



23 – 24 SEPTEMBER 2015
CZERNIN PALACE, PRAGUE



The Institute of International Relations together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic organized the **7th International Symposium “Czech Foreign Policy”**. The conference was held on 23rd and 24th September, 2015 in the Czernin Palace of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in Prague. This year, the main topic of the discussions was **the future global order and the role of small states in it**.

The first day of the conference was focused on discussing central European perspectives on the global order and how think tanks, universities, and research institutes play into the global thought. The discussions reflected also upon the current migrant crisis and the disagreements within the European Union. The participants also discussed the Eastern partnership in the context of EU instruments and policies. Among the topics was also the question of how the Czech foreign policy can influence and shape the global order.

During the first day of the conference there were two addresses given to those in attendance - one from Steven Kashkett, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of the United States of America to the Czech Republic, and the other from Karel Kovanda, Former Deputy Director-General, DG External Relations, European Commission Belgium/Czech Republic, Brussels. In addition, three highly professional panels took place:

- Think Tanks, Universities and Research Institutes as Partners in the Government's Diplomacy
- The Future of (Liberal) Global Order: Central European Perspectives
- The European Union and the Multilateral Order: the Eastern Partnership between Instrument and Policy

The conference was met with great interest from the public as many questions and points of the discussion were introduced by those in the audience. Among the conference participants were academic researchers, civil servants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, journalists, representatives of various NGOs, academic teachers, and university students.

During the first round table, the topics of critical thinking and the impacts of European NGOs on the global agenda were discussed. First, Břetislav Dančák, Dean of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University, prompted the discussion with the question of how universities develop critical thinking skills and how that translates to the international level. Then the conversations transformed into a discussion of how small European NGOs compete in the global context, with an expert contribution made by Robert Vass, Secretary General of the Slovak Atlantic Commission (SAC) and founder of the GLOBESEC Forum. GLOBESEC became an analogy to the small European NGO searching to be recognized in the global arena, as these



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institutions are applauded in practice but struggle to maintain themselves financially. Vít Dostál, Director of the Research Center, Association for International Affairs (AMO), reaffirmed the ideas behind establishing a NGO or research organization in a world of large nations. Finally, Zbyneěk Pavlačík, Director of the NATO Information Center and Chairman of the Association for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation (Jagello 2000), agreed with opinions expressed by Mr. Vass and contributed with his expertise in NATO relations to move the discussion further.

After many questions from the audience that followed the first panel, Karel Kovanda presented his keynote address, commenting largely on the current migrant crisis. Under the premise that “the need to belong has become stronger” in recent history, he claimed that European politics have failed both, the refugees and the European peoples. Kovanda was clear as he said that the fear of losing jobs and the fear of terrorism are equally unjustified and should not be an excuse for EU member states. Kovanda left the audience with the thought of how global warming will ultimately impact European immigration in the next twenty-five years. The attendees then had the opportunity to discuss this topic and more during the buffet lunch.

In the afternoon, a discussion of central European perspectives on the future of liberal global order prompted many questions. Sergey Utkin, Head of Department of Strategic Assessment, Centre for Situation Analysis and Russian Academy of Sciences, chaired the enlightening discussion. Jozef Bátora, Associate Professor of Political Science at Comenius University, discussed the theories of political consciousness, while Tomáš Weiss and Helena Schulzová unveiled their latest research on unconventional diplomatic representation with emphasis on typology and practice.

The last panel of the day explored the role of the Eastern Partnership of the European Union in the multilateral order, specifically its position between an instrument and policy. Each panelist shared their individual research and welcomed comments from their peers. Victor Chirila, Executive Director of the Foreign Policy Association in Moldova, discussed the financial embezzlement occurring in Moldova and then Arzu Geybullayeva, journalist and associate scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, echoed the anti-corruption sentiment in her discussion of Azerbaijan in both, the political and media contexts. Irakli Porchkhidze, Senior Vice President of The Georgian Institute for Strategic Studies (GISS), and Grzegorz Gromadzki of the Stefan Batory Foundation commented on the need for cooperation between nations. As Vít Dostál, Botond Feledy, and Gustav Gressel concluded the panel with innovative theories on multilateral order and left the attendees with many concepts to think about during the evening.



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On the second day of the 7th International Symposium “Czech Foreign Policy” with the topic “The Future of Global Order”, many established politicians, journalists, business persons and various other professionals regrouped to discuss more about the future of Czech foreign policy. The day was started with an opening address delivered by Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek.

Zaorálek’s welcoming address prepared speakers and other participants for the upcoming panels to be held that day. These included:

- The Future of Global Order and Challenges for Democratic Countries
- Czech Foreign Policy and the Future of Global Order: Between Activism and Free Riding
- Between Ignorance, Prejudice, and Partnership: Politicians, Journalists, Diplomats, and Experts and the Prospects of the Czech Foreign Policy

The first discussion of the day was focused on challenges that democratic countries have to face, and was led by Martin Michelot. Equality was a common theme that these speakers reiterated and agreed they wanted to strive for – in several different aspects. Johannes Gerschewski, Research fellow at the department of Democracy and Democratization in Berlin, presented important information. He pointed out that hard aggression against non-democratic nations is destabilizing, and even counterproductive. It decreases the probability of moving toward a democracy in the future by up to 40 %. Arzu Geybullayeva from Azerbaijan revealed that even though Azerbaijan “boasts in the glory of energy,” the country actually maintains more political prisoners than Russia. Soli Özel, Professor of International Relations at Kadir Has University in Istanbul and columnist for the Habertürk newspaper, emphasized that a mere 350 people around the world have more money than 50% of the world. The challenge Özel believes is necessary to be tackled is to find the balance between the inequalities of capitalism and the framework of democracy. He believes that almost everywhere capitalism is on the rise. You cannot have democracy without a middle class, and the choices of the middle class define the future of the democratic order. Slawomir Debski, the Director of the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, had his most memorable moment during the question-and-answer session of the panel. His view that “armies are for fighting wars, not for limiting refugees” in regard to the current EU immigration crisis was well received. Sergey Utkin felt strongly that the Western powers should not be able to impose decisions on the rest of the world. All panelists agreed that an open stream of international dialogue and an awakening of the middle class in all nations will be vital to solving these challenges for democratic countries.



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After the panel was concluded, all Symposium attendees enjoyed a keynote video address from Walter Russell Mead, Professor of International Affairs and Humanities at Bard College. The main topic of his keynote was EU-Russian relations and how they have changed since the collapse of the USSR. He pointed out that the EU should eventually prevail, due to its global vision that overcomes Putin's tunnel-vision of Russian nationalism.

The next panel was about the future of the Czech foreign policy specifically, chaired by David Král from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Czech Republic. Vladimír Handl, a lifelong researcher of politics and international affairs from the Institute of International Relations, Prague, was very clear in his declaration that the Czech Republic does not plan to join the Eurozone until Greece leaves. The debt crisis is not something the Czech Republic is interested in helping to solve. Lucia Najšlová, the Editor-in-Chief of *V4 Revue* political webzine as well as Research Fellow at Charles University in Prague, has expressed her opinion that the last elections helped the Czech Republic to become more globally aware of world issues. She called upon Czech policymakers to take a clearer stance on their hopes for Ukraine. Rudolf Fürst, Researcher at the Institute of International Relations, was resentful about the lack of human rights policies in Poland. He also challenged Polish lawmakers to prompt more human rights discussions and avoid the difficulties of serious conversations like these. Lastly, Michal Kořan, the Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations, pointed out that foreign policy is also public policy and thus transparency is essential in foreign policy decision-making.

The final panel of the entire Symposium focused on human rights and how professionals influence these conversations and decisions deriving from them. Ondřej Soukup, journalist at Czech daily newspaper *Hospodářské noviny*, was regretful that political parties are not able to present these topics in an effective manner. For this reason, foreign policy conversations often turn into personal quarrels that have nothing to do with foreign policy, and in turn the Czech lawmakers earn a poor reputation when the government does not achieve any progress. Jan Zahradil, Member of the European Parliament, presented the question of how to find harmony between economic and human rights policies. Sometimes these can contradict each other but we must strive to find a balance. In the midst of an opinionated debate between the panelists about modern media's effects on politics, Lucia Najšlová eloquently suggested that professional roles should stay divided. She called for journalists, academics, and politicians to be empathetic in order to rise productivity. The last panel of the day produced new ideas about the relationship between politics and media.

The two-day Symposium "Czech Foreign Policy" ended on a high note, with Michal Kořan giving the closing remarks. This was yet again a positive experience for all attendees, and the topics covered were productive and thought provoking. Everyone was invited to share a glass of wine before parting ways until the 8th Symposium in 2016.



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