



 Institute of  
European Studies and  
International Relations



## **Trans European Policy Studies Association**



## **2016 Slovakia Pre-Presidency Conference**

### **REPORT**

**2 – 3 June 2016**

**Comenius University in Bratislava**  
**Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences**  
**Institute of European Studies and International**  
**Relations**



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The Slovak PPC has received support from the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, Jean Monnet Support to Institutions, under Grant Decision n. 2015-2719/001-001 of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the content, which reflects the view only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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## Foreword and acknowledgments

On the occasion of the first Slovakia EU Council Presidency starting on 1 July 2016, the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) held its traditional Pre-Presidency Conference (PPC) in Bratislava on 2-3 June 2016. The Conference was organised by the Institute of European Studies and International Relations (IESIR) of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of Comenius University in Bratislava. For more than 20 years, TEPSA has organised Pre-Presidency Conferences, taking place twice a year in the capital of the Member State holding the Council Presidency prior to the beginning of its mandate. TEPSA and IESIR, which is TEPSA's Slovak member since 2012, co-organised Slovakia's first Pre-Presidency Conference of Slovakia.

In the two-day conference, the Slovak perspective on the Presidency and its views on some of the most contentious issues in the European Union were unfolded. Distinguished guests and experts covered issues relating to the five-pillar construction concerning the majority of Europeans and citizens of the world. Thanks to the academic setting where the conference took place, participants felt free of constraints and comfortable to discuss the topics on the agenda. Moreover, the panellists led the discussion into a constructive direction that facilitated and encouraged the debate on academic understandings and research focus.

Slovakia as the holder of the Council Presidency and more broadly the EU as a whole are facing a challenging time. The values of democracy are being questioned, particularly the protection of human rights. It is the EU's responsibility to address these challenges and find solutions. The leading idea throughout the conference was not how the EU presidency will help Slovakia, but rather how Slovakia will contribute to the EU.

The main aim of TEPSA's PPCs is to bring together academics and researchers from the TEPSA network, policy-makers, media, civil society organisations and the general public in order to discuss the agenda and challenges of the upcoming Council Presidencies. TEPSA's PPCs represent a major platform for communication and exchange between policy-makers and academia. Prior to the event, TEPSA researchers formulate recommendations that are presented to high-rank government officials in a plenary session at the PPC. Moreover, the conferences actively involve civil society and media actors, who interact with practitioners and academia. The insights gained during these conferences and seminars directly feed into future research on the EU and into EU policy making. Thanks to their genuinely European and transnational nature and to the involvement of civil society, TEPSA's Pre-Presidency Conferences actively contribute to shaping a European public sphere.



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The Slovakian PPC was also an integral part of TEPSA's PONT project, aimed at building a bridge connecting young academics and EU practitioners.

*All colleagues present in this pre-presidency conference wish to contribute to a successful start of the presidency.*



*The opinions expressed in this report are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the positions of TEPSA or TEPSA Member Institutes. Please note that this is a summary and not a verbatim report.*



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## Opening session

The opening session was held by the rector of the Comenius University in Bratislava, **professor Karol Mičieta, PhD**. In his speech he underlined that in today's cosmopolitan world, we are facing dynamic changes, including but not limited to the migration crisis and armed conflicts.



These challenges should be properly reflected in the presentations and discussions by experts, based on the evidence provided in their research. The academic surrounding also provides a more comfortable space for critical views, stated the dean of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, **assoc. prof. Lucia Mokrá, PhD**.



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The experts' discussion was also warmly introduced by TEPESA Secretary General— **professor Jaap de Zwaan**.



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## Session I: Slovak Presidency and the key issues of the EU agenda

The introductory remarks were presented by the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign and European affairs of the Slovak Republic and plenipotentiary representative of the government for the Slovak Presidency in the EU, **his excellency Ivan Korčok**. He recalled past decisions already implemented and reflected on the outcomes of the discussion that Slovakia presented just before holding the presidency. He defined and explained the EU priorities under the Slovak presidency. He claimed that a real perspective of individual priorities is especially needed to achieve real results given the short period of the Presidency. He also underlined the necessity of cooperation within the presidency trio and stressed the priorities the EU presented in the last decade, in connection to different European and international crises.

The following contribution was presented by **assoc. prof. Oľga Gyarfášová** from the Institute of European Studies and International Relations. She presented the evolution and the current perception of the EU in the Slovak public. Besides, she reflected on the last elections and the use of the EU in the media discourse, as well as the presentation of the political parties in the electoral campaigns.

Later, **Dušan Fischer** of SFPA (Slovak Foreign Policy Association), discussed EU security and defence policy and emphasized the necessity of triangulation and reflexion of the security policy within EU and NATO cooperation, including the relation with the United States. Both actors should face the contemporary security threats and challenges in a closed cooperation.





## Session II: Employment and competitiveness of the EU in the world market / EU in the global perspective

This panel focused on employment and improvement of the current economic environment in the European Union. **Prof. András Inotai**, from the Academy of Sciences in Hungary, **dr. Miroslav Štefánik** from the Slovak Academy of Sciences and **assoc. prof. Miroslav Beblavý**, expert in this field and also Slovak MP, provided presentations on the topic, connecting research outcomes with political practices.

## Session III: EU as area of freedom, security and justice – for citizens only? / Migration crisis, development agenda, humanitarian principles' crisis in Europe, future of Schengen

In this session experts discussed on the current state of play of the migration challenge. The panel was composed of **Professor Jaap de Zwaan**, expert in European Law and TEPSA's Secretary General,



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**Antonis Papagiannidis**, economic analyst from the European Public Law Organization in Greece, and **Zhivka Deleva**, former PhD student in IESIR and currently working as head of an organisation providing social services to refugees in Berlin. The discussion led to a critical assessment of the situation, especially on the stage between the adoption of legislative decisions on the European level and the implementation phase.

## Session IV: Security challenges in Europe as a challenge to humanity? Defence cooperation, energy security, cooperation of international actors

This session was co-organised with the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic.

**Róbert Tibenský** (General Director of the Department of Defence Policy, Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic) opened the discussion by indicating the challenges and priorities of the security policy from the governmental point of view. **Gianni Bonvicini** (Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy) and **Hanna Ojanen** (University of Tampere, Finland), both TEPSA Board members, stressed the necessity of interaction between security and foreign policy. Moreover, they recalled the importance of strengthening the EU security environment by implementing a more effective protection of EU external borders and an efficient management of the migration challenge.

## Session V: Fiscal and monetary union – cooperation or competition model?

This session was co-organised with the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic.

The final panel dealt with future steps in the area of fiscal and monetary policies at the EU level and under the Slovak Presidency. The panel was integrated by experts from the Ministry of Finance; among others, **Michal Polák**, advisor of the minister of finance, who reflected on the need of future developments to strengthen the financial cooperation between EU Member States. **Professor Iain Begg**, from the London School of Economics and **Adriana Lojschová**, from the Research Unit of the National Bank of Slovakia also participated in the discussion.

## Concluding remarks

TEPSA recommendations were presented in the initial part of the Pre-Presidency Conference by **Funda Tekin**, who reflected not only on the topics later discussed in the panels, but also on the need for an important revision of the EU. The issues raised were EU-Russia relations, the situation in Ukraine, EU



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– Turkey relations, populism and its influence in public opinion, which has been already shown in parliamentary elections in several EU Member States.

**Professor Wolfgang Wessels**, TEPSA Chairman, delivered the concluding remarks. He emphasised the need of cooperation in order to avoid fragmentation within the EU. TEPSA advocates discussions among experts, which directly feed into future research on the EU and into EU policy making **at the European and Member State level**. Prof. Wessels also thanked the organisers for the inspirational atmosphere and congratulated them for the successful organisation of the conference.



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## Annex I: Slovakia Pre-Presidency Conference, Bratislava, Programme



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# Pre-presidency conference



Slovak Presidency of the Council  
of the European Union

## 2 – 3 June 2016

## Comenius University in Bratislava

# PROGRAMME



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## Programme Thursday 2 June 2016

12.30 – 13.30 Welcome to participants & registration

13.30 – 14.30 Official opening

Welcoming words by:

prof. RNDr. Karol Mičieta, PhD. (Rector of Comenius University in Bratislava)

assoc. prof Lucia Mokr (Dean of Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences)

prof. Jaap de Zwaan (TEPSA Secretary General, Lecturer European Integration, The Hague University for Applied Sciences, Em. Professor of the Law of the European Union, Erasmus University Rotterdam)

14.30 – 16.00 Session I.

### **Slovak Presidency and the key issues of the EU agenda**

Introductory Remarks by:

Ivan Korok (State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic/Plenipotentiary of the Government for the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU): Priorities of the presidency

1) Oga Gyarfsov (Director, Institute of European Studies and International Relations): How the EU is understood in Slovakia (reflection on the recent parliamentary elections)

2) Duan Fischer (SFPA, analyst): Defence strategy and policy – reflection to deeper communication between member states and with other actors

3) Funda Tekin (CIFE): Recommendations to Slovak Presidency on behalf of TEPSA

16.00 – 16.15 Coffee break

16.15 – 17.30 Session II.

### **Employment and competitiveness of the EU in the world market EU in the global perspective**

*Chair: Karen Henderson (IESIR)*

1) Miroslav Beblav (Centre for European Policy Studies, MP)

2) Andras Inotai (TEPSA Board, IWE)

3) Miroslavtefnik (Slovak Academy of Science)

17.30 – 19.30 TEPSA General Assembly

20.30 DINNER



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## Programme Friday 3 June 2016

08.45 – 9.00 Welcome coffee and tea

9.00 – 10.15 Session III.

**EU as area of freedom, security and justice – for citizens only?**

**Migration crisis, development agenda, humanitarian principles crisis in the Europe, future of Schengen**

*Chair: Aliaksei Kazharski (IESIR)*

- 1) Jaap de Zwaan (TEPSA Secretary General)
- 2) Nikos Frangakis/ prof. Spyridon Flogaitis (EKEME/EPLO)
- 3) Zivka Deleva (former IESIR)

Discussion

10.00 – 10.15 Coffee break

10.15 – 12.00 Session IV.

**Security challenges in Europe as a challenge to humanity? Defence cooperation, energy security, cooperation of international actors**

*in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of the SR*

*Chair: Andrea Figulová*

- 1) Róbert Tibenský (Defence Policy Director, Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic)
- 2) Gianni Bonvicini (TEPSA Board, IAI)
- 3) Hanna Ojanen (TEPSA Board, University of Tampere)

Discussion

12.00 – 13.15 LUNCH

13.15 – 14.45 Session V.

**Fiscal and monetary union – cooperation or competition model?**

*in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance of the SR*

*Chair: Tomáš Profant (IESIR)*

- 1) Michal Polák (Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, advisor to minister)
- 2) Iain Begg (TEPSA Board, LSE)
- 3) Adriana Lojschová (NBS, researcher)

Discussion



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15.00 – 16.00 Concluding Session

**Challenges and opportunities for the Slovak Presidency - Setting the Agenda for the European Council**

*Conclusions of the IESIR | TEPSA Pre-Presidency Conference 2016*

Moderator: Wolfgang Wessels (TEPSA Chairperson, Jean Monnet Chair ad personam at CETEUS | Centre for Turkey and EU Studies, University of Cologne)

Panellists: Chairs from the sessions

Concluding Remarks



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## Annex II: Recommendations from members of the TEPSA network to the incoming Slovakian Presidency

The Recommendations from members of the TEPSA network to the incoming Slovakian Presidency can be downloaded at this link/ <http://www.tepsa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Slovakia.pdf>



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