
Institute of Economic Studies Presented Charles University's Programmes at the Shanghai EXPO

Krize ozdravují myšlení

Institute of Economic Studies of the Charles University Faculty of Social Sciences presented its English-speaking programmes to prestigious Chinese and some European universities and their students at the Shanghai Expo. At the same time, the Institute and its partners from Fudan University jointly organized a workshop called The EU and China in Turbulent Times.

Our times are indeed dramatic in many respects, as Professor Michal Mejstřík, the director of the Institute, and the deputy director Martin Gregor, will reveal in the following interview. Still, they take a moment to contemplate the unique position of economics in forming the perspective of looking at the days and decisions to come. "The beauty of the future is in its a priori unknowability, in the creative endeavour of searching for a solution, and economics should contribute to this search", said Professor Mejstřík.



Prof. Michal Mejstřík,
IES FSV UK

One of the basic goals of your trip to Shanghai was to strengthen the ties with Fudan University. In what ways is it this relationship fruitful for the University and your Institute?

This all goes back to 2004, when we presented our institute to guests coming from Shanghai. They were economists and all of them were interested in a more systematic form of collaboration. Then I found out that the EU started to support ties with China and departed on an exploratory trip. I visited several universities, especially in Shanghai, and I basically initiated a whole more general programme, that received EU funding and that later resulted in not only our institute, but the whole Faculty of Social Sciences collaborating with Chinese professors on papers, that will be collected in two books.

Cooperation with Chinese partners was therefore supported by the EU, so it has more profound impact than purely bi-lateral and academic agreements. What do people in Shanghai and at Fudan University know about Prague and Charles University?

Michal Mejstřík: With 20 million inhabitants, Shanghai is an important industrial and financial centre, and although we are seeking to collaborate with many other universities, Fudan is among three of the best universities in the country and ranks well in the international arena. Charles University, on the other hand, along with Vienna University, is the only university in the Central and Eastern Europe that ranks among the 300 top ones in the world. Also, Charles University was the only one from our region to join renowned German, French, Dutch and British universities in the EU-supported cooperation project. This way we are trying to establish the position that Charles University deserves both for its history and its present research, the position of one of the best Central and Eastern European universities.

The Institute of Economic Studies took advantage of the Czech Pavillion at Expo 2010 to present the Faculty of Social Sciences and its programmes. What else can the Institute offer to Chinese students and Ph.D. candidates to come to Prague, and not anywhere else?

Michal Mejstřík: Before I hand over to my colleague Martin Gregor, let me say that our presentation returned a favour to Fudan University, which had organized the conference last year. We called the conference not to Prague, but to the Czech Pavilion, to take advantage of the 6 million visitors and add an academic element to the presentation of our country. In the process, we managed to convince the Faculty of Social Sciences to compile a very up-to-date presentation

of its programmes taught in English. We have been consistently offering all of the programmes, not only the Economics and Finance Bachelor's and Master's degree taught at our Institute.

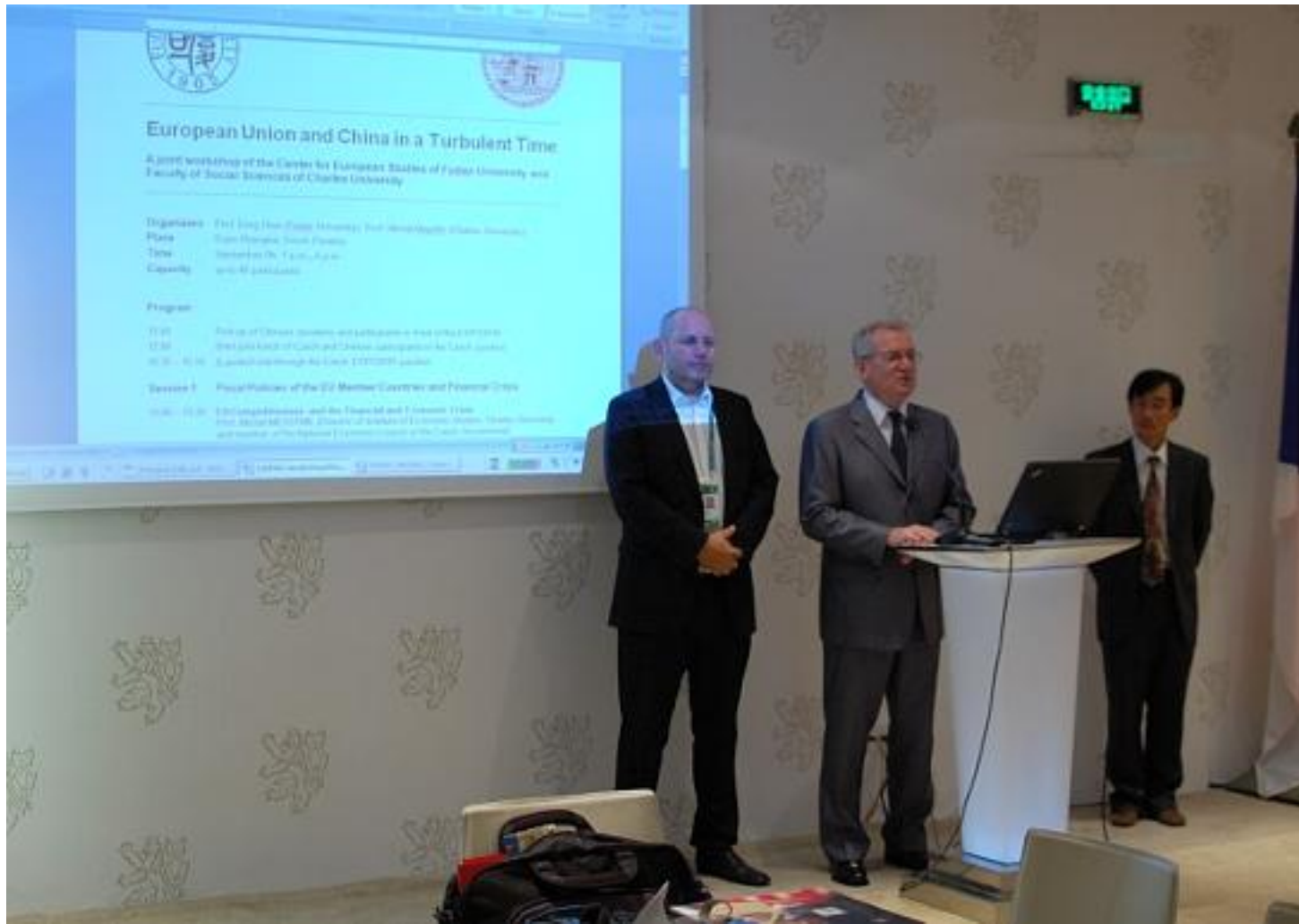
Martin Gregor: An important impulse was the decision of the new management of the faculty to further develop programmes taught in foreign languages and diversify their selection. Our institute had had experience in this respect, first with our Master's, and later our Bachelor's degree, so we suggested more quality and more publicity. The new Dean secured funding for external relations from the Faculty budget, which enabled us to prepare professional promotional materials. These turned out to be very useful, as we had both presentations of each institute and the programmes it taught in English, and of each individual programme.

The initial question was how to get these materials to Chinese students. We knew we could target some groups of Chinese students through the EXPO channels, but that would be like looking for needles in a haystack. Therefore, it was more useful for us to contact our partners in China and ask their international departments to distribute our materials, and, in the ideal case, present our programme to its students, or give us information about the students who are considering applying. Anyway, promotional activities must follow standard procedures either through these or other channels, because the international education market has its ways of doing things: specialized agencies, all kinds of online networks, intermediaries, and so on.



**Martin
Gregor, IES
FSV UK**

Michal Mejstřík: I would like to stress that at the EXPO, we presented Charles University and the Faculty jointly with Fudan. Fudan University is a great partner to be associated with, because it is a top university. Thanks to this, many other universities joined the event and we ended up being invited to Tongji University, Shanghai Institute for Foreign Trade (SIFT), East China Normal University, with which we had already collaborated, and others.



(Marie Kohoutová)

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