

## Dissertation Review

Name of the student:	Stefania-Felicia Pavel
Title of the thesis:	European Fiscal Integration in Euro Absentia. Budgetary Compliance as a Step Stone to a Fiscal Union
Reviewer:	Dr. Javier Arregui

### 1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

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

The literature review is comprehensive, integrative and quite complete. It has been developed according to the main theories that explain the integration process. Perhaps the adding of theories explaining conditions for fiscal convergence (from the Economics literature) would have added theoretical leverage. Thus, I miss some theories that explain conditions to meet fiscal convergence in order to properly match the theory and the cases. The research questions are interesting, although they look quite exploratory. This means that in the conclusions it is hard to appreciate theory development after the analysis of the cases. The research objectives are also clearly presented and the thesis' structure is good.

### 2. ANALYSIS

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

The analysis that this research follows is the study of fiscal convergence of two cases: Czech Republic and Romania. Although I like the two selected cases, they probably need a more convincing justification for the selection. When selecting cases, an author has to justify why the selected cases are the best ones to answer your research questions. It is not clear that this is made in a systematic way in this piece of research. The analysis relies on macroeconomic data and figures of the selected cases across time. Thus, the analysis is systematic and not complex. In order to obtain more robust results, the selection of multiple cases would have been a welcomed research strategy. The link between the developed hypotheses and the theory is clear in the first hypothesis, but less clear in the second one. This has of course some consequences for the conclusions and for the general findings of the paper. Another relevant issue is that in methodological terms you cannot talk about causal mechanisms when you analyse just two cases (as stated on Page 9). I am afraid that to be able to talk about a causal relationship, one requires many more cases and a rather different type of analysis and methods than those that are actually implemented in this research. The sources used in the research to introduce the issues at stake are adequate and updated.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

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

Conclusions are persuasive in relation to the first hypothesis. In the first case, there is a clear logic and explanation behind the argument. However, in the case of the second hypothesis the development is poorer. My view is that the research would have gained greater value by including more cases and higher diversity. This would have provided more explanatory variation regarding conditions under which fiscal convergence is actually taking place in Euro absentia. The link between the data and conclusions is almost missing.

#### 4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

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

Overall, the thesis language is quite clear and the structure of the paper is solid, which of course are important features to keep the reader interested. Citations are also in a good state and the references are generally up to date. All of this shows a clear ability of the student regarding formal aspects of the Dissertation's elaboration.

#### 5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

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

The strong points of the dissertation are

- Two previously unexplored research questions
- Strong link between the research questions and theory in the first hypothesis
- Good literature review
- A systematic exploratory analysis (with macro data) of the selected cases

The weak points are

- No clear link between the research questions and theory in the second hypothesis
- Case studies are useful to identify and explain conditions and mechanisms that represent the main drivers of the dependent variable – Clearly in this case we do not know how representative the analysed cases are.
- Given the easy access of the data used, I would have included more cases in the analysis, and I would have shown tables in a rather comparative way – That would have made the findings and conclusions of the study much more solid.

<b>Grade (0-10):</b>	7,8
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
25/08/2020	Javier Arregui