**PhD abstract**

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Agenda-setting scholarship classified primary issues as the most discussed items in coded resources but the systemic approach towards the concept is missing. Furthermore, agenda-setting debate is primarily concentrated on how issues get to an agenda despite the widely acknowledged principle of the matter of degree, i.e. distinct position of items on agenda. The PhD thesis thus examines issues performance at the EU agenda through the lenses of the framework of primary and secondary issues in order to answer the question what positions issues take and what is the performace of issues on policy agenda. The thesis analyses the issues performance on the case of EU foreign policy examining relevant venues in EU policy-making using the holistic grading method.