the lack of an effective food safety control system; the lack of established brands, origins and eco-certification; not the modernized processing industry.

The most important factors of the external environment that favor the competitiveness of Kosovo agriculture are: the development of new technologies, varieties and systems of agriculture; the political stability in the country and the consistent policy for state support of agriculture; the demand for food products on the domestic and international markets; the inflow of foreign investments in the country and the industry; the trend of continuous growth of international prices of basic agricultural products and others.

The most important threats to the external market, institutional and natural environment that hinder the rise of the competitiveness of Kosovo's agriculture are: the annual devastating natural disasters of various kinds (droughts, floods, storms, fires); strong competition with neighboring countries exporting similar products; the slow pace of restructuring of monopoly state-owned enterprises for services, processing and exports; the constant increase in the prices of machinery, fertilizers, preparations, fuel seeds; strong fluctuations in international and domestic prices of basic agricultural products; limited irrigation resources; inefficient public sector (administration, support programs, judiciary); the lack of a modern banking system in the country and rural areas; the ongoing debate on the guidelines and the degree of reform of the industry and the economy as a whole.

The conclusion of the dissertation summarizes the main conclusions from the results obtained in the study and analysis of the problem and makes valuable recommendations for solving most of the problems.

The general assessment I make of the dissertation is as follows: the literature used by the doctoral student corresponds to the research, the authors are cited accurately and correctly, the goals and objectives set in the dissertation are completely solved. The style is scientific and understandable.

6. Contributions to the dissertation.

The dissertation has evidence of scientific and applied research, presented as views and solutions to the problems of agricultural policy in Bulgaria and Kosovo. The scientific and applied scientific contributions indicated in the abstract correspond to the actual contribution moments in the dissertation.

The main scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation can be outlined in the following directions:

First, enrichment of existing theoretical knowledge about the nature of agricultural policy.

Second, a comparative analysis of Bulgarian and Kosovo agriculture was made, concluding that agriculture and the policies applied to it on both sides have a number of common features, going through a dramatic transition of economic liberalization and institutional renewal.

Third, the comparative analysis of agricultural policies in recent times (after the agrarian reforms) in both countries finds that they have a number of common both positive and negative results.

Fourth, the comparative analysis also found that the implementation of policies in both countries was associated with a number of similar negative results.

Fifth, the analysis shows the specific features of agricultural policies and the results of their implementation in both countries. In Bulgaria, the agrarian reform took place as part of the overall transformation from a centralized to a market economic system. Kosovo has a specific model for privatization and economic liberalization.

Fifth, the most important factors of the external environment that favor and hinder the competitiveness of Kosovo agriculture are listed.

7. Critical remarks and questions.

The work of doctoral student Avni Ilmi Gashi is a complete scientific and applied research, which is why I have no critical remarks. I have a recommendation for the doctoral student, after defending his dissertation, to continue and expand his work aimed at researching agricultural policies, and especially that of Kosovo, by increasing his publishing activity on these issues so relevant to the country.

8. Published articles and citations.

The doctoral student presented a list of 3 independent scientific articles, which are related to the topic of the dissertation. They are proof that some of the problems studied in the dissertation have received scientific recognition.

The presented abstract objectively reflects the structure and content of the dissertation.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the learned and applied by the doctoral student, different research methods, correctly performed experiments, summaries and conclusions, I believe that the presented dissertation meets the requirements of ZRASRB and the Rules of the Agricultural University for its application, which gives me reason to evaluate it POSITIVE.

I allow myself to suggest to the esteemed Scientific Jury also to vote positively and to award Avni Ilmi Gashi the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty Organization and Management of Production.

Date: 15.7.2021

Plovdiv

REVIEWER: 

(Prof. Dr. S. Todorova)