

# STANDPOINT

by Assoc. Prof. Victoria Svetlomirova Gatzova, PhD  
Higher School of Insurance and Finance – Sofia

of a 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. Economy

**Author:** Dr. Mateusz Kaczmarek

**Title:** Conditions for socio-economic development of regions in Poland, considering the sustainable development of rural areas and mountain and sub-mountain territories

## 1. General description of the submitted materials

By order No. 172/03.04.2023 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Prof. Dr. L. Sc. Boris Velchev, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to provide a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic: “Conditions for socio-economic development of regions in Poland, considering the sustainable development of rural areas and mountain and sub-mountain territories”, for obtaining the scientific degree “Doctor of Science” in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economy.

The author of the dissertation is Dr. Mateusz Kachmarek - a candidate of the “Finance and Insurance” department of VUZF.

The materials submitted by Dr. Kaczmarek include all the necessary documents for the procedure, namely:

- Autobiography
- Translation from Polish of the diploma for the acquired educational and scientific degree “doctor”

- Dissertation in Russian
- Abstract of the dissertation in Russian and Bulgarian
- List of publications related to the topic of the dissertation
- Summaries of publications
- Reference for the contributions in the dissertation
- Reference on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for obtaining the scientific degree “Doctor of Science”

I accept the following materials specified in the minimum national requirements reference: dissertation for awarding the scientific degree “Doctor of Science”, 15 articles published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, 3 publications in non-refereed journals with peer reviewed or published in edited collective volumes and 1 published collective monograph chapter.

## **2. Brief biographical data about the candidate**

Mateusz Kaczmarek has a master's degree in agricultural sciences from the Agricultural University Hugo Kołłątaj in Kraków, Poland and he has also a master's degree in business administration from the Crakow University of Economics. He has post-graduate training in “Health management with elements of medical law” at Jan Grodek State University in Sanok, Poland. In 2015, Mateusz Kaczmarek obtained the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in agricultural sciences at the Agricultural University Hugo Kołłątaj in Kraków.

For 6 years, Dr. Kaczmarek has held leadership positions at the Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Ecosystem Management, and since September 2020 he has been rector of the Jan Grodek State University in Sanok, where he has been teaching for 13 years. Also, Dr. Mateusz Kaczmarek has participated in various scientific projects funded by the European Union.

## **3. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work**

The dissertation of Dr. Mateusz Kaczmarek is a theoretical-empirical study. It has a total volume of 275 pages and is structured in an introduction, 7 sections, a conclusion, a bibliography, an appendix and a list of tables, figures and graphs. The structure is unconventional, as usually this

type of academic work consists of chapters and is not structured in sections. The bibliography includes 297 literary sources, including a number of monographs, studies, articles and online sources, and a significant part of them are from the last 5 years and are characterized by actuality. There are well-designed tables, figures and graphs that help to better structure and visualize the information.

The dissertation contains the following mandatory elements in the introduction - main goal, thesis, research subject and research tasks. My recommendation is a research object to be added.

The main goal of the research is to assess the socio-economic development of the regions, as well as the sustainable development of the rural and mountain and foothill regions of Poland in 2007-2019. To fulfill the set goal, Dr. Kaczmarek formulated five research tasks. It is noteworthy that the author mixes the concepts of "goals" and "tasks". It is necessary to specify them.

The subject of research is the assessment of the socio-economic development of Poland's regions in 2007-2019 and the sustainable development of rural, mountain and sub-mountain areas.

The main thesis of the study is that the socio-economic development of the regions and the sustainable development of rural and mountain and sub-mountain regions of Poland in 2007-2019 are territorially diversified and conditioned by factors and barriers to development. For the more in-depth study of the problem, the author of the dissertation raises 5 research hypotheses, which are clearly formulated.

In the dissertation, with a view to achieving the main goal, fulfilling the set tasks and verifying the raised thesis and hypotheses, a research methodology combining the following methods is used: deduction, induction, analysis, synthesis, descriptive and statistical methods.

The first section of the dissertation has a theoretical nature. It examines the problems of regional development, focusing on regional development policy, factors and barriers. The second section is devoted to the methodological foundations of the study. The third section assesses the differentiation of the level of socio-economic development of Poland's regions, as well as the sustainable development of Poland's rural, mountain and sub-mountain regions in 2007, 2015 and 2019. With the help of Helwig's synthetic indicator of development, an arrangement by region and classification, according to the achieved level of development, were made. The fourth section is dedicated to assessing the impact of sustainable development of rural areas on the economic activity of rural residents, newly registered business entities, the area of personal business plots and the average monthly disposable income. The fifth section focuses on the problem of the impact of research activity and innovation on the development and socio-economic progress of Poland's regions. The penultimate section of the dissertation assesses how the Common Agricultural Policy 2014-2020 and the Rural Development Program 2014-2020 have an impact on the sustainable

development of mountain and sub-mountain regions in Poland. The seventh section examines the determinants of the socio-economic development of the territorial areas in Poland, as well as the sustainable development of rural, mountain and foothill areas. A positive side of the seventh section of the dissertation is that the author has indicated recommendations for the socio-economic development of the regions and the sustainable development of rural, mountain and sub-mountain areas in Poland. There is a lack of balance in the volume of the seven sections - the second and fifth sections are disproportionate to the others, as they are only 6 pages each.

#### **4. Contributions and significance of the development for science and practice**

The list of contributions, presented by Dr. Kaczmarek, does not include scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation work. In the list, goals and results are indicated, but not the contributions of the dissertation. The following contributions can be identified:

- An assessment of the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy 2014-2020 and the Rural Development Program 2014-2020 on the sustainable development of mountain and sub-mountain regions in Poland was made.
- An assessment of the impact of research activity and innovation on the development and socio-economic progress of Poland's regions was made.
- Recommendations for the socio-economic development of the regions and the sustainable development of rural, mountain and sub-mountain regions in Poland are formulated.

#### **5. Evaluation of the publications on the dissertation**

In the submitted reference, Dr. Mateusz Kaczmarek has indicated 15 articles published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, 3 publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes and 1 published chapter of a collective monograph . All publications are co-authored, and some of them are in English. It is important to note that not all of the publications cited by Dr. Kaczmarek are on the topic of the dissertation.

## **6. Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements**

According to the presented materials, I can conclude that Dr. Mateusz Kaczmarek fulfills the minimum national requirements for acquiring the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" in the professional direction 3.8. Economy.

## **7. Abstract**

An abstract in Bulgarian and Russian is attached to the dissertation. It has a volume of 48 pages. In terms of content, the abstract is appropriately structured and reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation work.

## **8. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I have several critical remarks and recommendations to the dissertation work and the materials presented to it:

- It is necessary the structure of the dissertation to be improved. I recommend reducing the number of sections and merging some of them, since the second and fifth sections are 6 pages long.
- It is mandatory for the author of the work to formulate specific contributions to the dissertation research.
- It is necessary to present the information about the publications on the topic of the dissertation more precisely, as there are discrepancies in the abstract, in the list of publications and in the reference to the minimum national requirements, which create confusion. Some of the publications are presented as studies, and they are 6-7 pages long and do not meet the definition of studies. Therefore, I have accepted them as scientific articles.

## CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific and scientific-applied contributions and meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB.

The dissertation shows that the candidate, Dr. Mateusz Kaczmarek, possesses theoretical knowledge and demonstrates qualities and skills for independent research.

Due to the above, I give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the scientific degree “Doctor of Science” to Dr. Mateusz Kaczmarek in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; professional field 3.8. Economy.

17.04.2023 г.

Reviewer: (s)

**(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Victoria Gatzova)**