

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of International Studies

PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT
(Reviewer)

Name of the student: Ingriin Rääk

Title: **Arguments used in parliamentary debates on Western Balkan European integration in EU member states**

Reviewer: Zuzana Kasáková

1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE (short information on the thesis, research objective):

The thesis examines the discourse on the EU enlargement to the Western Balkans in four EU member states national parliaments – Austria, Estonia, Ireland, and Slovenia, between 2012 and 2022. The research objective has been formulated comprehensively and clearly.

2. CONTENT (complexity, original approach, argument, structure, theoretical and methodological backing, work with sources, appropriateness of annexes etc.):

The enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkans and how it is discussed in the national parliaments in the small EU countries is understudied, making it a suitable choice for a diploma thesis. The literature review is very comprehensive. The research question and hypotheses are logical. However, the first hypothesis should be better explained and grounded in the expectations of the literature. Furthermore, the thesis should be more grounded in the theory and methodology of discourse or discourse analysis. The selection of four national parliaments for comparison is appropriate as they represent old and new EU member states and different geographical distances from the Western Balkans. The empirical data is categorized into five arguments – security, economic, democracy, containment of the influence of third actors, and morals by country. Data has been presented well and its relevance to the results is clear. However, the author could include a table summarizing the data for better clarity, connect their findings more with the existing literature on the given topic, and thus analyse them more deeply. The thesis is well-written and structured. The author displays skills in working with a range of sources.

3. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE (quality of language, citation style, graphics, formal aspects etc.):

The thesis is clearly written and uses appropriate language. The citation style and formal aspects are all adequate, though the author should sort the bibliography alphabetically.

4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS

The thesis was checked by the Turnitin Theses anti-plagiarism software and is in accordance with the requirements for the originality of the thesis.

5. SHORT COMMENTS BY THE REVIEWER (overall impression, strengths and weaknesses, originality of ideas, achievement of the research objective etc.):

The thesis focuses on a very interesting topic. One can also appreciate the author's effort to conduct original research based on discourse and comparison. It would be appropriate to incorporate theory and methodology related to discourse and discourse analysis, which would help better anchor the thesis in the research framework. The research objective was achieved.

6. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE:

Can the author address the issue of the discourse theory and methodology mentioned above?

7. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE:

I recommend the thesis for the defence.

Grade: **B-C**

Date: 19. 1. 2023

Signature: