

**To the Head of the Department
"Control and Analysis of Economic Activity"
D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov**

REVIEW

From: Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Rositsa Koleva
D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov
Department of "Control and Analysis of Economic Activity"
Scientific specialty "Accounting, Control and Analysis of Economic Activity"

Subject: Doctoral dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the doctoral program "Accounting, Control and Analysis of Economic Activity (Control)" at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Basis for presenting the review: Participation in the scientific jury for the defense of the doctoral dissertation, pursuant to Order No. 343/24.04.2025 of Assoc. Prof. Marin Marinov, Rector of the Academy

Author of the dissertation: Todor Georgiev Gogov
Title of the dissertation: "Internal Audit in the Prevention and Detection of Fraud in Organizations (Using the Example of Public Enterprises in the Republic of Bulgaria)"

Academic supervisor: Prof. Dr. Georgi Ivanov

1. Information about the PhD candidate

The candidate is enrolled in the doctoral program "Accounting, Control and Analysis of Economic Activity (Control and Analysis)" at the Department of "Control and Analysis of Economic Activity" within the Faculty of "Business Accounting" at the Academy, pursuant to Order No. 254/26.04.2022 of the Rector.

Todor Gogov obtained his higher education at the University of Oil and Gas, Ploiești, Romania, earning a Bachelor's degree in "Public Administration" in 2003, and a Master's degree in "Internal Audit" in 2015 at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

Mr. Gogov's professional experience is closely connected with audit activities. He has worked as an internal auditor at "Lukoil Neftochim Burgas" AD; Head of "Control, Analysis, and Pricing" at "Altest IGT" EOOD; Expert in "Internal Control" at "Audit Burgas" EOOD; Internal Auditor at "Energo-Pro" EAD; and as Manager "Internal Audit and Control," Procurator and Member of the Board of Directors, and Director of "Internal Audit" at "Monbat" AD.

He is proficient in Romanian, Russian, and English (both written and spoken).

2. General characteristics of the presented dissertation

The dissertation consists of 205 computer-typed pages, structured into: an introduction, a main body in three chapters, including 35 tables and 11 figures, a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices.

The introduction justifies the relevance and significance of the topic, as well as the subject, object, goal, and the resulting tasks, methodology, approaches, and research limitations. The thesis is defined as follows: in the internal audit practice of Bulgarian public enterprises, specific limitations exist in the responsibilities of internal auditors related to the prevention and detection of fraud. These limitations may impair the adequacy and effectiveness of internal audit, and finding solutions to overcome them could enhance its role and significance in combating fraud in these organizations. Four research tasks are formulated to specify the goal of the dissertation.

The three chapters sequentially examine the theoretical, methodological, and applied aspects of internal audit, the responsibilities of internal auditors in fraud prevention and detection, internal audit approaches for fraud risk assessment, and the audit tools used during assurance engagements when fraud is suspected. In the conclusion, the author summarizes the main results of the comprehensive study. This structure provides coherence and depth across the parts of the dissertation when substantiating specific characteristics, hypotheses, models, approaches, arguments, and recommendations for management practice.

3. Evaluation of the scientific and applied results

The dissertation presents a comprehensive systematic scientific study and in-depth analysis of internal audit practices in fraud prevention and detection. The candidate's research achievements, both scientific and applied, can be summarized in the following areas:

First, the study focuses on the theoretical and conceptual characteristics of fraud and the classifications of occupational fraud. It provides a detailed justification of the fundamental role of management in establishing,

implementing, and maintaining adequate risk management systems (including fraud risks) and the obligation to take all necessary actions to reduce such risks to an acceptably low level.

Second, an in-depth scientific and practical analysis is conducted on the main responsibilities of internal auditors in fraud prevention and detection. Based on data from the author's survey among internal auditors in public enterprises, certain limitations and major challenges faced in fulfilling these responsibilities are highlighted.

Third, a new conceptual framework is proposed, with specific steps and a model approach for identifying and assessing fraud risks. The assessment of the actual state of internal audit practices in public enterprises reveals serious shortcomings in auditors' responsibilities in this area.

Fourth, specific problems are identified in the use of audit tools during assurance engagements related to fraud prevention and detection, which may reduce audit quality and responsibility execution.

Fifth, the dissertation includes a research design that evaluates the synergistic effect of possible improvements in internal audit practices concerning fraud prevention and detection in Bulgarian public enterprises. It emphasizes minimizing the impact of existing weaknesses and limitations in auditors' responsibilities regarding:

- fulfillment of internal auditors' core responsibilities in fraud prevention and detection;
- identification and assessment of fraud risk and how it is managed by the organization;
- use of specific tools by internal auditors during assurance engagements when fraud is suspected;
- a summary of the achieved results, supported by strong correlations between the studied factors and circumstances reflecting the views of survey respondents – internal auditors from public enterprises in Bulgaria.

With the results of the studies, evaluations, and analyses, the doctoral candidate convincingly proves the validity of the thesis that there are specific limitations in internal audit practices in Bulgarian public enterprises that may compromise its adequacy and effectiveness. Identifying solutions to these issues would improve the role and importance of internal audit in fraud prevention and detection in such organizations.

The dissertation constitutes a complete study with specific theoretical and applied scientific results, confirmed through the application of a well-argued methodological toolkit for identifying audit practices. This proves that the candidate possesses an adequate level of specialized knowledge in the subject

area, which underpins the topic selection, research methodology, and a pragmatic approach to proving the doctoral thesis and fulfilling the objectives and tasks of the study.

4. Evaluation of scientific and applied contributions

The author identifies five contributions, relating to the enrichment of knowledge through addressing an important scientific problem – the theoretical, methodological, and practical relevance of internal auditors' responsibilities in public enterprises for fraud prevention and detection, and the identification of opportunities for improving practice.

I accept the List of Contributions in the abstract as realistic and reflective of the research results. In my opinion, the main contribution is the identification of key weaknesses and limitations in the application of internal auditors' responsibilities in fraud prevention and detection, along with concrete measures to overcome them and improve internal audit practice in this aspect – fully aligned with the stated thesis aimed at enhancing internal audit in the fight against fraud in organizations.

5. Evaluation of the dissertation-related publications

Three scientific publications have been submitted in support of the dissertation. I believe they accurately reflect the author's scientific potential and contribute to the dissemination of the research results among academic and professional audiences.

6. Evaluation of the abstract

The abstract consists of 52 pages, and both structurally and conceptually reproduces the dissertation. Its content objectively presents the purpose, tasks, research thesis, author's contributions, practical significance of the scientific results, and the justified proposals from the research.

7. Critical notes, recommendations and questions

I have no critical notes or recommendations regarding the dissertation, despite some minor inaccuracies of a formal nature, which do not alter my positive assessment of the work.

8. Conclusion

The dissertation meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. Taking into account the relevance and significance of the conducted scientific research, the defined scientific and applied results, and the

specific proposals made for management practice, I give a positive assessment of the dissertation and a favorable conclusion — in support of awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Economics to PhD candidate Todor Georgiev Gogov in professional field 3.8. Economics, doctoral program "Accounting, Control, and Business Analysis (Control and Analysis)."

May 7, 2025
Sofia

Signature:
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rositsa Koleva)