

SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT

by Stanislav Dimitrov Petkov, Associate Professor, PhD, at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia, VUZF - Sofia

of dissertation for awarding the scientific degree "**Doctor of Science**"
in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field 3.8. Economics, at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance – Sofia, VUZF – Sofia

Author: Professor, PhD, Virginia Zhelyazkova

Topic: „Management of banking risks in the transition to a circular economy”

1. General description of the presented materials

I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury under the procedure for defense of the dissertation of Professor, PhD, Virginia Zhelyazkova for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field 3.8. Economics, at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Sofia (VUZF - Sofia) by order of the Rector of VUZF Assoc. Prof. Dr. Grigoriy Vazov № 38 / 15.03.2021.

The title of the dissertation is „Management of banking risks in the transition to a circular economy”. The dissertation is written in Bulgarian language.

The candidate has presented the following materials in connection with the announced procedure:

- order of the Rector of VUZF for determination of the scientific jury under the procedure,
- dissertation work;
- abstract for the current dissertation;
- abstract of a dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" from 2010;
- diploma for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" from 2010;
- diploma for higher education at the educational-qualification degree "master" from 2007;
- reviews - 3 pcs.
- list of publications on the topic of the dissertation;
- summaries of the publications on the topic of the dissertation;
- texts of the publications;
- reference for the scientific contributions;
- reference to the citations;
- CV;
- reference for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for acquiring the scientific degree "Doctor of Science in Economics" in professional field 3. 8. Economics.

The materials are characterized by completeness and neatness.

2. Brief biographical data about the candidate

Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova has presented her CV. According to the information provided, the candidate is a professor of economics, doctor of economics, vice-rector of VUZF - Sofia. She has a bachelor's degree in International Relations and a master's degree in International Economic Relations from the University of National and World Economy. She obtained an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in World Economy and International Economic Relations from BAS, Sofia in 2010. She has passed a number of professional trainings and specializations. She holds various positions in the period from 2005 to the present, and since 2013 she has been the Coordinator for Environmental and Social Affairs at Eurobank Bulgaria / Head Office /.

3. Relevance of the topic and appropriateness of the set goals and objectives

Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova's research is focused on the management of banking risks in the transition from a linear to a circular economy. In the presented dissertation Prof. Zhelyazkova sets as her main goal to analyze in detail "... *What are the main financial dimensions of climate change and the transition to a circular economy and what actions should banks take in this direction.*"

What is new in the study of the issues under consideration is the analysis of the impact of the transition to a circular economy on the management of banking risks. The original in the presented dissertation is the approbation of the author's conclusions with the proposal and application of a model for assessment of the ecological and social risk in crediting. The latter is discussed in detail in Chapter Five of the dissertation.

The task thus set is insufficiently developed in the scientific literature. The issues under consideration have developed significantly in recent years and raises many questions both in theory and in practice of bank risk management and the transition to a circular economy.

This issue is particularly relevant, given the trends over the past eight years to put environmentally friendly activities at the center of society and business.

My opinion is that the study of the issues would have a significant effect on both theory and practice.

In the introduction of the dissertation the main goal, the objects, the subject are clearly and concretely formulated. The hypotheses of the research are formulated on pages 8 - 9. The author correctly indicates the limiting framework of the performed research.

4. Knowledge of the problem

The candidate Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova demonstrated in-depth knowledge and practical experience in relation to the issues she studied. Prof. Zhelyazkova has her own opinion on the researched issues, formulates the problems in the field, performs analysis, draws conclusions and offers guidelines for solutions. Prof. Zhelyazkova is extremely well acquainted theoretically with the issues under consideration. The author has processed and analyzed a significant amount of information and data.

5. Research methodology

The research methodology is presented on page 10 of the paper. I agree with the methodology described by the author, applied in conducting the study.

6. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation

The structure of the dissertation contains an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a list of references and appendices. The dissertation is 300 pages long.

Chapter One contains a study that focuses on climate change, its nature and its manifestation.

The analysis in Chapter Two focuses on the circular economy in theory and on the policies and practices in some of the developed countries related to the imposition of a circular economic model.

Chapter Three deals with the resource provision of the circular economy.

Chapter Four examines the theory and practice in the field of environmental accounting and reporting and their relationship to the transition to a circular economy.

Chapter Five proposes an author's model for assessing the environmental and social risk in bank lending. The author proposes a model of eight factors of environmental risk management in banks. This part presents the concept of a green bank. The study assesses the current stage of banks in Europe and Bulgaria.

After the Conclusion and the References, five appendices are included in a total volume of 21 pages.

The structure of the work is appropriately chosen. The content corresponds to the topics of the individual parts.

A positive moment of the dissertation is the fact that after each chapter the main conclusions reached by the author in the respective part are formulated.

The merits of the dissertation are the included tables /13 in number/ and figures /7 in number/.

Authors are correctly quoted in the text. The significant number of used literary sources makes a positive impression - a total of 158 in number, 10 in Cyrillic and 148 in Latin.

The author used independent sources of information to support her reasoning.

The studied data are up-to-date.

The presented dissertation is a significant development of the chosen topic. The study is extremely thorough and comprehensive. The analysis is characterized both by its theoretical aspects and by its practical and applied dimensions.

7. Contributions and significance of the study for science and practice

An abstract is attached to the dissertation. On page 62 of the abstract the author formulates the contributions of the dissertation. I agree and accept those formulated in this way in the contributions of the dissertation.

8. Evaluation of the publications on the dissertation

For the purposes of this procedure, Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova has presented a reference for a total of 15 / fifteen / publications on the topic of the dissertation. Based on the information provided about the publications and the publications themselves, I have reason to conclude that in this way the candidate Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova meets the national minimum requirements for obtaining the degree of "Doctor of Science".

9. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements

The candidate Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova meets the national minimum requirements for obtaining the degree of "Doctor of Science", set out in the Regulations for the implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria. According to the reference submitted under the procedure, the candidate collects the following points: under criterion A - 50 points, with a minimum number of points 50; by criterion B - 100 points, with a minimum number of 100 points; according to criterion G - 170 points, with a minimum number of 100 points and according to criterion D - 265 points, with a minimum number of 100 points.

10. Personal participation of the candidate

From the dissertation work the author's attitude to the researched problems is evident. The position of Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova on the issues she researched and her active opinion on them is evident. This is due to the good knowledge of the topic, object of the dissertation, as well as the special interest of the author to it.

11. Abstract

An abstract is attached to the dissertation. The abstract is 65 pages long. The abstract contains a description of the main characteristics of the dissertation, structure and content of the work, a summary of the dissertation, research contributions, publications on the topic of the dissertation.

The abstract of the dissertation is prepared in accordance with the requirements adopted for such research. It illustrates well enough the main points in the dissertation.

12. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no significant critical remarks and recommendations to the author.

The work would benefit if the inclusion of social risk in the model and analysis in Chapter Five is better justified, given that the first and second points justify the management and role of environmental risk, but there is no such justification for social risk.

13. Personal impressions

I have personal impressions of the candidate, which are due to our commitment to VUZF - Sofia. My personal impressions are entirely positive about the research work of Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova, the teaching activity and the implementation of administrative tasks.

14. Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

I recommend to the candidate Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova to continue a more in-depth and critical study of her chosen topic, as this issue will be relevant and will continue to be in the focus of public interest and financial institutions in the coming years.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law for development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for application of ZRASRB.

In conclusion of the above, I give **my positive assessment** of the dissertation, abstract, results and contributions, as well as the scientific publications of the candidate Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova and **I suggest the esteemed scientific jury to award Prof. Dr. Virginia Zhelyazkova scientific degree "Doctor of Science"** in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional field 3. 8. Economics; at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF) - Sofia.

02.04.2021

Reviewer:



Assoc. Professor PhD Stanislav Dimitrov