
Waiting for the Godot of Government Funding

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"Believing that the government will ever provide more funding than today is naïve," said assistant professor Daniel Münich at the tuition fee themed seminar which took place on November 30th. In his opinion, tuition fees will be a necessary source of higher education funding in the near future.



Münich, the co-author of the white paper on tertiary education, took part in the round table along with the dean of the Faculty of Informatics of the Masaryk University in Brno prof. Jiří Zlatuška, the chairman of the Students' chamber of the Council of Higher Education Institutions Mgr. Miroslav Jašurek and the editor of the student magazine Sociál and a Faculty of Social Sciences student Mgr. Miroslava Pašková. The event was organized by the informal group of Charles University teachers from the Uzsenatonemohudivat.cz (Can't Sit And Wait Anymore) initiative.

Speaking for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Münich presented the delayed tuition system as a socially sensitive measure that sets the maximum tuition based on the projected earnings of graduates, saying that graduates are only obliged to pay the tuition after reaching a certain level of income. The audience objected to the idea that in some programmes, the tuition would be automatically lower, including teachers college programmes, in which the state is unable to provide high enough salaries.

Right at the beginning, prof. Zlatuška expressed his doubts over the white paper while calling it very complex and specific. He added that tuition fees whose amount is determined by the universities, are a part of the British-American system, followed by some of the post-communist countries.

Speaking for the Council of Higher Education Institutions, Mgr. Miroslav Jašurek warned against the consumer attitude in the higher education institutions funded by tuition fees and said that in the UK, the fees do not cover the improvement of the quality of teaching or higher salaries for teachers.

Being the co-author of the white paper, Daniel Münich was the target of most of the questions. Vice-rector Stanislav Štech warned against the consumer behavior among students, saying that after paying tuition fees, people tend to buy a product and ignore the process of getting towards it.

Mr. Münich also had to defend the fact that while talking about price signals in tertiary education, he was talking about commercial value. His defence against these claims proved to be rather unsuccessful.

P.K.

Translation: Jaroslav Švelch