

Priorities of Polish Presidency: Czech Perspective

International seminar organized by the Association for International Affairs in cooperation with the Polish Institute of International Affairs and with the kind support of the Czech Polish Forum, Open Society Fund and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Prague.

Prague, 1-2 December 2010

Venue: Mirror Hall, Černín Palace, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic



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Synopsis

The Czech EU Council Presidency was generally perceived as a somewhat turbulent period. However, it was positively evaluated in Warsaw as its priorities fell under the scope of Polish interests and specific actions pursued by the Czech Republic helped to fulfil priorities of Polish European policy. Resolving the gas crisis, pro-active approach against violations of the Single market rules or launching of the Eastern Partnership were issues, in which the Czech Presidency gained Polish appreciation.

This is not a surprise if we take into account that Czech and Polish views on majority of the EU dossiers are similar. Czechs and Poles are among the new and poorer EU member states, which are profiting from the robust Cohesion Policy and which want to keep this redistributive instrument for the next programming period. Both countries look rather eastwards than southwards when thinking about the EU Neighbourhood Policy. Furthermore, the EU Single market should be as open as possible according to Prague and Warsaw and development of the EU Energy Policy is in the vital interest of these two Central European countries.

Czech Republic and Poland have been fighting with the label of European trouble-makers. Sharp and sometimes also unpredictable postures in the long and fatiguing institutional debate or blunt statements of certain high-level politicians have not helped to gain respectful positions within the EU. Nevertheless, Prague and Warsaw find themselves in different situations. Echoes of the peculiar Czech Presidency are still audible. On the other hand, the complicated period of the Polish European policy seems to be forgotten and Polish position in the EU is now much better than it was three or four years ago. Moreover, the Polish EU Council Presidency in the second half of the year 2011 will be a great opportunity for Polish European policy, since it can mark Warsaw's status in the EU for next decade. If it is – together with the Hungarian Presidency – successful, it can signify much for the whole picture of Central Europe which has been stained by the turbulences of the Czech Presidency.

This seminar will focus on two main issues. Firstly, the proximity of Czech and Polish views and quality of cooperation vis-à-vis the next EU Financial Framework, Common Security and Defence Policy, Eastern Partnership and External Dimension of the EU Energy Policy. Secondly, this meeting should deal with the Polish EU Council Presidency. Although the Presidency commences on the 1st of July 2011, it is already high time to stimulate the debate about its priorities, which were stipulated by the Polish government. This event is an opportunity to discuss them in the circle of ministerial and think-tank experts. The goal of the seminar is also to pin-point areas of possible deeper cooperation and to identify specific ways of their mutually beneficial advancement during the Presidency. However, we should not expect that Czechs and Poles will concur in all areas. There will definitely appear some issues in which Prague and Warsaw will disagree. This event should help find and describe the backgrounds of possible areas of contention in order to eliminate misunderstandings during the Polish Presidency.

Let me wish you productive days of exchanging your views and ideas.

Vít Dostál

Association for International Affairs

Sessions

Session I – Financial Perspective 2014-2020

Several important documents saw the light of day in Brussels this autumn. Firstly, the Budget Review was finally revealed after a number of postponements. Secondly, the so called Fifth Cohesion Report indicated the future of the EU Cohesion Policy and, last but definitely not least, the Commission outlined a blueprint for the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013. These three dossiers, all full of heavy issues, will be thoroughly discussed and will be transformed into the budgetary framework proposal for the years 2014-2020. It is needless to say the shape and size of the EU budget is one of the most burning issues on the agenda as it will influence economic performance of the Member States and the level of convergence between the “old” EU-15 and the “new” EU-12. How will Poland tackle this issue during its Presidency? Does the fact it has very much at stake mean it will try to avoid harsh debates? Do the Czech Republic and Poland share a view on where the EU money should be spent? Is the limit of 1 % of EU GNI for the EU budget set by the Czech government acceptable in Poland? How should the income of the budget be structured and do we need additional sources?

Session II – Common Security and Defence Policy

For both the Czech Republic and Poland, the establishment of the European (today Common) Security and Defence Policy represented a certain strategic problem: right at the moment when their security and defence became firmly embedded in NATO a new, hitherto unknown venue for coordination of these policies emerged. Both states' initial positions could be characterized as reserved. Especially for Prague, this is still the case today – the emphasis on transatlantic security anchor clearly dominates in Czech foreign and security policy. Warsaw's case is a bit different, as demonstrated for example by hundreds of Polish soldiers participating in EU operations in Chad and the Republic of Central Africa. Whether and why both countries will remain close to each other in their views of CSDP (especially vis-à-vis NATO), or whether their perspectives will gradually differentiate, that remains to be seen – and discussed.

Session III – Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership was ceremonially launched in Prague during the Czech Presidency. It seems, however, that it lost the political interest of the EU shortly afterwards. Despite this falloff in high political focus, the Eastern Partnership has been developing. Poles want to bring it back on the top of the EU agenda and a further development of the Eastern Partnership is among their Presidency priorities. Furthermore, Poland wants to mark its Presidency with specific actions such as the starting of visa-free regimes or signing of association agreements. The Czech Republic has been among staunch supporters of the Eastern Partnership. Yet, Czech-Polish cooperation in this respect has been affected by fruitless quarrels about ownership of the original idea. Are these run-ins finally over? How can Czechs help develop this issue during the Polish Presidency? How to persuade less enthusiastic EU members about the importance of the Eastern Partnership?

Sessions

Session IV – External Dimension of the EU Energy Policy

Energy and climate change were among the top priorities of the Czech EU Presidency, energy itself even made it among the “Es” (Energy, Economy and Europe in the World) that defined the Presidency agenda. Even though the Czech Presidency as such is judged as failure, its achievements in external energy relations are considered a success story. Prague contributed to resolving the January 2009 gas crisis and the Southern Corridor summit in Prague made an important step towards the realization of the Nabucco pipeline. Two years later, Poland will take over the EU Presidency as a second Central European country, facing similar challenges in this area. Dependency on gas and oil imports from Russia, active approach towards nuclear power and LNG, single European gas market and special issues like Nord Stream pipeline. These are just some of the conditions under which the Polish EU Presidency will form its contribution to EU’s energy security. Just like the Czech Republic, Poland will have the opportunity to influence the future shape of external dimension of the EU’s energy policy and contribute to the amalgamation of different national views.

Programme

Prague, 1 December 2010

Venue: Mirror Hall, Černín Palace, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

13:30 - 14:00 REGISTRATION

14:00 - 14:10 WELCOMING REMARKS

Maria Staszekiewicz, Director, Association for International Affairs

14:10 - 15:30 SESSION I - FINANCIAL PERSPECTIVE 2014-2020

Chair:

Alena Falathová, Project Manager, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Prague, Czech Republic

Speakers:

Ignacy Niemczycki, Senior Expert in the EU Budget Unit, Department of Economic Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland

Kateřina Matouřková, Head of Unit, Financial Perspective and EU Budgetary Relations Unit, National Fund Department, Ministry of Finance, Czech Republic

Paweł Tokarski, Analyst, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Republic of Poland

15:30-16:00 COFFEE BREAK

16:00 - 17:30 SESSION II - COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

Chair:

Tomáš Karásek, Director of the Research Centre, Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic

Speakers:

Joanna Jurewicz, First Secretary of the Common Security and Defense Policy Unit, Security Policy Department, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland

Jiří Kyrian, Deputy Director of the Security Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

Marcin Terlikowski, Analyst, Polish Institute of International Affairs, Republic of Poland

19:00 DINNER

organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Prague (special invitations)

Programme

Prague, 2 December 2010

Venue: Mirror Hall, Černín Palace, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

9:00 – 9:30 **REGISTRATION**

9:30 – 11:00 **SESSION III - EASTERN PARTNERSHIP**

Chair:

Maria Staszkievicz, Director, Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic

Speakers:

Jarosław Dziędzic, Head of the Eastern Partnership Unit, Eastern Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland

Petr Mareš, Ambassador, Special Envoy for the Eastern Partnership, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

Petra Kuchyňková, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic

11:00 – 11:20 **COFFEE BREAK**

11:20 – 12:40 **SESSION IV - EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF THE
EU ENERGY POLICY**

Chair:

Petr Binhack, Analyst, Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic

Speakers:

Szymon Polak, Head of the Energy Policy Unit, Department of Economic Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland

Lukáš Hlavatý, Unit of International Energy Relations, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Czech Republic

Veronika Zapletalová, Analyst, International Institute of Political Science, Czech Republic

12:40 – 13:00 **HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY PERSPECTIVE**

Ádám Szesztay, Head of the Department of the Strategic Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Hungary

13:00 **BUFFET LUNCHEON**

Team



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Conference Coordinator

Conference Coordinator
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We would like to thank all those whose help and cooperation have made this event possible.

Association for International Affairs

Association for International Affairs (AMO) is a preeminent independent think-tank in the Czech Republic in the field of international affairs and foreign policy. The mission of AMO is to contribute to a deeper understanding of international affairs through a broad range of educational and research activities. Today, AMO represents a unique and transparent platform in which academics, business people, policy makers, diplomats, the media and NGO's can interact in an open and impartial environment.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS AMO STRIVES TO:

- formulate and publish briefings, research and policy papers
- arrange international conferences, expert seminars, roundtables, public debates
- organize educational projects
- present critical assessment and comments on current events for local and international press
- create vital conditions for growth of a new expert generation
- support the interest in international relations among broad public
- cooperate with like-minded local and international institutions

RESEARCH CENTER

Founded in October 2003, the AMO's Research Center has been dedicated to carrying out research and raising public awareness of international affairs, security and foreign policy. The Research Center strives to identify and analyze issues important to Czech foreign policy and the country's position in the world. To this end, the Research Center produces independent analyses; encourages expert and public debate on international affairs; and suggests solutions to tackle problems in today's world. The Center's activities can be divided into two main areas: First, the Center undertakes research and analysis of foreign policy issues. Second, the Center fosters dialogue with the policy-makers, expert community and broad public.



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Notes

Organizer



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