

OPPONENT STATEMENT

to doctoral thesis „Impact of Collective Action in Controlling Migratory Flows: Understanding Migratory Flows within the European Union “

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Author decided for the very **actual topic**, frequently discussed in present due to the fact of increasing of migration flow to the Europe and particularly to the European Union. The movements in the neighbouring countries influenced very massively the migration flow to the European Union and the analysis provided by the author especially the conclusions can become relevant for the potential regulation and also for understanding migration flows.

In present time, the migration as the whole concept and system of relations within the European Union (the economic migration, migration for the purpose of study etc.) and in Schengen area, as well as relations outside the European Union (relations with migrants from third countries) is becoming the "topic of the day". EU policy-makers and legislators had established as one of the priority within the period of 2007-2013 the area of freedom, security and justice, the same follows in the period 2014-2021. One of the objectives in this area is to establish the basis for the creation of some general rules in the area of migration policy. As mentioned in the Hague programme, the priority 3: the EU should define **the balanced approach to migration**. The Commission intends to come up with a new balanced approach to dealing with legal migration and illegal immigration. As stated in the programme, the **proper management of migration flows** also involves greater cooperation with non-member countries in all fields, including the readmission and return of migrants. The EU introduced measures, which should help to achieve mentioned goals and these includes the "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows" framework programme, which covers the creation of an External Borders Fund, an Integration Fund, a Return Fund and a European Refugee Fund. The unified legal regulation or the basis for the negotiations of the principles for member states' cooperation is missing until today. The non-satisfaction and failing in achievement of the priorities were later on transferred to Stockholm programme (2010-2014), looking again on area of freedom, security and justice, concretely by priority Access to Europe: Access to Europe – dealing with border and visa regime and by priority Europe of solidarity: where on the basis of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, the "EU must develop a comprehensive and flexible migration policy. Efforts must be made to set up the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) by 2012. In this regard, the development of the European Asylum Support Office is essential. By providing a common asylum procedure for EU countries and a uniform status for those who have been granted international protection, the CEAS would create an area of protection and solidarity within the EU". The new budgetary priorities reflect still gaps in migration policy and look for the practical problems connected with the internal and external migration in the EU. So **I strongly welcome** any research in the area of migration, especially if it is supported by the field research.

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The migration topic is usually very spread and discussed and author decided for the particular analysis of the policies impact on migratory flows in the CEE region. He had decided to focus on the concrete example of the Czech republic and the migration flows and its relation to the concrete factors influencing migration. His main objective looks very ambitious, but he had prepared it in longer time and decided to do field research to support his arguments. Using of case study (the Czech Republic) may be helpful not only in understanding the migration flows in the concrete country, but its tie to the state policy and individual decision-making may be used as the example for the countries in region due to the similarities in the political, legal and social situation (like for the Slovak Republic, Hungary and Poland, however in Poland the migration has longer tradition and nationalism and its support in Hungary had influenced the whole migration by special way).

It is the most **innovative** part of the thesis, the own field research in the area of migration in Central and Eastern European states. Usually the migration is inquired by using different criteria, wide definition and the final predicative value is not relevant or cannot be compared. The author's objective of the thesis is "to understand the various processes involved in migratory decision-making and how governmental policy impacts on migratory flows in the case of CEE mobility". Author tries to understand factors influencing individual decision making processes and how theoretical models may be applied to better understand the complexity of such activities. The thesis design and research methods are explained mainly in the 4th chapter, but author underlines the most important parts of methodology in particular sub-chapters that follow.

The author used **relevant research methods**, and is unique in that it discusses and analyses the impact of education and travel on improving skills and enhancing employability. This is not a particular approach as it usually used by authors dealing with migration, but its strict definition provides space to author focus on concrete questions and problems of migration. The meta-theoretical approach to the set hypothesis created the space for evaluation of the research outputs and also formulation of the final conclusions. I especially welcome field research, which looks on particular migrants in the Czech Republic in chapter 5. The decision to focus on Slovak migrants to Czech Republic, which means the biggest group of economic migrants, connected with Czech capital city via historical, social and family tights provide author good basis for the formulation of conclusion and generalization of outputs.

I would like to underline the length for allocation of questionnaires as well as the number of filled, which are quite nice re-distributed between members of target group and that may provide real basis for formulation of the conclusions in chapter 5 and following sub-chapters. The thesis is particularly focused than only on those migrants fitting the criteria of holding a university level certificate (ISCED 4 at minimum) and roots in the Slovakia.

The innovative approach of the author led to the **outputs of the thesis**, in the form of precise conclusion, when he understood the migratory experience of individuals as a complex multistage

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process under constant re-visitation. He had find out that the complexity of migratory flows within the Czech Republic defies generalization. He had pointed out, that decision-making falls into multiple categories and is reflective of the social position of the actor, educational attainment, life history and long-term intentions. Micro and meso level factors play a significant role in the process itself i.e. intention to settle, employment prospects, the presence or absence of family, strength of networks, connection to the destination as well as the level and ease of integration into the social milieu. He had concluded after the field research that the majority of highly skilled migration in the Czech Republic (as the case study) is largely unaffected by state policy, limitations on settlement or visa issuance appear to be more of a nuisance than a restriction on movement or settlement. Author finally concluded, that flows included in this project can be broken down into several distinct groups; those who came due to reasons of family reunification, those who migrated as students and stayed, (or returned after graduation) lifestyle migrants, those who migrated for personal reasons (may they be politically driven or a result of a need for change) and labor migrants of mixed typologies. The other types of migration are not relevant as to the field-research outputs.

As mentioned above, author's objective was "to understand the various processes involved in migratory decision-making and how governmental policy impacts on migratory flows in the case of CEE mobility". The author fulfilled mentioned objective, however there is still one objection. As author stated in conclusion, the thesis findings do have broader applicability; findings indicate that economic factors are not necessarily a driving force leading to mobility and that lifestyle or familial based decision are of significant importance when it comes to decision making. The broader applicability in the CEE region is stated very general, that the countries (not only CEE, but the whole Europe) will benefit from the application of broadly inclusive theoretical constructions, which understand that mobility is driven by multiple forces, economic, social, political and personal. What does the author mean? Can author somehow concrete the recommendations to policy-makers, how they should e.g. adopt the legislation in area of migration, reflects the migrants in social and security policy, modify the educational system to accept the different educational system outputs and degrees or?

The **own conclusions** are mentioned particularly in individual chapters, which are more concrete and the final conclusions are more generalised and several times the author repeat what he had already stated. However, the final conclusions confirmed the author is prestigious and erudite in the topic. His work has demonstrated the continued need for cross-disciplinary work that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries while incorporating a variety of alternative perspectives in the area of migration. His contribution to the migration research in the Czech Republic with possible research outputs application in the CEE region or the EU has the potential to help elimination of gap in understanding migration today. The thesis can be used not only for the academic purpose in the form of continuing research in the area of migration, but I strongly recommend it as the "example of good practice" or "guidelines" for policy-makers and legislators for initiation of discussion and elaboration of the effective regulation of migration in the European Union for the benefit of individuals as well as societies.

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Conclusion

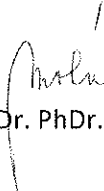
Author filled stated objective. It is the innovative and own research output of the author. I have to underline, that the thesis is elaborated on very serious research level, using relevant sources (preferably foreign, but from different research branches) and also from the formal point of view the thesis fulfil conditions for such kind of research thesis.

I recommend the thesis for the oral defence and evaluate it with excellent grade level (A).

Within the presentation, the author should answer following questions:

- 1) How is the economic migration reflected in the MFF 2014-2021? Does there exist limit only to highly educated people or young people? Is it consequence or rational decision due to financial crisis (2008 – 2012...)?
- 2) How does the recognition process of educational outputs (degrees and diplomas; formal, non-formal and informal educational outputs) reflect the social need of economic migration in the Czech republic?

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