SUMMARY OF
the scientific and applied contributions of

of
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submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "PROFESSOR"
in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences,
professional field 3.6. Law – Labour Law and Social Security Law,
for the needs of the "Civil Law Sciences" Section,
announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 24 of 06.03.2026

I. General Remarks

For participation in the competition, I have submitted 1 monograph, 52 articles, 7 studies, and 4 chapters from collective monographs. Unlike other parts of the competition documentation, where I have tried to provide the most detailed information, in this report on my contributions, I will limit myself to stating the reasons why I present exactly these works to the attention of the scientific jury. I refrain from a detailed self-assessment of my scientific production not out of excessive modesty, but because I hope that the works themselves will present my work better than any declaration of mine.

II. Monograph

Aleksandrov, A. Problems of Labour Relations in the Context of a Declared State of Emergency or Declared Extraordinary Epidemic Situation, Sofia: Spotinov Print, 2022, 196 pages, ISBN (Print) 978-619-188-795-8.

As far as I know, there is no other monographic study in the Bulgarian legal literature dedicated to the legal issues of labour relations in the context of a declared state of emergency or declared extraordinary epidemic situation.

The main conclusions from the analysis are summarized in the final section of the monograph. Here, I will mention only a few of them:

1. The Law on Measures and Actions during the State of Emergency, declared by the National Assembly decision of March 13, 2020 (and for overcoming the consequences) /Amended – SG, issue 44, 2020, effective from May 14, 2020/ has not fully regulated the legislative measures to combat the pandemic, specifically those within labour law. Its provisions were internally inconsistent and unclear (e.g. the labour law-related provisions in the law itself and the amendments made with § 4 of its Transitional and Final Provisions in the Labour Code); significant gaps remained in the regulation (such as the limits of employer intervention concerning vaccination, processing of vaccination status data, etc.). Attempts to fill these gaps were made through orders from the Minister of Health. Therefore, the first categorical conclusion of the study is that a comprehensive revision of the crisis labour legislation is needed and the cessation of the practice of "legislating" by administrative bodies.

2. During the pandemic, the imperfections in the legal regulation of home-based and remote work clearly emerged. Although legislation in this area remained dynamic in the following years, it still does not provide clear answers to questions regarding the limits of employers' duties to ensure health and safety working conditions at the place from which the

employee has chosen to perform their work. There are also uncertainties about the employer's liability for damages resulting from a work-related accident that occurs at the employee's home or another remote location where the employee performs their work. In this regard, I believe that the practical problems identified in the study are still relevant today and could serve as future proposals for improving the legislation.

3. In recent years, I have often criticized the attitude of the Bulgarian legislator towards overtime work. The "crisis" labour legislation provided many negative examples in this regard, and some of them are still present in the law (such as the provision of Art. 107l, para. 3 of the Labour Code: "under the conditions of paragraphs 1 and 2, the employee or worker who performs remote work organizes their working time so that they are available and work during the time when the employer is in communication with third parties"). If the Bulgarian legislator ever adopts the arguments for why this provision should be immediately repealed, that alone would be a contribution from the study.

4. The analysis offers concrete proposals *de lege ferenda* regarding the provisions in the Labour Code related to the state of emergency (extraordinary epidemic situation). Currently, they are not applied because the country is not in a state of emergency, but they are part of the existing legislation, and it is not excluded that at some point in the future, they may be "activated". It seems unreasonable to wait for such a moment to fix their obvious gaps, which are thoroughly outlined in the study.

5. Regarding the "unrealized" changes, some of them were realized in recent years. This concerns the introduction of the Unified Electronic Labour Record (electronic labour book), the advantages of which I argued in detail long before it became a reality.

Unfortunately, the problems of judicial proceedings in labour disputes during a declared state of emergency or extraordinary epidemic situation are not much different from those of the same proceedings in a "post-pandemic" situation. Delays in cases have become increasingly serious to the point where they can be equated to practically denied justice. The solution is easy to state but difficult to implement in practice — modernization and digitalization of the judicial system. If there were sufficient technical capabilities for conducting court hearings through video conferencing, many of the reasons for postponing hearings could be eliminated. The fact is that this requires significant investment, but isn't the issue of electronic governance and electronic justice on the agenda for years?

Setting aside thoughts that still seem utopian even from today's perspective, there is still much that can be done to improve the situation. I have tried to formulate proposals for relieving our judicial system from labour disputes, for which an alternative dispute resolution method can be found. It is also reasonable to establish specialized judicial panels to handle labour cases. Consideration could be given to which disputes should continue to be dealt with under the rules of "fast-track proceedings" according to the Civil Procedure Code and which should not.

III. Articles, Studies, and Chapters from Collective Monographs

I have submitted a large volume of scientific and applied scientific articles, studies, and chapters from collective monographs, published from 2018 to the present. My goal was not solely to meet the scientometric criteria, which could likely have been achieved with more summarized information. (The choice of 2018 is linked to the previous procedure for the

academic position of Associate Professor, which took place in 2017. This way, I ensure that none of the presented publications were used in that procedure).

I have strived to demonstrate my sustained interest in various issues of labour and social security law in Bulgaria, and I hope that my work has contributed to raising awareness and, possibly, overcoming the imperfections in their legal framework and the practice of their application.

In most groups of publications (as summarized in the summaries of the scientific works presented in the competition), I have included both those with primarily theoretical contributions and those with scientific-practical significance.[*] It is probably unnecessary to convince anyone, least of all the members of the scientific jury, that labour and social security law are branches closely related to the everyday problems of people. Scientific understanding of this subject is a complex process that also involves solving specific practical problems. Therefore, I have always aimed for my publications to be useful both for the development of legal doctrine and for practice.

A) In the works dedicated to the **digitalization of documents with labour law significance**, I have proceeded from the understanding that it is a natural and logical process that cannot and should not be stopped in modern society. Years before the introduction of the Employment Register and the Unified Electronic Labour Record, I argued for the benefits of digitalizing the labour book. When it finally became a reality, I, of course, did not spare my criticism of the adopted regulations.

Conceptually, as proposals for improving the legislation, I would point out many necessary changes to the Regulation on the Types and Requirements for Creating and Storing Electronic Documents in the Employee's Labour File, which has already become morally outdated in several aspects. The Regulation on Registration in the Employment Register also needs improvements. My contribution in this regard is the proposals I formulated in my works.

In practical terms, I have supported practice with concrete solutions to practical issues related to the creation and storage of electronic documents, submitting electronic labour records, etc.

B) The articles devoted to various aspects of **personal data protection** are a kind of continuation of the study "Protection of Personal Data of Workers and Employees," which was also the proposed habilitation thesis I submitted for the academic position of "Associate Professor." However, it was published in 2016, before the General Data Protection Regulation came into force.

All publications in this group contain important conclusions about the unsatisfactory compliance of our national data protection legislation with EU law and justify the need for reforms.

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[*] The journal "Labor and Law," in which the majority of publications with practical and applied significance are published, is included in the National Reference List of Contemporary Bulgarian Scientific Journals with Scientific Peer Review. Therefore, these publications are considered scientific. This does not change the fact that the journal has a clearly defined practical orientation and is more popular among practicing lawyers, accountants, human resources specialists, and others, rather than in academic circles. For nearly 20 years (from 2008 to the present), I have had a regular "column" in the journal, where I present current practical issues of labor and social security law.

C) Protection against discrimination and harassment in the workplace has gained increasing theoretical and practical significance in recent years. When the Anti-Discrimination Act was adopted 20 years ago, this area was relatively foreign to Bulgarian legal thought, it sounded abstract, and there was a lack of administrative and judicial practice. Two decades later, this is no longer the case. I have offered my analyses and conclusions on various issues, among which I would emphasize the topic of the rights of persons with mental disabilities, which is often underestimated in Bulgaria.

D) Among the **other labour law issues examined**, perhaps the most attention I have given is to the legal regime of labour remuneration, paid annual leave, and termination of the labour relationship. These are "classic" topics in labour law, where it is rarely possible to say something entirely new and unknown to legal doctrine at the time, but I believe I have substantiated my "own" theses, which I firmly support to this day, such as:

- the unsuccessful legislative decisions in regulating the minimum wage;
- the appropriateness of maintaining additional labour remuneration for acquired length of work and professional experience;
- the need to eliminate the unclear regulation of "non-attendance" days, mechanically included in official holidays;
- establishing and strictly maintaining a legislative concept for limiting overtime work;
- the categorically wrong return to the legislative solution of allowing the expiry of the entitlement to use of the paid annual leave;
- the discriminatory nature of the regulation of the termination of labour relations with academic staff upon reaching the age of 65;
- the removal of gratuity compensation under Art. 222, para. 3 of the Labour Code for wrongful conduct by the employee, leading to the termination of the employment relationship;
- necessary changes in the area of preliminary protection during dismissal;
- the inadmissible "editing" of the law in several interpretative rulings of the Supreme Court, dedicated to various issues related to the termination of employment relationships, etc.

My applied contributions in these areas are reflected in numerous comments and clarifications, which have been useful to my colleagues practicing in this area, who find them helpful.

E) I have also focused on the procedural aspects of examining **labor disputes and the administration of justice in labor cases**. I believe this is easily explainable, given my work as a practicing lawyer. Unfortunately, I observe that the problems in this area are deepening year after year, rather than finding their solution. Slowness is perhaps the most pressing issue in resolving labor disputes. The delayed judicial intervention, often lasting for years, is effectively a denial of justice: the unlawfully dismissed employee has long lost interest in being reinstated, and the employer convicted for compensation must pay it along with the accumulated interest over the years. This is just a small part of the possible examples.

I have proposed a number of specific steps to counter this trend, such as more specialized judges handling labor cases, relieving the judicial system of some cases (e.g., for imposed

penalties like "warning" and "warning of dismissal," especially in cases where the employment relationship has already been terminated), strengthening out-of-court methods for resolving labor disputes, and more.

F) From the documents presented in the competition, it is evident that the majority of my scientific work is in the field of labor law, while I have relatively rarely focused on **social security law issues**. I will try to change this in the future.

However, here I would like to mention the research dedicated to long-term care for the elderly as a social risk covered by insurance, which is known in other European legal systems. It substantiated the conclusion that introducing this risk into the Bulgarian social insurance system will inevitably lead to an increase in the overall insurance burden. However, other, less revolutionary reforms could be sought, which would move long-term care out of social assistance, as its current regulation there essentially assumes that the regime applies only to socially weak individuals. There is no reasonable reason to assume that only such individuals could fall into the need for long-term care. Undoubtedly, the 'social' state should be social for all, not just for the poorest.

J) I have often been outspoken in my criticism of contemporary legislation and have established a group of publications under the general title **"Quality of Legislation".** Of course, such conclusions are also found in other of my works on various topics.

I have always strived for the criticism to be constructive, not just for the sake of criticism. It is relatively easy to identify the shortcomings of numerous labour laws and subordinate regulations, especially since they are often obvious and the result of simple legislative negligence. To each such criticism, I have added proposals ***de lege ferenda*** with which the regulation should be improved. Unfortunately, until now, the legislator has rarely taken into account the opinions presented in legal doctrine, but this is no reason for them not to be expressed, as "*words fly, but the written word remains*".

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