

Projev profesorky Lenky Rovné na slavnostním zahájení projektu BRIDGE

Charles University in Prague was awarded the title Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in European studies for the first time in 1999 as the first centre in Central and Eastern Europe. At that time I wrote 4 pages application on an old type writer, which my father exchanged for a package of cigarettes with German soldiers leaving Prague in revolutionary days in May 1945. The success of the application played important role as an encouragement of the development of European studies at Charles University. Second time we got an award in 2006. In the meantime our Jean Monnet Centre of European studies became a respected partner for other European or International Universities in research and teaching.

We participated and participate in numerous research project of 5th, 6th and 7th Framework Program. We are a partner in many other European projects: to name some EULEIT financed by Volkswagen Foundation examining European debate, GO EAST – researching and teaching European studies in the countries of Eastern Partnership financed by Visegrad foundation, EXACT – a joint PhD program together with Cologne University and Edinburg University financed by Maria Curie program. Jean Monnet Centre at Charles University is a partner in joint MA program EUROMASTERS and Transatlantic Masters. In September we were officially opening here in Patriotic Hall a joint specialization of Vaclav Havel “European Politics and Society” under the auspices of Europaeum, the association of oldest European Universities with Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne, Leiden University and Oxford University. We are just about to start preparing the full-fledged joint degree with Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne. The European Union is also funding the project Pegasus aiming to establish a joint PhD program with several respected Universities such as Maastricht University, Cologne University or Centre for Advanced Studies in Vienna. I do not want to overload you with more information. I just wanted to give you some examples of our activities, which were encouraged by the label Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence.

The last award of Jean Monnet Centre - we got this year - was a result of the work of several colleagues from the Institute of International Studies and the Institute of Economic Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences as well as our international partners for several weeks. These were not 4 but 77 pages.

The project was highly evaluated as to the content of research. We lost some points due to the fact that I quote “we were awarded by too many European projects”. Fortunately additional funds were found.

The project BRIDGE - we are officially launching today - is concentrated on the transformation, democratization and Europeanization processes in the four Visegrad countries in comparative perspective. The project is using experiences of four Jean Monnet Centers of Excellence and this is a pleasure to welcome here their representatives - all Jean Monnet Chairs: Professor Sylvia Mihalikova from Comenius University Bratislava, Professor Helena Wlasczyuk Tendera from University of Economics in Cracow and Professor Tibor Palankai from Corvinus University in Budapest. Our colleagues and partners from Mohyla University in Kiev - represented here by Maksym - will test a possible usage of experiences of Visegrad countries on the countries of Eastern Partnership. Renowned Professor, mentor and friend for many years Jacques Rupnik from prestigious Science Po in Paris leads the Advisory Board fro the project.