

Annex 1 – Template Dissertation Report EPS



Joint Dissertation Review

Name of the student:	Ana Puljiz
Title of the thesis:	Democratization of the Western Balkans through EU's enlargement strategy: from success to failure?
Reviewer:	Visnja Vukov

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

The research addresses a very relevant question about the causes of the EU's success and failure in promoting democracy in its neighbouring candidate countries. The student does an excellent job in presenting the puzzle and theoretical, as well as political, relevance of the research. She is also very thorough in her literature review, engaging with various relevant fields of scholarship and clearly showing the contribution to the state of the art.

2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

The research design is well thought through and the methodology is highly appropriate for the research question. The thesis uses comparative case studies based on the most similar systems research design. Case selection is very well justified. The interviews with relevant policy makers were very well executed and the student managed to gain highly relevant information and insight from the interviewees, producing important and novel findings.

3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The student has made a very good link between the data and the conclusions. She has also clearly outlined some of the main contributions of her findings to the existing theoretical debates. This last aspect could have still been stronger. In particular, the contribution to those studies that already discuss the possible effects of enlargement fatigue and enlargement resistance on Europeanization in the Western Balkans could be more clearly specified.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

All the formal academic standards have been met by the student.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

The student has produced an excellent thesis, with very relevant and interesting findings. The thesis is overall very well written, with strong theoretical background, adequate research design and important and novel results. With some further improvements, particularly in the elaboration of the theoretical contributions of the results, the thesis could be a basis for a journal submission.

Grade (A-F)	9.7 A
Date	Signature
24/06/2022	