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The newly established [Council for the Defence of British Universities](#), a new organisation created to help represent the interests of the academic world, has stated that it has the following goals: prioritisation of education, defence of traditional academic values and greater autonomy for universities. The Council was introduced to Czech academics by Prof. Howard Hotson, a History Professor at Oxford University, during his lecture at the Czech Academy of Science on Tuesday 27th November.

Two weeks ago, the main representatives of British academia founded a politically independent council to help universities face the interests of the corporations and smothering bureaucracy. According to Hotson, in the debate about the future of the public university education it is necessary to present empirically grounded data and to defend it using arguments acknowledged by politicians and businessmen, as well as public.

Professor Hotson informed the auditorium about the likelihood of English universities losing effectiveness in the aim to submit to short-term economic interests. The current radical reforms of the higher educational system are based on the conservative ideological that privatization brings better results for less money. This idea however is strongly tested by statistics from elsewhere in the world. The most effective higher education systems are those financed by the public, as is the case in Switzerland, Sweden and in Great Britain, before the government decided to abolish this system overnight. By contrast, higher education funded by the private sector have been shown to be less efficient, as in Japan, Brazil and the United States of America.

According to Hotson, universities in England belong to the most efficient institutions despite receiving far less financial support than universities in countries like Estonia, Slovenia or Hungary, and the amount of support is 30% below the average of other OECD nations. Based on [research by the OECD](#), it's also clear that the financial contributions of the industry to research and development are decreasing. When comparing the list of the 200 top universities internationally, using university rankings like the [Times Higher Education World University Ranking](#), British universities are still four times more successful than American ones. The United States does however spending fifteen times more on higher education than England.

Its surprising that the above statistics are not reflected in the well known Brown Report“ [The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance](#)”, Prof. Hotson remarked. The report analyzed the contributions of taxpayers, students, graduates and employers to financing the university system, and concluded that was feasible to increase university fees in England to some of the highest in the world.

The transformation of the university education system in England is, according to Hotson, not only due to the right-wing government, and that it cannot be expected that the next government will change this; politicians have been aiming for this over the last thirty years.

The lecture of Prof. Howard Hotson, Professor of History from the University of Oxford, on the issue of the global university crisis was organized by the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Science. The co-author of the document "In Defence of Public Higher Education" which was published in September 2011 is one of the main critics of the governmental proposals of reforms of the British universities. At the moment he is writing a book dedicated to the problem of the marketing in of the public university educational. The book will be published by the British Academy of Science at the beginning of next year.