OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Nedyalko Mariev Nestorov, PhD, Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, member of the Scientific Jury appointed by Order No. 596/29.09.2026 of the Rector of Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", concerning a dissertation submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree Doctor, Professional Field 3.8 "Economics", Doctoral Program "Political Economy", entitled:

"Application of Game Theory and Behavioral Economics in Public Procurement Processes"

submitted by doctoral candidate **Lior Yaakov Agai.**

1. Brief Description of the Dissertation

The dissertation (written in English, comprising 243 printed pages, equivalent to 253 standard manuscript pages) follows a conventional structure consisting of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a statement of scientific contributions, 122 bibliographic references, and a declaration of originality. The object of the study is the public procurement system and its strategic management under conditions of competitive bidding, incomplete information, and regulatory accountability. The subject of the research concerns the influence of price anchors (opening price, estimated value, and absence of an anchor) on bidder participation over time and on professionals' perceptions of price thresholds.

The objective of the dissertation is to develop and empirically substantiate an integrated decision-support framework for public procurement, namely the Anchor-Driven Procurement Value Model (ADPVM). The four research questions and two hypotheses (H1-1 and H1-2) are conceptually and methodologically aligned with this objective, ensuring the internal coherence of the study.

The topic is highly relevant and practically significant. The integration of concepts from game theory, behavioral economics, and empirical research represents an appropriate interdisciplinary approach to the subject matter.

The professional background of the doctoral candidate, including managerial positions in the public sector, teaching experience, and consulting practice, contributes to the practical orientation and applicability of the research.

2. Evaluation of the Results and Contributions

The dissertation presents an in-depth theoretical and empirical examination of the role of price information in public procurement processes. A particular strength of the study is the combination of approaches from game theory, behavioral economics, and public procurement management, enabling the problem to be analyzed within a broader scientific context.

The research findings provide well-founded support for the central research thesis and are interpreted with appropriate scientific rigor. Particularly commendable is the careful distinction made between observed associations and causal relationships, as well as the clear recognition of the limitations inherent in the adopted research design.

The scientific and applied contributions presented in the dissertation are substantial, original, and directly related to the objectives and research tasks of the study. They enrich existing knowledge regarding the role of price information in public procurement, offer methodological approaches for its investigation, and create conditions for the practical application of the research findings. Especially valuable are the attempt to integrate different theoretical perspectives and the effort to develop an applicable analytical framework for supporting managerial decision-making.

I consider the stated contributions to be the doctoral candidate’s own work and regard them as sufficient in both scope and significance for a dissertation submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor.

3. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

The dissertation is based on an observational research approach that allows the identification of statistical relationships between the studied phenomena but imposes certain limitations on drawing definitive causal conclusions. Future research would benefit from the inclusion of a broader range of control variables related to the

characteristics of specific public procurement procedures, allowing for a more precise distinction between the influence of price information and the effects of other environmental factors.

The investigation of professional price perception represents an interesting and original component of the dissertation. At the same time, the sample and experimental design used necessitate a degree of caution when generalizing the findings. A promising avenue for future research would be the expansion of the empirical basis through larger samples and the application of alternative scenarios.

These remarks and recommendations do not call into question the scientific merits of the dissertation nor diminish the significance of its results and contributions. Rather, they indicate opportunities for further development and future scholarly inquiry.

4. Plagiarism

In the course of my evaluation, I did not identify similarities with other scientific works or any other forms of improper use of the research results of others. The dissertation has been prepared in accordance with established academic standards for citation and referencing, and it is accompanied by a declaration of originality.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, I consider the dissertation to be a completed and independent scholarly study with both theoretical and practical significance. The author demonstrates profound knowledge of the research topic, an ability to conduct independent scientific research, and skills in the critical analysis and interpretation of research findings.

On this basis, I give a positive evaluation of the dissertation and respectfully recommend that the Scientific Jury award Lior Yaakov Agai the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Doctoral Program Political Economy.

Date: 30 October 2026 Signature:……