

## **REVIEW**

by prof. Virginia Ivanova Zhelyazkova, DSc

VUZF - Sofia

of a dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Philosophiae  
Doctor"

in Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal studies

Professional field 3.8. Economy

Doctoral Program "Finance and Insurance"

Author: Yulinda Shehai

Topic: ""Financial and Legal Aspects of the Fight Against Organized Crime in the  
World and in the Balkan Countries Bulgaria, Albania and the Republic of North  
Macedonia"

Scientific supervisor: prof. Lyupcho Stoycheski, Ph.D.

### **1. General description of the presented materials**

By order No. 258 of 27.06.2023 of the Rector of VUZF University, prof. Boris Velchev, DSc, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure a procedure for the defense of a dissertation work on the topic "Financial and Legal Aspects of the Fight Against Organized Crime in the World and in the Balkan Countries Bulgaria, Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia", developed in English language for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Philosophiae Doctor" (Ph.D.) in the Higher Education Area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field (PF) 3.8. Economics, Ph.D. program "Finance and Insurance". The author of the dissertation is Yulinda Shehai - a doctoral student in an independent form of study at the Department of "Finance and Insurance" with scientific supervisor prof. Lyupcho Stoycheski.

The materials submitted by Yulinda Shehai include the following documents:

- autobiography;
- a copy of the diploma for the master's degree;
- dissertation work and abstract to it;
- list of scientific publications and their abstracts;
- copies of scientific publications;
- information on the implementation of the minimum national requirements under the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Regulations for its implementation;
- declaration of originality of scientific works.

The doctoral student has provided evidence on 3 scientific publications on the topic of her dissertation.

## **2. Brief biographical data for the doctoral student**

Doctoral student Yulinda Shehai was born in 1992 in Tirana, Albania. She holds a BA and MA in Law from the University of Tirana and then a MA in Criminal Law from the International University in Struga, Republic of North Macedonia respectively.

Over the years, Ph.D. student Shehai gained experience as a lawyer and investigator. She began her job experience as a legal assistant in a private company (Musa Consulting & Service), then as a legal consultant in another company (Angelus Lex), and as of August 2020 she has started working as a chief specialist "Investigations" at the police department in the city of Tirana.

The practical experience enables Ph.D. student Shehai to gather knowledge and observations to use in the development of her dissertation for the award of the Ph.D. degree

## **3. Actuality of the topic and appropriateness of the set goals and tasks**

The topic of the dissertation presented for consideration - financial and legal aspects of the fight against organized crime in the world and in some Balkan countries is invariably relevant: organized crime is a phenomenon that accompanies the

economic life of every country and opposing it with legal and financial mechanisms is the way for its minimization. The doctoral student demonstrates a good general knowledge of the complex issues of the fight against organized crime, primarily from a legal point of view. The bibliography lists a total of 88 sources in different languages, which shows an awareness of the subject. However, the analysis leans towards the legal side of the subject, the financial aspects could have been presented more clearly.

## **5. Research methodology**

The methodology of the research in the dissertation work is entirely from the field of qualitative analysis. The work has the character of a description and analysis of the normative and institutional framework in the field of combating organized crime with the presentation of facts related to the object of the study.

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

The dissertation has a volume of 160 pages. The work is logically structured in an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is devoted to an analysis of the current state of organized crime internationally. Here, the doctoral student well presents the main points characteristic of the subject of the study. In general, various definitions of organized crime, the reasons and motives behind its occurrence, some basic aspects and consequences of its existence - legal and financial - are examined. The significance of globalization processes for the development of organized crime in an international perspective is also analyzed. The object of special attention are the dangers related to organized crime, as the doctoral student examined them at the level of the world, the EU and the Balkan Peninsula.

The second chapter presents some basic provisions of the international legal framework for the fight against organized crime. First, the mechanisms within the United Nations are examined, then those adopted in the European Union (EU) and, thirdly, the bilateral agreements against organized crime. Further, the doctoral student examines the tools to fight organized crime: the capacity, the forms for its implementation and the role of governments in achieving success in this activity. Finally, attention is paid to its planning as a prerequisite for a positive end of individual actions and efforts in this direction.

The object of the third chapter is organized crime in the countries chosen by the doctoral student for analysis - Bulgaria, Albania and North Macedonia. In this part of the dissertation, the doctoral student presents the main part of her research. First, the doctoral student examines the basic conditions of organized crime on the Balkan Peninsula and some of its specifics. Further, she presents an analysis of the situation in the three countries she has chosen in a structurally identical way - first she presents the nature of organized crime in the country, then the institutions that implement the fight against it, then the regulatory framework of this activity and some financial aspects of organized crime specifically for the country under consideration. This is an appropriate and clear way of presenting the complex problem that the PhD student is analyzing and allows a very good comparability of the picture of things in individual countries.

The presentation ends with a conclusion, in which the main inferences of the study are appropriately and correctly presented.

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

The main contribution of the work is the presentation in an accessible way of the complex issues related to the legal and some financial aspects of organized crime as a phenomenon in the economic life of every country. The topic is examined in the context of three neighboring Balkan countries - Bulgaria, Albania and North Macedonia. Some main problems of the fight against organized crime are brought out based on an analysis of the legal and institutional framework in the three countries under study. Measures to counter organized crime as seen by the author of the study are proposed. This makes the work useful from both a theoretical and a practical point of view

## **8. Evaluation of publications on the dissertation work**

For the purposes of the present procedure, Ph.D. student Shehai has presented a total of three independent scientific publications on the topic of her dissertation, all three of which were developed in English. One was published in a VUZF journal, and the other two in scientific journals from the Republic of North Macedonia.

## **9. Assessment of the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements**

With his three independent scientific publications and the prepared dissertation paper, doctoral student Shehai fulfills the national minimum requirements of the

LDASRB and the Regulations for its implementation for the acquisition of the Ph.D. degree under PF 3.8 "Economics".

## **10. Personal participation of the doctoral student**

At this time, I am not aware of any information that calls into question the authenticity of doctoral student Shehai's dissertation and scientific publications.

## **11. Abstract**

The abstract presents the main points of the dissertation in a generally adequate and concise form.

## **12. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I have the following critical remarks and recommendations to the work:

- The research thesis is not formulated correctly – it does not have the nature of a statement that need to be proven: "without precisely defined legal and financial aspects such as an institutional legal national framework, there is no successful fight against organized crime".
- Of the three hypotheses presented in the introduction to the dissertation, the two - the first and the second one - do not have the character of hypotheses and are not formulated in a sufficiently understandable way, therefore they should be drop, and the third should remain, being more clearly formed. The additional ("auxiliary") hypothesis should be added to it and both hypotheses should be used as main ones. The research objectives should then be reviewed and specified.
- In the abstract, there is actually no reference to the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the doctoral student. Only a list of scientific results is presented, which does not adequately reflect the achievements of the doctoral student.

## **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation contains scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the LDASRB and the Regulations for its implementation. The presented materials and dissertation results correspond to the specific requirements of the Regulations for admission and studing of doctoral students in VUZF University.

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student Yulinda Shehai possesses theoretical knowledge and professional skills in PF 3. 8. Economics, demonstrating qualities and skills for independent conducting of scientific research.

Due to the above, I give my positive assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract and scientific publications, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree Ph.D. to Yulinda Shehai in the Area of Higher Education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; Professional field 3. 8. Economics; Doctoral Program "Finance and Insurance".

20/08/2023

Reviewer: ..... ..

(prof. Virginia Zhelyazkova, DSc)