



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Leona Knežević

Title: The Early Warning Mechanism: political or legal procedure?

Programme/year: MAIN/2024

Author of Evaluation (second reader): doc. PhDr. Běla Plechanovová, CSc.

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	6
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	20
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	28
<i>Total</i>		80	
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	8
	Style	5	3
	Formal requirements	5	4
<i>Total</i>		20	
TOTAL		100	69



Evaluation

Major criteria:

The thesis deals with an interesting and relevant topic of the role of the national parliaments in the European Union's legislative process. The principle of subsidiarity became an embodiment of the debate on the competence distribution between the member states and the Union since the establishment of the EU. The Author aims to find out what kind of arguments the national parliaments use when they submit their reasoned opinion on the legislation launched by the Commission. She assumes that there are three options for the basis of argumentation, legal, semi-political, and political.

First, the thesis builds on a sound choice of literature to the topic but it lacks in clear substantiation of the reasons why this particular focus should be applied. The Author does not present any hypotheses that would guide the reader through the empirical analysis. She hopes to answer question "Whether the EWM, as a subsidiarity mechanism, is a political or a legal procedure?" while "... this thesis aims to support finding how national parliaments form the basis for the arguments they present in the opinions and uncover what factors contribute to their choice of argumentation." (p. 9). My question would be: Why should we care about distinguishing between the legal and political arguments used in the texts of the opinions? Unfortunately, there is no answer to this question in the thesis. Presenting legal arguments by the national parliament within the early warning mechanism does not imply that the procedure is legal in its character. There is a legal procedure caring about the subsidiarity principal but that leads to the Court of Justice of the EU and there is no role for national parliaments there. The thesis makes no real effort to uncover the factors that lead the choice of argumentation of opinions of the national parliaments. In that respect it could have benefited from consulting the more recent literature (e.g., Huysmans, 2019; Huysmans et al., 2023).

Second, the choice of cases and the institutional setting - there is unfortunately very little to explain the choice of the EU member states as cases to be studied in the thesis beyond the Western/older vs Eastern/newer division. The Author provides a brief description of the institutional setting of each of the national parliaments in connection to the European legislation scrutiny but the presentation of the procedure from the European Commission's perspective remains rather shallow. The literature review section unfortunately does not discuss the findings that relate to individual member states of the EU that could help to navigate the reader through the empirical section of the thesis.



Minor criteria:

The text suffers from rather poor editing. At number of places the sentences are inconsistent in their structure, at number of places the references to the source literature are missing as they present claims without supporting argument but also without source that would explain it. Even the most often cited piece of literature misses a complete biblio data in the list of references (Cooper, 2016).

Assessment of plagiarism:

The thesis scores 15 percent similarity on Theses and 31 percent similarity on Turnitin applications. Both scores seem rather high, but are mostly due to very technical descriptions of procedures or processes. Still, there was clearly space for using the quote signs more often.

Overall evaluation:

The text meets the criteria for the MA thesis. The Author succeeded to present the topic based of the relevant academic literature as well as she mastered the empirical part in collecting and categorizing the data. The results of the analysis remain rather weak in conclusiveness as a result of an unconvincing research design.

Suggested grade:

C/D

Signature: