

## **BACHELOR THESIS EVALUATION: THESIS OPPONENT**

**Thesis topic:** Challenges and Limitations of Slovak Cultural Diplomacy

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**Advisor:** Radičová Iveta

**Opponent:** Tabosa Clarissa

**Study program:** Political Science, Liberal Arts

*Evaluation contains objective and critical analysis of a bachelor thesis proposal. Evaluation should be considered by the following criteria:*

Criteria for the evaluation of the final thesis	Max. points	Points given by evaluator
1. Methodological aspect (Logical frame, process of inquiry, topic specification, how realistic are set goals and how adequate are proposed working methods)	10	5
2. Sources of domestic and foreign literature, familiarity with relevant literature	15	15
3. Formatting and style	15	15
4. Scope and proportionality of content	5	5
5. Systematic approach	15	8
6. Evaluation of achieved results	40	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>73</b>

*Final evaluation: A (95-100 points), B (83-94 points), C (68-82 points), D (55-67 points), E (50-54 points), Fx(<50 points)*

### **Evaluation, comments, recommendations:**

The thesis focuses on analyzing the cultural diplomacy strategies of the Slovak Republic, mainly by looking at the Slovak Cultural Institutes (CIs) and identifying the limitations and challenges faced by them by contrasting their work with the work of other cultural institutes placed in Slovakia. The author maps the development of the overall European strategy to focus on cultural aspects in order to achieve diplomatic goals, which is a commendable effort. I also appreciate the overview on the work of the cultural institutes located in Slovakia. However, while the author demonstrates a strong commitment to her research, the thesis suffers from a lack of methodological rigor and a systematic approach to the research question.

The author falls short in explaining exactly which cultural institutes she will analyze in her research. Although she mentions that she will compare Slovak CIs abroad with CIs of other European countries based in Slovakia, she does not provide a clear list of the institutes under review up to page 22. The methodology section of the thesis lacks clarity and specificity. The author outlines the three clusters of criteria she will use to measure the effectiveness of Slovak cultural diplomacy: management and structure of cultural institutes, cultural institutes' activities, and interest in cooperation and activity in international education. However, she does not explain how she came up with these criteria. Later on she claims "How to measure the effectiveness of cultural institutes is a question that has no precise answer yet. It is necessary to review all literature relevant to measuring the effectiveness of CIs to set precise criteria for measurement.", but this comes right after she already mentioned the three criteria I outlined above. The author also claims that she will interview people working in CIs but does not provide further details on the methodological aspects of these interviews.

The data on Slovak CIs presented in the thesis is not always conclusive. Most of the data presented about Slovak cultural institutes abroad are marked as “na - not announced on the webpage” or “ur – unresponsive”. This raises questions about the feasibility of the study in the first place. It is unclear to me what the author can, de facto, conclude from these findings.

Overall, the thesis could benefit from a more systematic approach and greater methodological rigor. While the author demonstrates a strong commitment to her research, the lack of clarity and specificity in the methodology section partially undermines the credibility of her findings.

What I suggest for the defense is that the author:

- Summarize her main findings in a more systematic way and present it accordingly;
- Give us more insights into the interviews she conducted. Who were the people interviewed? (Do that by preserving their confidentiality, if required) Also, present the findings of her interviews
- Focus on the goal of cultural diplomacy – to promote dialogue and mutual understanding, and putting forward foreign policy goals. Based on that, present to us in which circumstances she believes the Slovak CIs are achieving these goals and in which not.

**I believe she has the knowledge, and maybe even the data, necessarily to address my comments above but needs to present it in a clearer and more systematic way. If she manages to do so, in addition to answering the questions below, I recommend she is given a B during defense.**

Again, I do appreciate her efforts, the fact that she mapped the overall European strategy to focus on cultural aspects in order to achieve diplomatic goals, which is in itself a commendable effort, and the overview of the work of cultural institutes in Slovakia. These, alone, are great outputs of her work.

#### **Questions for the author (relevant to the content of the Thesis):**

1. The author, correctly and based on academic literature, points out that the goal of cultural diplomacy is to promote dialogue and mutual understanding between countries (and people). Based on her research, even if limited in the number of cultural institutes do you perceive Slovakia as successful in promoting mutual understanding between Slovakia and its partners? Justify your answer with particular examples.

2. Why were the Slovak Institutes in Jerusalem and Moscow not included in the research?

In Bratislava, on: 10.05.2022 (date)

Signature of evaluator: talvora