

Review of Master work supervisor

Name and Surname of Student	Jennifer ENDERS
Qualification Work Title	The impact of COVID-19 related border restrictions on cross-border cooperation between Saxony and Czech Republic
Name and Type of Study Programme	Regional and European Project Management / Navazující
Faculty / Department	Ekonomická fakulta / KRM
Supervisor	Johnen Thomas, prof. Dr.
Review author	Prof. Dr. Thomas Johnen

Thesis evaluation

- 1. Logical structure of the thesis 1.0
Note: See commentary below.
- 2. Fulfillment of objectives 1.0
Note: See commentary below.
- 3. Methodological approach 1.0
Note: See commentary below.
- 4. Assessment of theoretical and/or practical contribution of the thesis 1.0
Note: See commentary below.
- 5. Handling of literature 1.0
Note: See commentary below.
- 6. Formal aspects 1.5
Note: See commentary below.
- 7. Student's own contribution to the studied problems 1.0
Note: See also the comment with regard to item 4. The main merit of this thesis is in my opinion to have unified the views of experts from both sides of the border in German and Czech language which permitted her to get a more equilibrated view.
- 8. Monitoring for plagiarism (result) **negative**

Conclusion

Thesis evaluation (note): **excellent**

I recommend the thesis for defence: **YES**

Questions and comments

Critical comments and overall contributions, total value of the thesis

1. Logical structure of the thesis (research subject, methodological framework, basic notions and their explanation)

The subject is highly actual and very relevant. Seeing the the ongoing pandemic situation it may help to reflect on future alternative solutions to border closures in order to prevent negative consequences for cross-border cooperation.

The methodological framework is very well chosen. Due to the lack of earlier studies, expert interviews are a convincing method to get first insights in the problem. All necessary basic notions are well explained and discussed.

2. Fulfilment of objectives

Due to the explorative character of this qualitative research, it is questionable if the aim of such a study can be to establish hypotheses and then to verify or falsify them. The research design favours the establishment of new and unforeseen hypotheses but not in the first place the verification of hypotheses which had been established on the basis of previous knowledge. The research question in this Master's thesis is well answered. Drawing on the results alternative proposals to border closures are developed.

3. Methodological approach

The methodological approach (qualitative expert interviews with German and Czech experts on cross-border-projects between Saxony and the Czech Republic) is well chosen. The transcription is exact enough to analyse the relevant aspects. The use of an analytical software for qualitative research which helps categorising the results has been fruitful.

4. Assessment of theoretical and/or practical contribution of the thesis

The contextualisation of the Saxon-Czech cross border collaboration is very well elaborated considering historical, political and economic facts. However the interrelationship between historical, political and economic reasons for the development of EUROREGIOS could have been better shown.

The result of the expert interviews highlight the importance of these interrelationships.

The main practical contribution is the elaboration of alternative proposals in order to avoid future border closures which may affect negatively the cross-border cooperation.

5. Handling of Literature

The bibliography consists of relevant, mostly very recent studies in Czech, English and German which are well presented. The bibliography in general observe the norms for scientific papers. Some entries of chapters of E-Books lack the complete bibliographic information. However, in these cases the DOI or the link is indicated, so that it can be found for further research.

6. Formal Aspects

The thesis is very well written with regard to all formal aspects. There are only a few mistakes, not more than it would be acceptable for a scientific paper which is submitted for publication. The illustrations are well placed. However, the source of figure 1:11 on p. 10 is omitted.

This thesis is well written, well documented and represents an original research on a recent and ongoing subject. The subject is very well contextualized. Saxon and Czech perspectives are included, analysed and discussed in a convincing way. The great challenge of this study is to describe, analyse and discuss a dynamic, rapidly changing ongoing phenomenon. The author got access to a field of specialist from both sides of the border, which permitted to include both perspectives. The chosen method is well employed and the discussion of the results is very well done. For these reasons I would evaluate it EXCELLENT.

Questions and topics for discussion before the commission

Question 1: Which of your results were the most unexpected? Why?

Question 2: In the first part based on research literature and EU-documents, cross border cooperation is always motivated by economic arguments. In the interviews economic aspects seem to have a secondary importance. This mismatch isn't pointed out in your Master's thesis. Could you elaborate on the possible reasons for this mismatch?

Date: Sep 11, 2021

Signature of supervisor