

REVIEWER'S POSITION

on a dissertation work for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. Economics, the scientific specialty "Economics and management (agriculture)"

Author of the dissertation: Gueorgui Borissov Guerov, full-time doctoral student at the Department of Economics at the Agrarian University, Plovdiv

Dissertation topic: Adaptation of Bulgarian agriculture: balancing national interests and the EU green policies

The opinion was prepared by: Associate Professor Iskra Markova Nencheva – Ivanova, PhD, Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Scientific Region 3. Social, economic and legal sciences; in a professional direction: 3.8. Economics; in the scientific specialty of Economics and Management (agriculture) appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order No. № RD16-969/03.10.2025 the Rector of the Agrarian University, Plovdiv.

1. Relevance of the problem.

The present study focuses on sustainable development in the agricultural sector through an integrated approach that combines institutional analysis, strategic planning and evaluation of applied results. The topic of the adaptation of Bulgarian agriculture to the Green Deal and European environmental policies is of paramount importance in the context of the global climate crisis and the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The analysis of the adaptation potential of the sector to the Green Deal is not only timely, but imperative, as it serves as a scientific basis for developing policies that guarantee a balance between the economic, social and environmental priorities of Bulgaria.

The chosen topic is dissertable and allows for reasoned conclusions, proposals and the formulation of contributing aspects. The topic has both theoretical and practical application. The doctoral candidate sufficiently substantiates the relevance and significance of the scientific research, supporting his thesis with results from specific studies.

2. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and research methods.

The purpose and tasks of the dissertation are related to the research thesis and are the basis of the well-composed structure and content of the dissertation. The tasks clearly define the directions in which the work is developed. They are correctly defined.

The research tools used, encompassing various methods and approaches, are appropriate for the purpose and tasks of the study, and have been applied correctly. The scientific tools are appropriate for the specific issue and allow for reasoned conclusions to be drawn. The research methods are appropriately selected. The adopted restrictive conditions refine the research framework.

The methods of analysis in this study are based on a systematic and holistic approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods in order to objectively study the complex dynamics between national interests and European green policies in agriculture.

In the empirical part of the study, quantitative methods have been applied, aimed at an objective assessment of the influence of economic, environmental and demographic factors on the adaptation capacity of the sector.

The research methods are appropriately selected. The adopted restrictive conditions refine the research framework.

The sources of information are contemporary. They are also supported by the author's own research.

3. Visualization and presentation of the obtained results.

The dissertation work submitted for evaluation by doctoral student Gueorgui Guerov on the topic "Adaptation of Bulgarian agriculture: balancing national interests and the EU green policies" is a logically connected, in-depth and wide-ranging scientific research, developed in a total volume of 245 standard pages and consists of: an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion and used literature. A good balance has been achieved between the chapters of the study in terms of their volumes, as well as their individual paragraphs, and in their entirety they represent an independently completed study. Each chapter ends with adequately summarized conclusions.

The dissertation is illustrated and contains 24 tables and 27 figures. Through them, the doctoral student has correctly systematized and objectively presented the obtained results of the dissertation research.

The bibliography includes 236 sources. The sources correspond to the thematic focus of the dissertation work. The literary sources used are accurately cited in accordance with the requirements. No significant deviations from the norms of scientific and professional ethics have been identified.

The language and style of the presentation in the dissertation work are at a good level. No repetitions and deviations in the presentation are identified. The work is properly structured. There is a proportionality of its individual parts.

I believe that the doctoral student categorically presents his scientific positions, which makes it possible to outline the contributing moments of a theoretical and practical-applied nature in the dissertation work.

4. Discussion of the results and used literature.

The dissertation work of doctoral student Gueorgui Borissov Guerov on the topic "Adaptation of Bulgarian agriculture: balancing national interests and the EU green policies" submitted for evaluation is a logically connected, in-depth and wide-ranging scientific research,

The introduction contains all the necessary elements. The object and subject, research goal and tasks are correctly defined. The goal and tasks of the dissertation work are related to the research thesis and are the basis of the well-composed structure and content of the dissertation work. The tasks clearly define the directions in which the work is developed. The doctoral student sufficiently substantiates the relevance and significance of the scientific research, supporting his thesis with results of specific studies. The object and subject of the dissertation work are clearly formulated, which implies the disclosure of good practices and solutions.

The structure of the dissertation is consistently built so as to move from theoretical justification to practical applicability.

In chapter one of the dissertation, the theoretical and methodological foundation is laid through an interpretation of classical and contemporary paradigms for

sustainability and institutional adaptability in the agricultural sector. Including an analysis of conflict and synergy points between local needs and European regulations, identification of strategic directions for overcoming structural weaknesses in the sector. The doctoral student presents various theories of adaptation and sustainability. The emphasis is on the conceptual frameworks of adaptation in agriculture, emphasizing the importance of the EU's green policies on Bulgarian agriculture.

The first chapter outlines the conceptual framework of sustainability, based on international and national scientific experience, and systematizes the key factors determining the effectiveness of sectoral policies. On this basis, the research framework is set, seeking a balance between the implementation of European regulations (such as the Green Deal and the Common Agricultural Policy) and the preservation of the specificity of the Bulgarian agrarian sector, including its historical, cultural and structural features.

The second chapter presents the overall research architecture. It structures a critical and innovative methodological toolkit, including three authorial indices, allowing for an integral assessment of economic, environmental and social parameters. The chapter analyzes the content and application of strategic and regulatory documents, assessing their coherence and realism.

The source of the research data is indicated - NSI, World Bank, Eurostat, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Ministry of Agriculture and Food, State Fund for Agriculture, etc. The use of such diverse and reputable sources guarantees high reliability, comparability and validity of the collected data, which is essential for the assessments and conclusions made

The time scope of the study is 1990 to 2022 with a set of quantitative indicators included. The period was chosen in view of the significant socio-economic, institutional and environmental changes that have occurred in Bulgarian agriculture.

Географският обхват на изследването е национален с акцент върху регионалните различия (ниво NUTS 2), което дава възможност да се анализират демографските, икономическите и институционалните различия между Северозападна и Южна България.

Through 16 formulated and illustrated hypotheses, and a precisely presented research thesis, the complex nature of adaptation is presented in all its aspects - ecological, economic, social and spatial. The selected indicators in the second chapter allow to track both the internal dynamics of the sector and the degree of its compatibility with the goals of sustainable development and the Green Deal of the European Union. The selection made ensures analytical clarity and methodological consistency, allowing for the verification of the hypotheses and the drawing of justified conclusions about the state and potential of Bulgarian agriculture in the process of adaptation to the ecological and institutional transformations imposed by European policies.

In the third chapter, an empirical analysis is made of the dynamics of the sector in the period 1990–2022, revealing statistically significant dependencies and trade-offs between productivity, demography and environmental sustainability.

The third chapter presents an analytical model through which political and managerial mechanisms for achieving sustainability can be assessed.

The work contains specific results and empirical evidence that objectively reflect the real achievements of the conducted scientific research. The research tasks have been implemented, the research thesis has been defended and the main goal of the

dissertation has been achieved.

The fourth chapter offers a multi-layered model of sustainability, in which practical results and theoretical foundations complement each other. It demonstrates through the analysis how the transformed theoretical conclusions and empirical dependencies can be turned into political instruments. The presented scenarios outline a path to sustainability through cooperative structures, digitalization and export-ecological balances. The emphasis on coordination between national and European priorities leads to the formulation of applicable policies with local legitimacy. The integration of monitoring and adaptability as a systemic mechanism is proposed as a basic element for a new agrarian paradigm.

Based on the analysis made in the dissertation, specific conclusions and recommendations have been formulated, aimed at strengthening institutional capacity and optimizing management processes.

My general conclusion is that a dissertation is a comprehensive, complete, well-structured study with significant scientific and applied scientific results on a current and significant problem, which shows that the doctoral student is capable of independently conducting scientific research.

5. Contributions of the dissertation work.

I accept the main results and contributions formulated by doctoral student Gueorgui Guerov, contained in the dissertation work. The contributions in the dissertation work can be divided into scientific and scientifically applied. They enrich scientific knowledge and support practice. And they realistically reflect the achieved results and emphasize the significance of the research topic. I accept the contributions as real, reliable and proven in the course of the dissertation research.

6. Critical notes and questions.

I have no significant critical notes or recommendations regarding the dissertation.

7. Published articles and citations.

5 publications related to the dissertation work in English are presented. The publications presented are scientific reports in co-authorship (2 pcs.) and scientific articles (3 pcs.), of which 2 of them are independent.

The presented abstract, amounting to 40 pages, presents the complete and accurate content of the dissertation work. The abstract is presented in a synthesized form that meets the requirements. It is written in a clear, understandable and scientifically sound style, reflecting the main points in the dissertation and giving a clear idea of the achievements of the doctoral student. The abstract contains the necessary logical sequence. It includes the general characteristics of the development, structure and content, a brief presentation of the dissertation work, main conclusions and recommendations, contributions and publications on the topic.

A reference for citations is not presented.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the different research methods learned and applied by the doctoral student, the correctly conducted experiments, the generalizations and conclusions made, I consider that the presented dissertation meets the requirements of the ZRASRB and the Regulations of the Agrarian University for its application, which gives me reason to evaluate it POSITIVE.

I would like to propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to also vote positively and award Gueorgui Borissov Guerov the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)".

Date: 28.10.2025 г.
Stara Zagora

REVIEWER:

(Assoc. prof. Iskra Nencheva- Ivanova, PhD)