

International Institute of Political Science

Annual Activity Report 2003

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In 2003, the International Institute for Political Studies (IIPS) continued in its traditional publishing activities, organized specialist seminars and organized a number of educational events that aimed at elucidating various selected specialist issues to a more general public. The events were organized in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung foundation, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other partners.

ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

The aim of conferences and seminars organized by the Institute is provide a venue for direct outputs of various research projects in political sciences, jurisprudence, international relations and European studies. Conferences and seminars provide opportunities for informing the interested public about the main conclusions reached in research projects, and possibly also stimulate them to raise new research questions themselves.

In February 2003, the Institute organized a workshop on the “Transformation of communist parties”, where issues relating to succession organizations to the former governing communist parties and to their attempts at transformation to parties with social-democratic type of programme.

In March 2003, the Institute organized a two-day conference on *Czecho-Slovak relations 10 years after the break-up of the federation* to mark the 10th anniversary of the split. Besides the foremost scholars in this area (Petr Fiala, Filip Křepelka, Lubomír Kopeček), the conference was attended by prominent politicians and other VIPs (Petr Pithart, Rudolf Slánský, Jiří Zlatuška, Petr Osuský). The conference dealt with various aspects of relationships between the two countries, and it outlined the opportunities for further Czecho-Slovak cooperation, particularly in the context of the new enlargement of the European Union.

In April, the Institute organized a series of short seminars for students where political science research issues were discussed (*American think tanks and their role in the political system of the USA, Role of analysis and planning in Czech diplomacy, The shaping and tools of economic diplomacy of the Czech Republic, The Near East – the present and the future*).

At the end of April, the Institute organized the workshop *Parties and party families in transforming countries* in cooperation with the Political Science Department of the SoSS. The workshop was devoted to the question of political parties and political families in Central and South-Eastern Europe. The leading Czech and Slovak specialists discussed the possibility of using the concept of political families on that territory in general, and gave specific examples of political systems in individual countries.

In May, the conference *Referendum on the entry of the Czech Republic to the European Union and Czech political parties* was held to coincide with the referendum on the entry of the CR into the EU itself. Leading specialists in research into political parties, European issues, legal aspects of the “European referendum” or public opinion polls (Břetislav Dančák, Grigorij Mesežnikov, Markéta Pitrová, Vojtěch Šimiček) and leading representatives of Czech political parties (Miroslav Topolánek, Libor Rouček, Jiří Dolejš) discussed principal issues in the process of accession of the Czech Republic into the European Union.

In September 2003, the Institute organized an international conference on the *Financing of local governments in unifying Europe* together with the Faculty of Law of MU. The conference dealt with the financing of local government in European countries. The conference was attended by leading specialists in the issues from faculties of law, state administration and local governments from the Czech Republic, Croatia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic. It responded to changes that have taken place in Central and South-Eastern Europe in recent years, as well as to the need of (not only) candidate countries to adjust local government financing to the conditions prevailing in the European Union.

In October and November, the Institute organized a new series of seminars for students (*The role of think-tanks in the CR and V4 countries, Principal priorities of Czech foreign policies, The role of independent organisations in the Czech Republic, Publicity campaign before the referendum on the entry into the EU, Political influence of think-tanks in Slovakia, Strategy of negotiations in international relations, Pro-European organisations in the Czech Republic, Think-tanks and international security – possibilities and activities*) where leading experts from the academic community as well as practical politics spoke about topical issues.

At the end of November 2003, a conference on the *Division of judicial powers* organized in cooperation with the Faculty of Law was held. The conference dealt with topical issues of the internal division of judicial powers, the position of constitutional and supreme judges in the Czech Republic, in Slovakia and within the broader European context. The question of influence of the judicial power on the political system was also discussed.

In December 2003, the Institute organized a specialist workshop on *European referendums*, where basic information from research into public referenda individual European countries organized in connection with their respective entry into the EU were summarized.

TRAINING COURSES

Training courses organized by the Institute were designed for specific target groups: a) clerical staff of state administration and local governments, and b) teachers of social sciences and humanities at secondary schools. In the first half of 2003, a series of courses on the European Union was held for the secondary school teachers. A total of 15 courses in different parts of the CR was held. In the second half of 2003, another series of training courses for the secondary school teachers was held, this time on NATO. The 15 courses of the series were held in selected big cities of the Czech Republic. In the second half of 2003, training courses for regional administration staff were held. The aim was to explain them some basic questions related to the European Union, and the entry of the Czech Republic into the EU. The courses were organized in almost all regional offices.

In all three types of courses, the Institute provided the lecturers and guaranteed their professional competence. One of the Institute's partners was the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic.

PUBLISHING

The IIPS continued to publish the periodicals *Journal for political Science* and *Central European Political Studies*. Thanks to the assistance of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, the IIPS published *Politics in the CR*, a bulletin monitoring the political situation in the Czech Republic.

In its Monographs, Anthologies and Studies, the following books were published: Balík, S. (ed.): *Local government elections in the Czech Republic in 2002*; Balík, S., Hloušek, V., Holzer, J., Šedo, J.: *Political system in Czech Lands between 1848 and 1989*; Barša, P.: *The hour of the empire*; Fiala, P., Herbut, R. (eds.): *Central European systems of political parties. Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia*; Hloušek, V., Kopeček, L. (eds.): *Democracy*; Kolesár, P. (ed.): *Czecho-Slovak relations 10 years after the break-up of their federation*; Kopeček, L. (ed.): *From Mečiar to Dzurinda*.

Slovak policy and political system in the first decade of independence; Schneider, J.: Think-tanks and defence of interests in Visegrad countries; Szaló, C., Nosál, I. (eds.): Mosaic in reconstruction. The forming of social identities in contemporary central Europe; Šedo, J. (ed.): European issue in electoral campaigns.

In 2003, the International Institute for Political Studies continued to develop political research and its promotion, enhanced educational activities supported either from its own resources, or acting as a guarantee of professional competence. Activities of the IIPS in 2003 thus contributed to the further development of political and related sciences (international relations, European studies) in Brno, but they also contributed to the broadening of cooperation between the IIPS and academic institutions at home and abroad, and with the political and administration communities.