

REPORT

Prague Climate Talks: How will the EU contribute to climate protection?

Monday December 3, 2018, 16:00-17:30
European House, Jungmannova 24, Praha

- **The seventh debate of the Prague Climate Talks cycle took place on Monday 3th of December in the European House. This event was co-organised by the Institute for European Policy EUROPEUM and the Centre for Transport and Energy, in cooperation with Glopolis**

The topic of the seventh debate was „How will the EU contribute to climate protection?“. We welcomed four speakers: **Dana Balcarová** (chairwoman of the Committee on the Environment, Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of the Czech Republic, member of the Czech Pirate Party), **Anna Kárníková** (director, Centre for Transport and Energy), **Lenka Kovačovská** (executive director, Czech Gas Association) and **Pavel Zámyslický** (director of Department of Energy and Climate Protection, Ministry of the Environment). Debate was moderated by **Kateřina Davidová** from the Institute for European Policy EUROPEUM.

The debate began with the introduction of the guests and the topic of the panel by Kateřina Davidová. The topic is more than relevant today because of the ongoing climate conference COP24 in Katowice, Poland, as well as some of the recently published key documents, such as the EU long-term emissions reduction strategy and the IPCC special report.

Pavel Zámyslický from the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, which is closely cooperating with the European Commission, prepared a presentation outlining the plans, goals and data of the EU in the field of climate action until the year 2050 with a special focus on the new strategy entitled „A Clean Planet for All“. Zámyslický stated that the EU is responsible for 10% of the global emissions and is aiming to become the world’s leader in decreasing emissions of greenhouse gases. Sectors the EU focuses on are broad; apart from energy and industry, it is also finance, technologies, taxation etc. Furthermore, the presentation mentioned some very specific proposals on how the European Commission plans to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 and help maintain global warming to ambitious 1.5°C. Next year, the member states will discuss the strategy and decide which plan the EU should adopt.

Dana Balcarová from the Pirate Party commented on the presentation in a positive tone, but also warned about

a problem of implementation of these strategies into the national legislation of the Czech Republic. She added that the Ministry should be more persistent with the process of implementation.

Lenka Kovačovská from the Czech Gas Association is more sceptical about the EU's climate policies. According to Kovačovská, European strategy is not based on market principles and is deciding on who the winners and losers of decarbonization technologies will be. As an example she mentioned the first generation biofuels, which were later found to be counterproductive. Kovačovská added that it is necessary to carry out the process of decarbonization gradually and let the market decide which technologies will last and which will not.

On the other hand, **Anna Kárníková** from the Centre for Transport and Energy stressed the progress in thinking that has occurred over the past few years. The debate within the EU has shifted from 2°C, which was first seen as

rather unfeasible, to aiming for 1.5°C. Kárníková claims that reaching the limit of 1.5°C is technologically achievable, but we must start as soon as possible and ratchet up the goals already for 2030. The problem is, however, exacerbated by a lack of interest by the public and significant levels of political polarization.

Following the initial words were questions from the audience. The questions concerned the connection between climate change and circular economy; the processes of authorizing the strategy on the EU level; the connection between economic growth and climate change and last but not least, ways in which the Czech Republic can help with dealing with this problem. The panellists mentioned opinion polls which show that the Czechs care about the natural environment, but are not willing to pay for it. According to Dana Balcarová, politicians and the government should play a more active role in informing the citizens about the problem.