

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

**PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT**  
**(Supervisor)**

Name of the student: Lucie Vinařská  
Title: Goal Setting in Climate Policy of the EU

---

Supervisor: Mitchell Young

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

The thesis examines how goals are set in EU climate policy as a means of better understanding goal setting as a policy instrument. The author studies the topic through three case studies, each focused on a goal that the EU has set in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The author raises an interesting and important question: what if the critical aspect for understanding and using goals as a means of governance is not in their implementation strategy but rather, prior to that, in the way that they get set in the first place?

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

The thesis focuses on the goal setting aspect, rather than the more commonly studied goal realization or implementation aspect. This gives the thesis an original approach. Further the author uniquely combines several theoretical approaches in order to build her analytical framework. Starting with Oran Young's four determinants, she adds four additional ones which help round out the earlier framework and make it more relevant to the context of the EU and to climate and other science-dependent problems. The result is a useful analytical tool that could be applied to study a broad range of other goals. The eight determinants in the framework are well explained and are then applied to each of the cases and used to structure the findings section. This brings a cohesiveness and coherence to the thesis.

The research design is logical, and the cases well chosen. The research is set in a context of policymaking and governance theory, explaining well how governance theory reflects the shift to a decentered form of steering rather than direct control or regulation that is well suited to the tool of goal setting. It includes a solid literature review on the role of goal setting, both on a global level (with the UN based MDGs and SDGs) and within the EU with specific attention to the Open Method of Coordination.

The empirical section, which includes three case studies of different EU climate goals over time, is rich and detailed. It displays the authors capabilities as a researcher to find and dig into the EUs communications and decisions as primary sources.

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

The quality of writing and language is excellent. The citation style and formal aspects are all appropriate and fulfil the requirements.

**4. STATEMENT ON THE ORIGINALITY OF THE THESIS**

The thesis was checked by the Turnitin/URKUND/Theses anti-plagiarism software and is original.

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

Overall this is an excellent thesis. It addresses an important topic as goals are increasingly being used in policymaking efforts on a global and EU level, and understanding the various aspects of how they are set is helpful for determining and even predicting the effectiveness of goals. The author makes a useful distinction between what makes for ‘a successful goal’ as opposed to ‘successful goal setting’ and convincingly argues for the importance of the latter, and less studied, aspect of understanding of goals as tools in climate governance. Her analytical framework represents an advance, in that it captures elements of EU policymaking that others have not. It also is more applicable to science-dependent global challenges. I would have been interested to read more about the science aspect, but it made sense to keep a balance between the eight elements in the framework. The addition of some chart or table would also have been welcome. These are minor points, however. The thesis succeeds in exploring how three EU climate goals were set in a structured way that both ties in with and helps to advance the public policy theories that relate to goal setting in governance. There is ample space to continue with this work, developing the framework and expanding the cases, which could be done on the doctoral level.

**6. COOPERATION WITH THE SUPERVISOR (communication with the supervisor, ability to reflect comments, shift from the original intention, etc.)**

The cooperation with the supervisor was excellent. The author was in regular communication and was open to suggestions, while at the same time worked independently and effectively. Comments on the work in progress were always addressed appropriately.

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

Reflect on the analytical framework: you mention that not all the aspects of the analytical framework were equally useful – are there ways you would change it? Could some aspects be deleted or merged? Is there anything you might add?

Which of the three goals that you studied would you consider to have been most successfully set?

**8. (NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE:**

**YES – A** (on A-F scale)

Date: 1.6.2022

Signature: