STANDPOINT

to a dissertation on the topic:

"Transformations of the economy in the context of COVID-19 – financial assessment and sectoral analyses"

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Form of doctoral studies: full-time

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appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order of the Rector of the Academy of Economics Assoc. Dr. M. Marinov No476 from 12.06.2025

1. Relevance and importance of the topic

The relevance of the topic is clearly expressed and it stems from *"the importance of the process of transformation of modern economies, which requires a more careful and in-depth study* to highlight *the most important global economic, institutional, organizational and managerial factors influencing the transformation of national and global economic systems at the stage of global digital transformation".* The COVID-19 pandemic, changes the mechanisms of functioning of the economy, work and societies around the world and accelerate the process of digital transformation.

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"The most significant shock impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the processes of sectoral structural transformation in Bulgaria and the opportunities for an inclusive and sustainable recovery after Covid-19 based on the ongoing digital transformation processes are identified."

2. Fulfillment of the formal requirements for the dissertation and main components of the dissertation research

The dissertation submitted for review contains all the formal components of a completed dissertation.

In the introduction, the obligatory elements that characterize the problem area of research are presented, as follows: actuality, object, subject, thesis, purpose, tasks and methodology. In this respect, the development meets the standards and requirements for a dissertation.

With regard to **the object** of study, I believe that a more generalized formulation would be more appropriate, just as a better definition could be put from a stylistic chapter.

The **subject** of the dissertation is defined *as "the totality of economic relations arising in the process of transformation of economic systems, trends and models of development of production, technological, economic, institutional and social structures in their unity and interaction".*

The main line of research is the **thesis** *that "every economic system inevitably transforms under the influence of specific factors determined by the respective stage of development of social production and under the influence of the depth of changes in the world economy in the 20th and early 21st centuries".*

This statement shows an indisputable process and in order to sound like a dissertation thesis, it should be supplemented in a more specific problematic direction. Given the title topic, the other components and the content of the dissertation, a more meaningful thesis should include the "specifics of economic transformations" imposed by unusual events such as the COVID pandemic. The

introduction also contains statements from which a more specific and in-depth thesis could be synthesized, which corresponds to what has been achieved in the dissertation.

The goal is adequate and serious. Although logic is the goal to stem from the thesis, in this case it shows in particular the main parameters of the dissertation research.

In fulfillment of the main parameters of the study, 7 more specific tasks have been formulated.

3. Volume and structuring

The dissertation has a total volume of 152 pages, with the main text being 131 pages. 7 tables and 19 figures are included.

The structure of the dissertation is classic in 3 chapters. It is logical, balanced and contributes to the realization of the set goals.

The first chapter is entitled *"Transformation as a way to develop economic systems"*. Formulated in this way, the title of the first chapter does not correspond to the relevance of the topic set out in the introduction and the substantive conclusions from the chapter itself.

The second chapter discusses *"Mechanisms for optimization of transformation processes in the economy"*.

The third chapter is visited on *"The multidimensionality of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the processes of economic transformation"*.

4. Methodology

The methodology of the study includes descriptive, analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, generalization, scientific observations, methods of structural-functional, historical, logical, comparative and statistical analysis. Specialized macroeconomic measures are used: *Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI); Index of Sectoral Structural Transformation; Integral Coefficient of Structural Differences of Gatev and other similar indicators.*

5. Empiricism

The empirical part of the dissertation includes a study among EU member states from Eastern Europe: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia.

6. Citation and References

The list of references includes 127 sources, most of which are in English. The citation is correct in the accepted APA standard.

7. Style

The style as a whole is good from a linguistic point of view. However, it is not uncommon to use unnecessarily long sentences, which does not contribute to the scientific level of the dissertation.

8. Typography

The layout is very good.

9. Results achieved and contributions

It can be assumed that the tasks set have been completed successfully.

There are 5 contributions that essentially represent key results. As a wording with an editorial omission, the first two have remained as intentions.

10. Positive aspects

In this study, current processes are traced, and an objective opportunity for their assessment is sought. The demonstrated striving for objectivity and comprehensive analysis, for which the author has included many specialized indicators for measuring digital transformation and readiness of the economy, deserves admiration.

11. Related publications

In connection with the dissertation, Goryan Milev has published two articles and one paper from a scientific conference. All three publications are independent, which forms 30 points and this covers the minimum requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

12. Abstract

The abstract meets the standards and objectively reflects the content and results of the dissertation research.

13. Notes and recommendations

1) My main note to this dissertation concerns the broad scope of the topic and the entire exposition – which can be defined as general economic (i.e. above macroeconomic). This also poses a difficult task in terms of the depth of research.

2) As a result of the topic posed in this way, there is also the more serious issue of financial issues, interpretation, methodology, analytical, concepts (fiscal, budgetary, interest, government debt...) - which are missing or slightly affected. This raises the question of whether the dissertation belongs to the scientific specialty in which the department works and in which the PhD student is enrolled.

3) The presentation as a whole has a descriptive character. It should highlight the problem areas and consider the possibilities for their purposeful management regarding the processes related to *the "structural transformation in the Bulgarian economy and the transition to digitalization and automation"* and, accordingly, the necessary government policy and fiscal measures.

4) There are also reservations regarding the methodology used and, accordingly, the analyticalism achieved.

5) The results of the calculated coefficients in the empirical third chapter are left without generalizing conclusions, which invalidates the significance of the analysis.

6) The presentation of the final results suffers from a lack of specificity. Their formulation is largely in the style of research intentions or a conceptual paradigm.

7) There are weaknesses of an editorial nature – such as the need to:
   - summarizing the object of the study;
   - supplementing and deepening the research thesis;

- refinement of the title of Chapter 1;
- A lot of editorial omissions have been overlooked.

8) There are current dissertations and publications on similar topics on the state of digital services and e-government in Greece during and after the COVID pandemic, which have not fallen within the reach of the PhD student.

14. Questions to the defense

The results of the assessment of Bulgaria's digital readiness, according to the Cisco General Readiness Index for 2024, show weak and negative values on various indicators that place our country last in the EU countries.

- What financial dimensions does this have?
- And what financial dimensions do the necessary measures have to improve this bad situation?

15. Conclusion

Despite the above remarks and recommendations, my overall opinion of Goryan Milev's dissertation is positive. I believe that the presented dissertation possesses the necessary quantitative and qualitative characteristics for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

28.07.2025

Author of the standpoint: ....

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