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EU Mission in Georgia

Michal Thim, Katarina Lokšová

On Monday 15th September the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) dealt with the observation mission of EU in Georgia. Javier Solana called for accelerated action of the member states. The two hundred members of the EUMM Georgia monitoring mission with German diplomat Hansjoerg Haber in its head, will probably be displaced on 1st October. The mission will act on Georgian soil in the framework of ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy).

According to the treaty with Russian president Medvedev, which was negotiated by Javier Solana, José Barroso and Nicolas Sarkozy on behalf of the EU in Moscow, Russia bound itself to withdraw its troops placed out of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The withdrawal should take place until the above mentioned date on condition that Union’s civil troops are present. It is likely that EU observers will not get to the separatist regions, which can be seen as Moscow’s diplomatic victory. At the same time, Russia successfully blocs the increase of number of observers of the current OSCE mission also active in the territory of South Ossetia.

Apart from sending out the EUMM mission, the Council approved the naming of Pierre Morel as special representative of the EU for the crisis in Georgia, the additional release of 500 million € for Georgia during the period of 2008-10 and dealt with the preparations for a donor conference. The priorities of the Czech Republic still include preserving the territorial integrity and reconstruction of Georgia after war. However, the treaty concluded in Moscow does not mention territorial integrity. That is one of the reasons why the last steps of the EU can be perceived as withdrawal from original positions.

The European Institute for Innovation and Technology and the State of Science in the EU

Václav Bacovský

The European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT) which was officially launched in mid-September should become the flagship of European science and research (S&R). The European Commission which initiated the creation of the centre, expects that the new institution will contribute to more innovations, creating new technologies and chiefly preventing “the brain drain”.

The currently buried Lisbon strategy talked about R&S and the building of an economy of knowledge as the fundamental pillar of ability to compete. That is why already in year 2000 the project of European research area, which was supposed to facilitate free movement of scientists, technologies and knowledge, was launched. However the recent green book noted its persisting fractionalism. Therefore the EU as whole still lags behind the USA and Japan not just in terms of R and S expenditures, but also in number of scientists or in the amount of new patents.

Is it possible for a new Institute to change this? It is necessary to realize that both financial and human investments in R&S get appreciated in the horizon of decades. To the top of it the Institute is surrounded by certain doubts. Its budget till year 2013 was set to 2,4 billion € – however the EU covers only 300 million, the rest has to come from private sources. Industrial companies have already stated that they will not allocate any money before they get to know the concrete projects. Some European MPs have already expressed their fears of excessive centralisation or the outflow of finance from smaller scientific centres.

EU's position in the area of R&S is quite tacky: it realizes its key role in Europe's future, however it does not have effective means for its support. It is still true that it is mainly up to the member states themselves to determine how much they want to invest in R&S. Next year the Czech research and development will profit from an increased budget, however it will still be underfinanced in comparison with EU average.

Sanctions for the Employment of Illegal Migrants in the EU – Legislation in Preparation

Alena Falathová, Michal Vít

Along It is estimated that currently about eight million illegal immigrants live in the EU. That is why the European Commission came up with a proposal of a regulation which stipulates common sanctions for companies employing illegal immigrants. According to the proposal, every year member states would have to make a certain minimal amount of controls in companies. Sanctions for employing immigrants would be of both financial (fines etc.) and penal character (including imprisonment of the employer).

However the Commission's proposal was not accepted unconditionally in the EU Council, where it encountered negative approach of some Central and North-European countries. While Mediterranean countries which have to fight with a large influx of immigrants stand up for strict penalties, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Sweden insist that the penalisation of companies should stay in competence of member states. It is safe to predict that the Czech Republic will join the countries which oppose the Commission's proposal. During its presidency, the Czech Republic wants to promote “Europe without barriers” and also stands up for the principle of subsidiarity. Harmonised tough penalties for employers would lead in a direction opposite to that along which the Czech Republic wants to lead the EU during its presidency.

However, illegal migration to the Czech Republic is still a very up to date topic. Both chambers of Parliament passed the proposal of the so-called green cards, which will enable workers from non-EU countries to acquire permit to stay in one month, on the condition that they apply for a vacancy that could not have been filled by an EU worker in a month. The Czech Republic has decided to tackle illegal migration preventively as well as eliminate the lack of workers in industry.

Similar situation took place in Germany during the fifties and sixties, the result of then immigration policy are today's problems with the large amount of immigrants. On the other hand foreign workers helped Great Britain and Ireland to a remarkable economical growth. The Czech Republic thus has a perfect opportunity to learn from other EU member states' mistakes and successes.

EU-Ukraine Relations in the Shadow of Georgian Conflict and the Governmental Crisis in Kiev

Jan Potucký, Marián Zachar

Ukraine is currently going through a constitutional crisis, sparked by the departure of Yushchenko's governmental party from the coalition. That has happened after the refusal of the declaration about the Georgian conflict and continuing efforts to limit presidential powers by the Regions Party united by the Prime Minister. Now Yulia Tymoshenko has 30 days to create a majority coalition. Apart from that Tymoshenko will try to get support for her possible presidential candidature in 2010.

Similarly as in the case of Georgia, an inner conflict threatens to grow into an international crisis. Russia will increase the pressure on territorial and political unity, for example by issuing passports for the already numerous 60% Russian "minority" in the Crimea or by supporting pro-Russian protests. The subject of the feud is the Russian navy fleet in Sevastopol, which was strategically significant during the Georgian conflict.

In spite of N. Sarkozy's rhetorical support, only minimal progress (e.g. abolition of short-term visas for Ukraine) is to be found in the declaration of the last joint summit, which took place on 9th September. It is very likely that without clear political support from the EU in the form of a possible future membership, Ukraine could fall into the net of resurgent and arrogant Russia.

The Czech Prime Minister Topolánek expressed his hopes for a solution of the situation during his official visit to Ukraine. The entire European Union, with the Czech Republic not an exception, depends on the flow of Russian raw materials through Ukraine. The instability of supplies led to the increase of Czech strategic supplies. Therefore Ukraine's stability is in the best interest of both the EU and the Czech Republic, not only because of the approaching presidency.

Comments on Recent News

Russia plans to increase its defence budget by a quarter

According to Vladimir Putin, the amount spent by Russia on "national defence and security" should reach 66 billion € in 2009, which equals around one third of the amount spent on defence in the EU (excluding Denmark) in 2006. Reportedly this is a Russian reaction to the enlargement of NATO and the planned anti-missile system in the Czech Republic and Poland. More

Irish governmental poll: Voters lacked information about the Lisbon Treaty

Micheál Martin, Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs, has admitted that the campaign for the Lisbon Treaty was not well managed. However the results of the poll have cheered up Brussels because it emerged that 70% of respondents deem EU membership beneficial. The results will be used by the Irish government when solving the situation after the rejection of the Treaty. More

EuroparITV launched

On Wednesday 17th September Hans Gert Pöttering, the president of the European Parliament, solemnly launched the internet EuroparITV. However, the television which is to broadcast in twenty languages including Czech is experiencing major trouble from the beginning – because of the delay on the side of subcontractors it has nothing to offer to its viewers. More

Relations between Cuba and EU ameliorating

Havana decided to conditionally accept EU's offer to renew political dialogue. It is another step in deepening mutual relations after the removal of sanctions that were imposed on the island state by the EU because of the situation of local political prisoners. The Czech Republic plans to evaluate the benefits of counter approach during its presidency. Renewal of sanctions is more than unlikely. [More](#)

Interesting Publications

Centre for European Policy Studies

In his new study Benchmarking Integration in the EU: Analyzing the debate on integration indicators and moving it forward Sergio Carrera analyses the benchmarking of third-country nationals' integration in the European Union. He also points out the deficits of current methods and outlines prospects for new benchmarking techniques.

Chatham House

The newest publication of the Royal Institute of International Affairs examines the role of Great Britain in Europe in the 21st century. A British Agenda for Europe: Designing Our Own Future deals with such issues as public as well as political interest, for example: British approach to the EU, the EU accession of Ukraine, constantly growing energy dependence on the Russian federation, and the increasing power of China.

Europeum

EU Democracy Assistance through Civil Society – Reformed? The design of the Community Financial Instruments for the first half of the Financial perspective 2007-2013 is a research study conducted by Věra Řiháčková that focuses on the reform of the EU external assistance financial instruments for the support of democracy in third countries (Cuba, Belarus, Ukraine, and Bosnia and Herzegovina). It also identifies the problems which appear during the implementation. As to the donors, the Visegrad countries are in the centre of attention.

Invitations

Seminar: Black Sea Synergy: “Eastern Barcelona Process” or “Southern Northern Dimension”?

When: 26/09/2008 at 3 pm

Where: Evropský dům, Jungmannova 24, Praha 1

Organiser: Association for International Affairs in cooperation with Stephan Bathory Foundation

Guests: Jiří Schneider - Prague Security Studies Institute, Levan Tsukiridze - Georgian Institute for Public Affairs, Iulian Chifu - Center for Conflict Prevention & Early Warning Romania and other
[More](#)

Conference: Central Europe's relations with Russian Federation and the future of EU-Russian strategic partnership. Central-European dialogue between the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and Slovakia.

When: 29 – 30/09/2008 at 9 am

Where: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Mirror Hall of the Tchernin Palace

Organiser: Institute of International Relations and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Guests: Marek Menkiszak - Centre for Eastern Studies, Alexander Duleba - Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Susan Stewart - German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Petr Kratochvíl - Institute of International Relations Prague and others

[More](#)

Lecture: Transatlantic relations between unilateralism and multilateralism

When: 02/10/2008 at 3 pm

Where: Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University, Joštova 10, Brno, lecture room U42

Organiser: Masaryk University Brno

Guest: PhDr. Břetislav Dančák, Ph.D

[More](#)

Upcoming Events

Discussion starts: CAP after 2013

On 21 September 2008, a two-day informal meeting of EU agriculture ministers begins with focus on new and more ambitious common agriculture policy after 2013. One of the items on agenda will be emerging diseases, but the highlight is going to be the future common agricultural policy after 2013. The presidents of Visegrad countries have already met in Poznań to converge their positions. "Our joint objective is to prevent deepening of the gap between the new and old EU states until 2013 and absolute equality afterwards." Find out more about the Czech position in NL4.

Immigration pact approved?

25th – 26th September, the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council meets in Brussels. The central topic is going to be the French proposal of Immigration Pact, i.e. common immigration and asylum policy. Another item will be the Commission's draft of the directive on so called blue cards that should facilitate the access to the EU labour market for highly qualified third-country nationals. Petr Nečas, the Czech Labour and Social Affairs Minister, does not support this project – at least until the labour market is entirely free for all the Member States.

Cooperation of Parliaments in the EU

26th – 27th September, Prague is hosting the Central European Summit of Presidents of Parliaments. The theme is "New Forms of Co-operation of National Parliaments in European Union" and the participants will represent parliaments of Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. [More](#)

Presidency 2009

Mini-analysis: Bitter-sweet temptation or "We'll give Europe a taste of its own medicine."

Vladimír Beroun, Lenka Ryjáčková

On 4th September the Czech government has officially started the first part of the communication campaign for the Czech presidency called "Faces of the Czech Presidency". Its focal point is the 30 second spot depicting the working morale of conferences in Brussels and ministerial meetings, connected with the ambiguous catch phrase "We will make it sweet for Europe". The official explanation of the catch phrase is "not to dissolve in Europe and to sweeten the summits during the Czech presidency" with its primary goal being the capture of attention of the domestic audience.

The ambiguity of the catch phrase has caught the attention of most Czech and European media as well as that of the scarcely informed Czech citizens and therefore has incited the desired discussion. From the point of view of marketing strategy, the campaign can be described only in superlatives. There is no doubt that it has way more originality, wit, creativity and surprise than, let us say, the campaign of Slovenia, first of the new members that was to preside over the EU. However the provocative spot has become a subject of discussion about the "degree of hyperbola" rather than "reminiscence" of our place in Europe. Thanks to its negligible informational value it could become a Czech alibi not to present overtly the priorities of the presidency and the country's aspirations. It unnecessarily downplays the presidency under the veil of hyperbola, sweetness and

pleasantry. To the top of it is highly unadvisable to connect the Czech presidency with sugar at a time when Czech sugar industry is in doldrums caused among others by the undeniable procrastination of the Czech government when it comes to its reform. Another issue is also the proclaimed stress on the conception of "Us and Europe". A short lived catch phrase created for this campaign has even outshined the motto of the Czech presidency "Europe without barriers" which expresses the strive to remove the barriers between EU countries and the openness of the EU on the outside. A contrast interpretation and discontinuity of the catch phrase and the motto is noticeable.

A great deal of Czech commentators and media experts is rather sceptical about the campaign. They mostly point out the fact that the government does not understand the point of the presidency, because the spot neither offers any facts nor leads to reflection and therefore the grand public does not find out what to expect of the Czech presidency. Media & Marketing notes, that the ironic catch phrase is determinative however it is not clear towards what. According to the Association of Czech Advertising Agencies and Marketing Communication the campaign ignores the three fundamentals: who communicates, who is communicated and what is the goal of the communicator. Furthermore it draws attention to the troublesome strategy and financing of the campaign in comparison with Great Britain. At the Czech political scene both the coalition partners and the opposition have overtly disavowed the entire campaign.

The campaign will keep this form until the official logo of the presidency goes public in November 2008. It is highly desirable that the consecutive campaign, as announced, begin the explanatory process with the specification of priorities, which will have larger space than for example typical Czech products.

Comments on Recent News: Echoes of the Czech Campaign in Foreign Media

France 24 commented: Europe is puzzled. The hard to translate catch phrase has stolen the attention of most European media and has reinforced the ideas of the Czech Republic being euroscptical or ambiguous towards the EU. The English version of the spot is "We will make it sweet for Europe", alternatively "We will give Europe a taste of its own medicine", French "Nous allons en faire baver à l'Europe" and German "Wir werden es Europa versüßen".

The media have covered the creation and the meaning of the Czech video to a surprisingly vast extent and pointed out the prestigious cast. They also informed about the preparations of the Czech presidency and the current political situation. Namely the EUobserver notes for which topics the Czech Republic should prepare in connection with the continuing of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. In the end it lists the "problematic" Czech stances towards certain issues of the European integration. BBC draws attention to the "seemingly innocent" form of the catch phrase and highlights its ambiguity. Deutsche Welle has also found the Czech spot intriguing, therefore its reporters analyse whether the Czech Republic will manage its role of presiding country and point out to the packed programme which had to be shortened due to European institutional elections.

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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