

OPINION

on the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" under the doctoral program "Finance, Money Circulation, Credit, and Insurance" (Finance)

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Author of the dissertation: Tsvetelina Vassileva Tsankova — full-time PhD student, Field of Higher Education: 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, Professional field 3.8. Economics, Doctoral program: "Finance, Money Circulation, Credit, and Insurance" (Finance).

Title of the dissertation: "Financial and Legal Aspects of State Policy in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic"

Scientific Supervisor: Prof. Teodora Dimitrova, PhD

This opinion has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

I. General Presentation of the Dissertation

The submitted dissertation consists of 208 pages and includes: an introduction (4 pages), main body (three chapters – 189 pages), a conclusion (3 pages), a bibliography (7 pages), and one appendix (3 pages).

The introduction and the conclusion are prepared in accordance with the generally accepted academic standards. The three chapters are well-balanced and

form a complete, logically connected whole. The first and second chapters are structured into three paragraphs each, while the third chapter consists of four paragraphs. The exposition is supported by 21 tables and 14 figures.

The dissertation clearly defines the object, subject, aim, and objectives of the research, as well as the doctoral thesis. *The object of the study* is the state policy during the COVID-19 pandemic, while *the subject* is the specific financial and legal mechanisms and instruments applied by the state in pandemic conditions, and their interrelation in serving the public and societal interest. *The aim of the dissertation* is to analyse the financial and legal aspects of state policy during a pandemic and to assess the effectiveness of the instruments used, with a view to informing appropriate decisions in the event of future pandemic situations.

The doctoral candidate defends *the thesis* that the state policy during a pandemic faces numerous challenges, which necessitates timely, rational, and effective financial and legal decisions to protect public interest, health, and human life.

The author demonstrates a solid understanding of the subject area, both in theoretical and practical terms. A substantial amount of specialized literature has been reviewed — the bibliography of the dissertation includes 80 sources. A modern methodology and relevant research tools have been employed. The work presents useful conclusions, evaluations, recommendations, and summaries.

II. Assessment of the Form and Content of the Dissertation

The topic of the dissertation is both interesting and relevant. It is defined by the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on societies, economies, and legal systems worldwide. The main arguments for the relevance of the topic are: the extraordinary nature of the pandemic, its financial impact, the legal

challenges, the socio-economic recovery, and the lessons that could be acknowledged for future crises. The topic is crucial for the formulation of better strategies for managing similar global events in the future.

The structure and the exposition are at the required academic level. The dissertation begins by outlining the profile of the pandemic and reaches the important conclusion that the successful pandemic management requires a complex and integrated approach encompassing health, social, and economic aspects. It examines the scope of the state policy, particularly the legislative documents that were amended as a result of the pandemic, as well as the roles of central and local government authorities (Chapter One). This is followed by a review of the financial aspects of the European Union's policies during the pandemic, with a detailed analysis of the financial decisions made by the central authorities and, subsequently, by local authorities (Chapter Two). Finally, the doctoral candidate presents an analysis of the impact of the implemented anti-epidemic measures on the economy and the society, an analysis of the costs associated with COVID-19 response measures during the period 2020–2022, and an empirical study on the effectiveness of the state policy during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on a conducted survey.

The dissertation represents a thorough and comprehensive study of the state policy in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its structure is clearly defined, encompassing the legal and financial aspects of governance, as well as the challenges facing state policy in both the current and post-pandemic periods.

The positive aspects of the dissertation can be summarized as follows:

1. Relevance and significance of the topic

The dissertation examines one of the most significant global crises of the 21st century and its impact on public governance. The relevance of the

research is undeniable, as the COVID-19 pandemic has permanently transformed the socio-economic and the legal framework of governance.

2. Logical coherence and structured approach

The dissertation is well-organized into three main chapters, which systematically present the various aspects of the topic. Each chapter contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the issue, transitioning from theoretical analysis to practical case studies and empirical research.

3. In-depth analysis of legal aspects

The first chapter explores the legal mechanisms employed by the state in addressing the pandemic, including the roles of central and local authorities. The research demonstrates a strong understanding of the legal framework, combining national and international regulatory instruments.

4. Comprehensive financial analysis

The second chapter presents a detailed examination of the financial policies of the European Union and the Republic of Bulgaria in the context of the crisis. The author conducts comparative analyses and provides interpretations of budgetary expenditures, which are essential for evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented measures.

5. Empirical research with practical relevance

The third chapter includes a survey study that adds further value to the dissertation. The collection and analysis of the empirical data enable a better understanding of the impact and effectiveness of the measures.

6. Practical recommendations for future policy

The dissertation offers concrete solutions for overcoming the consequences of the pandemic, making it not only theoretically significant but also practically applicable in the field of public administration.

7. Sound methodological foundation

The author employs a variety of research methods – including normative

analysis, comparative analysis, statistical methods, and empirical study – contributing to the scientific value of the work.

The author has adhered to the principles of academic ethics — originality of the scientific work, proper citation and referencing, and accuracy of the presented information.

The author's abstract (with a volume of 48 pages) accurately and sufficiently reflects the content of the dissertation.

The doctoral candidate presents 5 publications — 1 article and 4 conference papers, one of which is co-authored, thus exceeding the national requirements. All publications correspond to the subject matter of the dissertation.

III. Scientific and Scientific-Applied Contributions of the Dissertation

In my opinion, the main scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation are related to the following points presented by the doctoral candidate:

First. As a result of an examination of theoretical, regulatory, and practice-oriented positions identified during the research process, the author synthesizes a comprehensive and multi-faceted profile of the COVID-19 pandemic, defines the scope of the state policy, and outlines the role of central and local government bodies during a state of epidemic emergency. A complex systematization of the socio-economic impact of the pandemic is presented, substantiating the necessity of implementing anti-epidemic measures.

Second. Based on an analysis of the financial decisions of the central and local authorities in Bulgaria, the appropriateness and effectiveness of the state's financial policy during the pandemic are assessed, as well as its interrelation and

dependency on the general policy of the European Union. The socio-economic role of the state in supporting businesses and households to overcome the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic is argued, along with its capacity for an adequate management of the targeted European funding allocated to tackle the pandemic in Bulgaria.

Third. Using an original toolkit of financial and economic indicators, the impact of the implemented anti-epidemic measures on the economy and society is evaluated. The dissertation emphasizes the need for reforms in the healthcare, social protection, and public administration sectors, as well as the necessity of applying a comprehensive and integrated approach to emergency epidemic management.

Fourth. Based on an empirical study (an original survey conducted by the author among Bulgarian households), an objective assessment of the effectiveness of the state's policy during the pandemic is made. The attitudes of households regarding the implemented anti-epidemic measures are identified, and recommendations are formulated for overcoming the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IV. Questions regarding the dissertation

I have no questions for the doctoral student.

V. Summary evaluation of the dissertation and conclusion

The dissertation stands out with its high scientific level, analytical depth, and practical significance. The author demonstrates a high degree of competence and the ability to work with complex issues in the field of state policy and finance. The work represents a valuable contribution to the scientific literature and has the potential to be useful to legislators, public sector experts, and the academic community.

The dissertation on the topic “Financial-Legal Aspects of State Policy During the Covid-19 Pandemic” is a thorough study with clear scientific and scientific-applied contributions. The work meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for the Application of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the provisions of the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at the D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics in Svishtov.

Against this background, I give a positive evaluation of the dissertation of Tsvetelina Vassileva Tsankova for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the doctoral program “Finance, Monetary Circulation, Credit, and Insurance” (Finance) and recommend to the respected members of the scientific jury that Tsvetelina Vassileva Tsankova be awarded the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the field of higher education 3. “Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences,” in the professional field 3.8. Economics, and scientific specialty “Finance, Monetary Circulation, Credit, and Insurance” (Finance).

17.04.2025

Prepared by the reviewer:

(Assoc. Prof. S. Radukanov, PhD)