

EVALUATION STATEMENT

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UNWE-Sofia, Professional Field 3.8 „Economics”

About: Dissertation Thesis for awarding the scientific degree **„Doctor of Sciences”** in Professional Field 3.8 „Economics” at ERI-BAS.

Author **Prof. Dr. Viktor Ivanov Yotzov**
Title Between Efficiency and Equity: Assessment of the Flat Tax Effects in Central and Eastern European Countries

The Review is submitted on the basis of:

Participation in the Scientific Jury constituted for the procedure on the defense of the dissertation thesis according to Order № 124 / 27.02.2026 of the Director of the Economics Research Institute /ERI/ at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

1. General Description of the Dissertation

The presented dissertation comprises of 301 pages in total, including 253 pages of main text, 8 pages of bibliography, and 40 pages of appendices. Structurally, the thesis consists of an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion (presented as Chapter 7). The list of specialized literature sources contains 119 titles, all of which are in English. The dissertation includes a significant amount of illustrative material, comprising 50 diagrams and 21 tables.

Given the indisputable relevance of the topic, the dissertation focuses on four key research questions along with four working hypotheses, the examination of which structures both the theoretical framework and the related empirical analyses. The depth of the performed scientific research required a methodology that includes both quantitative tools (including econometric analysis of panel data) and a qualitative approach such as the case study method. The author also formulates a general thesis, according to which tax policy requires *“a nuanced approach: the optimal choice depends on institutional capacity, the degree of inequality, public preferences for solidarity, fiscal needs, and the package of accompanying reforms.”* The use of reliable empirical data of high methodological quality regarding selected indicators for CEE countries for the period 1995-2024 also makes a favorable impression.

Chapter One presents the theoretical framework and the political-economic rationale behind the relevant reforms, including the channels through which they affect investment, employment, growth, and other dimensions. The

second chapter contains a theoretical analysis of the “flat tax” concept and the related institutional reforms in CEE countries. The third chapter presents the data sources and policy operationalization variables, as well as the analytical models for empirical analysis. Chapter Four presents the results of the statistical estimation of the panel regression models along with the diagnostic tests. The fifth chapter presents the results of the analysis of the Bulgarian case, including the analytical estimates obtained by the implementation of a specific “counterfactual” method. Chapter Six summarizes the findings regarding the implemented policies, with a focus on the design of the tax system and its interaction with the social security burden. The conclusion synthesizes the results regarding the hypotheses raised, the research questions, and the limitations of the study, while outlining directions for future research.

2. Fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the academic degree “Doctor of Science”

2.1. Requirements of the Regulation on Awarding Academic Degrees and Assigning Academic Positions at the Economics Research Institute (ERI) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Art. 59, para. 3)

Given the scientific and applied achievements in the dissertation, it can be confirmed that it contains theoretical generalizations which represent an original contribution to science and address clearly formulated, significant applied and scientific problems in economic analysis, corresponding to contemporary achievements in the field of macroeconomic and fiscal policy. The work is precisely structured, and the results achieved are presented in a clear and logical sequence. The content of the dissertation attests to the author’s substantial knowledge of the theory and specialized scientific literature in the field, as well as his scientific competence in systematizing and critically analyzing contemporary achievements related to the topic of the study.

The dissertation contains substantial scientific and applied contributions corresponding to the current state-of-art, including the conceptualization and argumentation of a significant economic phenomenon such as income taxation; the author’s adjustment of the econometric methodology for empirical analysis and explanation of key economic processes; the development and validation of a comprehensive methodological toolkit for conducting the designed empirical analysis and achieving experimental research results of a high scientific standard. I accept the main scientific contributions to the dissertation as formulated in the Report; they reflect the new scientific and applied results contained in the thesis, obtained through the author’s research on the chosen topic.

2.2. Minimum requirements of ERI at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences by indicator groups

The information presented regarding the publications related to the dissertation and the identified citations provide grounds for the following conclusions regarding the fulfillment of the minimum scientometric requirements of ERI-BAS for the award of the academic degree “Doctor of Science.”

- The indicators from Groups A and B have been fulfilled – the dissertation author holds a PhD degree (in scientific specialty “Finance, Monetary Circulation, Credit, and Insurance,” Higher Attestation Committee Diploma No. 27696 / 21.01.2002), as well as a completed dissertation for the award of the academic degree of “Doctor of Science.”

- The minimum required score for Group D is 100 points, and the submitted publications (all single-authored) provide nearly double that score (195 points), including 120 points from extended articles /2/, articles, and conference reports published in scientific journals indexed in world-renowned scientific databases; 75 points from extended articles /1/, articles, and conference reports published in peer-reviewed journals, proceedings, or edited volumes.

- The minimum required output for Group D is 100 points; the citations submitted account for nearly four times that amount (390 points), including 210 points from citations in scientific publications indexed in world-renowned scientific databases; 110 points from citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes; 60 points from citations in peer-reviewed journals.

2.3. Originality of the presented work and reliability of the scientific data (pursuant to Article 4, Paragraph 9, Item 1 of the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria).

An examination of the content of the thesis reveals no unacceptable violations of the standard rules of scientific ethics and integrity; there are grounds to confirm the originality of the works presented and the reliability of the scientific results, as well as the doctoral candidate’s authorship in their production.

3. Critical comments, recommendations, and questions

The thesis demonstrates the candidate’s ability to formulate meaningful research questions and hypotheses, to identify appropriate methodological approaches to seeking empirical support within the framework of available information resources. The dissertation lacks an overall formulated objective and tasks integrated with it, other than those providing a conceptual rationale and empirical evidence in search of answers to the raised research questions, which I

accept as author's personal choice. I would recommend that the doctoral candidate seek additional opportunities to publish his research findings in prestigious international academic journals. Given the significance of the topic for Bulgarian economic science and policy, I would recommend that, following a successful defense, the dissertation is published as a standalone book based on the defended thesis.

4. Conclusion

There are no doubts that the dissertation submitted for review is a result of sustained and in-depth research in the chosen field, containing systematic generalizations and analytical information on important scientific and applied policy issues. Based on the above assessments, I consider that the requirements I consider that the requirements of the Law on Academic Staff Development (Article 12), the Regulation for its implementation (Article 37) and the Regulation on the Procedures for Awarding Academic Degrees and Assigning Academic Positions at the Economic Research Institut at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences **have been met**. I suggest a **positive assessment** of the dissertation on the topic "*Between Efficiency and Equity: An Assessment of the Effects of the Flat Tax in Central and Eastern European Countries*," and I propose the Scientific Jury to award to **Prof. Dr. Viktor Ivanov Yotsov** the academic degree of "Doctor of Science" in the Professional Field 3.8 "Economics".

24.04.2026
Sofia

Signed:
/ Prof. Dr. V. Boshnakov /