
**Czech Association for European
Studies held its 3rd Annual Conference
in Prague on the topic:
*“The EU and the Czech Republic
in 2014 – a reflection of the current
state and future perspectives”***

The middle of June 2014 was an important date for the Czech Association for European Studies (CAES – Czech ECSA). It organised its Third Annual Conference, the event with cross border significance and international impact. The venue of the conference was the residence of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Czernin Palace in Prague. The Conference bore the title **The EU and the Czech Republic in 2014 – a reflection of the current state and future perspectives** and the event was held under the auspices of H.E. Mr Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The conference was organised in cooperation with the Faculty of Law, Palacky University in Olomouc and Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Over 20 detailed papers of the invited speakers and profound discussions took place within the two days, 12th and 13th June 2014. About 150 participants from several EU Member States as well as Eastern Partnership countries representing the academia, practice, state administration and diplomatic services were registered for this important event.

The Conference took place at the time of 10th anniversary of the accession of the Czech Republic into the EU and the 5th anniversary of the launching of the Eastern partnership policy and its goal was to reflect relevant actual problems of European integration, to summarize the results of the last elections to the European Parliament and discuss the issues related to the continuation of the Year of the European Citizenship.

The whole event and first day of conference was opened by the welcome address given by Assoc. Prof. Naděžda Šišková (the President of the Czech Association for European studies, Jean Monnet Chair in EU Law and Head of the Department of European law, Faculty of Law, Palacky University in Olomouc) who presented the goal, content and ambitions of the present annual conference. The opening panel then offered two papers of distinguished guests Mr. Juraj Chmiel (Special Envoy for the External Dimension of the EU

at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, former Minister for European Affairs of the Czech Republic) who gave a speech on topic: “The Czech Republic and the EU in the turning year and the crucial times – the new challenges and reflections” and Assoc. prof. Pavel Svoboda (Faculty of Law, Charles University in Prague and newly elected Member of the European Parliament) with the presentation titled: “The elections to the European Parliament 10 years after the Czech accession to the Union – some considerations.”

First discussion panel was devoted to the highly actual topic – *EU after the economic crisis*. This panel was chaired by dr. Emil Ruffer (Director of the European Law department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic) and offered the presentations of the four distinguished scholars. Prof. Fausto de Quadros (Department of Administrative Law, European Law and International Law, Jean Monnet Chair in EU law, Faculty of Law, University of Lisbon) presented paper titled “Europe after the economic crisis: towards a political Union” in which he analysed and critically evaluated the impact of the current economic crises to the further steps in deepening of the European integration. Prof. Takis Tridimas (Chair of European Law, Director, Centre of European Law, The Dickson Poon School of Law, King’s College London) in his paper “The post-Lisbon integration paradigm: EU competences and EU rights” focused on the impact of the ever deeper integration and new competences of the European Union on the level of protection of individual (fundamental) rights. Dr. Lenka Pitrová (Head of Strategies and Institutions Department, EU Affairs Section, Office of the Government and Faculty of Law, Charles University in Prague) analysed the processes of changing and amending the EU “Constitution” both from legal and political point of view. Her paper bore the title: “The new trends in the modification of the content of the primary law of the EU”. Last speaker Assoc. Prof. Lubor Lacina (Jean Monnet Chair in European Economic Studies, Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, Mendel University in Brno, Euroteam member) in the paper titled “Ex-ante Coordination of Economic Policies in Eurozone – Impact on the Czech Republic” offered the reflection of the selected instruments of the new economic governance in the Eurozone from the perspective of the economic science.

Second panel dedicated to the topic *European citizenship and the deepening of elements of the civic dimension of the Union* was chaired by the Assoc. Prof. Běla Plechanovová (Jean Monnet Chair, Head of the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague) and offered the presentation on the questions of identity of supranational and national institutions, legitimacy, cultural roots and constitutional aspects of the integration in general and ties between Union and individuals in particular. The panel put together dr. Jiří Zemánek (Judge of the Constitutional Court of

the Czech Republic) with the paper called “The Identity – building and democratic legitimacy beyond the nation state: the role of European citizenship”; Assoc. Prof. Alexander Balthasar (Director, Institute for State Organization and Administration Reform, Austrian Federal Chancellery, Vienna) who presented the topic “Cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of the Europe”; and prof. Josef Blahož (Institute of State and Law of the Czech Academy of Science) with the paper titled “European Union and Welfare (Social) State – Reforms and Transformation”.

Third thematic panel dealt with the topic *European citizenship and human rights* and the papers given in it were focused on the new challenges for the European Union in the field of protection of fundamental rights after Lisbon and economic crisis. This panel was presided by Assoc. Prof. Naděžda Šišková (the President of the Czech Association for European studies, Jean Monnet Chair in EU Law and Head of the Department of European law, Faculty of law, Palacky University in Olomouc). The panel includes three speeches. Prof. Werner Schroeder (Head of the Institute, Institute for European and International law, University of Innsbruck) presented the paper titled “The EU and the Rule of Law – Dealing with a Rule of Law Crisis in the Member States.” Prof. Pavel Šturma (Head of the Department of the International law, Faculty of law, Charles University in Prague) spoke about “Protection of Fundamental Rights in the EU: how many levels?” and dr. Emil Ruffer (Director, European Law Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic) had a presentation on the problem of “The accession of the EU to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”.

First day of the Conference was concluded by the award ceremony on which president of the Czech ECSA, Assoc. Prof. Naděžda Šišková and vice-president of the Czech ECSA prof. Eva Cihelková handed the awards of the Czech Association for the significant contribution to the development of science in the field of European studies to the notable laureates: prof. Oldřich Dědek (in the field of European economy); prof. Michal Tomášek, prof. Pavel Šturma and Assoc. Prof. Vlasta Kunova (all three in the field of EU law).

Second day of the conference was opened by the *fourth thematic panel* dedicated to the topic: *The EU, the Czech Republic and external relations. Perspectives of the Eastern Partnership. The destiny of the EU – Ukraine Association Agreement. The Association Agreements with other states of Eastern Partnership*. This section was chaired by dr. Michal Petr (Faculty of Law, Palacky University in Olomouc) and comprised of the presentations given by dr. Petr Mareš, CSc. (Special Envoy for Eastern Partnership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic) who offered the paper titled “Eastern Partnership: the Czech Contribution to the Development of the Policy” and

Assoc. Prof. Liudmyla Falalieieva (Academy Advocacy of Ukraine, Kiev) who presented the paper called “Adaptation of the Eastern Partnership to the new geopolitical realities: legal aspects”.

Last section of the conference hosted the special guests from the Ukraine and was devoted to the topic *Rule of Law, human rights and approximation of laws as a conditio sine qua non for acceptance of duties of the Associated state*. This panel was presided by dr. Ondrej Hamulák (Vice-dean of the Faculty of Law, Palacky University in Olomouc). The panel offered the insights to the legal developments in the Ukraine related to the process of the approximation and future association of Ukraine with the European Union. First speaker prof. Natalie Kuznetcova (Department of civil law, Kiev National University Schevchenko) presented the paper “The reform of the judicial system of the Ukraine – in accordance with the standards of the quality of justice”. Second member of the panel Assoc. Prof. Olena Zakharova (Department of Justice, Kiev National University Schevchenko) gave the speech about “The access to justice and its integral parts under the Ukrainian legislation”. Next speaker prof. Oksana Grabovska (Kiev National University Schevchenko) spoke about “European Convention on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and its application in the civil proceedings of the Ukraine”. Last member of the panel who presented the final paper of the whole conference was Assoc. Prof. Lydia Gruzina (Academy of Advocacy of Ukraine, Kiev) devoted her paper to the topic of “Influence of EU law on the transformation of the labour legislation of Ukraine”.

Third Annual Conference of the Czech Association for European Studies represented one of the most profound and influential academic events in the first half of the year 2014 in national but also European perspective. The conference joined the representatives of academia and practice from different parts of the European Union and also guest from outside the EU and offered the wide space for the discussions and finding the solutions of the hot topics of the current state of the European integration (its internal as well as external dimension). The selected papers given on this event are presented to the wider academic community thanks to upcoming volume of the journal *European Studies – The Review of European Law, Economics and Politics* published by Czech ECSA in cooperation with the Wolters Kluwer. There are always people responsible for the organisation of every event. Czech ECSA conference in Prague couldn't be so successful without the hard work of the Scientific and Organization Committee which comprised of Assoc. Prof. Naděžda Šišková (Palacky University in Olomouc), prof. Fausto de Quadros (University of Lisbon), prof. Eva Cihelková (Economic University in Prague), prof. Běla Plechanovová (Charles University in Prague) dr. Emil Ruffer (Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of the Czech Republic), Mgr. Jan Škeřik (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech republic) and dr. Ondrej Hamulák (Palacky University in Olomouc).

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