

V. International Symposium “Czech Foreign Policy”

Democracy and Democratisation

Tuesday, 12th November, 2013

Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Loretánské náměstí 5, Prague

Introductory Speech

Michal Kořan, *the Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations, Prague*, opened the symposium by introducing the two main topics of the conference: the support for democracy, and cooperation between academic and executive authorities.

Jan Kohout, *the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic*, speculated about the mistrust between the academic and executive spheres. He believes this leads to their isolation from each other, and he encouraged a cooperation between them in the style of the US model.

Petr Kratochvíl, *the Director of the Institute of International Relations, Prague*, expressed appreciation for the relevance of the theme of democratization. Despite widespread support for democracy, he acknowledged that it nonetheless continues to face problems.

Jiří Schneider, *the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic*, stressed the importance of cyber space and its significance for the Czech Republic. He added that according to him, the EU is a normative concept whose processes both political and academic elites are failing to explain to the public, resulting in it unfortunately growing increasingly distant from the public.

Between Cooperation and Disinterest: Cooperation between Academic and Executive Spheres in Czech Foreign Policy

David Král, *the Director of the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy*, pointed out the importance of cooperation between political and academic institutions, where there is great potential. Additionally, he noted the importance of cooperation with schools.

Štěpánka Zemanová, *the Head of Department of the Jan Masaryk Institute of International Studies, FMV, University of Economics, Prague*, expressed appreciation for the cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Faculty of International Relations at the University of Economics. She explained the main problem in the cooperation as one of mutual miscommunication.

Břetislav Dančák, *the Dean of the Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno*, described the difficulty of, and the insufficiency in, financing academic research, and the discrepancy between academic reports and the Ministry's requirements.

Oldřich Bureš, *the Director of the Centre of Security Studies, Metropolitan University, Prague*, stressed the difference between academic output and the demands from executive organs. He also expressed hope for a closer relationship between ministries and universities.

Vít Dostál of the *Association for International Affairs in Prague* mentioned the necessity of quantitative research, as well as student initiation.

Daniel Košťoval, *the Deputy Minister of Defense*, saw the main problem in the financing of research, and the discrepancy between research and demands of the Ministry. He expressed appreciation for the competitiveness between academics, though, positing that it can lead to better results.

Jan Havránek, *the Director of the Defense Policies and Strategies of the Ministry of Defense, Prague*, mentioned his regret about the lack of understanding of think tanks' aims, especially on the part of state sectors.

At the end of the debate **Jiří Schneider**, *the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic*, discussed the various forms of cooperation with several non-governmental organizations, and the political processes of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Foreign Policy in Czech Political Life

Vít Dostál of the *Association for International Affairs, Prague*, presented the results of a survey of Czech political elites' attitudes towards the EU. These demonstrated that Czech politicians appreciate the economic benefits of being part of the EU, and that they would like to accept the Euro currency in the future; thus, their opinion was very different from that of the public.

Martin Kuta of the *Parliamentary Institute of the Czech Republic, Prague*, researched the influence of the Czech parliament on Czech foreign policy. His results showed that this relationship is dependent on numerous conditions; nonetheless the role of the executive authority – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – is more significant in this matter.

Tomáš Weiss of the *Department of West European Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague*, talked about national interests in European politics, and their promotion. He noted that the Czech Republic is failing in this sphere compared to the other states, and moreover, it is criticized for its ignorance of the “rules”.

Czech Foreign Policy and the Problems of the Euro-Asiatic Security

Iveta Hlouchová of the *Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno*, described the necessity of continuity in the Czech foreign policy towards Afghanistan. She identified the spreading of democracy as a priority of Czech politics, specifically pointing to Afghanistan by noting that in today's globalized world, Afghanistan can pose a threat even to the Czech Republic.

Petr Martinovský of the *Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno*, discussed China's growing influence in Africa and called for an acknowledgment of the fact that African states have increasingly started to prefer cooperating with China over cooperating with Western countries. However, his survey showed that China's influence in Africa is exaggerated, and generally China has good relations with only a few African states.

Josef Kraus of the *Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, and the University of Defense, Brno*, focused on the Czech–Iranian relations, which were favourable during the era of Pahlavi, but halted after the 1979 revolution. They were once again restored after the breakup of Czechoslovakia, but since 1998, when Radio Free Europe supported the state opposition in Iran, the relations remain problematic. Otherwise, the Czech reputation in Iran remains very good.

Tomáš Šmíd of the *Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno*, described the Czech Republic's unbalanced policy towards the Caucasus region, especially its policy toward the

Armenian–Azerbaijani conflict. Despite its declarations of support for worldwide democracy, the Czech Republic has treated one side of the conflict more harshly, even though both sides have committed the same atrocities.

Spheres of Growth of Czech Exports

Jan Průša of the *Institute of Economic Studies, Charles University, Prague*, showed – by using the gravity model – that geographical factors, especially the distances between markets, are especially important for Czech exports. Another positive factor in this respect is a tradition of good relations with the importing country, whereas both sides sharing a common currency has little influence in this matter.

Vladimír Benáček of the *Institute of Economic Studies, Charles University, Prague*, compared German and Czech exports. German export policies are among the best and can be used as a source of inspiration for the Czech Republic. He also stressed the possibilities of exporting not only products, but also education and services.

Božena Bobková of the *Institute of Economic Studies, Charles University, Prague*, and **Lourdes G. Daza Aramayo** of the *University of Economics, Prague*, described the possibility of an intensification of Czech exports to Latin American countries. By also using gravity models with institutional variables, they presented the potential market's wide range. The model also showed the close relationship between the state of export and institutional stability.

Vilém Semerák and **Yu Chin Cheng**, both from the *Institute of Economic Studies, Charles University, Prague*, explained that in spite of the small proportion of exports to China, the Czech Republic is doing very well in comparison to other countries from its region (except Slovakia) in this respect. Nevertheless, the Czech exports to China could be doubled, but owing to the problem of distance, the market remains insufficiently developed.

Zdeněk Drábek of the *World Trade Organization, Geneva*, described some trade models for the African continent. Even though Africa is not the main area of interest for Czech exports, the interest in the local situation there should be maintained, as there is a great economic potential in trade with Africa. There is some economic development in Africa right now owing to the great reforms of the previous years, especially in the field of social and health care.

Pietro Podda of the *Anglo-American University, Prague*, showed the impact of institutional distance on Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the Czech Republic, describing formal and informal institutions and their impact on the public. On the one hand, the degree of corruption in the Czech environment is not hugely significant, but on the other hand, he recommended improving the Czech regulatory qualities.