

**R E V I E W**

**from**

**Prof. Dr. Valentina Lyubenova Nikolova- Alexieva**

**on**

dissertation for the award of the scientific degree " **Doctor of Science** "

in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

Professional field 3.8 . Economics

Author: **Grazyna Kacicka**

Topic : ***Theoretical and methodological foundations of the formation of the anti-crisis management system in the entrepreneurial sector in the conditions of a market economy***

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

By Order No. 131/ 11.04.2025 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance - Prof. Boris Velchev, I am appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the topic : "**Theoretical and methodological foundations of the formation of the anti-crisis management system in the entrepreneurial sector in the conditions of a market economy** " for the acquisition of the scientific degree "**Doctor of Sciences**" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics.

The assessment was made based on the documents submitted in the following list:

- Abstract of a dissertation for the scientific degree " Doctor of Science".
- Dissertation on the topic : " ***Theoretical and methodological foundations of the formation of the anti-crisis management system in the entrepreneurial sector in the conditions of a market economy*** " for acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Science " .
- List of publications.
- List of citations.
- With a document-declaration to meet minimum national requirements for acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Science" .
- Autobiography.

In addition to the dissertation, the candidate presents 26 *publications* , including *a chapter from monographs , 21 scientific articles and 4 reports* . The submitted documents meet the requirements and allow for consideration and assessment of the candidate's scientific achievements.

## **2. Brief presentation of the candidate**

The candidate for the PhD procedure is Dr. Grazyna Katsicka , from Poland. In 2017 , she defended her dissertation for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific field of "Political Science" at the Ivan Franko National University - Lviv, Ukraine.

Dr. Grazyna Katsitska underwent various additional training at the Ivan Franko National University in Lviv, Ukraine in the period 2015-2017 , which enriched her palette of knowledge and skills and provided a solid foundation for her subsequent scientific activity. In 2014 , she obtained a Master's degree in Management from Lublin University of Technology, Poland. In 2012 , he obtained a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Lodz, Poland. He is fluent in English and Russian.

In the period 1986 - 2003 she worked as an expert in a notary's office and held a managerial position in the "Scrap and non-ferrous metals Company" in the city of Jarosław, Poland. From 2004 to the present he has been working as a Spokesperson for the "Dar-Pol Company" in the city of Jarosław, Poland, while since 2017 he has started working as a lecturer at the Higher School of Social and Economic, the city of Przeworsk, Poland.

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

The presented dissertation is relevant, and the topic concerns anti-crisis management in the entrepreneurial sector, through the development of effective strategies and mechanisms for overcoming crises is fundamental. The relevance of the study is also determined by the need to take into account global trends, such as business digitalization, process automation and development of artificial intelligence, which simultaneously open up new opportunities for entrepreneurs and create additional risks. The implementation of digital technologies allows to speed up the decision-making process, improve the quality of management and reduce operating costs. However, insufficient preparedness of enterprises for digital transformation may lead to a deterioration of their competitiveness and increasing the risk of losing market

positions. In addition, an important aspect is the influence of socio-economic factors, such as pandemics, migration processes and changes in consumer preferences. These factors necessitate the need for entrepreneurial structures to adapt operationally to changes in the external environment, to develop and implement innovative approaches to formation and organization of the crisis management system, which will allow the impact of crisis events on their activities is minimized.

The topic addressed in the dissertation is complex in nature, as it requires knowledge of issues of risk management , diffusion of innovations and forecasting of economic trends , through the use of tools for digital transformation of business . Thus , an interdisciplinary problem requires a multifaceted scientific study of this phenomenon.

Despite the significant number of scientific works devoted to the theoretical aspects of the emergence of crises and overcoming their consequences in economics, issues of analysis of theories of crisis phenomena and the development of crisis- logical studies remain under-researched. This limits the implementation of an effective crisis management system and justifies the need for further research in this area.

In the context of the above, the topic of the dissertation is fully justified. The dissertation represents an important scientific work , and the outlined boundaries of the issues presented in it in many places, I consider original and valuable from both a theoretical and a practical point of view.

***In this regard, it can be concluded that the topic of the dissertation is very successfully chosen. It is extremely topical , dissertable and has great practical significance . The purpose, scope and subject of the dissertation research are properly defined and allow for the evaluation of the achieved scientific results.***

#### **4. Degree of knowledge of the problem**

To ensure the sustainability of the entrepreneurial sector, necessary optimization of the organizational and economic mechanism of the system for anti-crisis management. This implies an analysis of international experience, identifying the most effective practices and adapting them to national conditions. In this aspect, the analysis of the world experience in anti-crisis management shows that that the development and implementation of organizational and economic mechanisms must take into account global challenges and trends in the world

economy. Based on The analysis of the researched materials has formulated key points that reveal the main directions for optimization of the organizational and economic mechanism of the crisis management system, integration of best global practices and their adaptation to national conditions.

The author conducted scientific research in the period 2018-2024 and demonstrated in-depth and reliable knowledge , reflected in the theoretical and analytical part of the dissertation. ***This is evidenced by the excellent knowledge of the analyzed issues and the handling of a rich conceptual apparatus.***

Overall, the work is compact, written in a good academic style, information is given synthetically in tabular form or diagrams and is accompanied by verbal commentary , conclusions and inferences of the author.

The high degree of knowledge of the problem implies the precise formulation of ***the main thesis and the setting of the research hypotheses . The object, subject, goal and limitations*** of the dissertation are correctly and clearly defined . The 7 tasks indicated are logically linked and arise from the set goal.

The author of the dissertation demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the defined problem area. **A sufficient number of up-to-date literary sources have been studied. A large-scale study has been conducted on the topic** for obtaining the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences". The author also has **significant practical experience** in monitoring, researching and managing processes related to anti-crisis management in the context of digital transformation of the entrepreneurial sector .

## **5. Research methodology**

The candidate has chosen an appropriate methodology and research tools that correspond to the complex, multidimensional nature of the study. To prove the author's thesis, a systematic approach was used, building on previously conducted studies, theoretical analysis and synthesis, comparative analysis, the observation method, experimental and empirical methods, as well as descriptive, inductive, deductive methods for summarizing and deducing the essential characteristics of the main concepts. To achieve the main goal and the tasks set, a grouping method was used (authors' opinions, methodological characteristics, influencing factors); theoretical-empirical and analytical methods for studying theoretical approaches to anti-crisis management, economic-mathematical modeling for assessing the influence of crisis factors,

idealization method for simplifying complex systems and processes, abstraction method for excluding from consideration non-essential characteristics of the object when conducting the study, comparative analysis of international experience in implementing anti-crisis strategies, expert assessment methods for identifying key factors for the sustainability of enterprises.

The chosen research methodology allows for a high degree of realization of the set goal and obtaining an adequate answer to the tasks solved in the dissertation work.

*I give a very high rating to the literature review, the methodology used, as well as the fulfillment of the tasks set to achieve the research goal.*

## **5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation work**

*The dissertation is 453 pages long , of which 425 are main text , illustrated with 6 figures and 25 tables. The bibliography includes 371 literary units , of which 14 are in Cyrillic and 357 in Latin .*

The dissertation consists of *an introduction, 5 chapters and conclusion* . In turn, the content of each chapter is divided into subsections and points.

**In the first chapter,** " *Theoretical foundations of the processes of crisis formation and anti-crisis management in the economic environment* " it is specified that the insufficient understanding the socio-economic nature of crises and their influence on the emergence of destabilization processes in the economy limits the effectiveness of crisis management. This makes it difficult to build a sustainable and adaptive socio-economic system at different levels of its hierarchy (macro-, meso- or micro level ). It has been established that crisis phenomena in the economy can be defined as critical states of economic development that can significantly undermine economic stability and efficiency of functioning of the socio-economic system. The dual nature of the crisis, which manifests itself both in a negative and positive way, is justified. side – presence of risk (damage), and on the positive side – presence of opportunity (solution). Based on the analysis of the results of scientific research in the field of crisis management, its main characteristics are outlined .

**The second chapter** " *Problems of regulating the economic activity of enterprises in crisis conditions and development of the anti-crisis system management in the entrepreneurial sector*" examines the main parameters of functioning of the entrepreneurial sector, its

importance and role for the economic growth and development in the conditions of the market system. It has been established that any change in the traditional paradigm of the functioning of the economic system with a modern economic paradigm is implemented in the process of gradual transformation of concepts in economic science, methodological principles and approaches to determining the characteristics of a certain period of time conditions for the development and formation of the socio-economic order. In this regard, a structured overview of key approaches and concepts is provided, related to the study of crises and anti-crisis management, where emphasis is placed on the importance of the paradigmatic approach, the cyclical nature of economic processes and management of the entrepreneurial sector in times of crisis. The presented results of the research covers a multi-level analysis - from global to microeconomic level, which allows for a deeper understanding of the nature of crises and effective measures for overcoming them. A classification of factors that contribute either directly or cause crises in the entrepreneurial sector .

**In the third chapter** " *Methodological aspects of the formation of a system for "anti-crisis management in the entrepreneurial sector "* " is based on the fact that one of the the key tasks of managing entrepreneurial structures in times of crisis is to minimize the risk of reducing their integrated economic sustainability. The methodological basis for the formation of an anti-crisis system is examined . management in the entrepreneurial sector by defining approaches to managing the risks . Based on the results of the study, a model has been developed for the systematization of the principles and methodological approaches to minimizing the risk of reducing the economic stability of the entrepreneurial sector in the conditions of contemporary crisis phenomena. Recommendations are proposed to help enterprises create an effective and sustainable risk management system capable of reducing the impact of crisis phenomena in the economy and maintaining stable business development.

**In the fourth chapter** " *Evaluation of the effectiveness and organization of the system for controlling the implementation of anti-crisis management in the entrepreneurial sector "* , emphasis is placed on the methodology for assessing the effectiveness of the functioning of the anti-crisis management system and the concept for the organization of the system for controlling the implementation of anti-crisis measures. An algorithm for assessing the effectiveness of a company's anti-crisis management is presented, ensuring a sequence of actions and their interrelationship. A structural model of principles, roles, functions and conceptual foundations of the anti-crisis management control system in entrepreneurial activity is also substantiated.

**In the fifth chapter** " *Modern trends and new approaches to the organization of the anti-crisis management system in the entrepreneurial sector* ", with the aim of justification of the need to implement innovations in the management process, a parallel is drawn between traditional approaches to crisis management based on standard and often reactive measures, and modern methods that significantly expand the possibilities for operational response and coping with economic crises. A systematization of innovative technologies and management approaches in anti-crisis management has been developed. Based on the analysis of the study, key directions for optimizing the organizational and economic mechanism for anti-crisis management have been formulated.

The **conclusion** presents the main conclusions from the empirical study.

*The scientific paper represents an original solution to a scientific problem and demonstrates the author's general theoretical knowledge and ability for independent scientific work.*

## **6. Contribution and significance of the development for science and practice**

In terms of content, there is an analytical nature of the presentation, well-argued protected author's thesis and hypotheses, a scientific and readable style of presentation, grammatically correct language is used. The author convincingly reveals his research qualities and skills to systematize various theoretical concepts, to use methodological approaches for social assessment; to work with a large volume of empirical data; to develop an author's methodological toolkit; to analyze reliable empirical information; to summarize conclusions and make recommendations for social practice on the researched problem.

The usefulness of the results stands out in two directions - **theoretical-cognitive and applied**.

### **➤ Contributions to the development of science include :**

- An analysis of the theories of crisis phenomena and the development of methodological aspects of crisis research has been carried out.
- The relevance and the importance of their application in determining the causes of occurrence and consequences from crisis situations, which allows the development of a methodology for forming an effective crisis management system.

- The category of "crisis phenomena in the economy" is defined as a dynamic process characterized by periods of intense economic instability and uncertainty in the functioning of the entrepreneurial sector .
- Developed for studying crises through the prism of innovation. development and crisis methods .
- An integrative approach to the formation of anti-crisis management is proposed , taking into account the impact of digital transformation and globalization .
- A methodology for assessing the sustainability of entrepreneurial structures based on proactive management strategies .

➤ **The practical ones include :**

- The factors contributing to the emergence of crises in the entrepreneurial sector are classified, including macroeconomic, industry, intra-firm and financial determinants, which can affect both in isolation and in aggregate, forming complex crisis phenomena.
- A model has been developed for using methods and tools to analyze the key factors causing crises in the entrepreneurial sector.
- The key differences between traditional and innovative methods of anti-crisis management are determined, based on a comparative analysis of their functional effectiveness according to the main indicators in the context of the "action-result" model.
- Methodological recommendations and tools aimed at increasing the sustainability of entrepreneurial structures in conditions of economic instability are proposed.

**I consider the contributions to be the author's personal work.** The conclusions and proposals in the dissertation present **the candidate as an erudite researcher with good theoretical preparation, with the ability** to make creative generalizations and formulate solutions for practice .

## **7. Evaluation of dissertation publications**

The publications fully meet the requirements for number, type and place of publication.

- The publications that the candidate has attached are: **a chapter** of a monograph , twenty - **one** articles published in scientific journals, peer-reviewed and indexed in secondary databases



and in edited collective volumes, as well as *four* conference papers. *The publications are directly related to the topic of the dissertation.*

- The publications mainly cover the period after 2018 , i.e. they are relatively new and reflect current issues. The publications do not repeat those submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree " Doctor ".

- Although relatively new, the publications have already been cited by many authors in refereed and non-refereed publications, which illustrates the relevance and innovation of the theoretical and practical charge of the candidate's work;

- The topic of the publications is directly focused on the individual aspects of the dissertation, which not only summarizes the publications, but also builds on the achieved scientific results.

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

After checking the data from the Report on the implementation of the minimum national criteria , According to Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the Law on the Academic Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, I believe that the candidate's academic achievements significantly exceed the requirements for acquiring the scientific degree " Doctor of Sciences" in Professional Field 3.8. " Economics ". With a minimum threshold of 350 points , Dr. Grazyna Kacicka meets the indicators with a total of 525 points.

*It is worth noting that the publications address very significant and topical issues affecting the anti-crisis management of the entrepreneurial sector, both in Poland and in other countries .* This is justified by the increasing number of citations not only in domestic publications, both indexed and non-indexed (articles, monographs, collective works), but also in foreign publications, which proves the scientific recognition of the author.

## **9. Personal participation of the candidate**

The dissertation is the result of independent scientific research, most of which has been presented at scientific forums. Theoretical sources and institutional reports and documents are used and cited correctly. The requirements of Art. 29, para. 6 of the Law on the Republic of Bulgaria are met and at present there is no proven plagiarism in the author 's scientific works .

## **10. Evaluation of the autoref**

The dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Science is presented in an abstract of 56 pages . The candidate has presented the main hypotheses and has argued and defended them in the dissertation. The goals, objectives, methodology and limitations of the research are indicated. The abstract accurately reflects the structure of the dissertation. It is structured correctly , with the individual parts logically connected to each other. The author demonstrates the ability to formulate conclusions and generalizations and, based on the analysis, can define forecasts. The conclusions drawn from each chapter are reflected . In turn, the generalizations related to the overall work are included in the conclusion of the dissertation , emphasizing the external and internal factors influencing the anti-crisis management of the entrepreneurial sector .

*I assess the abstract as properly structured and reflecting the research results presented in the dissertation.*

## **11. Critical notes and recommendations**

- **Main opinion** : quality dissertation, excellently illustrated, clearly defined contributions with potential for development.
- **Critical remarks** : I have no significant critical remarks about the dissertation research.
- **Recommendations** : I believe that the results of the dissertation are extremely useful in theoretical and practical aspects. Therefore, I recommend that Dr. Grazyna Katsicka publish the results of this dissertation and develop them in monographs and textbooks. I also recommend that she continue her scientific work in this specific interdisciplinary field. I recommend that the results be published in global databases such as Scopus and WoS.
- **Question** : What are the real risks associated with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the entrepreneurial sector operating in conditions of accelerated digitalization?

## **12. Personal impressions**

I do not personally know the author of the dissertation. However, based on the material provided, I note that the author has been engaged in scientific work on risk management issues,

mechanisms and tools for anti-crisis management in the context of digital transformation for many years and shows exceptional commitment and knowledge of the issues raised.

Academic achievements demonstrate specialized theoretical and practical knowledge related to crisis management. of entrepreneurial structures, by developing innovative approaches for operational adaptation to changes in the external environment and minimizing the impact of crisis phenomena on their activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation contains results that represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB) and the Regulations for the Implementation of the ADASRB.

The candidate has high professional qualities and is an established and innovative scientist with a high scientific reputation. The dissertation shows that the candidate **Grazyna Kacicka** possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and skills in Professional field 3.8. "Economics ", demonstrating a high capacity for independent research and its application in practice.

I highly appreciate **the** research, results and contributions presented by the candidate in the dissertation and abstract. For all of the above, I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the degree of " **DOCTOR OF SCIENCES** " by **GRAZYNA KACICKA** in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences in the Professional field 3. 8. "Economics " .

10 May 202 5.

Plovdiv

Reviewed by :

/ *Prof. Dr. V. Nikolova-Alexieva* /