

## Day 3 Summary

The third day of the Prague European Summit featured the perspectives and role of Central European states in the EU's future. In the morning session *Central Europe as an Active Player in the Aftermath of the European Parliament Elections* several ministers weighed in on if making regional distinctions within the EU is helpful. The ministers agreed that the EU needs to overcome these internal divisions and regard its members on an equal playing field in order to be successful. The Czech Republic's Minister of Foreign Affairs **Tomáš Petříček** also outlined his country's priorities, which included strengthening the single market, fostering more innovation and integrating the Western Balkans and Eastern European countries.

Great power relations both within and outside the EU were analyzed at the breakfast discussions. In *Coalition Building after Brexit*, speakers expressed the possibility of building a new ad-hoc coalition of medium-sized states to fill the leadership hole that will be left by Britain. They were also hopeful that consensus building, which has been increasing throughout Europe, won't be impacted by Brexit. **Lucinda Creighton**, former Irish Minister for European Affairs and CEO of Vulcan Consulting, also expressed optimism that the march of populism might be more muted than anticipated, shown by the European elections which, she believes, were "not as catastrophic" as the media predicted.

The panel *Is It the End of Global Agreements on Common Challenges?* examined the strain multilateralism has undergone in the past few decades thanks to known opponents like Russia and China as well as allies like the United States. The speakers did agree in general that global agreements were key to paving the way for important future negotiations, such as modernizing organizations like the World Trade organization. Their main concern was the impact of Brexit on the EU's economy.

Speakers also pondered the question of if China should be considered a friend or a foe in *Chinese Influence in (Central) Europe*. Beijing's use of soft power is shown by its purchase of media outlets to boost its image in Europe and its investments in infrastructure projects, especially in the Western Balkans. However, speakers don't think this is necessarily a bad thing. **Laurent Zylberberg**, Chairman of the European Long Term Investors Association, says that if China is willing to take a risk by helping Europe financially, there must be a good reason why.

Czech's attitudes toward EU issues like populism and free trade were explored in a study presented in *Czech Perception of the European Union and How it Differs from Other V4 Countries*. While the study shows that the EU has worked for some members more than others, it also shows that Czechs prefer to reform the EU as opposed to leave it. They also care more about security and prosperity over democracy, free trade, and business issues.



The rapid changes technological innovations are bringing to governments were also addressed in several discussions. Panelists in *Is Europe Ready for a Dynamic Future? Role of EU Governments and Governance* expressed concerns over the EU's inability to keep pace with these advances. MEP **Matthijs van Miltenburg** suggested that the EU's regulatory bodies need more power to act quickly while also being transparent, so they do not lose the trust of citizens or entrepreneurs. **Kalle Palling**, Riigikogu's Chairperson of European Union Affairs Committee, also emphasized the need to change the educational system in order to encourage "upskilling" so people and technology can evolve together. An example of how to do this would be adding an expiration date on your diploma to get people to practice or learn new skills.

*Evolution of Humans in the Next Century. Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* looked at the risks and rewards of artificial intelligence. Speakers all agreed that many of the security concerns raised by experts like Nick Bostrom and Elon Musk are exaggerated, arguing that AI is unable to surpass human intelligence. The panelists highlighted the potential benefits AI will bring when it comes to medicine, climate change, and more. They all agreed that AI will be central to all aspects of human existence within the next twenty to thirty years.

The Prague European Summit ended with Director of the Institute of International Relations **Ondrej Ditrych** thanking the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the office of the government, the European Commission, the Visegrad Fund, and everyone who participated in the three-day event. "Together we created a singular space for debate on Europe and its future," he said.

