

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yana Kirilova, Institute for Economic Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

on the materials submitted for participation in a procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in Professional Area 3.8. Economics

Candidate: Anton Ognyanov Peychev

Title of the doctoral dissertation: "The Role of Circular Economy Transition Policies for Economic Growth (on the example of the waste economy)"

1. Grounds for Submitting the Statement

This statement has been prepared in accordance with Order No. 328/08.05.2026 of the Director of the Institute for Economic Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, by which I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the doctoral dissertation procedure for awarding the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" to doctoral candidate Anton Ognyanov Peychev, who has completed his doctoral training under the supervision of Prof. DSc (Econ.) Rositsa Rangelova.

2. General Description of the Submitted Materials

The set of materials provided by the Institute for Economic Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences includes all required documents for the procedure, as follows: doctoral dissertation, abstract, curriculum vitae, summary of main scientific contributions, list of publications, 4 publications related to the doctoral dissertation, a report on compliance with the minimum requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" by groups of indicators pursuant to Annex 1 of the Regulations for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at the IER-BAS, and an order approving the composition of the scientific jury.

3. General Characteristics of the Doctoral Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation has a total volume of 194 pages, of which 159 pages constitute the main text and 35 pages comprise appendices, including the bibliography. The text includes 15 tables and 9 figures. The bibliography contains 139 sources. The volume and structural organization of the work demonstrate a systematic and comprehensive research approach. A total of 4 scientific publications by the candidate on the topic of the doctoral dissertation have been submitted. The abstract has been prepared in accordance with good academic tradition and practice and correctly reflects the main content of the doctoral dissertation in an abridged format.

The doctoral dissertation of Anton Peychev is devoted to an up-to-date and socially significant problem: the interaction between European Union policies for the transition to a circular economy and economic growth, examined through the lens of waste management. The topic is particularly timely in the context of the active regulatory expansion of the Green Deal and the EU Circular Economy Action Plans, and the need for an empirical assessment of the real economic effects of these policies.

The research problem is clearly formulated: the relationship between the circular economy, waste management policies, and economic growth is not automatic or unidirectional, but is structurally conditioned by the level of economic development, the institutional

environment, and the material structure of the economy. The main objective of the dissertation - to assess the role of EU policies and legislation in the transition to a circular economy by examining their manifestation in waste management and their relationship with growth indicators - is specific, measurable and scientifically grounded.

In pursuit of this objective, the author sets five interrelated tasks: the theoretical positioning of the circular economy concept within economic science; analysis of the European regulatory framework in the field of waste; assessment of the comparability and reliability of statistical data; econometric investigation of the dependencies between circular economy indicators and GDP; and identification of the limitations of available data with proposals for improvement. This logical sequence demonstrates a sound understanding of the requirements of conducting scientific research.

The dissertation demonstrates **a thorough command of the relevant scientific literature**. The doctoral candidate successfully synthesizes contributions from classical, neoclassical, Keynesian and institutional economics, linking them to the concepts of sustainable development, green economy and circular economy. Excellent knowledge of the national and European regulatory frameworks related to waste management is demonstrated.

A particularly strong aspect of the doctoral dissertation is **the in-depth knowledge of the statistical databases** used to measure the circular economy and waste management. The author demonstrates not only the ability to work with Eurostat data, but also a critical assessment of their limitations that is rarely encountered in doctoral theses - an assessment that stems from his prior professional experience in the field of waste management. He systematically identifies and analyses a number of methodological problems: changes in the methods of calculating recycling indicators, the lack of full harmonization between the reporting methodologies applied by Member States for waste stream accounting, the high degree of data aggregation that prevents the simultaneous analysis of generated and recycled waste by stream and sector, as well as the biennial reporting frequency, which leads to time series of limited length. These findings are well argued and demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to adopt an independent and well-founded scientific position.

4. Scientific and Applied Contributions

The doctoral dissertation contains a number of scientific and applied results representing contributions to the field. At the theoretical level, the author proposes an integrated analytical framework for the circular economy that combines Keynesian, neoclassical and institutional arguments. Particularly valuable is the conclusion that the circular economy does not belong entirely to any single school of economic thought, but constitutes a mixed analytical framework - a position argued through the analysis of multiple theoretical currents and practical manifestations of European policy.

At the methodological level, the dissertation analyses the statistical base and the methodological limitations of circular economy data, and proposes the application of econometric methods to the specific context of waste management in Bulgaria.

At the practical-applied level, the dissertation formulates concrete recommendations for governance practice: harmonization of waste and circular economy reporting methodologies within the EU; introduction of more integrated indicators that account for the quality of secondary raw materials and the economic value of material flows; establishment of a periodic cycle of interim policy assessments; and development of national analytical monitoring capacity. These recommendations are directly linked to the

deficiencies identified in the research and are applicable at the national and European policy level.

Last but not least, the dissertation makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the limitations of the existing monitoring system for the circular economy, including the observation that statistics not only measure outcomes but also shape them through methodological choices, which calls into question the independence of empirical assessment. This is a conceptual contribution with potential for broader application in the field of policy evaluation.

5. Publications and Compliance with National Minimum Requirements

The candidate has submitted 4 publications on the topic of the doctoral dissertation. The regulatory requirements for admitting the candidate to participate in the procedure for the defense of a doctoral dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" have been met.

6. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

The doctoral dissertation is logically sound and well argued. As a recommendation, I would note the possibility of extending the time series of the research in the future, when reliable data become available, as well as the investigation of regional aspects of this subject matter following the approach of the present study.

I have the following question for the candidate: Do you believe that the results of the econometric analysis would change substantially if you had access to longer time series?

7. Conclusion

The doctoral dissertation and the materials submitted by Anton Ognyanov Peychev meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its implementing regulations.

Having reviewed the submitted set of materials, I give my **positive assessment** and recommend that the scientific jury award Anton Ognyanov Peychev the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in Professional Field 3.8. Economics.

Signature: _____

Associate Professor Dr. Yana Kirilova

Date: 5 June 2026