

STATEMENT

**Regarding the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.8 "Economics",
Doctoral Program "Economics and Tourism Management"
at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov**

Prepared by: Associate Professor Genka Ivanova Rafailova, PhD

Author of the dissertation: Vasilena Shtereva Krastanova

Dissertation topic: "Opportunities for Effective Management of the Hotel Business in Crisis Conditions"

Scientific supervisor: Associate Professor Lyubka Mincheva Ivanova, PhD

I. General Presentation of the Dissertation:

The dissertation comprises 201 pages, based on 127 sources, including 75 in Cyrillic and 52 in Latin script, and contains 6 tables and 16 figures. The core subject of the research is the potential for effective management of tourism enterprises in times of crisis. The doctoral student has developed the topic in a dissertation that follows a classical structure – introduction, main body consisting of three chapters, and conclusion. The first chapter provides a theoretical review and analysis, the second presents the research methodology, and the third outlines the results and testing of the author's model for managing hotel businesses in crisis. The chapters are logically and coherently connected.

The primary objective of this dissertation is to develop and test a model for effective hotel business management during crisis conditions. This is achieved through the successful execution of well-defined research tasks.

The references used are sufficiently diverse and include significant literature sources, as well as key documents from global tourism organizations.

The dissertation includes four appendices presenting the survey questionnaires used, scales, indicator definitions, and quantitative values for the indicators applied to the studied hotels.

II. Assessment of the Format and Content of the Dissertation:

The dissertation presents a study of current and highly relevant issues that are significant for the hotel sector in Bulgaria and globally. The factors causing tourism crises, especially in the accommodation sector, are diverse, numerous, and relatively consistent in their effects. This indicates a high risk of crisis emergence, which in turn influences management approaches and tools. Despite efforts by the tourism sector to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the hotel industry still requires the implementation of crisis management strategies in today's dynamic and risk-prone environment. The dissertation provides a thorough theoretical review and analysis of crisis events, their impact on accommodations, and management strategies to prevent or mitigate their effects. The author develops a model for assessing crises and their influence on hotel management, tests it through research in actual hotels, and provides practical guidelines for management before, during, and after crises.

The author uses a clear and academic style in presenting theoretical concepts, research results, and conclusions. The text is concise, yet the volume allows for a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the topic. The dissertation is grounded in a rigorous and academically sound methodological framework.

The abstract realistically and accurately reflects the theoretical basis, methodology, and research results.

III. Scientific and Applied Contributions of the Dissertation:

The dissertation presents significant scientific and applied contributions to hotel management:

1. A comprehensive theoretical review and analysis of crisis events, their causes, effects, and management tools.
2. Summary of the impact of crises on the hotel business and management.
3. A model for analyzing and evaluating crises, management measures, and the results of their application in the hospitality industry.
4. Practical guidelines for management decisions and tools for hotel business management in crisis conditions.

IV. Questions Regarding the Dissertation:

1. The proposed management models are highly suitable for hotels that are part of medium- to large-sized companies. What are the specifics of managing small and medium-sized hotel businesses, which are typical for the sector, in times of crisis?
2. What are the differences in management approaches and tools between year-round and seasonal hotel operations in times of crises?

V. Overall Evaluation and Conclusion:

The dissertation by Vasilena Shtereva Krastanova is a thorough and timely study of the opportunities for effective hotel management in crisis conditions. The author has successfully developed and tested a model for assessing crises and implementing management strategies and tools in real hotel settings. The research demonstrates a high level of theoretical depth, a clear methodological structure, and practical relevance.

The scientific and applied contributions are valuable both to the field of "Economics and Tourism Management" and to practical hotel operations, which are particularly vulnerable to crisis impacts. The dissertation reflects the doctoral candidate's excellent theoretical preparation, analytical thinking, and research capabilities.

I conclude that the dissertation meets the requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" by the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its regulations.

I give a positive evaluation and recommend the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Vasilena Shtereva Krastanova in the field of higher education 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", professional field 3.8 "Economics", in the doctoral program "Economics and Tourism Management" at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Sofia.

Date: 10.07.2025

Prepared by: ...

(Assoc. Prof. Genka Rafailova, PhD)