
Information about International Jean Monnet Conference

„The EU in time of multicrisis and its greatest challenges: up-to-date solutions, future visions and prospects“

**Prague
May 22nd – 23rd 2017**

Brilliant International Scientific Forum Looked at Actual Challenges of the European Union

An exclusive multi-branch conference organized by Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in EU Law¹, Faculty of Law, Palacký University and the Czech Association for European Studies in cooperation with the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs intituled “The EU in time of multicrisis and its greatest challenges: up-to-date solutions, future visions and prospects” took place on May 22nd – 23rd 2017 in the Czernin Palace in Prague.

The two-day symposium featured more than 120 prominent experts. The invitation was accepted by scholars, representatives of the Czech ministries, ambassadors of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Austria, as well as other representatives of diplomatic corps of EU member states, judges, attorneys-at-law, lawyers, representatives of non-governmental organizations and last but not least students.

The well-developed and balanced symposium programme was thematically divided into six sessions in which 21 respected experts presented their contributions.

The introductory word of the plenary session of the conference was pronounced by its key-organizer, **Naděžda Šišková**, Head of Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in EU Law, Faculty of Law, Palacký University; the key note

¹ Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in EU, Palacký University in Olomouc founded in 2015 is an institution specialized in EU legislation.

speech was given by **Věra Jourová**, the European Commissioner, within its contribution called “Achievements and Challenges of the EU, possible paths for the future”.

The first section of the conference focused on democratic foundations of the European Union in time of multi-crisis, the question of the effective ways of European governance as well as on the reform of the EU institutions. A vivid debate was held over the contribution by **Miguel Poiares Maduro**, the former advocate general of the Court of Justice of the European Union who suggested i.e. a new concept of European government inspired by the “South African constitutional model”. According to this vision, the EU decisions should be taken, this point on, by an intergovernmental method only in fundamental questions; other topics should be decided by the qualified majority.

One of the most followed speakers was the EU law specialist **Peter-Christian Müller-Graff** from the Heidelberg University and his contribution concerning the authority of European Union law in rough political times. The speaker articulated the necessity of depolarization of conflicts and stressed the role of law as an active subject of integration.

The second session of the conference was dedicated to the up-to-date topic of Brexit and its implications. **Rainer Arnold** from the Regensburg University and Jean Monnet Chair *ad personam* expressed criticism about the impact of Brexit from the point of view of constitutional aspects of the United Kingdom. The discussion was held about the possibilities of the membership of Scotland and the Northern Ireland in the European Union. The topic of the discussion became also the question of the “acquired rights” of the Great Britain citizens and the incidence of Brexit on these rights. Possible institutional changes from the Czech perspective were taken into consideration in the contribution by **Lenka Pítrová** from the Charles University in Prague.

Actual challenges in the EU area of freedom, security and justice were the central theme of the third session of the scientific meeting. It did not omit the discussion about the migration and integration issues including the action for infringement of EU law to be brought before the Court of Justice of the European Union against the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

The subsequent fourth session of the conference revealed reflections on current challenges for the EU in the field of the external relations. The legal framework of the relationships of the EU and Turkey was taken into account in the contribution of **Marc Maresceau** from the Ghent University and the College of Europe in Bruges. The connections between the EU and China were neither missed out. The conception of the “cooperation renforcée” from the point of view of the public international law was analysed by **Vladimír Týč** from the Masaryk University.

The challenges of the Eurozone, especially in the light of restoring the economic growth and the real convergence as well as the “OMT programme” became the topic of the fifth’s conference session.

The last part of the conference was dedicated to the future visions and prospects how to change the EU. In particular, the Czech perspective was examined in this session. Criticisms were expressed at the fact that actually the character and content of a directive tends to change into a regulation in which case the unification does not contribute to the diversity of national states. The idea of reinforcement of the model of intergovernmental cooperation as the response of ongoing changes in the EU was repeatedly mentioned.

The conference programme was closed by the Czech Association for European Studies Awards ceremony. Each year, CAES honors the contribution in European Studies and development of European integration. This year laureates were Vladimír Týč from the Masaryk University, Lenka Pítrová from the Charles University and Peter-Christian Müller-Graff from the Heidelberg University that were awarded the prize for their significant contribution the field of European legal studies and European Commissioner Věra Jourová, who was awarded the prize for her merit for European cooperation and integration.

The content of the conference with a supranational overlap can be indisputably evaluated, in the words of Naděžda Šišková, as “a unique forum held in a unique time”.

Kateřina Štěpánová²

² Post-graduate student, Department of International and European Law, Palacký University Olomouc, Faculty of Law.