S T A N O V I S T

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yordan Yordanov, member of the scientific jury

in

procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

REGARDING: dissertation on the topic: ""International Standards for the Efficiency of Penitentiary Systems in Bulgaria and Albania (Criminological and Criminal Law Aspects)"" for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the doctoral program "Criminology", professional field 3.6. Law, field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences with author Krenar Rexhep Birdi , doctoral student in an independent form of study in the Department of " Criminal Law Sciences" at the Faculty of Law of the Bulgarian University "Chernorizets Hrabar"

Grounds for submitting the opinion: participation in the composition of a scientific jury, determined by Order No. 635 of 01.10.2026 of the Rector of the VFU "Chernorizets Hrabar"

I. Data on the dissertation, abstract and scientometric indicators

The dissertation on the topic: ""International Standards for the Efficiency of Penitentiary Systems in Bulgaria and Albania (Criminological and Criminal Law Aspects)" developed by doctoral student Krenar Birdy , is dedicated to a complex and socially engaged problem, with a special place in the contemporary scientific and public space. In recent decades, a clear conflict has been observed between the three conceptual penological directions: the traditional paradigm of correction and re-education, the humanistic alternative of rehabilitation without

desocialization , and the technocratic concept of "total control". Even a cursory review of trends in penitentiary policy in European countries shows that there is a lack of consensus on this issue.

We present to your attention a work on a current and significant issue related to the impact of international standards on the effectiveness of the penitentiary systems of Bulgaria and Albania. The results of the research are both scientific-theoretical and applied in nature, in which the author's developed vision, which is also the fruit of his many years of experience in places of deprivation of liberty, is clearly visible.

The dissertation on the topic "International Standards for the Efficiency of Penitentiary Systems in Bulgaria and (Criminological and Criminal Law Aspects)", presented by Krenar Birdy represents an original, in-depth and systematic study in the field of international and national prison law, which represents a scientifically based confirmation of the principle of balance between security and human rights, enshrined in the 2015 UN Standard Minimum Rules (Mandela Rules) and the European Prison Rules.

It consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices with a total volume of 190 pages.

The introduction to the dissertation clearly emphasizes the relevance and importance of the topic. The author convincingly presents his arguments for the necessity of conducting such a scientific study in the context of a comparative analysis between the penitentiary systems of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Albania. The post -communist legal and institutional legacy makes the comparison scientifically useful, allowing the dissertationist to explore the possibility of solving similar historical challenges at different levels of European integration.

The relevance of the study is also of practical importance. In both countries, the harmonization of legislation has advanced, but problems with implementation remain visible.

The first chapter is dedicated to international standards for ensuring the effectiveness of penitentiary systems and protecting the fundamental rights of detainees and persons deprived of their liberty.

The second chapter examines the penitentiary systems of Bulgaria and Albania.

The third chapter presents the empirical study of the effectiveness of the Albanian penitentiary system in crime prevention, along with analytical findings and recommendations.

The reference for literary sources contains: 180 titles in Bulgarian, Russian, English and Albanian language, and internet sources; the footnotes are 124 in number; the citations are correct. The research methodology is up-to-date. The doctoral student's style is good, he/she is well versed in criminological, penal and criminal procedure terminology.

The dissertation work complies with the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and Regulation No. 12 for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" and the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" of the VFU "Ch. Hrabar", and in terms of quality it meets the requirements for the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor".

The abstract meets the requirements for its content, corresponds to the structure and content of the dissertation, and provides a clear and accurate summary of the dissertation work.

On the topic of the dissertation, the doctoral student has three publications that represent a contribution to science, as follows:

1) Bardhi , K. (2025). Evolution of work rules in Albanian prisons . E-Journal VFU, 24, 861-874. https://doi.org/10.53606/evfu.24.861-874;

2) Bardhi , K. (2026). The role of work in prison and its impact him/her the rehabilitation in modern penitentiary systems . E- Journal VFU, 25, 475-489, https://doi.org/10.53606/evfu.25.475-489;

3) Bardhi , K. (2026). The Role and Impact of Family Visits him/her Prisoners . E- Journal VFU, 25, 463-474. https://doi.org/10.53606/evfu.25.463-474.

Publication activity is indicative of the doctoral student's enduring scientific interest in research on the chosen topic.

The doctoral student has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Law on the Education and Training of the Republic of Bulgaria and respectively under Art. 24, para. 1 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Education and Training of the Republic of Bulgaria for the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

II. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and applied scientific results

In terms of organization and content, the work offers good proportionality, coherence and logic of the scientific research. The author demonstrates a very good knowledge of the issues, both theory and practical solutions in the Republic of Albania. It shows good opportunities for research and interpretation of theoretical developments regarding the Bulgarian penitentiary system. The author's theses and analyses of international documents and practices and their integration into the notional legal systems of Albania and Bulgaria regarding rehabilitation and post-penitentiary reintegration give special dignity to the work.

The presented dissertation research contains scientific and applied scientific results, among which the following can be distinguished:

1. The study offers an interdisciplinary comparative analysis of the Bulgarian and Albanian penitentiary systems, proving through a comparison of

legal and criminological aspects that regulatory compliance with international standards does not automatically guarantee their practical efficiency;

2. Develops an integrated analytical framework in which the protection of human rights, rehabilitation, reintegration and crime prevention are treated as interdependent components for achieving efficiency in the operation of a penitentiary system;

3. Presents empirical findings from the Albanian penitentiary context, based on prison staff perceptions regarding rehabilitation, working conditions, institutional capacity, and recidivism prevention.

4. It notes specific gaps in the Albanian system related to staff training, mental health services and overcrowding. Problems are also observed in classification, continuity of programmes and post-release cooperation.

5. Compares Bulgarian institutional practices with Albanian reform needs and identifies elements that can be adapted to strengthen the Albanian penitentiary system.

6. The study has a clear scientific and applied value for prison reform in Southeastern Europe, as it builds on the criminal law doctrine through the concept of the preventive role of the penitentiary system and offers the involved subjects specific de law ferenda solutions for optimizing legislation, management and inter-institutional coordination.

III. Notes and recommendations

There is no doubt that the study has theoretical and practical value, but certain gaps are noticeable. The difference between the complex of measures of a rehabilitative nature in the penitentiary and post-penitentiary phases, their causal relationship with the successes or failures in the fight against recidivism, is not clearly analyzed. The proposals of law ferenda should contain a specific normative formulation - i.e. a ready-made text of a future law that directly addresses a defect in the legal framework. The empirical study lacks depth. With

nearly 20 MLS and about 4,000 employees in the Albanian penitentiary service, the survey conducted, covering 4 MLS and 40 employees, is more of a pilot nature. The conclusions and analyses from such a study could hardly lead to generalizations for an entire system. It is in this context that I find it necessary to include the main target group - those deprived of their liberty, who would provide the most up-to-date feedback from a criminological and criminal law perspective on the prerequisites for recidivism and the viability of rehabilitation measures.

In this sense, the author can be recommended to deepen the analytical approach to the issue in his future research. Given his expert experience in the penitentiary system, this will allow him to come up with significant proposals for improving the criminal and penal-executive legislation in the Republic of Albania. The recommendation made in this way does not affect my overall positive assessment of the dissertation work.

IV . Conclusion

Taking into account the considerations set out above, I give a positive assessment to the scientific work submitted for defense by Krenar Rexhep Berdi on the topic: "International Standards for the Efficiency of Penitentiary Systems in Bulgaria and Albania (Criminological and Criminal Law Aspects)".

The dissertation meets the requirements of Art. 6, para. 3 of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and Art. 27, para. 2 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor", therefore I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences", professional field "3.6 Law", doctoral program "Criminology" to Krenar Rexhep Burdi .

23.10.26 Member of the scientific jury: …….

Varna / Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yordan Yordanov/