



Prague European Summit

12 - 13 November 2015



"By holding the Prague European Summit we hope to show that Central Europe isn't like the donut hole in the middle of the EU."

Vladimír Bartovic

"The temptation on the national level to play to the fears of people is great. Let's not give in to the temptation of fear politics."

Frans Timmermans

"Everyone who wants to play the game has to follow the rules and participate in the game, not seek advantages."

Vaira Vike-Freiberga

"We need to talk to each other, understand our differences and wake up those who sleepwalk. That's why we need events like the Prague European Summit."

Lubomír Zaorálek

"Enlargement is part of EU's DNA. Deepening and widening do not contradict each other, in fact they need each other."

Štefan Füle

"EU doesn't do geopolitics."

Asle Toje

"Russia doesn't want Ukraine to be seen as a success story."

David Stulík

"We identify European Union with economy only. Thus when economy is not doing well, we think that the European Union is not doing well."

Tomáš Sedláček

"A crisis of economy and security has led to a crisis of confidence."

Martin Michelot

"EU institutions were made for good weather, but not for bad weather."

Jiří Schneider

PRAGUE EUROPEAN SUMMIT SUMMARY

November 12 – 13 2015, Lobkowicz Palace

DAY 1

Welcoming Remarks (Vladimír Bartovic, Radko Hokovský, Petr Kratochvíl)



The pilot year of Prague European Summit was launched on Thursday November 12th in the majestic premises of the Lobkowicz Palace. The intense two-day programme began with welcoming remarks by the directors of the three organizing think-tanks; Mr Vladimír Bartovic of EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Mr Radko Hokovský of European Values Think-Tank and Mr Petr Kratochvíl of the Institute of International Relations. All three highlighted the importance of common discussions about the pressing issues Europe is currently facing (i.e. the Ukraine and refugee crises and the rising threat of Daesh), a goal for which the Prague European Summit should serve as one of the platforms.

Plenary Panel I: EU Institutions Fit for Crisis Management (Steven Blockmans, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, Ivo Šlosarčík)



The first panel focused on the role of EU institutions in the process of crisis management. Ms Vaira Vike-Freiberga (former President of Latvia), Mr Steven Blockmans (Centre for European Policy Studies), and the chair Ivo Šlosarčík (Charles University in Prague), provided their opinions on the functioning of EU institutions. The prevailing message was that the EU has so far managed, albeit slowly, to respond to the unprecedented challenges it has encountered, beginning with the financial crisis in 2008.

Ms Vike-Freiberga pointed out that the European institutions had been created step-by-step, back when France and Germany put together resources and

created an attractive package for other countries to join, and put forward the ideological advantage of sharing national sovereignty.

“We should see the glass half-full”, remarked Mr Blockmans, discussing the EU’s sanctions policy in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine as a success in reaching a common ground on foreign policy. The speakers agreed that the EU institutional design needed reform in order to respond more swiftly to crises. Mr Blockmans also pointed out that the disagreements between heads of states regarding the institutional reforms in fact help the EU political space to mature. “The institutional structure is a reflection of confidence”, he stressed.

When discussing the UK’s requirements for EU reform, Ms Vike-Freiberga reminded that “everyone who wants to play the game has to follow the rules” and that pooled sovereignty and pooled powers are necessary for a stronger Europe.



Key-Note Speech (Lubomír Zaorálek)

In a key-note speech that followed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Mr Lubomír Zaorálek, stressed the importance of acting as a united Europe and avoiding the free-riding of some members. Alluding to the situation before WW1, he warned against sleepwalking into a conflict because of a lack of trust and communication. European trust, he argued, is the greatest achievement of the integration process, one that current crises should not be allowed to ruin. As the two key topics of this year's Prague European Summit, Mr Zaorálek pinpointed migration and enlargement and called for solidarity and empathy among different member states. He cited pooling of resources and improved management of the EU's external border as the two necessary measures to tackle the migration crisis. Building walls on the inner borders of EU states, however, constitutes an undesirable policy.



Visegrad Ministers' Panel: How to Enhance Central European Clout in the Discussions on EU Institutional Reforms? (Miroslav Lajčák, Péter Szijjártó, Artur Nowak-Far, Lubomír Zaorálek, Petr Kratochvíl)

In the foreign ministerial panel on Central Europe's role in EU institutional reforms, moderated by Mr Petr Kratochvíl (IIR), we welcomed ministers from the four Visegrad countries; Miroslav Lajčák (Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic), Péter Szijjártó (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary), Artur Nowak-Far (Undersecretary of State for Legal Treaty and Consular Affairs of Poland) and Lubomír Zaorálek (Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic).



They all agreed that maintaining the Schengen zone is crucial for a well-functioning EU, but also for the Central European states in particular, and that the refugee crisis has threatened the future of Schengen. However, they each maintained a different view on what response should the EU adopt. While Mr Szijjártó argued that the only reasonable proposal to tackle the "mass migration" into EU was put forward by the Central Europeans, Mr Lajčák stressed the importance of a united response and common help to the states that are most affected by the migration crisis such as Greece.

The ministers also stressed the importance of the V4 cooperation within the EU, Mr Lajčák calling it the "most solid regional cooperation". Mr Nowak-Far and Mr Zaorálek also warned against the popular perception of EU as being divided between old and new members. They argued that the V4 was not meant to always give a uniform answer but should rather be a platform for comparing different views. The recent criticism of V4 countries for blocking certain policies and contributing to EU's disunity is, according to Mr Zaorálek and Mr Nowak-Far, unfounded.



Plenary Panel II: Re-enchanting the European dream: are we still capable of living together? (Dragoljuba Benčina, Gordan Bakota, Martin Michelot, Tomáš Sedláček, Jiří Schneider, Beata Jaczewska)

The concluding panel of day one took up the current state of the “European dream” and its potential for re-enchanting the European project. Under the moderation of Ms Beata Jaczewska (Executive Director at International Visegrad Fund), the speakers offered many thought-provoking ideas. Mr Jiří Schneider (Prague Security Studies Institute) pointed out that there was more than one European dream, with each country having a slightly different version of its own European dream and different expectations of the European project. He also maintained that European institutions had been made for good weather only, but that they lag behind in turbulent times.

Mr Martin Michelot (EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy) pinpointed that the three core European values are democracy, stability and prosperity. According to him they still stand strong, but the recent storm of crises has led to a crisis of confidence among the Europeans. The mainstream parties across Europe seem to have abdicated their responsibility to find solutions to this crisis, thus giving way to the populist, extremist parties. According to Mr Michelot, Europe is desperately looking for leadership on both national and EU levels and the mainstream parties must revive themselves to fulfil their responsibility to lead.

Mr Tomáš Sedláček (ČSOB) raised a few provocative questions on the limits of European solidarity and Christian ethics (“love thy neighbour but only when he’s far away”). He also argued that the EU is used to sorting out problems by only using its economic power (e.g. Greek bailouts), but when a crisis occurs that cannot be solved economically (e.g. refugee crisis) the EU struggles to deal with it. We identify the EU predominantly with economy, he continues, thus when the economy is not doing well, we feel as if the whole EU is not doing well. He also reminded of the 2004 EU enlargement, where the older members’ fears of the new “different” Slavonic countries didn’t materialize, comparing it to our current fear of refugees precisely because they are “different”. He ended by suggesting that the current migration to the EU could as well be seen as a spontaneous enlargement.

Mr Gordan Bakota (Coordinator for the V4 countries, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia) and Ms Dragoljuba Benčina (State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia) offered a view of the two Balkan countries strongly affected by the refugee crisis, both maintaining that the EU was still of prominent importance to south-east European countries. They also highlighted the importance of EU-wide solidarity with the countries facing the highest number of refugees for a successful management of the crisis.

The panellists finished on an optimistic note, agreeing on the assessment that the EU equalled 28 democratic countries whose values we can and should be proud of.



DAY 2



**Key-Note Speech
(Frans Timmermans)**

The second day of the Prague European Summit began with a key-note speech by Mr Frans Timmermans (First Vice-President of the European Commission). In a very passionate speech he expressed his worries for the future of the European project. With the refugee crisis creating the perfect storm for European

cooperation, will we fail to respond collectively to collective challenges such as the refugee crisis?

He also warned that we should always remind ourselves that treaties and laws are better alternative to any power struggle and that the European construction, even if not flawless, is a necessary provision for that. Furthermore, preventing the renewed division of Europe between East and West will be best achieved by an increased mutual understanding and respect for historical differences, Mr Timmermans argued. Speaking directly about the refugee crisis, he maintained that the EU's external borders must be protected through the cooperation of all EU members. Similarly, it is crucial to create actionable divides to help distinguish between legitimate asylum seekers and economic migrants.

The foremost responsibility of the EU in this crisis is, according to Mr Timmermans, to explain to all the member states that it is in their interest to show solidarity with the most affected ones and help manage the crisis, at the risk of everybody losing out. He concluded remarking that "leaders who fight against diversity, fight against the tides of history."





Plenary Panel III: Enhanced European Neighbourhood Policy (Vladimír Bilčík, Anthony Dworkin, Barbara Lippert, Marc Pierini, Věra Řiháčková)

In a third plenary panel focused on the European Neighbourhood Policy, we welcomed Vladimír Bilčík (Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association), Anthony Dworkin (European Council on Foreign Relations), Barbara Lippert (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik) and Marc Pierini (Carnegie Europe). The panel was chaired by Věra Řiháčková from the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum.

A predominant part of the discussion revolved around Ukraine. Barbara Lippert began by pointing out that the EU should stick to its policies even in times of crises, rather than giving them up. More political and financial investment is needed to help ENP countries move closer to the EU. On the other hand, she expressed her concerns about the ENP review. She stressed it would not bring anything new to the neighbourhood policy as “there is a total lack of geostrategic element in the strategy.” She went on to emphasize that the EU has to “do a bit more in strategic thinking” to guarantee solidarity and prosperity.

Vladimír Bilčík brought attention to the importance of the very idea of the EU, which should continuously be fostered in the ENP eastern region. The EU’s presence on the ground (in education, business development, infrastructure etc.) is essential for this. Anthony Dworkin added that the EU should continue to represent an economic model for the Eastern European countries. Marc Pierini concluded by remarking, critically, that the ENP is shaped more by shock events rather than through a continuous dialogue. This should be improved.

Breakout Sessions

The programme continued with three breakout sessions, each conducted by one of the three organising think-tanks. They dealt more thoroughly with the issues of Ukraine, Daesh and immigration crisis in the Mediterranean.

Breakout Session A: Major Challenges in our Neighbourhood: Ukraine: How to avert yet another frozen conflict in Europe? (Martin Bútora, Iryna Solonenko, David Stulík, Asle Toje)



In a session organised by EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy focusing on Ukraine and chaired by Martin Bútora (Honorary President at Institute for Public Affairs) we heard opinions from Iryna Solonenko (European University Viadrina), David Stulík (Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine) and Asle Toje (Norwegian Nobel Institute). They discussed the possibility of a frozen conflict in Ukraine and the differing interests of the EU and Russia in this region. Mr Toje presented the idea that a state acts aggressively either when it feels threatened or when it holds revisionist ambitions. In the case of Russian aggression in Ukraine, he argues, the EU is not united on whether Russian motivations were the former or

the latter, which makes a united response rather complicated to the detriment of EU. Mr Stulík argued that Russia does not want Ukraine to be seen as a European success story, therefore a frozen conflict is in Russia's interest, but not in EU's. He sees a potential for improvement in a sovereign, economically prosperous Ukraine with its own functioning army, which however, might take time to achieve.

Breakout Session B: Major Challenges in our Neighbourhood: DAESH: How to defeat the so-called Islamic State and prevent the formation of other such organizations in the MENA region? (Shmuel Bar, Roland Freudenstein, Jana Hybášková, Antonio Missiroli, Milan Nič)



Breakout session B, prepared by European Values Think-Tank, was devoted to strategies to defeat the so-called Daesh. Shmuel Bar (Samuel Neaman Institute for Public Policy) stressed that it should be noted that ISIS is not an organization but rather an ideological movement. He thinks that due to the lack of economic, military and political "investment", neither Syria, Libya, Yemen nor Iraq will be the "same" countries soon again. Jana Hybášková (Delegation of the EU to Iraq) pointed out that it is difficult to bring the Middle East "back" if we do not really know what "the back" is. ISIS is not a problem to be solved but a challenge to be managed, she added. Antonio Missiroli argued that the ISIS is the

best and the worst enemy the EU can have.

Roland Freudenstein concluded that the governments and authorities should try harder to engage Muslim communities living in the EU and integrate them into "our" values system.

Breakout Session C: Major Challenges in our Neighbourhood: The Mediterranean: How to prevent the human tragedies at sea and adopt a viable and sustainable European immigration policy? (Radko Hokovský, Polly Pallister-Wilkins, Eduard Soler i Lecha, Benjamin Tallis)

The third breakout session, organised by the Institute of International Relations, focused on the migration crisis in the Mediterranean. The panel was moderated by Radko Hokovský (European Values), and the discussions were Mr Eduard Soler i Lecha (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs), Mr Benjamin Tallis (Institute of International Relations) and Ms Polly Pallister-Wilkins (University of Amsterdam).

The prevailing message was that the crisis cannot be fixed by one actor only, yet the EU can help improve the critical situation by managing it effectively. Ms Pallister-Wilkins highlighted the humanitarian aspect of the crisis, urging not to merely reduce the refugees to numbers but to always see them as human beings. She opposed the idea of setting up barriers since she believed it would not prevent people from escaping the conflict-ridden areas, but only make their journeys riskier. Mr Tallis supported the refugee quota system as a sustainable solution to the current crisis, provided that the migrants accept to stay in the country they are assigned to. He urged to see migrants not as a burden, but rather as an opportunity. Mr Soler i Lecha concluded by a reminder that we need to put this crisis into perspective, quoting that even with the current intensity, the number of refugees coming to the EU will still only account for less than 1 % of its population.



Plenary Panel IV: Towards an EU “Global Strategy”: How to Combine Ambition and Realism, Ends and Means, an Inclusive Process with an Incisive Outcome? (Annegret Bendiek, David Král, Zoltan Martinusz, Stuart Summers, Antonio Missiroli)



In the fourth plenary panel of the second day chaired by Antonio Missiroli (Director of European Union Institute for Security Studies) and featuring Annegret Bendiek (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik), Zoltan Martinusz (Enlargement, Security, Foreign Affairs Council Support), David Král (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic) and Stuart Summers (European External Action Service), the role of EU in global affairs was discussed. Each speaker brought their insight into what should be taken into account when forming the new global strategy of the EU given the current international dynamics.

High Level Ministerial Panel: How to Restart the Pending Process of the Western Balkans Enlargement? (Štefan Füle, Igor Lukšić, Dimitr Bushati, Nikola Poposki)

A special high level ministerial panel welcomed Ministers of Foreign Affairs of three Balkan countries; Mr Igor Lukšić of Montenegro, Mr Dimitr Bushati of Albania and Mr Nikola Poposki of the Republic of Macedonia. It was chaired by the former European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Mr Štefan Füle.

Mr Füle opened the discussion by stating that enlargement is part of the EU’s DNA and that the deepening and widening of the Union go hand in hand. He remarked, however, that the enlargement agenda has become increasingly politicized in recent years. The three foreign ministers hailed the newly founded Western Balkans Fund as a major step forward in regional cooperation. They also

presented the view that Balkan countries can help strengthen the Union and might be particularly important now in a time of crisis, even though their image is not always favourable in Brussels.



Closing Remarks (Vladimír Bartovic)

The two days of the intensive and thought-provoking pilot year of the Prague European Summit were wrapped up by Vladimír Bartovic's (EUROPEUM) closing remarks. He expressed his thanks to all who attended and his hopes for this year's Prague European Summit to be the foundation of a successful tradition of the regular, high-level, EU-wide summits to be held in Prague in the years to come. In the end, he lifted the spirits of the audience by comparing the EU to a donut and expressing his hopes that Central Europe will no longer be the symbolic hole in its middle. The Prague European Summit is here to prove that Central Europe is willing to fill this hole.



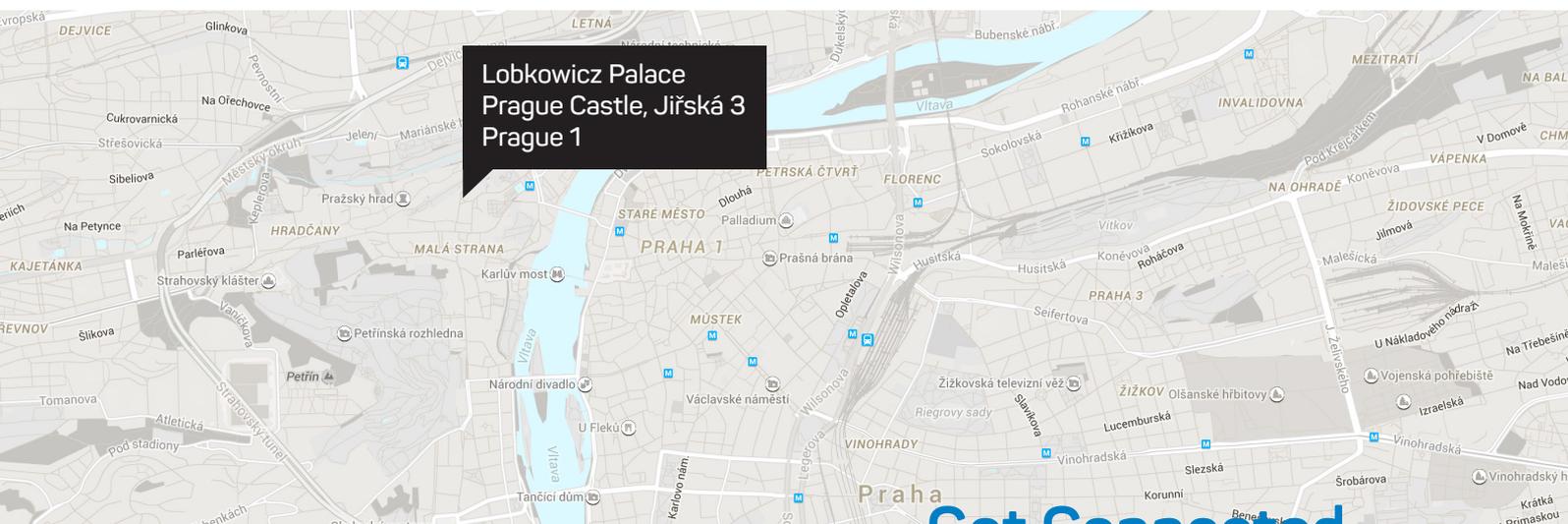


Nelly Tomčíková

Project manager

Email: ntomcikova@praguesummit.eu

Mobil: +420 777 802 254



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