

REVIEW

by **Assoc. Prof. Radostina Dimitrova, PhD**

Higher school of finance and insurance

Of dissertation for the granting of scientific degree „Doctor of sciences”

In area of higher education 3. Social, economic and judicial sciences

Professional field 3.8. Economics

Author: Robert Jurczak

Topic: „Mechanism of innovative development in the agricultural food sector in the context of regional economic integration“

1. General description of the submitted materials

By order No. 136/27.03.2024 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, Prof. Doctor of Law Boris Velchev has been appointed as a member of the scientific jury to ensure a procedure for the defense of the dissertation work on the topic "**Mechanism for innovative development in the agriculture and food sector in the context of regional economic integration**" for the acquisition of a scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" in the Region of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional direction 3.8. Economy. The author of the dissertation is Robert Jurczak - candidate at the Department of Finance and Insurance

The materials submitted by Robert Jurczak include documents according to the presented inventory:

1. Dissertation work for the granting of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences"
2. Abstract to the attached dissertation work in Bulgarian and English
3. Reference on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements
4. Copy of the publications
5. List of publications

6. Summaries of publications in Bulgarian and English
7. List of contributions from the dissertation work
8. Declaration of originality and authenticity
9. Autobiographical reference
10. Dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "PhD"

For the purposes of fulfilling the minimum national requirements for the award of the Doctor of Science degree, the candidate has applied:

- **1 dissertation work** for the acquisition of the “Doctor of Science” degree
- **33 articles and reports** (including independent and co-authored) published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information and in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes.
- **1 published book based on dissertation work for the award of a scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences"**.
- **17 pcs. citations** of Robert Yurchak's scientific publications.

2. Short biographical data of the applicant

Dr. Robert Jurczak is a professional with diverse experience in various aspects of public administration, social care and academia. His work experience began as a Housing Specialist where he honed his expertise in navigating complex housing policies to ensure equal access for all applicants. Carrying out the position of organizational specialist in the next company he worked for, this experience laid the foundation for his subsequent role as a chief specialist in the implementation of social government programs in the implementation of initiatives aimed at promoting social welfare and community development.

Alongside his professional endeavors, he turned to academia, conducting both full-time and part-time studies at the Faculty of Economic and Technical Sciences at the Academy of Applied Sciences in Konin. The acquired academic experience provides him with a comprehensive understanding of economic principles and their application in the context of the real business environment.

The candidate conducts didactic classes covering a range of topics, including public finance, public sector management, development and monitoring of public services. He deepens his interests in the field of public authorities and state administration in Poland. Dr. Jurczak conducts classes in disciplines related to the organization and functioning of local self-government units and strategies and programs for the development of local self-government units.

His academic and professional background is in local and sustainable economic development, agricultural economics in Poland, public finance in the EU, regional politics, modern history and non-fiction.

3. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation

The dissertation submitted for review with **author Dr. Robert Yurchak** on the topic: **"Mechanism of innovative development in the agricultural food sector in the context of regional economic integration"** was developed in English. Its volume is spread over 325 pages, distributed in the following sequence: an introduction, an exposition in four chapters, a conclusion, a list of references and appendices. The **serious number of sources cited by the author** is impressive – 178 sources (including books, articles and online publications). This speaks of a thorough knowledge of the literature devoted to the object of his research. The theoretical propositions, the research and the analysis found a place in the exposition are supported by means of **good visualization through 65 figures and 55 tables**. The purpose of the research is well formulated, namely "to develop a conceptual model for the formation of an economic mechanism for innovative development of the agricultural and food sector in various countries of the European Union, aimed at ensuring food security and further integration of the economy in the modern world system". The **first chapter** contains theoretical and methodological foundations for creating the economic mechanism for innovative development in the food and beverage sector. The focus of the **second chapter** is the state and the main trends in the development of the agrarian sector of the European Union. The emphasis of the **third chapter** is the methodological tools for assessment and regulation of the regional food and logistics market. The object of the **fourth, last chapter** is the conceptual model of innovative development of the food sector in the context of digital transformation. The selected **research methods** are quantitative and qualitative in nature, including a review of theoretical statements, a survey, application of a point system and mathematical models for forecasting the innovative development of the agricultural and food sector in the context of regional economic integration. The **presented hypothesis** does not have a discussion character and can rather serve as a specific research task of the dissertation work. The **thesis could be reformulated** as follows: "Sustainable development and economic resilience within the European agri-food sector can be achieved by the construction of a comprehensive methodology tailored to evaluate the operational dynamics of the agri-food sector within EU nations, with specific emphasis on increasing competitiveness across diverse market landscapes and by conceptualizing strategies

for innovative advancement which prioritize food security, enhance operational efficiency amidst uncertainties and risks”.

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

I accept that the dissertation work shows the possession of in-depth theoretical knowledge in the relevant scientific field and the ability for independent scientific research of the candidate. Key achievements of the dissertation of a contributing nature include:

- the concept of innovative development of the agricultural and food sector in modern conditions is substantiated, which represents the complex use of knowledge-intensive production factors and conditions;
- a strategy for innovation development based on the cluster principle was developed as the main factor in the mechanism of formation, functioning and innovation development;
- measures and recommendations are proposed for the formation of an institutional mechanism for the development of public-private partnerships within the framework of the digital economy;
- a program has been developed for the management of commercial risks in the agricultural and food sector;
- a conceptual model for sustainable innovative development of the agricultural and food sector of the countries of the European Union has been developed.

5. Review of the publications supporting the dissertation

The candidate has presented the following major publications:

- **1 dissertation work** for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "PhD"
- **1 dissertation work** for the acquisition of the “Doctor of Science” degree
- **1 published monograph**, which has not been submitted, as the main habilitation thesis
- **33 articles and reports** (including independent and co-authored) published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information and in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes.

6. Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements

The submitted materials prove that the candidate fulfills the minimum national requirements for obtaining the scientific degree "Doctor of sciences" in the professional direction 3.8. Economy.

7. Abstract

A 49-page abstract in Bulgarian and English is attached to the dissertation. It contains all the main components and is prepared in accordance with the requirements adopted for this type of development. It includes a description of the main characteristics of the dissertation work, its structure and content, a summary presentation of the dissertation, publications on the topic of the dissertation, selected literary sources and a declaration of non-plagiarism.

8. Critical remarks and recommendations

1. The paper would be improved by better formulation of the research thesis.
2. In the introduction of the dissertation work, some contributions are brought out, which could be singled out in a separate paragraph at the end of the work and further developed.
3. The only sources that are current from the last 5 years are internet sources. The rest of the literature could also be updated.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation **contains scientific, scientifically-applied results**, which represent an **original contribution to science** and **meet 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 presented materials and dissertation results correspond to the specific requirements of the Regulations for admission and training of doctoral students in the Higher School of Insurance and Finance.

The dissertation shows that Robert Jurczak has in-depth theoretical knowledge and skills in professional field 3.8. Economics, **demonstrating** qualities and competencies for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I give my **positive assessment** of the research conducted, 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 sciences”** to Robert Jurczak in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; professional direction 3.8. Economics.

18.04.2024

Reviewer: (s)

Assoc. prof. Radostina Dimitrova, PhD