

Report on round table and the book promotion

„From the Lisbon Strategy to Europe 2020“

On Thursday the 9th of December 2010 the Institute for International Relations with the support of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Croatia organized a round table and promotion of the book „From the Lisbon Strategy to Europe 2020“. The round table was opened by **Mrs. Avis Beneš**, the Director of the EU Information Centre and **Mrs. Sanja Tišma**, PhD, the Director of the Institute for International Relations. The program consisted of two round table sessions with selected speakers presenting the main research conclusions from their contributions in the book, while the last part of the program was the book promotion.

The first session entitled strategic perspectives dealt with general issues concerning the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 Strategy. **Prof. Attila Agh** (Professor at the Department of Political Science at the Corvinus University of Budapest) has analyzed the Europe 2020 Strategy as the new vision for the EU. In his detailed presentation, Professor Agh has emphasized on the process of deep European transformation defining it as a result of the pressure of crisis as well as strong globalization process. He explained the role which Europe 2020 plays in the present European times, pointing out which particular issues the new strategy is expected to correct after the Lisbon Strategy.

His main argument is that the Europe 2020 Strategy is the answer to the governance deficit in the EU and that it establishes meta-governance framework in the EU that significantly distinguishes Europe 2020 from the Lisbon Strategy. Namely, Lisbon Strategy was a Commission's driven initiative while the Europe 2020 is clearly presented as the developmental agenda under the full ownership of the European Council. Greater ownership is envisaged by the fact that this Council's driven programme is indispensable in tackling the most pressing governance challenges that the EU faces today. These challenges include: imbalances between monetary and fiscal policy in the EU, tensions between the EU's and national policies and the emergence of new strategic partners or BRIC countries. These rising powers urge the EU to regionalize its neighborhood so the EU with the Europe 2020 adopts the policy of *globalization cum regionalization*. Finally, additional challenges deal with developments of functional macro-regions and the question of next financial perspective (in the post-2013 period) that has to be appropriately adjusted to dual dynamics of competitiveness and cohesion. Prof. Agh has also analyzed the launching of the EU Danube Strategy, characterizing it as the concrete program with underlined targets. In the context of the future Croatian EU membership, the significant part of his analyses was the overview of expectations set before the Hungarian Presidency for faster Croatian integration into the EU flows. He stressed the difference of the present EU and the EU during the days of Hungarian accession, by saying that the Europe is not a “garden of roses” although the advantages of the EU membership can be clearly visible.

Mr. Hrvoje Butković, PhD (Research Assistant from the Institute for International Relations, Zagreb) has given presentation on the positive and negative results of the Lisbon Strategy. By starting with targets set by the Lisbon Strategy as well as its Guidelines, Mr. Butković has analyzed the impacts of the economic crisis on the realization of the Lisbon Strategy. He offered some comparative statistics on the evaluation of the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy

targets, in general, as well as in the EU Member States. His conclusions encompass the opinion that the economic crisis has not betrayed the trust into the benefits of reforms introduced by the Lisbon Strategy, as well as that the results from these experiences brought the new strategic framework. With his presentation he presented the main achievements of the Lisbon Strategy, and created the introduction for the presentation about Europe 2020 as the new strategic framework for the EU. The following presentation by **Mrs. Višnja Samardžija**, PhD (Head of the Department for European Integration at the Institute for International Relations, Zagreb) has elaborated on the challenges of economic governance within Europe 2020 as the new strategic framework, next to the challenges it provides for the candidate countries. While introducing headline targets, flagship initiatives, and integrated guidelines of the Europe 2020 Mrs. Samardžija has given an overview of the instruments of economic governance. She elaborated main tasks and responsibilities of the EU Member States and has stressed the importance of the Europe 2020 for candidate countries and their future obligations. This importance has been recognized already in the text of the Europe 2020 Strategy, stating that it is not only relevant inside the EU, but also very outside the EU, for candidate and neighboring countries. Mrs. Samardžija has defined the new strategic framework as the reform catalyst in the EU and in Croatia as well, where good practices of the EU Member States can be valuable source for the future reforms. Targets set by the Europe 2020 have been pointed out as excellent source for identifying Croatian targets and priorities, as well as for development of administrative capacities.

During the debate Professor Agh explained that the one of the greatest weaknesses of the Lisbon Strategy was the governance, which was not able to face emerging powers. According to his opinion the EU has to step up on the international scene, while the exchange of best practices has to be secured in order to achieve the highest level of coordination among policies. As an answer on the question on the employment rate methods and trends, Professor Agh has explained that although significant percentage of the European population can be defined as fitting into the knowledge-based society, there is part of it which would never be integrated into the labor market. He has raised some questions on the topic of poverty and social exclusion, as an introductory to the topics elaborated in the second session of the round table.

The second session dealt with thematic issues regarding the Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020. **Mr. Krešimir Jurlin**, PhD (Research Associate from the Institute for International Relations, Zagreb) presented his analyses on competitiveness and education within the Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020. Next to the need for better coordination of economic policies, Mr. Jurlin analyzed the level of competitiveness of the EU Member States and how much it has been influenced by the economic crisis. He pointed out that Europe 2020 puts stronger pressure on competitiveness, compared to the Lisbon Strategy. Furthermore, he elaborated the role of education and training for competitiveness, next to the very ambitious goals on reduction of administrative burdens for entrepreneurs. **Mrs. Giorgia Demarchi**, MPhil (from OSCE Skoplje) has submitted the presentation on her research in the area of investment in R&D in the EU and in Croatia. While elaborating the results of the Lisbon Strategy, she pointed out the lack of indicators on efficient and effective use of the R&D expenditure. Furthermore, she gave an overview of the R&D and innovation spending in Croatia, together with explaining why a candidate country should follow the Lisbon Strategy's goals. Interesting part of her presentation was the elaboration of Croatian progress and its future prospects in the sector of R&D. Mrs. Demarchi defined Lisbon Strategy as very important factor in defining the new EU strategic framework.

The presentation on social protection and social exclusion in the context of the Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020 has been provided by **Mr. Siniša Zrinščak**, PhD (Professor at the Faculty of Law, University in Zagreb). Professor Zrinščak has offered data on poverty rate, social expenditure and the rate of material deprivation. He has given special overview of the situation in Croatia, comparing it with the statistics from the EU. Furthermore, he analyzed the Joint Inclusion Memorandum as possible base for further actions. The concluding remarks of his presentation stressed some issues on defining the national targets in the process of Europe 2020 Strategy implementation. The social policy has been underlined as significant part of all future reforms. The second session of the program ended with the presentation of **Mr. Igor Vidačak**, PhD (Head of the Croatian Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs) on the social economy within Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020. Mr. Vidačak stressed the very strong potential of NGOs which operate in the EU. He explained that the strength of this potential was not recognized in the Lisbon Strategy, although the situation is different in the Europe 2020. The Statute for a European Cooperative Society has been pointed out as an important factor in promotion of mobility and closer cooperation among the cooperatives. Mr. Vidačak gave special overview of the Croatian situation emphasizing that the financing of the NGOs is just one shortcoming in the Croatian system. During the debate Mr. Vidačak pointed out the opportunities which are expected to be offered to the social economy actors after Croatia acquires the possibilities for financing from the European Social Fund. While answering the question on the importance of the EU industries for its global competitiveness, Mr. Jurlin explained the emerging process of deindustrialization in the EU that hinders the desired goals of high employability rates of the EU economy. Therefore, he stressed that European orientation has to be, among the others, focused on the potentials of green industries that can serve as a platform for increased innovation, productivity and employment in the EU.

An introductory note on the book promotion was given by **H. E. Paul Vandoren** (Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Croatia) who has underlined the importance of all opportunities to debate on the EU topics, especially in the candidate states such as Croatia. As an important moment Mr. Vandoren recognized further work on informing the Croatian citizens on all strategic documents in the EU. The smart, sustainable and inclusive growth has been stressed as the focus of the Europe 2020 Strategy, while the values of past Lisbon Strategy's experiences have been recognized as well. **Mr. Mladen Andrić**, PhD (Director of the Croatian Diplomatic Academy within Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration) stressed the importance of this book, especially having in mind new strong players on the global level. According to Mr. Andrić the achievement of the greater level of competitiveness on the global market represents the main goal for the EU in the upcoming decade. **Prof. Mladen Vedriš** (Professor at the Faculty of Law, University in Zagreb) has presented the content of the book as one of the book reviewers. He underlined the very concrete message sent by the book that the EU has to find right instruments in coping with the global challenges in order to avoid marginalization. The importance of the economic growth and innovations has particularly been stressed in the context of the future European economy. Finally, **Mrs. Samardžija** has expressed her gratitude to all the authors, reviewers and assistants as well as to all institutions that financially supported publishing of this book. The excellent timing of the book publishing has also been pointed out, underlining the evaluations of the results produced by the Lisbon Strategy as well as starting of the Europe 2020 Strategy implementation.

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