

Report of EUIJ Outreach Seminar Series

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| Series No. | 136 |
| Date | 26 January 2011 |
| Venue | Hyogo Toyota, Sannomiya |
| Speaker | H.E. Ms. Kateřina Fialková (Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Japan) |
| Topic | The Czech Republic in the year 2011 |
| Objective | To give a clear outline of the current economic and political developments in the Czech Republic in the context of the European Union. |
| Conclusion | <p>The Ambassador first briefly introduced the Czech Republic in terms of its geographic location and population. Then she outlined the Czech political situation. In January 2009 the country assumed its six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Following the last year's general elections, no major changes in the current government coalition are expected to occur in 2011. Czech government currently faces several major reforms, such as restructuring of public finances, reform of the education sector and the pension reform. The Ambassador next specified five main predictions for the Czech economy in 2011. Firstly, the economy is expected to resume growth this year with GDP growth predicted to reach 1.8%. Secondly, the inflation is predicted to be 2-3%. Thirdly, recent remarkable recovery of German economy and growing demand in Germany will boost Czech exports. Fourthly, there will be even more divergence between central and northern Europe as compared to southern Europe in 2011. Fifthly, the competition among banks in the Czech Republic is likely to further intensify in 2011. Regarding the Czech foreign policy, the Ambassador pointed out that after the major changes in the first half of the 1990s (reorientation to Western Europe, which eventually resulted in the country's EU accession in 2004), a general consensus now exists among all Czech political parties regarding the country's political orientation. Then she emphasized that since the Czech Republic is one of the four Visegrad countries, it is important that this year two Visegrad countries (Hungary and Poland) will in successive terms assume the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union (Hungary has already assumed its six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first half of 2011 and Poland will take over the rotating EU Presidency on 1st July). The Ambassador pointed out several priorities from the programme of Hungarian government for its Presidency, such as reinforcement of the EU economy so that the EU can fully recover from the crisis, creation of an efficient common energy policy and promotion of the EU enlargement process (Croatian accession negotiations).</p> <p>She concluded her lecture by mentioning some cultural events expected to take place this year (for instance, the premiere of the film based on the former Czech president Vaclav Havel's latest play called Leaving). Following the lecture, the Ambassador answered in detail several questions from the audience, concerning foreign direct investment in the Czech Republic and the country's plans for Euro adoption.</p> |
| Number of Audiences | 39 (6 student, 1 researchers and 32 general public) |