



## UNIVERSITY FOR NATIONAL AND WORLD ECONOMY

### STATEMENT

**By** *Assoc. Prof. Ivanka Andreeva Nikolova, PhD;  
UNWE, Department of Trade Economics;  
Professional field 3.8. "Economics,"  
Scientific specialty: 05.02.18 "Economics and Management (Economics  
of Trade, Hotel and Restaurant Management)"*

**Re** *dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree  
"Doctor" in the doctoral program "Economics and Management  
(Tourism)"*

**Author of the dissertation:** *Nevena Rumenova Lyaskova-Velikova,  
d010419221*

**Thesis topic:** *"Potential for innovative  
tourism products based on the experience economy"*

**Reason** for submitting the opinion: Participation in the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation, in accordance with Order No. № 585/04.07.2025 of the Rector of the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov.

#### **I. General presentation of the dissertation:**

The presented dissertation is dedicated to revealing the potential for growth in demand and supply within the national tourism market for innovative tourism products based on experiences.

The scientific work is 205 standard pages long, including two appendices, 23 tables, and 26 figures, which illustrate and contribute to a better systematization of the presentation.

The dissertation is characterized by a purposeful internal logic in the organization of its individual parts. **Structurally**, the work is very well balanced and consists of a list of abbreviations, an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and appendices. The introduction argues the relevance of the topic and clearly formulates **the object and subject** of the study, **the aim, the objectives**, and **the research thesis**. The chosen subject of the study and the set objective address a significant and multifaceted theoretical and practical problem. Five research tasks are formulated, the solution of which

achieves the set objective and proves the formulated thesis. The conclusion is a logical consequence of the presentation and summarizes the most significant results and contributions of the research.

The dissertation is based on the study and systematization of numerous publications by leading Bulgarian and foreign authors. **The bibliography** contains 161 sources, of which 43 are in Cyrillic, 80 in Latin, and 38 are websites. The subject, object, and research objectives and tasks cover a topical issue, which explains the study of a large number of foreign literary sources.

**The two appendices** contain a questionnaire for experts and a questionnaire for tourists as the main representatives of supply and demand in the national tourism market. They supplement the presentation, allow the research to be traced in an applied aspect, and confirm the reliability of the conclusions and recommendations made.

## **II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation.**

The issue under investigation is becoming increasingly popular and can be defined not only as **topical but also as having high potential for future development. It is new and insufficiently developed** in Bulgarian scientific literature, which is why a broad review analysis of the views of a number of international and Bulgarian authors working in the field of innovative tourism products and the experience economy has been carried out. As a result of a critical analysis, the doctoral student expresses his own opinion, highlighting certain contributions, which are presented in a separate reference.

**The volume of the dissertation** is determined by the subject matter under investigation. The doctoral student has managed to systematically present the research in 205 standard pages. The dissertation is a serious work in terms of volume and content, expressing the author's position, summarized in conclusions at the end of each chapter of the dissertation.

The empirical study is based on **a conceptual model** proposed by the author for examining the potential for innovative tourism products based on the experience economy. The comprehensive approach of the study is ensured by adapting it to the specific objectives of the analysis and combining six complementary methods: SWOT analysis, PESTE analysis, benchmarking, expert assessment, comparative method, and survey method. The conceptual model offers a logical sequence of stages covering the analysis of resources and the superstructure of destinations, as well as a study of the demand and supply of innovative products through direct surveys of tourism enterprises and consumers. The data from the surveys were processed using electronic spreadsheets (MS Excel).

In terms of **style and language**, the research work is distinguished by a



clear and scientific style, precise use of scientific terminology - without ambiguity, repetition, and logical contradictions.

**The abstract** submitted to the scientific jury is 37 printed pages long and includes a summary of the contributions to the dissertation, a list of the author's publications on the topic of the dissertation, and a declaration of originality and authenticity. The abstract fully and accurately reflects the content of the dissertation.

### **III. Scientific and applied contributions of the dissertation.**

The dissertation submitted for review definitely contains new scientific ideas and results that contribute to the expansion of existing theoretical knowledge and practice in the field of demand and supply of innovative tourism products in the experience economy.

The reviewer accepts and confirms the contributions outlined in the Summary of Contributions to the Dissertation.

### **IV. Questions on the dissertation.**

When testing the proposed model in different destinations, you make important recommendations for increasing the demand and supply of innovative tourism products in the field of the experience economy, which is an indisputable contribution. Can you identify and argue which of the two—tourist demand for innovative products based on experiences or the tourist supply of such products—is currently ahead in the national tourist market?

### **V. Summary assessment of the dissertation and conclusion.**

The dissertation presented by *Nevena Rumenova Lyaskova-Velikova* is, in essence, an independent and in-depth scientific study that achieves its scientific objective, convincingly defends its research thesis, and highlights the significant theoretical and empirical results achieved by the author.

In conclusion, the dissertation meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, which **gives me reason to vote "FOR"** and to propose to the distinguished scientific jury to award the doctoral student *Nevena Rumenova Lyaskova-Velikova* the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. "Economics," doctoral program "Economics and Management (Tourism)."

20.08.2025  
Sofia

Member of the Academic Board: .....  
(Assoc. Prof. Dr Ivanka Nikolova)