



An Annual Conference of the Prague European Summit, 13 - 15 June 2017

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS A TENTATIVE VERSION OF THE CONFERENCE AGENDA.

Day One, 13 June 2017, Lobkowitz Palace

12:00 – 13:00 Registration, coffee and refreshment

11:30 – 13:00 *PES Programme Board Lunch*

13:00 – 13:15 Words of welcome:

Vladimír Bartovic, Director, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Petr Kratochvíl, Director, Institute of International Relations Prague

13:15 – 14:00 **Key-Note Address: Bohuslav Sobotka**, Prime Minister, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

14:00 – 15:00 **Opening Plenary Session: The EU as a Community of Rules or as a Community of Exceptions?**

The EU has always stressed that rules have to be obeyed, a fact strongly underlined during the accession process of CEE countries. However, the last decade has shown that the application of these rules EU and its institutions can be very flexible. It also seems that some Member States can infringe the rules without the concerns of sanctions that have hit others. Exceptions that are planned to overcome a possible deadlock or to solve an unexpected crisis seem to sometimes fall outside of these bounds. Can the EU sustain its stability by granting more and more exceptions? Does this hamper mutual confidence within the EU and its Member States? Should the EU return to a more rigorous enforcement of rules?

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 – 17:00 **Breakout Sessions: Rules or Exceptions**

Breakout Session A: **External Players in Central Europe – USA, China, Russia**

Apart from membership in the EU and close relations with European partners, Central European diplomacy is also marked by the involvement of powerful external players. Central European governments have traditionally sought to cultivate special bilateral partnership with the US, particularly in security cooperation. More recently, Russia and China have been gaining increasing influence and access in the region, chiefly - though not exclusively - through strategic business endeavours, or even, as in the case of Russia, through political subversion. What role do these external actors play in the domestic and foreign policies of Central European states? Is there a risk of Central Europe becoming - as it sometimes alleged - yet again a playground for great power politics?

Breakout Session B: **Paris, Berlin: still deciding the future of Europe?**



It has become commonplace to assert that Franco-German cooperation, a traditional motor of EU politics, is stuttering. This is often attributed to the growing imbalance in their economic performance and political weight. And yet, in many areas - notably defense integration or Eurozone governance reform - agreement between Berlin and Paris remains indispensable to any meaningful progress. What will be the implications of the successive elections for Franco-German cooperation? What role will other big Member States - Italy, Spain and Poland - play in the post-Brexit configuration of power in the EU?

17:00 – 17:30 Coffee break

17:30 – 18:30 Plenary Panel: EU Energy Security between Business and Politics

Over the years, and in part thanks to Russia's aggressive posture, the EU has made notable progress towards greater energy security, both internal and external, especially in the framework of the Energy Union. However, national or business interests continue to stand in the way of the collective pursuit of energy security and diversification of sources, routes and suppliers. How can the situation be remedied? Does the EU need a more robust legislative framework to ensure Member States compliance with respect to energy supply contracts? What remains to be done to build a functioning internal energy market?

18:30 – 20:00 Welcome Networking Reception

Welcome address: **Adriana Krnáčová**, the Mayor of Prague

20:00 – 21:30 Night Owl Sessions

Session A: **Pressing the Reset Button of Transatlantic Relations: What Next?**

Even before the US presidential election, transatlantic relations had been adrift. The failure of TTIP, as well as the growing US frustration with European inability to step up its security and defence commitments, reflected the dilution of a common strategic purpose. The election of President Donald Trump led to predictions of an impending breakdown of the transatlantic alliance amidst mounting challenges to the liberal international order. Are these worries being born out?

Session B: **EU – The Uncertain Future of EU-Russia Relations**

Once perceived as a promising strategic partner, Russia has become EU's main strategic challenge. While the EU has managed to come together in enforcing as a sanctions regime in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and aggression in the Donbas, it has failed to formulate a sustainable strategy for managing relations with Russia in this new, more adversarial context. Is there enough common ground in the EU for such a strategy? It is possible to unfreeze and rebalance EU-Russia relations without compromising EU's principles



and commitments to Ukraine and other Eastern partners? What is the right balance between containment and engagement? What role should current US policy play in defining EU's approach to Russia?

Day Two, 14 June 2017, Lobkowitz Palace

9:30 – 10:00 Registration

10:00 – 11:30 High Level Ministerial Panel: Political Radicalisation in Europe

« Post-truth politics », « enough of experts » were the buzzwords for 2016 politics. Have they carried on in 2017 and brought with them the confirmation of the disconnect between established political parties and a European electorate increasingly tempted by self-styled “anti-system” voices? How can political parties regain this essential role of channelling societal desires into daily politics? What do we learn from the U.S. and French presidential elections that should serve a platform to ensure European cohesion and integration?

Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Sebastian Kurz, Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs

TBA

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee Break

12:00 – 13:15 Plenary Panel: Future of Digital Europe

Capitalising on the digital revolution presents a key source of economic growth for the EU. Digital technologies are inspiring new business models, transforming traditional industries, facilitating creative start-ups and changing the ways we live and work. The EU needs a regulatory environment that encourages innovation and risk-based, entrepreneurial approach, while striking a balance with protections and standards. This calls for an EU regulatory environment that has to be simple and harmonised in order to reap maximal benefits. How can we best contribute to truly completing the Digital Single Market? In order to fully participate in it, EU citizens will need new skills and lifelong learning. It is crucial to think ahead now of ensuring that no one is left behind by digitalization in order to avoid the disappointment for some that globalization has caused?

13:15 – 14:45 Buffet Lunch

14:45 – 16:00 Plenary Panel: What Future for the EU Banking Union?



The EU Banking Union is still incomplete and Member States are not able to agree upon one of its pillars: the European Deposit Insurance Scheme. Member States outside the Eurozone are reluctant to join the Banking Union, while stress tests have shown serious problems with banks in some Member States. Can the EU Banking Union live up to expectations and successfully prevent a new banking sector crisis? Can we expect its fast completion? What kind of future regulation(s) of the EU banking system can we expect?

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

16:30 – 17:45 Plenary Panel: Redefining the terms of the European security narrative

The EU has made significant progress in the past year on strengthening its CSDP and to implement the strategic autonomy that the EU Global Strategy has called for. The drivers of increased cooperation seem to be on a strong path, buoyed also by Central European countries who view a strong EU as a way to protect its citizens and defend its borders. Can we expect these positive dynamics to continue, or will the dangers of “two-speed Europe” limit integration on security issues? Are we witnessing a division of labour between NATO and the EU?

17:45 – 18:15 Coffee Break

18:15 – 19:30 Plenary Panel: Investing in Europe’s Growth

The Investment Plan for Europe is a flagship initiative that it is intended to boost the European economy with huge investments flowing to different sectors, and that leverages the partnerships between the EU, Member States and private companies. The expectations it has raised are high. Has the Plan so far delivered on its expected results? Should the Plan be tweaked? Does it have the potential to secure sustainable growth and low unemployment in the EU?

19:30 – 20:00 break / transfer

20:00 – 21:30 Reception & Annual “Vision for Europe” Award

Venue: Czernin Palace, Loretánské náměstí 5, Prague 1

Vision for Europe is the annually bestowed award for distinguished personalities who have, in the course of their lives, devoted substantial energies to the establishment and development of European ideals such as strengthening peaceful cooperation among European nations, developing a fair institutional arrangement of European integration, making European integration more accessible to European publics, and overcoming prejudices and misconceptions related to the integration process. The awarding ceremony is part of the annual Prague European Summit, and it is accompanied by the European Vision speech, which is delivered by the awardee.

20:15 Official Opening: **Lubomír Zaorálek**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Day Three, 15 June 2017, Czernin Palace

8:30 – 10:00 Discussion Breakfasts at the Embassies

- **Norway**
- **Slovenia** - *The future legal framework of the EU: Ljubljana initiative*
- **Sweden**

10:30 – 11:00 Registration

11:00 – 12:15 Plenary Panel: Brexit. Bad or Worse?

Brexit negotiations will dominate the EU's political agenda for years to come. Its significance will go beyond setting the parameters of EU's trade and political relations with the UK. Brexit will also shape the identity of the European project itself - to the point of re-defining the very meaning of EU membership, and ways in which EU relates to European non-member states. Just as importantly, the process and outcome of Brexit will bear on the future of the single market. Is there a shared vision of future EU-UK relations that can serve as a basis for a win-win outcome of Brexit negotiations? Can a mutually acceptable agreement be reached without compromising the integrity EU's four freedoms? How will Brexit change patterns of integration in the EU, and in Europe as a whole?

12:15 – 13:30 Buffet Lunch

12:15 – 13:30 *PES Programme Board Lunch*

13:30 – 14:45 Plenary Panel: Exploring Options for EU – UK Trade.

Once the UK leaves the EU, it will become the EU's main trade partner. Without any doubt, it is in the interest of both parties to preserve intensive mutual trade relations. To what extent will this be possible? What is the price the UK will have to pay for access to the EU internal market? What sort of trade agreement will the UK have with the EU? Will it also cover services, particularly financial services? Will there be a trade-off between the scope and speed? What sectors will be most affected by the Brexit?

14:45 – 15:15 Coffee Break

15:15 – 16:15 Key – note Speech: Vice-President of the European Commission
Q & A

16:15 – 17:00 Prague European Summit study



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17:00 – 18:00 **Closing Remarks: Organizers**
Glass of Wine

Prague Public Talks

To be added