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A Bi-monthly Review of European Affairs from the Czech Perspective

Special Issue - External Relations of the European Union

Introduction - EU's Role in the World

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Dear readers,

You have just opened the already 10th issue of the Association for International Affairs' European Programme Newsletter. In connection with our annual conference, "External Relations of the European Union" were chosen as the topic of this special issue. We believe that a series of articles written under the supervision of Václav Bacovský, will bring you an interesting overview of recent developments in this area especially with regard to the upcoming Czech presidency 2009.



At the moment we are starting off a new project PREDSEDNICTVI.CZ in cooperation with E15 daily as our media partner. We believe that this web portal which combines news service, deeper analysis, interviews with interesting personalities as well as space for readers will, combined with the Newsletter, contribute to your good orientation in European issues in the upcoming months.

With kind regards on behalf of all Newsletter team members

Ivana Jemelková,
Head of the European Program of AMO

Mini-analyses

Introduction - EU's Role in the World

Vladimír Beroun

The EU is one of the most significant subjects of international relations, it is an important stabilisation factor, moderator of international conflicts and disposes of an enormous negotiation potential as well as strong "soft power". After the Laeken summit (2001), where

the "Europe at a Crossroads" declaration was published and which defines Europe as a global player directing global course of events, it was expected that the EU will define itself more and more as a single organisation with full subjectivity in international law. However the following failure of the "Constitution for Europe" led to curtailment of the original ideas, hopes and perspectives.

The EU plays the most important role in relative indexes of international trade, the potential of Euro as a global reserve currency is constantly growing, EU is the world leader in environmental protection, supports peace missions and is the most generous donor of development and humanitarian aid; however it is still not perceived as a global player. It disposes of neither military potential nor material capacities; its energy perspective remains unresolved and has to battle demographic and immigration issues. Many of these factors are influenced by the non-coherence and inability of member countries to decide a common European foreign policy. Europe still does not have one telephone line, just as Henry Kissinger stated in the seventies.

It is in the best interest of the entire international community that the EU engages more and accepts its responsibility for international course of events. At least a partial communitarisation of EU's second pillar (CFSP) seems to be a vital part of the new Europe which is seeking its own identity and solid vision. In this respect the reformative Lisbon Treaty, which defines the decision-making processes of European institutions more closely, could be of certain hope.

EU and Russia: Discussions about a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

Jakub Kulhánek

In reaction to the appeal by the European Commission (from 5 November), the EU Member States decided to renew the negotiations about a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Russia, the old one having expired last year. The talks about its renewal, interrupted due to the conflict in Georgia, were approved at the summit of EU and Russia representatives in the French city of Nice on 14 November.

Some of the longstanding problematic issues still burden the mutual relations and will probably be reflected in the upcoming PCA negotiations. From the EU's point of view, what is crucial is the security of smooth oil and gas supplies – that being intensified by the concerns of some countries about overdependence on Russia. Brussels also requires the abolition of some non-market measures (tariffs, state subsidies) that distort the mutual trade. On the other hand, Russia wishes the new agreement with the EU to be enhanced to a strategic partnership. According to some voices, Russia wants the new agreement to be rather general. Moscow also seeks guarantees for the entry of its companies to the European energy market.

As the next presiding country the Czech Republic is certain to be involved in the negotiations about the new PCA. Doubtless the cooperation with Russia will be a great challenge for the Czech presidency, further complicated by the intended construction of the American radar. The current Topolanek's government adopts a much more cautious attitude towards Russia than France, which again can cause frictions not only with Moscow, but also within the Union itself. The Czech presidency can await a regular summit of high representatives of Russia and EU, which will be held in Russia this time. In addition, we might see certain surprises regarding the domestic political changes in Russia next year, as the Russian president Medvedev recently hinted in his annual speech to the Duma.

Perspectives of the Union for the Mediterranean

Petr Hajný, Marián Zachar

The Arab-Israeli conflict and the integration of common foreign and security policy led to the creation of neighbourhood policy with the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean Union, supported by the French president Sarkozy, should be one of the platforms of building of good relations. The constitution of the Mediterranean Union would then become the flashpoint of the not so successful

Barcelona process which had defined the policy towards this region since 1995. France gained support mainly from the region's countries such as Italy, Spain, Slovenia and Greece. However the European Commission, Germany and other EU countries which should have been held back according to the original proposal, opposed it. In the end France celebrated only partial success, on 13th July 2008 a greater Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) in which the entire EU participates was created thanks to a compromise.

There are many opinions on why France threw itself behind this particular project: from gaining greater influence in the region to solving EU's immigration problems. The possibility of Turkey's membership in the UFM is important and resolves its "(non)membership" in the EU (through formal financing from the UFM instead of the EU). However Turkey wants to become a full member of the EU and it has agreed with integrating in the UFM only after affirmations that the UFM membership will not limit its ambitions to enter the EU.

The Czech Republic fully supports Turkey's membership in the EU, it does not have any stronger interests in the Mediterranean and therefore its view of the UFM is rather sceptical. It has supported the project along with Poland under the condition that in the future the EU will also open itself to Ukraine. There are several questions concerning the UFM: how can 43 countries agree on a common approach towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or whether the budget financed largely from Union's sources will be sustainable in the long term.

EU's Foreign Missions

Jan Potucký

The history of foreign missions of non-military nature is quite recent, they went through huge development during the Cold War era, when this was virtually the only activity that could be approved by all blocks of power. After the fall of the iron curtain, international organisations headed by NATO took over the administration of peace operations. The EU continues in increasingly engaging itself on the international field. From 2007 it has EU battle groups at its disposal for interventions abroad.

The EU is very engaged in the issue of humanitarian aid and peace operations, which fall under the second pillar of Common Foreign and Security Policy. The contractual basis for peacekeeping missions can be found in Article 17 of the Amsterdam Treaty, into which the so-called Petersberg Declaration was embodied. The development of second pillar should have been one of the priorities of the French presidency. However the interim failure of the Lisbon Treaty (which abolishes the pillar structure) has slowed development in this area which therefore keeps its strictly intergovernmental character. The missions in progress are divided into civil and military ones. Civil missions are aimed at monitoring and development of a certain area, while military ones are designed for sustaining, introducing and supporting peace with force. At the moment humanitarian aid for Congo is contemplated, however it was evaluated by EU ministers as precocious. The turmoil will then probably continue to escalate.

The Czech Republic participates in several NATO operations: it operates in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq. It also took part in the recently terminated operation of the EU, Althea. However it is not engaged in the current Eulex mission. In total thirteen observers operate abroad in the name of the Czech Republic (missions in Congo, Georgia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Liberia). Their activities are universally monitoring ones.

Croatia: One Step Closer to the European Dream?

Sylvie Milerová, Michal Vít

The report on enlargement presented on 5th November by Commissioner Olli Rehn contains a plan according to which Croatia should finish accession talks in course of next year and therefore could become the twenty-eighth EU member as soon as in 2011. However there is

one condition – Croatia must continue in structural reforms and fight against organised crime, which is especially up to date after the October assassination of journalists in Zagreb which casts a certain shadow over Croatia. At the same time Olli Rehn pointed out: “This is an encouragement, but not a blank cheque. The ball is now in Croatia’s court.” Stability of the entire Balkan region is at stake – simultaneously with the possible completion of proceedings with Croatia in 2009, guaranteeing Serbia the status of candidate country is planned.

After Irish refusal of the Lisbon Treaty, Croatian perspective of EU membership was rather dim. It seemed that the Croatian dream came to an end thanks to the statement of the French president Sarkozy, who said that without accepting the Treaty, further EU enlargement is impossible. In connection with this Alexandr Vondra asserted that EU’s enlargement to Croatia should not be conditioned by Treaty’s entry in vigour. This approach was later confirmed by all Prime Ministers of the Visegrád Four at their Prague meeting. Croatian membership in the EU is one of the priorities of the upcoming Czech presidency and according to the results of Eurobarometer from spring 2008 enjoys wide support of Czech citizens – 73 % of Czech respondents (52 % of European ones) agree with its membership. Thus Croatia has placed fourth, from both Czech and European wide point of view, right behind non-member countries of Western Europe.

Comments on Recent News

Czech Presidency Logo Unveiled

The colourful sign EU2009.CZ is the new logo which will represent the Czech Republic during European Union proceedings. It was introduced by its author, Czech designer Tomáš Pakosta along with Prime Minister M. Topolánek, Deputy Prime Minister A. Vondra and ballet dancers on 12th November at the Veletržní Palace. However the solemn unveiling of the logo has showed that both Czech and foreign journalists were more interested in the often disputed competence of the Czech Republic to lead the EU and the controversies surrounding president Klaus rather than in the graphic look of the Czech presidency. The organisation of the solemn unveiling of the logo has also showed that there is still much to improve less than two months before the beginning of the presidency: the professional notion of the otherwise artistically successful presentation was affected by functionless microphones, lack of presentation materials as well as chaotic Prime Minister Topolánek. More

International Conference on Caucasus in Prague

On 13-15th November the Association for International Affairs organised the international conference “South Caucasus in 2008 and Beyond: Frozen Conflicts or Frozen Peace?” The August events in the region have dramatically afflicted the culminant preparations and changed the essence of the conference, which instead of a mere warning not just reflected the new development, but also tried to outline possible future development. In spite of all obstacles, about forty experts from the countries of South Caucasus, EU, USA, Russia and other countries met in the past few days in order to discuss issues connected with the war’s consequences concerning the relations between Russia and the West, future development in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the role of civic society and other key issues, in the framework of seven panels. Well-represented was for example the organisation International Crisis Group, whose outputs are unique thanks to the fact that they are based on dialogues and in-house investigation in the area of conflicts. Peter Semneby, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus was also present.

The Association wanted to draw attention to the problem before the Czech presidency of the EU begins. In this context, low attendance on the part of representatives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Office of the Government is startling, all the more that both institutions assumed auspices over the conference. We cannot choose but hope that the situation does not reflect real interest of Czech “policy makers” in what happens in EU’s Eastern neighbourhood, which is the long term priority of Czech foreign policy. If it be to the contrary this would be a highly alarming message

concerning the readiness and ability of the Czech presidency to deal with conflicts that will not easily disappear from the agenda during 2009.

The Strongest Economies of the World Tried to Find a Solution of the Financial Crisis

On 15th November a summit of G-20 which groups the economies of 19 countries and the European Union (together these represent around 80% of world trade) took place in Washington. The main topic was the financial crisis and possible solutions to it. In the final declaration the representatives have agreed on common approach and fifty correctional measures to reconcile the situation. The next summit will take place in spring 2009. Therefore the Czech Republic will represent the entire EU at the summit.

Common EU Defence Policy in the Fashion of Two-Speed Europe?

In an interview, French Minister of Defence Hervé Morin has overtly expressed to the intent that the common European defence policy cannot be understood as a project designated for all 27 member countries of the European Union. In connection with this he has highlighted the uneven ambitions of particular member countries on one side and the current potential for cooperation of "selected" member countries on the other one. Following similar incidents from the last few weeks, the idea of double approach towards EU countries as well as the concept of the so-called two-speed Europe, which has significantly showed in the Schengen space issues, restrictions of free labour movement, dissimilar approach of the USA towards visa policy or the unequal agricultural policy, is gaining momentum. More

Interesting Publications

Association for International Affairs

This autumn, the Association for International Affairs has published a book focused on the external relations of the EU ("Vnější vztahy Evropské unie"), written by a group of authors led by V. Nekvapil. Besides the EU enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, transatlantic ties or relations with more distant regions, such as Latin America or China, are also analysed.

Centre for European Policy Studies

Jan Techau's and Alexander Skiba's study called "Transatlantic Relations 2009: European Expectations for the Post-Bush Era" is based on surveys conducted in 15 EU member states and sums up what the individual countries as well as the EU as a whole can expect from the new American president. Case studies outline the concrete areas and problems that Europeans would like to address in the transatlantic format.

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

In his work "Die EU-Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik im Schatten der Ungewissheit" (The Security and Defence Policy in the Shadow of Uncertainty) Nicolai von Ondarza offers another point of view on the consequences of the Irish "No" to the Lisbon Treaty. In particular, he deals with the construction of the European Security and Defence Policy, which is at the core of the European integrative processes and which proved essential during the recent crises in Georgia and Somalia when the world was calling for the involvement of the EU. The Treaty being accepted or not in the end, this policy is due to undergo a lot of changes in future.

House of Lords: Select Committee on Economic Affairs

The comprehensive analysis "The Economic Impact of Immigration" minutely examines all the impacts on the British economy that immigrants bring about. Its asset is that it can be applied on other EU economies, which can also learn from the British mistakes in this sensitive area. The work looks at the topic from an immigrant's (work force) point of view and investigates the problems they encounter on labour market.

Invitations

Discussion: EU – US Relations – Time for reflection

When: 21st November 2008, 9 am - 3 pm

Where: Czernin Palace, Loretánské náměstí 5, Praha 1

Organiser: ANO pro Evropu in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

Guests: Richard W. Graber – US Ambassador to the Czech Republic; Claude-France Arnold – General Secretariat Council of the EU, Jiří Šedivý – Assistant Secretary General, NATO, Karel Kovanda – Deputy Director-General for External Relations, European Commission and others.

[More](#)

Conference: 10 Years of the Euro – Inspiration for the Czech Republic

When: 25th November 2008, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Where: Dorint Hotel Don Giovanni Prague, Vinohradská 157a, Praha 3

Organiser: Economia a.s., Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic

Guests: Miroslav Kalousek – Minister of Finance of the Czech Republic, Oldřich Dědek – national coordinator of Euro introduction in the Czech Republic, Servaa Deroose – European Commission, Vladimír Špidla – European Commission

[More](#)

Upcoming Events

EU-China Summit

On December 1, the French city of Lyon is going to host the EU-China Summit. Special place on the agenda is reserved for the current financial crisis, but also for the regional issues of Eastern Asia – North Korea and Burma. It is expected that the negotiations will focus on economic issues, due to the weekend summit of G20 in Washington where the representatives of economic superpowers expressed their wish to reform the international financial architecture. Worth mentioning is a recent offer of the EU towards China: to give up its permanent presidency of the IMF. Africa will also be among the priority subjects of the summit. [More](#)

Euro-African Ministerial Conference

On November 25, the Second Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development will take place in Paris, following on from the first conference held in Rabat in 2006. The aim of the meeting of the concerned countries and international organisations is to search solutions for migration. The main issues will be legal and illegal migration, and synergies between migration and development policy. [More](#)

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association for International Affairs.

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