

Monika BOKŠOVÁ: The Importance and the Effects of the Common Commercial Policy of the European Union when Reaching Noneconomic Goals

The question of importance and effects of the Common Commercial Policy of the European Union is the topic that has been researched many times by a number of economists from all over the world. However, the emphasis that the author applied in her thesis, concentrating solely on issues of noneconomic goals, sets her work apart from the majority of the literature. Her work represents, at least in the Czech milieu, a unique attempt to cover the not so well researched part of the economic theory. Her contribution to the “Europe-as-a-power” debate, based on reaching non-economic goals, in particular protection of human rights, through new strategy “Trade for all”, is new and inspiring. She draws her conclusions based on thorough research of literature and presents a very true and realistic picture of the problem.

In this review I would like to stress the following important aspects of the dissertation:

- *formulation of research question and main conclusions in view of current state of theoretical knowledge in a given field of study*

The author divided the research, i.e. the study, how could the market power of the EU be used for human rights protection in countries, where the EU’s market power is small or negligible, into three areas:

- examination of instruments that the EU has at its disposal to pursue the protection of human rights in trade deals with countries that could potentially access the EU (candidate or potential candidate states);
- assessment of such instruments, when they are applied vis-à-vis states participating in the EU’s Neighborhood Policy;
- assessment of these policies towards less developed countries, participating in a special trade arrangement, Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+).

For each of these three segments, three countries fulfilling the desired criteria were selected, and based on this sample a careful analyses had been made in order to find answers to the main question, i.e. how market power of the EU can be used for protection of human rights in countries that belong to each of the three above mentioned segments.

- *adequacy of scientific methods used*

Research for this thesis was based on qualitative analysis, given the understandably limited number of researched countries and therefore a need to concentrate on depth and detail rather than on more widely descriptive research means.

The author worked with two sets of data, one based on EU’s policy documents, the other was obtained through interviews with representatives of the EU on different level. The use of interviews allowed both for understanding, how Market Power Europe operates on different levels of EU external policies in practice, and gaining

insight into EU's trade negotiations. These interviews had been carefully assessed and through anonymously presented views of the EU's practitioners the thesis thus gained authenticity by showing the impact of theoretical postulates on everyday practical reality. Despite author's finding out that the views of EU experts may not in all cases closely follow the presented theoretical theses, they gave the author's conclusions enough credibility, allowing for moving the knowledge in this field to a new quality.

- *logical interconnection of the structure and desired balance of content of the thesis*  
The structure of thesis follows the best practice in such type of works. After a very thorough review of literature (Chapter 1) the author describes in Chapter 2 the methodology used. These two introductory parts are followed by three chapters, representing the crux of the thesis. In these three chapters the author employs research, investigating impact of the three theoretical principals that the EU applies in exerting influence. These principals are used for pushing through the EU's goals, in this case the interest in and defense of human rights in the countries, belonging to the three categories mentioned above, i.e. candidate or potential candidate states (Chapter 3), states participating in the EU's Neighborhood Policy (Chapter 4) and countries, participating in a special trade arrangement GSP+ (Chapter 5). These principles in question are Principle of Leverage, Principle of Pragmatism and Principle of Credibility. The author thoroughly reviews the current theoretical views and confronts them with the practical experience of those, who actually look after the EU's goals concerning protection of human rights in different groups of countries, with which the EU may exert influence through trade. The structure of these three chapters is identical, taking one of the principles after the other and describing the possibilities that the EU has for pushing through its human rights ideas.
- *authors contribution on basis of her authentic research*  
It is evident throughout the thesis that the author fully mastered the topic and acquainted herself with the best and widely commented theories, presented by various international authors. The scope of her grasp of the theory is commendable, as well as her ability to intersperse her arguments with quotes by well-known experts in this particular field, however without copying their views. On the contrary, based on comparison and disputation, the author reaches her own conclusions. The topic of this thesis is still new and in the literature not yet fully developed and thus in this respect the work is unique. Of author's meticulousness and diligence, resulting in perfectly mastered review of the world literature on the topic, testifies the List of References, enclosed at the end of the thesis, spanning more than 10 pages.
- *Author's contribution to the theory and practice*  
As mentioned above, the thesis contain a unique research in the field that so far has not been adequately covered in literature. While the theoretical contribution to the debate concerning the many aspects of the Common Commercial Policy of the EU is undeniable, the work could also serve as an important source for practitioners, who

are engaged in the field of human rights protection. They could find in the conclusions many suggestions as to the power and ability of negotiating trade agreements with countries belonging to the three segments.

- *level of reaching the stipulated goals*

The research question *“How is the EU’s market power used to externalize EU’s human rights regulation in countries with negligible economic importance”*, applied during analyzing the role of the Common Commercial Policy of the EU for reaching non-economic goals through protection of human rights, has been fully answered and accompanied by convincing arguments. The author incorporated into the final body of her thesis all relevant comments and suggestions, stemming from the previous defense on the departmental level, therefore I do not have any additional comments or questions.

In view of the fact that the thesis presented for defense satisfy all legal requirements and is in my opinion of a very high quality, I fully recommend its presentation for defense before the appropriate commission.

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