Substantive and Procedural Aspects of the Access to Public Information Act

Ivalina MARINOVA (2026) – summary of the PhD thesis

The PhD thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of the substantive and procedural specifics of access to public information, which are new, relevant and deserve a thorough scientific review. The study attempts to outline a comprehensive picture of the protected human right to access public information and fill some of the existing gaps in the matter of open public data. The study contains a review and commentary on a significant volume of national and international case law, which includes different concepts and views regarding access to information.

The interpretation of the results obtained in the dissertation work from the conducted legal and sociological research, aimed at the social functions of access to information, reveal various aspects of the implementation of the APIA and its effectiveness, as well as the prospects for improvement.

The purpose and objectives of this dissertation study differ significantly from the existing doctrinal studies in their entirety on the issues of the application of the APIA. The relevance of the legislation and case law, the perspective of the applicability of the law, as well as the addition of the methods of legal sociology, combined into one, presuppose a new and more innovative analysis of the topic, both on the substantive and procedural issues of the application of the law.

The main theoretical and applied contributions of the dissertation work "Substantive and Procedural Aspects of the Access to Public Information Act" can be outlined in the following areas:

- This study presents a current analysis of the issues of the implementation of the APIA and the practice of administrative courts and the Supreme Court of Justice in recent years, expanding and supplementing the existing doctrinal research.

- The study clarifies the current state and dynamics in the development of access to information by revealing its interrelationships with the constantly improving information technologies and processes in the field of e-government in the Republic of Bulgaria.

- The problems of access to information in the field of the environment and the health sector are analyzed in the work in a more innovative way, both from a substantive and procedural legal aspect.

- The thesis is formulated and substantiated for the basic role of access to information as a factor for increasing the effectiveness and efficiency in the work of administrative bodies, as well as for preventing the risk of corruption practices.

- The degree of citizens' satisfaction with the exercise of their right to access public information, as well as with the current legal means of access, is

experimentally proven. The applied empirical methods of legal sociology provide a more modern analysis of the topic, both on the substantive and procedural issues of the application of the law.

The theoretical and practical experience gained in the development of this dissertation will allow us to more effectively solve complex professional tasks. Future research will be aimed at finding adequate approaches and proposing ways to strengthen cooperation between countries on issues related to corruption and reducing public trust in political parties. With interest, they will follow and study the processes of the gradual introduction of artificial intelligence by 2027, as well as the problems related to environmental pollution and public awareness in discussing and making environmental decisions.

Apart from the administrative law analysis, the work is supplemented with surveys and additional analyses on the topic from the perspective of the sociology of law.

This multidisciplinary nature of the work offers a new scientific and practical perspective on the implementation of the APIA.