

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

PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT

Name of the student: Léna Chilaud

Title: The EU as a Global Actor: French Outermost Regions as Geopolitical Assets

Reviewer (external reviewers including the address and position): Eliška Tomalová, Ph.D.

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

In her Master thesis Léna Chilaud focuses on European Union's Outermost regions, more specifically on the geopolitical understanding of the importance of three selected French collectivités territoriales. The main goal of the Master thesis is to answer the following research question and the subsequent questions: How has the EU approached the French outermost regions geopolitically? (1), How has the EU's discourse on its ORs evolved over time? (2), and What specific policies and actions have been implemented in the French ORs that reflect its geopolitical strategy? (3) - p. 5.

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

From a methodological perspective, the Master thesis represents a qualitative case study with three subcases. The structure follows a clear logic – from a very good overview of relevant academic literature (including new trends in geopolitical research) to the contextualization of EU's links with ORs to the empirical part divided into three sections. The case studies do not follow an identical structure, the author presents the most relevant specific areas of geopolitical relevance. Both primary and secondary sources are abundant. The thesis does not include any visual materials/tables/graphs.

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

Turnitin check – no problem.

The thesis meets all relevant formal criteria.

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

Léna wrote a very good thesis offering the reader a comprehensive insight into the current situation of the selected EU's outermost regions. The thesis is reader friendly. Below are listed its most relevant weak and strong elements:

Strong points of the thesis:

- The research objective and research questions are clear and well defined
- The EU's perspective on its ORs is pretty rare in academic research, thus the research angle offers an innovative way how to study the role of ORs in EU's external strategy
- On top of that, the geopolitical focus reflects the geopolitical turn in EU studies.

Weak points

- The thesis contains some confusing elements concerning the role and influence of actors who are involved in the relations with ORs and the definition of their geopolitical relevance (both on the EU side and Member states, more specifically France. It does not take into account the longlasting French geopolitical stance vis a vis its outre mers)
- The study is very complex in terms of contextualization of EU's links with selected ORs and their specificities, however, it offers only limited analytical elements that would link the current academic

debate on the EU's geopolitical turn with varied geopolitically relevant areas of cooperation between the EU and the ORs.

- The selection of the three cases would deserve more explanation.
- If the author had considered adding maps and/or figures it would have helped the reader to visualize also the physical aspects of the ORs geopolitical relevance.

5. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING THE DEFENCE (one to three):

I suggest that Léna Chilaud answers during the defence the following questions:

- Are there any aspects showing an active approach from the Outermost regions (more specifically the case studied in the thesis), can we talk about their specific actorness in shaping the EU's policies and geopolitical understanding of these regions? Are there any examples of specific initiatives from the Outermost regions that would impact on EU's position?
- Can we find any connections between EU's ORs and other French Overseas territories that would influence the EU's position on ORs (for instance the internal instability in Nouvelle Calédonie)?

7. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE (A,B,C,D,E,F):

I recommend Léna Chilaud's Master thesis for defence and I suggest that this thesis is graded **B**.

Date: 9/9/2024

Signature: Eliška Tomalová, Ph.D.