REPORT ON THE MASTER THESIS

IEPS – International Economic and Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Title of the thesis:	**Strategy of Slovak Republic´s government to use higher education as an investment into human capital**
Author of the thesis:	**Erika Smereková**
Referee *(incl. titles)*:	**Mgr. Michal Paulus**

Remark: It is a standard at the FSV UK that the Referee's Report is at least 500 words long. In case you will assess the thesis as "non-defendable", please explain the concrete reasons for that in detail.

SUMMARY OF POINTS AWARDED *(for details, see below):*

CATEGORY	**POINTS**
Theoretical background (max. 20)	19
Contribution (max. 20)	20
Methods (max. 20)	16
Literature (max. 20)	17
Manuscript form (max. 20)	15
TOTAL POINTS *(max. 100)*	**87**
The proposed grade (1-2-3-4)	**1**

You can even use a decimal point (e.g. giving the grade of 2.5 for 60 points).

Comments of the referee on the thesis highlights and shortcomings (following the 5 numbered aspects of your assessment indicated below).

1) Theoretical background:

The thesis examines strategic documents related to the higher education of the Slovak government or responsible state institutions. Except of this analysis also educational experts from Slovakia were questioned. The author focuses on role of education as an investment into a human capital (stimulation of productivity) and whether the documents are mentioning this role of educational investments and propose implementable tools for this policy.

The topic is backed by review of seminal theoretical works in economics examining the role of human capital in productivity. However, author also covers key papers more from sociology or political sciences on welfare regimes, governments approaches towards education, relationship between human capital and higher education. Therefore, the review is of multidisciplinary nature trying to connect outcomes from various disciplines. The natural price of that approach is that the literature is not exhaustive, however I do not regard that as a negative feature of the review because the added value is in the attempt to connect outcomes of different research streams. Hence the author through this approach creates a solid theoretical background for the thesis.

2) Contribution:

The thesis offers interesting and relevant empirical contribution. It is the first thesis up to our knowledge which analyses the strategic documents of higher education in the Slovak Republic. It is one of the key basic steps for any other future research activities focused on Slovak higher education. From this perspective the thesis is especially valuable.

3) Methods:

The thesis is based on qualitative analysis of the strategic documents and questionnaire sent to educational experts. The hypotheses are transparent and logically tested via the analyses. I find the methods appropriate.

4) Literature:

The literature review covers seminal papers and books from several disciplines related to the research question. I have commented the literature in the first "aspect": Theoretical background while both parts are interrelated. To sum it up the thesis covers sufficient amount of literature and provides interesting multidisciplinary insight. The cost for that is that the literature review is not exhaustive because it covers human capital and education not only from the perspective of economics but also sociology and political sciences. I regard this approach as suitable and valuable with respect to the topic of the thesis.

5) Manuscript form:

There are few minor issues which can be improved regarding the manuscript form.

- I would recommend different numbering style of tables. Instead of e.g. "Table n. 1" (page 10) just "Table 1" is recommended.
- Then on page 12 I would include citation to papers where Castles and Heclo developed their theories.
- On page 47 the layout of the Graph 3 should be corrected to follow the style otherwise used in the thesis.
- On page 19 the author refers to subchapters of strategic documents but presents two different references (subchapters 3.1-3.9 and 3.2-3.3, 3.6-3.7). There should be just one reference for transparency.

Except of these technical comments I have no serious remarks.

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