С.А."Д.А.Ценов" Свищов
Вх.№ 93.00-109/23.10.2026

TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCIENTIFIC JURY

appointed by Order No. 789/31.08.2026

of the Rector of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics

STATEMENT

regarding a procedure for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Pavlina Petkova Dimitrova, PhD, Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, Department of Economics and Mathematical Modeling, Scientific Specialty: Accounting, Control and Analysis of Economic Activity

Author of the dissertation: Miroslav Georgiev Marinov, doctoral candidate at the Department of Strategic Planning,d010323309

Dissertation title: "Developing Human Resource Development Strategies in Business Organizations in the Chemical Industry"

I. General Overview of the Dissertation.

The **object** of research in the dissertation comprises business organizations in the pulp and paper industry in Bulgaria, examined through the prism of their strategic management and planning systems. The subject of research concerns "the processes, methods and interrelationships involved in developing long-term strategic plans for human resource development in the industrial sector". The precise definition of the object and subject of the dissertation demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of the research issues and the doctoral candidate's ability to comprehend and interpret them in their overall scientific context.

The **principal aim** of the dissertation is to examine the current state of strategic planning of intellectual capital in the sector and to identify the problems associated with the topic. An ambitious **objective** is set: to "develop and test a new model for predictive and strategically flexible management through data processing and artificial intelligence". Given the particular relevance of developments in artificial intelligence at present, the model developed by the doctoral candidate will contribute to elucidating important issues.

To achieve this aim, the doctoral candidate has formulated the following research **tasks**, which may be summarized as follows:

- To examine the evolution of the models from a theoretical perspective and trace the progression from strategic ideas to their day-to-day planning;

- To investigate market barriers to the development of strategic labour potential in Bulgarian enterprises and to propose new research approaches for the objective assessment of skills with a view to increasing the strategic accuracy of planning;

- To establish the alignment between the overall strategic objectives of the business and workforce provision plans in the production plants.

- To specify an algorithm for implementing data-mining technologies in the long-term strategic forecasting of staffing needs, and to develop and test an original model for flexible strategic human resource management in the sector.

The tasks have been fully accomplished. The research thesis, together with the other components of the introduction, has been comprehensively specified.

Attention has also been paid to the methodological tools employed.

The dissertation comprises **160** standard pages, including 135 pages of main text and **12** pages of bibliography. There are four appendices.

Its length fully meets the requirements for a work of this type.

The bibliography includes **103** sources in English and the remaining 11 sources in Bulgarian, making a total of 114. The extensive use of international sources may be regarded as a significant advantage both for the present dissertation and for the doctoral candidate's future academic development.

Structure: In terms of composition, the dissertation comprises three thematically and logically coherent chapters of balanced length, as well as an introduction, a conclusion, a list of references and appendices that supplement and enrich the exposition.

II. Assessment of the Form and Content of the Dissertation.

The subject of strategic human resource development in enterprises in the pulp and paper industry is becoming particularly relevant in the context of accelerated technological modernization, demographic constraints and increasing requirements for environmental sustainability. The dissertation appropriately highlights the contradiction between the high degree of production automation and the prevailing traditional, short-term-oriented workforce planning practices. This substantiates the need for integrated and flexible strategies for competency development and workforce succession planning.

The introduction substantiates the relevance and practical significance of the problem under investigation and formulates the research thesis, object, subject, aim and research tasks. It presents the

methodological basis, the instruments used and the limitations of the study, focusing on strategic human resource planning in enterprises producing pulp, paper and paperboard.

Chapter One examines the theoretical foundations and models of strategic human resource development, including the relationship between "conceptualization – strategy formulation – planning" and the need to align human resource strategies with corporate strategies. It also considers opportunities for integrating management activities and information systems, as well as the specific challenges facing the pulp and paper industry arising from digital transformation, demographic developments and the requirements of the Green Deal.

Chapter Two presents an empirical investigation of the state of strategic human resource planning in enterprises within the industry under consideration, based on 16 semi-structured in-depth interviews with representatives of senior and functional management. A mixed qualitative and quantitative analysis, cross-tabulations and statistical assessments identify discrepancies between technological development and workforce planning practices, insufficient information integration, and constraints related to the shortage of qualified specialists.

Chapter Three presents methodological solutions for improving strategic human resource management through the integration of production data, data-mining technologies and artificial intelligence. The original HIRA model is developed, comprising diagnostic, operational and strategic components, and its applicability is assessed through prospective model testing and the comparison of expert assessments with production performance indicators. Specific proposals are also formulated for implementing the model and improving succession planning and workforce planning.

The conclusion summarizes the principal theoretical and empirical findings, highlighting weak interconnections between information systems, the fragmented nature of planning and the need for objective methods of human resource assessment. The author considers the research thesis to have been confirmed and substantiates the practical potential of the proposed flexible model for improving workforce provision and the strategic competitiveness of enterprises in the industry under consideration.

The dissertation **abstract** has been prepared appropriately and is of the required length, providing a concise presentation of the dissertation's content.

The dissertation meets grammatical and stylistic standards.

III. Scientific and Applied Scientific Contributions of the Dissertation

I accept the three contributions identified by the doctoral candidate:

1. **First contribution – theoretical and methodological**

The main challenges facing strategic human resource management in the pulp and paper industry, arising from digital transformation, demographic imbalances and the requirements of the Green Deal, have been systematized. On this basis, a conceptual framework for the transition from reactive to flexible strategic human resource planning has been theoretically substantiated.

2. Second contribution – empirical

On the basis of the empirical study, significant deficiencies in strategic human resource planning in pulp and paper enterprises have been identified, relating to the insufficient integration of information systems, technological mismatches and constraints on workforce provision. The findings substantiate the need to develop a new competency profile for specialists based on adaptability, diverse technical skills and digital literacy, referred to in the dissertation as the "Triad of the Future".

3. Third contribution – applied scientific

The original HIRA model for strategic human resource management has been developed, integrating production and personnel data and incorporating mechanisms for comparative assessment and forecasting staff turnover. Through prospective model testing, the operational and economic feasibility of the model has been substantiated, and practical guidelines for its implementation in enterprises in the industry under investigation have been proposed.

The contributions identified enrich existing theoretical and practice-oriented knowledge in the field under investigation.

IV. Questions Concerning the Dissertation

Minor technical recommendations may be made regarding the presentation of sources, primarily beneath tables and figures (for example, what sources underpin the analysis carried out by the author in Tables 5 and 6, among others?).

Questions – none.

V. Overall Assessment of the Dissertation and Conclusion

The dissertation by doctoral candidate Miroslav Georgiev Marinov constitutes an independent and comprehensive scientific study distinguished by originality and a contributory character, and the stated research aims and tasks have been successfully achieved. Notwithstanding certain critical remarks, the foregoing provides grounds for me to express the opinion that the dissertation meets the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria and to vote in favour of awarding the educational and scientific degree of "DOCTOR" to Miroslav Marinov.

22/10/2026 Statement prepared by:

(Assoc. Prof. Pavlina Dimitrova, PhD)