

# **HABILITATION THESIS**

## ***Good Practices and Human Resource Policies for an Efficient Public Administration***

### ***ABSTRACT***

#### **CANDIDATE:**

**ASSOC. PROF., PhD. ANA-MARIA BERCU**

The habilitation thesis titled *Good Practices and Human Resources Policies for an Effective Public Administration*, elaborated by Ana-Maria Bercu, PhD Associate Professor at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Department of Finance, Money and Administration, is a synthesis of the research activity and of the didactic activity elaborated in order to obtain the attestation certificate, according to the legal norms in force, namely the National Education Law no. 1/2011, Order of the Minister of Education and Scientific Research no. 3121 / 27.01.2015 approving the Methodology regarding the organization and carrying out of the process of obtaining the attestation certificate, Order no. 6129 / 20.12.2016 regarding the approval of minimum necessary and compulsory standards for the award of higher education didactic titles, professional research and development degrees, doctoral qualification and attestation.

The candidate, Assoc. Prof., PhD. Ana-Maria Bercu, supported the PhD thesis titled *Professional Training and Career of Public Administration Staff*, Prof. Dr. Anton Rotaru, at the *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iasi, on September 8, 2008 and obtained the title of doctor according to the Order of the Minister of Education, Research and Youth no. 5837, dated November 4, 2008.

The habilitation thesis is structured in two main parts, according to the provisions of the Order of the Minister of Education and Scientific Research no. 3121/27.01.2015 approving the Methodology regarding the organization and carrying out of the process of obtaining the attestation certificate: First part - Scientific,

didactic and academic achievements and Part two - Plans for the development of the scientific, didactic and academic career.

**The first part of the habilitation thesis - Scientific, didactic and academic achievements** presents the evolution of the candidate's career, Assoc. Prof., PhD. Ana-Maria Bercu, the graduated studies, the academic career stages and main achievements, the research activity and its impact, as well as the didactic activity reflected by coordinating and guiding students from undergraduate, master, doctoral and postdoctoral cycles throughout the learning and development process.

The scientific research directions present the important scientific contributions of the candidate, Assoc. Prof., PhD. Ana-Maria Bercu, supported by publications, participation in scientific events and in the initiation and development of research projects. These directions can be synthesized as follows:

- a. Good Practices and Human Resources Policies in Public Administration at Organizational Level. National and European context
- b. Good practices and human resources policies in public administration at the individual level. National and European context

Here are some of the scientific achievements that are considered important for highlighting the qualities as researcher and teaching staff of the candidate, Assoc. Prof., PhD. Ana-Maria Bercu, who support the achievement of the title of doctoral supervisor in the field of administrative sciences.

The results of the scientific research activity resulted in the publication of two specialized books as the sole author: *Professional training and career of the public administration staff*, published in the Bucharest University Publishing House in 2009, which concretizes the efforts of doctoral training and *Public Management Strategies*, published at Tritonic Books Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, a book that aims to analyze and interpret the strategic phenomenon in the public sector being a useful tool for teaching-learning activities for the students of the Public Administration, Bachelor's or Master's specialties, but also for all those interested in the complexity of the domain. Also, published as the first author of the volume *European Regional Competitiveness and Human Resources Development* (co-author Mihaela Tofan), 2018 and co-author for the *European public service and career management of the European civil servant* (first author Mihaela Tofan), 2013, both published at the publishing house of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași, reflect the candidate's orientation towards the development of the field of administrative sciences.

A study conducted by the candidate on the impact of vocational training on work satisfaction was published in the Clarivate Analytics indexed journal in 2017. *Impact of Employees' Training Programs on Job satisfaction*, Current Science, Vol. 112, No. 7, 10 April 2017, pp. 1340-1345. (IF: 0,883) followed the analysis of the employees' attitudes in the northeastern Romanian organizations regarding the training programs they followed, thus explaining the relationship between training and job satisfaction. The results show that it is necessary to implement high quality vocational training programs, as there is a positive relationship between work ethics, work recognition, supervision and commitment to work.

The results of team research have been materialized in the publication of scientific articles indexed Clarivate Analytics. Thus, the paper *The Impact of Public Expenditures on Economic Growth: A Case Study of Central and Eastern European Countries*, published in Emerging Markets, Finance and Trade, Vol 54, Issue 3, pp. 552-570. (IF: 0.828), Lupu, D; Petrișor, M.B .; Bercu, Ana-Maria; Tofan, M. (2018) highlights the candidate's preoccupation with interdisciplinary approaches. The study reveals that spending on education and health has a positive impact on the economy, while spending on defense, economic affairs, general public services and social welfare have a negative impact. The study tested the importance of different categories of public spending, functional structure and gross domestic product growth, using quarterly data for the period 1995-2015 for ten selected Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union.

Another work that proves to be involved in the research activity and the creation of research teams is the work entitled *Entrepreneurship Dynamics in the EU. A Comparative Perspective*, Transformation in Business and Economics, Vol. 15, No. 3C (39C), pp. 431-451. (IF: 0,556), 2016, Tofan, Mihaela; Bercu, Ana-Maria; Roman, Angela. The main purpose of the paper was to highlight the important role of entrepreneurship in economic growth, the creation of new jobs and innovation, and the reduction of social inequalities that led to an increasing interest of academics and decision-makers at different levels in examining the dynamics of entrepreneurship in different countries, in order to identify the segments requiring the maximum support of public authorities. Thus, the main purpose of the paper is to investigate the dynamics of entrepreneurship according to the business life cycle in 26 EU Member States in terms of key indicators established in the literature. The research uses descriptive analysis techniques applied to the annual data provided by the Global

Entrepreneurship Monitor for the period 2008-2015. Regarding the dynamics of entrepreneurship, the results of our research highlight the existence of major disparities between countries, especially those with similar levels of economic development and a strong correlation of the level of economic development of countries and of entrepreneurial activity. The analysis can be useful for decision-makers at both European and national level to identify appropriate promotion and support measures for entrepreneurship.

The article *The Empirical Research on Civil Servants Motivation: Evidence from Romania*, published in *Managing Global Transitions. International Research Journal*, vol. 15, no. 4, December 2017, pp. 399-417, indexed by BDI (ERIH +), co-authored by Mihaela Onofrei, follow to investigate the impact of motivational factors of the civil servants. The purpose of this article is to identify the most important factors affecting the motivation of civil servants. Examine the factors that affect motivation and explain their effects on professional satisfaction. In order to achieve the above objective of the research, the Maslow-Herzberg combined model was used. The study was conducted in 21 mayoralities in Iasi, Romania. Pearson's correlation and regression analyzes were used to determine whether the selected motivational factors influence the professional satisfaction of civil servants. Civil servants who consider themselves to be important to their organization will actively pursue their goals and increase efforts to be more competitive at work and perform better. The framework provides an explanation of why certain factors increase the motivation of civil servants, while others do not.

The candidate has published more than 25 specialized papers after obtaining his Ph.D. degree in 2008, being constantly concerned with improving his professional training.

**The candidate's professional career** started with the initial training at the Ștefan cel Mare High school in Bacau, the teacher profile, continued through the studies started on 1 October 2007 as a student of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, specializing in Public Administration. Bachelor studies were graduated in 2001, *head of the promotion*, with the **Magna cum laude award**, and in 2002 in-depth studies were completed in the specialization of Resource Management in Public Administration, with the general average 10.

Candidate's academic career began in 2001 as assistant professor at the Department of Finance and Money, with seminar activities in the subjects of

Administration Science and Comparative Administrative Systems, representing the moment of training for the development of didactic and pedagogical skills, and starting the scientific research in economic and administrative sciences. The year 2002 was the beginning of the Ph.D. studies, in the field of fundamental Economics, specialization Management, under the scientific direction of Prof. Univ. Dr. Anton Rotaru. Specialists in the field of management and administrative sciences very well appreciated the doctoral thesis, so in 2009 it was published in the University Publishing House in Bucharest, constituting a crowning effort for the doctoral training.

Vocational training continued through the follow-up of December 2015 to May 2016 of Postdoctoral Studies at the University of Tel Aviv, Israel, Recanati School of Business. The topic of post-doctoral research was *Human resource performance as a competitive advantage for organizations*. The research aimed at identifying factors of influence and human resource practices leading to competitive advantage in organizations, as well as analyzing the reward system and the impact on work satisfaction of the organization's staff. Account has also been taken of the human resources strategies that make a significant contribution to achieving competitive advantage.

She started his academic career in February 2002, when he held the post of assistant at the Department of Finance and Currency, at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, at *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iasi, successfully fulfilling the didactic and research tasks. In February 2005, she held the post of assistant professor at the same Department of Finance and Money of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. Following a new competition, in February 2008, she held the lecture at the Department of Finance and Money, which as a result of structural changes at the University and faculty level became part of the Department of Business Administration and from 2012, became the Department of Finance, Money and Public Administration. Since February 2013, she has been a university lecturer in the same department, a post occupied after a competition.

Following the implementation of projects funded by the European Commission in the field of European Studies, with a focus on European regional competitiveness and human resource development (2014-2019), and the career and management of the European civil servant career (2010-2015) became professor Jean Monnet, being part of the academic community of teachers with scientific results in

the field of European integration studies. Ana-Maria Bercu is a member of the Jean Monnet Center for Excellence in European Studies at *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University in Iasi (since 2009) and active member of the Institute of Administrative Sciences *Paul Negulescu*, Sibiu (since 2004).

Vocational training was supported by participation in documentation and teaching internships at universities and institutes from abroad on topics related to human resources management in public and private organizations: University of Ljubljana (Slovenia, 2006 and 2012), European Forum Alpbach (Austria, 2009 ), University of Catalonia (Spain, 2011), Ariel University, Turkey (2013), University of Opava (Czech Republic, 2014 and 2018), University of Pozega (Croatia, 2015), University of Tirana University of Nis (Serbia, 2018), University of Rzeszow (Poland, 2018), European Authority Bank (Great Britain, 2018). Also, in December 2010, she was visiting professor at the University of Rouen, France, focusing on human resources and intercultural differences. Intercultural differences have form a framework for debate on the differences in the human resources policies and strategies between Romania and France, good practices and results of their application at company level (private and public). In terms of personal development, these internships have contributed to the establishment of partnerships and collaborations in the field of research of human resources management in public administration.

Candidate, assoc. Prof., PhD. Ana-Maria Bercu, participated in training courses in university management and university policies organized at *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iasi, courses in educational management organized by IRMED (Romanian Institute for Educational Management) and *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University of Iasi, the training course for obtaining the quality of Trainer organized by SC Learn & Vision SRL, Cluj-Napoca with the approval of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport.

Through active involvement in scientific projects as a project manager or member of the implementation team, expert or responsible for teaching, evaluation, learning, the candidate has initiated and developed new university courses and summer schools in the field of resource management in public administration (national and European).

The 16-year teaching career in university education is complex and reflects a permanent concern for the development of teaching and learning abilities. The

candidate has professionally fulfilled course and seminar assignments for students from the undergraduate and master degree courses to disciplines such as Performance Management in Public Administration, Public Sector Strategic Management, Public Management Strategies, Work Relationship Management in European Context, Administrative Science, Comparative Administrative Systems, Administrative Law, Industrial Relations in Human Resource Management in Europe (Industrial Relations in European HRM). Within the Doctoral School of Economics, she is a member of the guidance boards and titular of the Sustainability course of doctoral research.

Strong professional training, based on the study of the reference works in the Romanian and foreign literature, on rigorous documentation during internships or teaching internships at universities abroad (from France, Slovenia, Spain, Austria, Czech Republic, Portugal, Italy, UK, Croatia, Cyprus), on the participation in national and international scientific events, have been the basis for assuming new subjects included in the curriculum for master's specializations (Master of Public Administration, Master of Human Resource Management and Development and Resource Master Human) since 2008. These have created new challenges in professional development, didactic activity and scientific research being oriented towards the study of performance management in public administration, strategic management in the public sector, public policy analysis and working relationship management in a European context.

An important aspect of the didactic activity is represented by the activity of guiding the bachelor and dissertation works for a significant number of students, proving a demanding spirit and aiming for obtaining the best results by the students. As a coordinator of the students' specialty practice, have been established with specialized public institutions frameworks of cooperation for the development of the skills and professional abilities of the students. Another dimension of the didactic activity is given by the coordination of the student scientific research activities, by participating in the commissions for assessment and appreciation of the works at local and national level, as a member of the commission for evaluation of the scientific works at the National Olympiads organized by AFER in 2010 and 2012 (she was appointed as a member of the commission by decision of AFER - Association of Romanian Economics Faculties), receiving the diploma of excellence (2012 and 2014). The results of the guided students were excellent.

In 2018, the candidate became a national scientific assessor of the Francophone University Agency for *Eugen Ionesco* Scholarships, coordinating the work of postdoctoral researcher Alya Charfi of the University of Sfax, Tunisia.

**The second part of the habilitation thesis - Plans for the development of the scientific, didactic and academic career**, reflects the objectives of developing the professional career of the candidate, Assoc. prof., PhD. Ana-Maria Bercu.

**The didactic dimension** of the university career is one of the most important directions pursued in the candidate's formation and evolution. In order to preserve the quality standards she has imposed on his students, she will continue her professional and didactic training, will participate in courses for the development of pedagogical abilities, acquisition of new techniques of didactics and teaching for socio-economic disciplines with the purpose of providing knowledge in an attractive, easy and appropriate way, in accordance with the new information society outlined and in full agreement with economic realities.

The objectives proposed by the candidate can be summarized as follows:

- a. Review the content of the Performance Management courses in Public Administration and Public Policy Analysis for publication in recognized national publishers; in order to get some valuable scientific work, she will consult courses and specific papers offered by prestigious universities.
- b. Re-publishing the Public Management Strategy (published in 2013 at Tritonic Books Publishing House, Bucharest) and completing it with up-to-date information. The new product will be a Strategic Management Manual in the public sector, useful to students in their work, but also to all those interested in the field.
- c. Improving teaching-learning techniques, particularly by using on-line equipment.
- d. Developing the European Regional Competitiveness and Human Resource Development curriculum (Jean Monnet project, funded by the European Commission, 2014-2017), introducing new courses and expanding the network of collaborating teachers.
- e. Developing the Industrial Relations course in European HRM, an English course, introducing new case studies and developing support material.

Contributing to a student-oriented didactic profile and finding the most effective teaching and learning methods and techniques, we consider that the doctoral students' coordination activity will have a well-built foundation, oriented towards achieving performance.



### **Scientific dimension.**

That the doctoral activity to be successful, the candidate, Assoc. Prof. Ana-Maria Bercu, intends to pursue three interconnected goals, the ultimate aim of which is to provide reliable and high quality research work. These research directions are based on the experience so far, on the already existing professional interests, a natural continuation of previous activities. At the same time, it wishes to explore new related fields, in line with international and national trends in the field of research.

The objectives are as follows:

- a. To pursue research in the field of human resources practices and policies in public administration, following interconnectivity, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary.
- b. Calibrating future research on issues such as performance interrelationship - motivation, performance payment - motivation, job satisfaction - professional performance, and professional career -staff retention, organizational change - adequate human resources policies.
- c. The pursuit of fundamental and applied research leading to the discovery of new theories, models, practices that can provide solutions to specific problems in the field of human resources policies in the public administration.

To support research activities and improve didactic work, it will continue to apply for research projects with national or international funding.

Another important dimension is the activity of collaboration in the scientific field with professors from universities from the country and abroad. By participating in Erasmus+ teaching activities at international conferences, workshops, as guest professor or participant, she will have the opportunity to meet experts and the opportunity to develop joint research projects in which will be actively involved the PhD students.

The last part of the habilitation thesis presents the bibliographic references designed and used in its writing.