

## OPINION

**From:** Prof. Dr. Tatiana Hubenova-Delisivkova, Institute for Economic Research of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

**Regarding:** dissertation on professional field 3.8. Economics, DP-Economics and Economic Policy for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

**Author of the dissertation: Mihail Raychev Raev**, part-time doctoral student in professional direction 3.8 Economics, DP-Economics and economic policy for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"

**Dissertation topic: ECONOMIC REFORMS IN GREECE AND PORTUGAL (1999-2018) – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

**Research supervisor: Assoc.Professor Dr. Mariela Nenova-Amar**

**Reason for presenting the opinion:** participation in the composition of the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation of Mihail Raychev Raev on the basis of Order RD 38-207/08.05.2024 of the Rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" and the provision of Art. 4, para. 5, 6 and 7 of ZRASRB and decision of the scientific jury according to Protocol No. 1 / 17.05.2024

The opinion was developed in accordance with the ZRASRB, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

### 1. Information about the dissertation student

Mr.Mihail Raychev Raev has a bachelor's degree in the Faculty of History of the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. Cyril and Methodius" (1996-2001) and a master's degree in economics (Macroeconomics) in the period 2009-2012 in the Faculty of Economics of the University of Sofia. St. Church of Ohrid". In the period (2019-F2023), he studied as a part-time doctoral student in a doctoral program in the Department of Economics of the Faculty of Economics of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski". He speaks English and Russian, as well as uses German, French and Greek.

### 2. General characteristics of the dissertation

The presented dissertation has a total volume of 279 pages, of which the exposition includes 205 pages, and the remaining 74 pages contain used literature and three appendices. The dissertation is devoted to the analysis of the experience of Greece and Portugal in the management of the crisis of their public finances in the conditions of the European sovereign debt crisis. The chosen issue is essential for the functioning of the Economic and Monetary Union of the EU in the last 15 years and a problem that remains relevant even at the modern stage of superimposed crises and new challenges to state finances and the development of the integration of the countries of the Eurozone. Given the objective methodological difficulties in evaluating economic reforms and their complex relationship with political and

institutional factors of development in the countries under consideration, the overall consideration of the chosen topic of the dissertation is subordinated to the chosen historical-economic sequence of interpretation of the problems. Based on the selected and well-argued theoretical-methodological framework of the analysis, the doctoral student successfully and at a high professional level coped with the comparative-analytical analysis of the economic, political and institutional changes in Greece and Portugal during the crisis of their public finances as members of the Eurozone during the European debt crisis.

The dissertation is structured in an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, 3 appendices and a bibliography. The chosen structure fully corresponds to the main goals and objectives of the study.

**In the introduction**, a detailed argumentation of the relevance of the research is made and its goals, main tasks, object and subject, and hypotheses are defined. The main research thesis is clearly formulated and the main types of research methods are briefly described. The way of structuring the dissertation is described and the most important author's contributions are presented in a synthesized form.

**The first chapter** has a theoretical-methodological character and serves as a conceptual basis for the subsequent factual analysis. It presents the theoretical foundations of the research on the topic of fiscal sustainability and financial crises. Attention is paid to the role of formal and informal institutions. In fulfillment of the research objective, the doctoral student seeks to substantiate the role of the elite for economic policy. Public choice theory and the new political economy are thoroughly interpreted in support of the presented conceptualization of the theoretical framework.

**The second chapter** is devoted to the analysis of the manifestation of long-term stagnation and concentrates on tracing the role and the way of evaluating the natural interest rate. The political development of Greece and institutional changes in the period (1974-2009) are examined. Assessments of the economic development of the country in the period (1974-2009) are summarized - the causes and chronology of the crisis with the national debt of Greece (2009-2010) and the development of the political and economic crisis (2010 - 2018) are summarized. ) The OECD recommendations for reforms in Greece from 1992 to 2001 are interpreted. The restructuring programs (2010, 2012 and 2015) are examined and a comparison is made with the recommendations of the OECD reports.

**The third chapter** includes a historical-analytical interpretation of the problematic on the subject of the example of Portugal. Based on the analysis of the economic and political development of Portugal in the period (1974-1999) and from the accession to the Eurozone until the crisis in 2011, the problems of the sovereign debt crisis (2011-2014) are analyzed. Following the selected comparative approach, the doctoral student evaluates the implementation of the OECD recommendations for reforms in Portugal from 1992 to 2001. The Restructuring Program (June 2011) as a consequence of the management of the European sovereign debt crisis is analyzed. The comparison of the reforms in the OECD reports and the restructuring program of Portugal under the auspices of the Troika of official international institutions is substantiated.

**In the fourth chapter**, economic reforms in Greece and Portugal and the role of the elite in changing institutional constraints (1999-2018), the similarities and differences in economic reforms, as well as institutional constraints and change, are brought out. The considered constraints on institutional change contribute to clarifying the main conclusions of the analysis. Based on the application of the theoretical model, the general characteristics of the comparison of economic reforms between 1999 and 2018 have been derived. At the end of each of the four chapters, a brief summary of the performed analysis is made and the most important author's contributions are formulated.

**The conclusion** contains the most important theoretical and empirical results of the dissertation work, which prove the confirmation of the formulated research thesis.

The dissertation analysis has been based on the necessary information supply and argumentation. Correctly, 236 titles are included in the bibliography, of which 10 titles are in Bulgarian and 157 titles are in English, as well as some titles in Greek. Statistical data are provided by 8 sources. 3 appendices are presented in a volume of 74 pages (from p. 205 to p. 279), which supplement the analysis of the experience of the countries under consideration by chapters. The contents includes 7 tables and 8 figures, which contributes to the clarity of the presentation. The dissertation has been developed independently and testifies to the very good theoretical training of the author, as well as his ambition to make a convincing and reasoned empirical analysis based on the use of appropriate scientific research tools.

### **3. Evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions and results**

The doctoral student objectively evaluates the achieved results and conclusions based on his analysis with the contributions presented. The nature of the analysis and the problematic issues under focus that interpret the interaction of economics and politics are determined by the fact that with the main results achieved, the doctoral student also offers specific points of contribution.

According to my assessment and in confirmation of the analysis due, we could summarize the main results and contributing points of the dissertation in the following directions:

**First of all:** A theoretical-methodological framework has been developed and applied for the study of economic reforms depending on institutional-political constraints in Greece and Portugal as members of the EU and the Eurozone in overcoming the European sovereign debt crisis. This framework includes macroeconomic requirements and conditions, as well as the assessment of the role of political elites and of institutional and political processes for the implementation of crisis management.

**Secondly:** A substantive analysis of the economic and socio-political development of Greece and Portugal after 1974 was made, with an emphasis on the period after 2010, when intensive changes were made in the legislation and institutions of both countries. It has been shown that in Greece there are institutional constraints that prevent the country from quickly overcoming the sovereign debt crisis, while in Portugal the emergence of the debt crisis is a consequence of the struggle between

political elites for institutional change and overcoming the institutional constraints imposed by the constitution and specific laws and regulations.

**Thirdly:** An original comparative analysis of the OECD's recommendations for long-term reforms with the reforms in the Programs under the auspices of the Troika for economic restructuring of Greece and Portugal during the European debt crisis was made. The analysis highlights the multifactorial dependencies and long-term scope of the reform processes in the countries under consideration.

**Fourthly:** An assessment of the success rate of the Economic Restructuring Programs created by the Troika is synthesized, taking into account the role of individual elite structures and actors in society and their influence on institutional change in Greece and Portugal. In fifth place: The independent author's assessment of the lessons for Bulgaria in connection with the preparations for the Eurozone, are related to the need to adapt public finances and analyse the need for political consensus among the political elites in the course of economic governance.

#### **4. Evaluation of dissertation publications**

The PhD student M.Raev has presented three publications on the subject of the dissertation - two of which are AS FOLLOWS:1) in the Yearbook of the Sofia UNIVERSITY "St.Kl. Ohridski" respectively from 2022 (volume 21) in a volume of 18 pages and 2) IN THE Yearbook from 2023 (volume 22 ) in a volume of 26 pages.

The third publication is in The Economic Research Guardian – Vol. 13(1)2023 Semi-annual Online Journal, www.ecrg.ro ISSN: 2247-8531, ISSN-L: 2247-8531 Econ Res Guard 13(1): 16-30 Notes on the Accumulation of Greek Public Debt between 1981 and 2000, Mikhail Raev Based on the presented publications, it can be assumed that they include significant results of the dissertation, which confirms that the work can be defined as sufficiently approved.

#### **5. Evaluation of the Summary of the PHD Thesis**

The summary of the dissertation is 44 pages long. The contents presents correctly, precisely and in the necessary completeness the main results of the dissertation work.

#### **6. Critical notes, recommendations and questions**

The above discussed merits of the dissertation are undoubted.

At the same time, certain weaknesses can be pointed out. The dissertation work could have focused more on the general characteristics of the European debt crisis, as well as on the forced institutional changes in the mechanism and tools of the economic management of the Eurozone in connection with this crisis. The reflection of these changes in the functioning of the Eurozone, however, has a significant impact on the economic reforms in Greece and Portugal in the historical period under consideration.

It can also be recommended that more Bulgarian publications be included when the dissertation is to be published.

The mentioned critical remarks do not change the positive impression of Milen Raev's dissertation work.

I suggest that the doctoral student M.Raev may answer two questions during the defense:

- 1) to summarize the main conclusions from the comparison of the experience in the economic reforms of Greece and Portugal under the Teroika Programmes;
- 2) to make a general assessment of the interaction of economic and domestic political factors as a condition for the progress of economic reforms.

**7. Conclusion:** The presented PhD thesis by PhD student Mihail Raychev Raev represents a complete, independent and in-depth scientific study of current and unexplored quite sufficiently problems in the Bulgarian economic literature. It has an analytical nature and contains indisputable points of contribution to the evaluation of the crisis management of economic reforms in the Eurozone countries in conditions of a debt crisis of their public finances.

I strongly support the positive evaluation of the doctoral student Mihail Raychev Raev's dissertation and suggest to the members of the respected Scientific Jury that we confidently and unanimously support the his awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional field 3.8. "Economics", DP-Economics and Economic Policy.

17.06.2024



Prepared the opinion:

(Prof. T. Houbenova-Delisivkova)