**15 Years in the EU. What has the membership brought to Czechia?**

**Date: 17.4. 2019**

**Venue: University of Economics, Prague**

**9:00 Opening**

**Josef Taušer**, Dean, Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics, Prague

**Jarolím Antal**, Director of the Centre for European Studies, University of Economics, Prague

**Matthias Barner,** Director of KAS CR and Slovakia

**9:05 - 10:45:**

 **What has (not) changed since the EU accession?**

The panel discussion will focus on the economic, political and social dimension of the developments after the EU accession. The EU10 has undoubtedly benefited from the EU membership. For instance, Czechia´s GPD has grown by about 40% since entering the EU, the European funds significantly improved the infrastructure and quality of living in Czechia. The CEE countries have learned to actively shape the EU policies and the debate of the European integration and are reliable partners on the EU level.

* To what extend the has the EU membership brought expected cohesion and welfare to the country?
* What has EU helped to change and what commitments it brought?
* What are the expectations and challenges for the CEE member states in the context of the debate on future of the EU?
* What areas/policies the CEE countries significantly shape?

**Cyril Svoboda**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

**Milena Vicenová**, Former Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the EU and Former Minister of Agricalture of the Czech Republic

**Václav Hampl,** Chairman, Committee for EU Affairs, Czech Senate

Moderator: **Michala Hergetová**, Czech Television

**11:15 - 12:30:**

 **Changing role in the EU – how get the most from the EU budget?**

The ongoing MFF 2020+ negotiations suggest that main priorities of the EU remain. Despite of good economic performance and improving economic level, also Czechia should be significantly benefiting from access to the ESI funds. However, EU budget has also tools where EU member states can apply for support through competitive programmes. Here, Czechia and other CEE countries lag behind the EU15. What stands behind?

* How has allocation changed of the EU funds in Czechia since the accession? What are successful stories and where is potential still untapped?
* How can Czechia benefit most from the upcoming MMF?
* What is the potential of the competitive EU programs and in what areas can Czech subjects be successful?

**Petr Zahradník**, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee

**Michal Částek**, Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic

**Pavlína Žáková**, Economic Advisor, Representation of the European Commission in the Czech Republic

Moderator: **Josef Bic**, Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics, Prague

**12:30 - 13:15: Lunch**

**13:30 - 15:00:**

 **Future of the EU: the Franco-German engine and the others? What role is Czechia ready to play?**

The recent developments and ongoing debate on the nature of the European integration process often mention core/periphery and a strong Franco-German leadership. Nevertheless, on direction of the EU all member states need to agree. In addition, a very strong say have the EU citizens who in the European elections decide where the EU will be heading.

* Where are the member states united and what divides them?
* What goals and wishes can the integration fulfil and what tangible results is the EU ready to bring in following years?

**Igor Blahušiak,** Director, European Affairs Communication Dept., Section EU Affairs, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

**Eric Maurice**, Robert Schuman Fondation, Brusel

**Moderator: Ondřej Houska, Hospodářské noviny daily**