

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

PROTOCOL ON DIPLOMA THESIS ASSESSMENT
(Reviewer)

Name of the student: Jord Hoffstadt

Title: The Establishment and Development of Asylum Policies in East Central Europe

Reviewer: Lucia Najšlová, PhD

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

This MA thesis traces establishment of V4 post-1989 migration and asylum policies and explores the role of EU accession talks and post-2004 membership in their development. The author clearly invested an effort into comprehending the studied phenomenon and the result is good.

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

The thesis provides a good description of some of the major milestones in development of V4s post-89 migration policies and the author relies on relevant literature to analyse EU's role in the process. The author uses UNHCR datasets to show that V4s have adopted restrictive immigration policies, yet he does little to account for *why* the V4 countries have been reluctant to admit more asylum-seekers.

I find the theoretical and methodological backing insufficient. The 'State of Art and Theoretical Framework' chapter fails to establish the analytical lenses employed in the research. I do not understand why the thesis has a separate 2-page 'Terminology' chapter, especially since the author does not mention a number of key terms that should have been employed in the thesis (e.g. securitization). The 'State of Art' chapter opens with a commentary on primary sources and then continues with a presentation of selected secondary sources. The review of secondary sources does include a number of relevant studies and does contain a number of valid points, yet it does not really constitute a coherent research framework.

The author states his ambition to 'measure ... legislative, procedural and processual' dimensions of asylum policies (p.2) yet does not sufficiently explain why these dimensions were selected. What are they, how do they matter and who says so?

Since the author opens and closes the thesis with discussion of V4s current perspectives on asylum and migration, it is striking to see that the most recent source used in the thesis was published in 2012. It is not clear then how the author knows the V4 rejected EC mandatory quotas (this happened in 2015) and on basis of what material the author wrote chapter 7 – 'Post-2010 developments and a brief outlook'.

I do understand the justification for relying mostly on quantitative indicators, especially if one explores 4 countries in whose languages he does not seem to be "at home". Yet, also English-language literature provides a number of sources that the author could have used to provide deeper social, political and economic context of the policies explored.

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

The thesis is written clearly, it does not have major formal flaws besides those described above.

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

See Section 2.

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

- What is securitization? Demonstrate familiarity with key authors using the concept and provide evidence for securitization of migration debate in the V4.
- What have been the key socio-economic and political factors leading to V4s adoption of a restrictive interpretation of EU asylum & migration legislation? How did the V4 elites justify their approach to refugee crisis?
- The author wrote a thesis exploring V4 policies, yet the bibliography does not include a single reference to a V4 joint statement on issues explored. I find this striking, especially since the very first sentence of the thesis is: “Recently, the countries belonging to the Visegrad Group have received a large share of media attention, especially in Western Europe.”

6. *(NON-)RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTED GRADE*
(*excellent, very good, **good**, unsatisfactory*):

I recommend this thesis for defence.

Date:

27.5.2016

Signature: