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REVIEW

of the PhD dissertation "Legal Aspects of Trade and Economic Cooperation within the Framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization" submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty "8D04201 – International Law" by Zhang Ju, Faculty of International Relations, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

I. Value of the Dissertation

The relevance of Zhang Ju's dissertation is determined by the growing importance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization within the system of regional institutions of the Eurasian continent. In the context of global economic turbulence and the ongoing transformation of international trade models, the analysis of legal mechanisms governing economic relations within the SCO acquires particular scientific and practical significance.

The author conducted a comprehensive and in-depth examination of a wide range of the Organization's official documents, including founding instruments, multilateral agreements, and decisions of statutory bodies regulating trade, economic, investment, and transport-logistics cooperation.

The scientific value of the dissertation lies in the well-founded conclusion regarding the predominance of soft law instruments within the SCO's legal system, as well as in the author's development of conceptual approaches to the formation of legal enforcement mechanisms aimed at enhancing their effectiveness. The author convincingly substantiates the thesis concerning the pivotal role of memoranda, roadmaps, multilateral cooperation programs, and declarative documents in harmonizing the interests of member states. It is persuasively demonstrated that this legal model, combined with the fundamental principle of consensus-based decision-making, objectively reflects the specific nature of the SCO as an association uniting states with diverse legal traditions and economic systems.

II. Aim of the Dissertation

The primary aim of the dissertation is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the legal foundations and regulatory mechanisms governing trade and economic cooperation within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as well as to develop scientifically grounded proposals for improving the Organization's legal and institutional framework.

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In pursuit of this goal, the author consistently addresses a range of interrelated objectives, including:

– a systematic analysis of the SCO's normative and legal base;

– an examination of the institutional mechanisms regulating trade and economic interaction;

– the identification of gaps and inconsistencies in the legal regulation of key areas of cooperation;

– the formulation of specific proposals to improve the legal and institutional foundations of the SCO's activities; and

– the development of recommendations for harmonizing the national legislation of the member states in the context of expanding multilateral cooperation.

Collectively, the implementation of these objectives enables the author to achieve the overall goal of the research and to make a practical contribution to the further development of the SCO's legal framework.

III. Structure, Methodology, and Theoretical and Practical Significance

The PhD candidate demonstrates a high level of methodological competence, the ability to apply modern research methods, and strong analytical skills in examining a substantial body of international legal sources. The dissertation reflects a deep understanding of the political and legal specificities of the SCO's functioning.

The presence of scholarly publications in peer-reviewed journals on the topic of the dissertation confirms the author's research proficiency.

The propositions submitted for defense are distinguished by scientific novelty and practical relevance. They contribute to the advancement of international legal doctrine and propose concrete mechanisms for optimizing trade and economic interaction within the SCO framework.

IV. Strengths of the Dissertation

The presented research constitutes a coherent and comprehensive scholarly work characterized by a systematic approach, conceptual clarity, and logical consistency of argumentation. The author successfully achieves the stated objectives through a thorough and rigorous analysis of the SCO's regulatory and legal system.

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V. Concluding Remarks

The dissertation "Legal Aspects of Trade and Economic Cooperation within the Framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization" fully meets the requirements established for PhD dissertations in the specialty "8D04201 – International Law".

Zhang Ju fully deserves the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty "8D04201 – International Law" upon successful defense.

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