



## Euroculture Thesis Assessment Form

Name of Student: **Lauren Bridges**

Thesis Title: **The European Union in Azerbaijan: Democracy Promoter or Energy Dependent?**

Home University: *Palacký University*

Host University: *University of Deusto*

Name of Supervisor: *Markéta Žídková*

In this report, please consider the following, by answering the following questions. Please add a short explanation instead of simply answering yes, no or partly.

### 1) **Content: Problem statement, method and theory:**

a) Is the topic of the thesis clearly presented and motivated?

*The topic is presented in the Introduction. It is clear that the author is interested in Azerbaijan, Baku's relations with the EU, and the EU's role in Azerbaijan.*

b) Are the aims and objectives of the thesis clearly identified and explained?

*Although I can imagine more precise wording when it comes to aims and objectives, the author managed to present her goals well.*

c) Is there a well formulated problem statement and is it of sufficient complexity for an MA level? Briefly explain.

*The author shows her ability to formulate the problem statement. Again, I can imagine even clearer focus of the text, however, the level of the submitted work is clearly sufficient as the MA Thesis.*

Has the student convincingly explained the relevance of the research?

*Yes.*

d) Has a suitable methodology and theoretical frame been taken to solve the stated problems?

*The author presents some concepts of democratization, relying (among other sources) on respected political scientists V. Gel'man and M. McFaul. Author's summary of the political transition in Azerbaijan is not flawless (chapter 1) but it is obvious that she tried her best to understand the process. Theories focusing on the role of the external actors in the process of democratization (of Azerbaijan) could have been presented.*

e) In case where empirical research has been conducted: is there a suitable research design and has the research been conducted adequately?

N/A

- f) Does the conclusion provide convincing answers/proof to the initial questions/hypotheses?

*The author provides answers and conclusions in the Conclusion (p. 55-58). She concludes that "(...) the fact that EU has not been successful in promoting democratic change in Azerbaijan is not the result of the EU ignoring the issue for the sake of access to energy. Rather, it is that the structure of EU's policies are intended to prioritize economic trade over democracy promotion, and this limitation on EU action for democracy in outside countries, which is further established by past precedent, makes it possible for Azerbaijan to maintain its authoritarian regime while at the same time engaging in trade with the EU." (p. 55) Such conclusion is still open for a debate (at the defence).*

- g) Does the research constitute a contribution to knowledge in this field or domain?

*Some important facts were presented.*

2) **Structure:**

- a) Is the thesis coherently structured in chapters and sections?

*The structure is without major problems.*

- b) Are concepts clearly introduced and explained, and critically and consistently applied?

*The Introduction is without major problems.*

3) **Sources** (primary and secondary):

- a) Has (enough) relevant (primary and secondary) literature been adequately interpreted and integrated into the thesis?

*No problem with sources.*

- b) Is the bibliography/list of references complete and accurate?

*No major problems with the bibliography.*

4) **Stylistics:**

- a) Is the use of language (English) acceptable and of the required standard (i.e. no spelling mistakes and typos, range of vocabulary, grammar)?

*The author is a native speaker.*

- b) Are references in the text given in a coherent and consistent manner (either in-text or as footnotes)?

*No problems with references.*

5) **Format:**

- a) How is the thesis presented (i.e. consistency in lay-out, choice of fonts, headings, tables and graphs)?

*No problem.*

- b) Does the thesis contain all required elements (title page, declaration, table of contents, bibliography, etc.)?

*The Thesis includes all necessary parts.*

**6) Quality of writing process:**

- a) To what degree has the student been able to work independently?

*Mrs Bridges worked mostly independently.*

- b) Have recommended revisions been executed to a satisfying degree?

*She went through all recommended sources.*

- c) Any other relevant comments (e.g on planning and commitment of the student).

*(I would have preferred to consult with the author personally, however, I understand that Mrs Bridges' s situation did not allow her presence in Olomouc.)*

**7) Possible questions for thesis defence (only if this thesis is to be defended orally)**

*The author mentions the fate of Leila and Arif Yunus (p. 50). Does she follow their current situation?*

**(National) Grade:** *ECTS: C*

Date and place: *29 July 2016, Olomouc*

Signature:

