

Role of Czech alumni of Western Universities in the Society

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Introduction

In the Czech Republic there is no systematic effort in mapping this specific group of alumni. They might be perceived as graduates of prestigious institution but that has not been transformed into any kind of policy or research which would try to cover their influence on the Czech society, its institutions, policies and social norms.

The complete absence of any statistical data was confirmed by Czech Statistical Office, which simply stated that this group is not an object of any kind of attention.

This absence of statistical data or any kind of data whatsoever was explained by Mr Krčál, The Head of the Department of Support of Universities at The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, according to him it is truly or almost impossible to follow the “western” students and graduates. There is absolutely no obligation for them to report their studies or graduation. Because they mostly cover their studies by themselves there is no reason for them to get in touch with the state institutions.

In general the topic is not politicized at all – in the sense of the western alumni being an issue of public dialogue. It is not a matter of debate of political parties or state institutions, neither of academics or researchers in general.

Czech governments since 1993

“Western” alumni among the top elites, meaning governmental positions, are rare exception in the entire post-federation period. Going through all the ministers there were only 14 ministers holding western title – Karel Dyba (Václav Klaus’ government 1992-1996), Josef Tošenovský (Prime Minister 1/1998 – 7/1998), Zuzana Roithová (Josef Tošenovský’s Government), Jan Kavan (Zeman’s government 1998-2002), Jiří Šedivý (Mirek Topolánek’s government 9/2006-1/2007), Pavel Svoboda (Mirek Topolánek’s second government 1/2007-5/2009), Gustav Slamečka (Jan Fischer’s government 4/2009-6/2009), Jan Pecina (Jan Fischer’s government 5/2009-7/2010), Jan Dušík (Jan Fischer’s government 11/2009-3/2010), Petr Fiala (Petr Nečas’ government 5/2012- 7/2013), Tomáš Podivínský (Jan Rusnok’s government 8/2013-1/2014), František Lukl (Jan Rusnok’s government 7/2013-1/2014), Martin Holcát (Jan Rusnok’s government 8/2013-1/2014) and Martin Stropnický (Current Bohuslav Sobotka’s government 1/2014-...).

As can be seen the majority of them was serving after the accession to the European Union. There is also an interesting pattern that western degree holders were mostly appointed during the periods of caretaker governments, especially during Mr. Fischer’s cabinet in between April 2009 and June 2010 and Mr Rusnok’s one from July 2013 till January 2014. But Tošenovský’s cabinet was caretaker as well. It can be suggested that western alumni are rarely the members of the Czech governmental positions and are „called to duty“ only as experts in their respective fields in cases of crisis.

Another interesting thing is that during the key accession period from 1998 till 2002 (Mr Zeman’s cabinet) there was interesting structure of the ministers. The governmental posts were mainly occupied by ex-dissidents who were persecuted after 1968 (era of normalization after so called Prague spring) period. Therefore for the purpose of this study the western education was not important in governmental context. On the other hand the Minister of Foreign Affairs was Jan Kavan who is a LSE graduate (see hereinafter).

Yet regarding the purpose of the project it is important to mention the most of these alumni got their western titles after graduating from Czech universities earlier. Moreover in many cases they were not studying in western countries but have received titles from programmes guaranteed by English schools yet studying in the Czech Republic.

The EU accession negotiating team

The Czech negotiation team which was responsible for the Czech Republic country's accession to the European Union was led by Pavel Telička, who replaced Cyril Svoboda on January 15, 1998. Svoboda led the team only couple of months¹. Both of them received their education at The Charles University at Faculty of law in Prague.

On the other hand they both have had serious experience with western context. Mr. Svoboda was an intern at Notre Dame University in USA in 1991. Mr Telička was born in Washington to a family of diplomat, and shortly after the studies was working at the ministry of foreign affairs and in between 1991 and 1995 he was working at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union in Brussels.

In this regard both respective leaders of the Czech negotiation delegation were representing "old school" professional with national titles. And even though western education was not a tool for their Europeanization, I believe we can say they have been both influenced by and partly acculturated by western normative framework.

It cannot be said that the rest of the team represents the "old school" branch of professional as all the CVs could not be gathered. But where managed, it turned out that most of the team studied at Czech Universities. The representatives were: Dan Michal, Petr Procházka, Petr Kubernát (Kyiev State University), Jan Volný, Blanka Ryboňová, Bedřich Moldan (Charles University), Jan Mládek (Charles University), Tomáš Zídek, Hana Heidlerová (University of Economics Prague, Leningrad Institute of Finance and Economics), Petr Ježek (University of Economics) and for a short period in 1998 Josef Kreuter, Pavel Štěpánek, Antonín Kalina². No matter the fact that some of them had had study exchange or even western title (Kreuter in 60s) they were mostly experienced diplomats and public administration seniors educated at national universities.

I would add that the dichotomy of young professionals educated in the West vs. "old school" professional with academic titles from national universities is too simplified. Even the "old school" professionals have in many cases some western exchange experience.

¹ *Usnesení vlády České republiky ze dne 14. ledna 1998* (Accessed on May 9, 2014).

http://racek.vlada.cz/usneseni/usneseni_webtest.nsf/0/71E677C06795DDB1C12571B6006C79AD

² *Usnesení vlády České republiky ze dne 11. března 1998 č. 182.* (Accessed on May 9, 2014)

http://racek.vlada.cz/usneseni/usneseni_webtest.nsf/0/639BD3683CA1DE57C12571B6006C963E;

Usnesení vlády České republiky ze dne 6. ledna 1999 č. 15 (Accessed on May 9, 2014)

http://racek.vlada.cz/usneseni/usneseni_webtest.nsf/0/7514011CA969C4A4C12571B6006DA699

The European department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Unlike Poland, Czech Republic did not create any special European Integration Unit. The process was under the auspices of the Ministry of foreign affairs. Both the negotiation team and the institutional framework of the ministry were connected through the person of Pavel Telička, who was both the head of the team and the Czech Deputy Foreign Minister at the same time (appointed on January 14 1998. As mentioned hereinbefore Mr Telička was not a graduate of a western university).

During the negotiation process there was also important role played by the Section of European integration led by Petr Ježek. Mr Ježek is not a western graduate either.

According to Vít Dostál, The Director of the Research centre of the Association of International Affairs (AMO), during the negotiation period there were political tendencies to create the Ministry for European Affairs. The Prime minister at that time Mr Zeman planned, according to Dostál, to transfer the European agenda to Mr Egon T. Lánský³. Zeman did not manage to create a Ministry for European Affairs, but he partially happened to transfer the European agenda to Lánský for a short period as he was appointed a Deputy Prime Minister for coordination of foreign policy and security. But due to pressures from then Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which would lose the agenda and due to health issues, Lánský stepped down in 1999 and European negotiations were strictly under the auspices of Ministry of foreign affairs and mostly Mr Telička⁴ since then.

Ministers of foreign affairs

From all of the eight Czech foreign ministers⁵ it is only Jan Kavan has got his first degree at prestigious western university. Kavan does not fit the pattern this study seeks for though. When he was a foreign minister, he was not a young professional who studied abroad and decided to come back home. Kavan was born in 1946 in London to Pavel Kavan, diplomat and an officer of the exile Czechoslovakian army, and Rosemary Kavan, English teacher. His father was persecuted in 50s by the communist regime. Kavan himself fled the country in

³ Czech anti-communist fighter, post-1989 deputy PM Lansky dies. ČTK, November 26, 2013. On-line: <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/zpravy/czech-anti-communist-fighter-post-1989-deputy-pm-lansky-dies/1012684>

⁴ Karel Barták a Pavel Telička. *Kterak jsme vstupovali*. Praha: Paseka, 2003.

⁵ Josef Zeilenc (7/1992 – 10/1997); Jaroslav Šedivý (11/1997 – 7/1998); Jan Kavan (7/1998-7/2002); Cyril Svoboda (7/2002 – 8/2006); Alexandr Vondra (9/2006-1/2007); Karel Schwarzenberg (1/2007-5/2009 and 7/2010 – 7/2013); Jan Kohout (5/2009-7/2010 and 7/2013 -1/2014)

1969. As he had a British citizenship he settled in London and graduated from London School of Economics. In between 1972- 1990 he was a member of Labour party. After the fall of communist regime he came back to the Czechoslovakia and after the split of the federation he became a member of Czech social democratic party. In 1996 he became member of the Senate and later in 1998 he was appointed the minister.

So Kavan was truly experienced politician, not a young professional. On the other hand he was the foreign minister in the important period for European accession process. It was mainly during his ministerial activity that most of pre-entry negotiations were taking place. His mandate ended in summer 2012 and the negotiations with the EU were closed in Copenhagen in December 2002, therefore his western experience might have played important role in this process.

Cyril Svoboda, the foreign minister at the times of entry to EU had had some western experience as mentioned earlier but was not a young western alumnus.

Ministers for European Affairs

Up until 2007 European matters were in hands of Ministry of foreign affairs. It was only in January 2007 when the specialized ministry for European affairs was created in the second cabinet of Mirek Topolánek. This ministry lasted only till 7/2010. It has experienced three ministers – Alexandr Vondra (1/1007-5/2009), Štefan Füle (5-11/2009), Juraj Chmiel (11/2009-7/2010). None of these have had western education. Moreover Mr. Füle graduated from famous Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) and yet he is one of the most important European players in Czech political and diplomat life (see hereinafter).

European Commissioners

Since the accession to the EU the Czech Republic has had two representants in the European Commission. The first was Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities from November 2004 to February 2010. The second is already mentioned Štefan Füle, who started in February 2010. They both have had impressive careers. Vladimír Špidla was a prime minister from 2002 to 2004 for the coalition led by his Czech social democratic party. Since 1996 he served as a chairman of the parliamentary Social Policies and Health Care Committee. Before being a Prime minister he worked as a

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs from 1998. Yet he has no western education. He graduated from the Charles University, the Faculty of Arts⁶.

Štefan Füle is the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy Since February 2010. As already mentioned, has got no western title, yet he studied the UN disarmament study program in 1988. He has got a lot of international experience. So apart of being e.g. Czech Delegation Member and Alternate Representative to the UN Security Council in 1994-1995, he was a Czech Ambassador to the UK (2003-2005) and most importantly Czech Permanent Representative to NATO (2005 – 2009).⁷

The Section for the European Affairs

The experiment of the Ministry for the European affairs was ended in 2010. Its duties were transferred to the Section for the European Affairs, which forms part of the Czech Republic's Office of the Government. Its goals are coordination and analytical preparation of Czech positions in meetings at the European Union and it is led by State Secretary for European Affairs. So far there were only two State Secretaries – Mr. Vojtěch Belling (2010-2014) and Mr. Tomáš Prouza (2/2014 -...).

They both represent young skilled professionals, with foreign experience. Even though Mr. Belling does not hold a western degree, has spent three years (2007-2010) on a long-term research at Institut für politische Wissenschaften, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg during his Ph.D.

Mr. Prouza is a holder of MBA from The Open University, where he studied in between 2003 – 2005. He got a Czech degree first though. He studied International politics and diplomacy and journalism (minor) in year 1991 – 1998 at The University of Economics (VŠE).

He has rich career and experience mostly in fields of finance. In between 2005-2008 he was a deputy chairman of the Ethical committee of the Association of funds and asset management of the Czech Republic. During July 2004 and January 2007 he worked at the Ministry of Finance as a deputy minister focused on analysis and legislation, fiscal policy and international relations. Later on from 2007 to 2011 he worked as a member of the board of directors and head for development and customer care at Partners Financial Service. Before

⁶ Vladimír Špidla, CV. On-line:

<http://www.euo.dk/upload/application/pdf/4bf7388e/i20020241.pdf%3Fdownload%3D1>

⁷ Štefan Füle, CV. On-line: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/about/cv/index_en.htm

he happened to be appointed as the head of the Section he worked for the World Bank as a senior financial service specialist in the team for Europe and Central Asia.

The EU presidency⁸

For the purpose of the European presidency in first half of the 2009 there was created The Section for the Czech Republic's Presidency of the EU⁹. It was cancelled later on in late 2009. It was led by Mrs Jana Hedrichová which has no western education. Her team in the section attracted interesting people but no one of the leading figures held western degree.

On the other hand during the presidency the hereinbefore mentioned section for European affairs was led by young alumni of western universities. Shining example is Marek Mora, nowadays one of the highest positioned Czechs in European establishment. He firstly finished The University of Economics. Later he did his Master studies in Saabrücken in between October 1995 and February 1997 and Ph.D. at the Europa-Kolleg in Hamburg from 1997 till 2000. Since 2003 he worked in the EU till 2006 as a country desk economist at European Commission, DG ECFIN. Then he started working in Czech state apparatus. During the EU presidency he was the State Secretary of the Section for European affairs. Nowadays he works at the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, Head of the Secretary-General's Private Office.

Another key figure of the presidency period was the Director of the European Policies Karolína Kottová. Apart of couple of exchanges, she holds two Master degrees from western universities. She firstly studied at the University of Trieste between 1995 and 2000, where she got a Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy. The next academic year she finished College of Europe in Poland focused on Administrative studies. Although on a maternity leave from 2012 she made an impressive career, mostly in EU institutions or EU related organs in Czech apparatus. So apart of her work during the EU presidency she was a Member of Cabinet of Commissioner Cecilia Malmström, responsible for home affairs – visa policies, EU border protection and surveillance and fight against illegal immigration - from January 2010 till February 2011. Or later on in March 2011 she became a Head of Unit and

⁸ *Who is Who: Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU*. On-line:<http://www.vlada.cz/assets/urad-vlady/vydavatelstvi/vydane-publikace/whoswho.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.vlada.cz/en/evropske-zalezitosti/predsednictvi-cr-v-rade-eu/archiv/sekce-pro-predsednictvi/section-for-the-czech-presidency-of-the-council-of-the-eu-21446/>

Coordinating Spokesperson on budget and citizenship, advising mainly the president of the European Commission¹⁰.

These two young professionals can demonstrate an interesting pattern. They both had international experience before they entered into state apparatus and they both did not stay. For most of the young qualified western educated professionals the state apparatus experience was just a short term option and an impressive CV item. Yet they do not seem to stay in it for a longer period of time. This was confirmed when after the end of the presidency a lot of young professionals, who were accepted mostly for the purpose of the presidency, left for big corporate companies like Škoda or EU institutions. Moreover it seems that the young professionals with western education are mainly hired for the short-term purposes. This was confirmed by Alexandr Vondra who claimed: *“In affairs like the presidency or the organisation of NATO summit, my bet on younger educated people, who were not experienced in state service, was worth it. They want to prove themselves.”*¹¹

Current state apparatus

So far the author has tried to prove that the western educated graduates are not a backbone of the state apparatus. And it seems to be no paradigmatic change in this set course. There are some honorary exceptions and even though they have played important roles in the development of the Czech republic in last 20 years, it would be exaggerated to say that it was them who led „the change“ or „The Europeanization“ of the country.

To prove that these graduates are mostly exceptional in state apparatus, the organisational scheme of two offices key for Europeanization were studied. The elite positions of the present Ministry of Foreign Affairs and The Section for European Affairs are occupied by non-western educated officials. There are western alumni, but there are exceptional as told before.

Ministry of foreign affairs¹²

From the 14 top officials, including the Minister, 4 Deputy Ministers and 9 Director Generals only two have western education. It is Martin Tlapa¹³, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for

¹⁰ Karolína Kottová, CV. Online: <http://www.istrieste.org/downloads/kottovacv.pdf>

¹¹ Tereza Nosálková. *Je mi 25, mám Oxford a chci sloužit*. June 2010. On-line: <http://www.cs-magazin.com/index.php?a=a2010062022>

¹² The Organisational Structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On-line: http://www.mzv.cz/file/73008/OrganogramMZV_2014_08_11.pdf

Non-European Countries and Economic Diplomacy and General Director of Economic Section Ivan Jukl¹⁴. Martin Tlapa has got a MBA from the Sheffield Hallam University (1999-2002), after he finished The University of Economics in Prague (1985-1989). He was a Secretary for Commercial and Economic Affairs at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Canada (1992-1996). Since 2004 he has been engaged with EU affairs. Firstly at the Ministry of Industry and Trade as a Deputy Minister for EU Affairs, Trade Policy, Single Market and Competitiveness (2004-2012). Before he was appointed to the Ministry of foreign affairs he was Deputy State Secretary for European Affairs at the Office of Government of the Czech Republic (2012-2014). For the purposes of this study Martin Tlapa represents successful western alumni who has played important role in influencing European policies and Czech attitude to Europe at three major institutional platforms, yet he confirms that western alumni are mostly exceptional. Moreover he confirms one more trend and that is the fact that most of the western degree holder in the state apparatus are not „pure“ western alumni, but graduates of long-distance programmes of foreign universities.

From all the other 54 top officials (Directors of sections and departments and special units) only 2 are western degree holders.

The Section for European Affairs

As mentioned hereinbefore the current State Secretary has got a western degree, but out of his six directors it is only one who has western education. Aleš Chmelař is currently Chief economist at Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. He has graduated from London School of Economics with MSc. title in European Political Economy (2010-2011).

¹³ Martin Tlapa, CV. On-line:
http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/about_the_ministry/organization_of_the_ministry/deputy_ministers/martin_tlapa.htm

¹⁴ CV could not be found.

“Old School” Professionals and Societal Changes

It is kind of tricky to reserve western orientation only to those who have western education. The Czech case is an example of that. Even though the big part of the Czech diplomacy was educated in a communist society, there was a paradigmatic change in the whole political system after the end of communism. The new dominant discourse of foreign policy was set by dissidents Václav Havel and Jiří Dienstbier who were truly pro-western. These two set the boundaries for foreign policy by creating brand new conception labelled “Return to Europe”. So no matter what the education of the diplomatic service was, the top political levels were occupied by pro-western and pro-European figures.

Of course it is necessary to perceive the whole international context. It is quite obvious that the European Union was only legitimate and viable goal as the whole worldviews of socialism and its politics was dead.

Moreover these dissidents were very often supplemented by Czechs from diaspora. Many of them were respected professionals in many fields with western experience which played important role during the era of transformation.

Finally many of the after-revolution elites were people who were educated in the communist society but were not pro-regime fanatics but were living in the “grey zone”, which was not truly dissent but was not truly pro-regime either. It was a world of expertise and non-political functions and these professionals were not formed by the communist political culture and could help to form the country after the revolution.

This can be proved by showing the structure of the governments, mostly of the 90s, where many ministers were “Chartists”, ex-communist who were kicked from the party in 1968 or the ex-emigrants.

Internships and Employment in the State Apparatus

The author has contacted and conducted phone interviews with various officials from different ministries and departments concerning internships or special programmes focused on (future) employment of Czech alumni of western universities.

Mr Dubinský, the Secretary of the State Secretary for European Affairs Mr. Prouza, has confirmed that there is no special programme focused on current students or graduates of western universities, but once they apply “they have bigger chance” of succeeding. Therefore it can be claimed that the section prefers these western alumni, but these preferences are not embodied in any kind of official policy.

Mrs Havlíková, the Deputy Director of Diplomatic Academy, described that there is no chance of preferring western alumni while accepting to DA. There is written procedure which needs to be fulfilled by all the applicants. Diplomatic academy does not generate any systematic effort in order to select successful graduates and to suggest their application.

She also offered statistics regarding the percentage of the students who have been western alumni: 1 out of 10 (2011); 1 out of 10 (2012); 2 out of 10 (2013) and finally 1 out of 8 (2014).

Mrs Havlíková also confirmed that there is surely no programme which would try to attract students of western schools for internships. There is an internship programme which is open to Czech students of western schools as well but they are no priority. Once again there is a procedure which does not allow any special treatment of students of western universities.

This information was supported by Mr Orlovič, The Director of Security Department, which is responsible for the internships. He acknowledged that “the interest of the state about Czech students of “western” schools is comparable to the interest of students of “non-western” universities or universities in The Czech Republic.” He stated to have no statistics regarding the number of interns who are “western” students, but estimated that out of 235 “embassies” interns and 84 “centre” interns” (who has already did the internship or will do till the end of 2014) about 10 percent were student of foreign schools (not all are probably prestigious western universities).

The author contacted another three ministries in order to compare whether this is a general pattern. Mr Daněk, The Director of department of personnel policies and education at the Personnel Section of the Ministry of Defence, clearly stated that there are no internship or employment programmes for “western” alumni. He added that even though the Ministry of

Defence welcomes western experience of the army personnel, they for obvious reasons, prefer military schools, which do not follow the purpose of this research.

The same was claimed by Mr Hrubý, Department of Personnel on Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Mrs Czesaná, The Head of the National Observatory of Employment and Education at the National Training Fund, introduced the author into the programme called “NÁVRAT”¹⁵(“Return”). It is not primarily focused on graduates but experienced researches. It is at least some state’s effort to attract young Czech professionals back home, yet it does not fit into the scope of this project.

State Scholarship or Loan

As we can see, none of the graduates got any state support. And the reason is quite simple. There is no state support which would help or motivate Czech students to go to study at prestigious western universities.

This fact was confirmed by many experts during the interviews. The first who confirmed it was Mr Šlejška, The Director of EDUin, "public-benefit organisation which seeks to make an issue of education topic of public discourse"¹⁶. There is one kind of tricky exception though. He claimed: “The state programme does not exist...The only one which could be considered as a state’s one is the Fulbright committee, which is linked to Ministry of education.“ As The Czech republic contributes one third of the financial costs we could consider Fulbright but the author dares to think that Fulbright is quite well-known and is not perceived as the programme this project is focused on.

Mr Krčál, The Head of the Department of Support of Universities at The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, also mentioned Fulbright as an only example of possible state programme which supports the mobility (to prestigious universities). And he acknowledges that state do not support so called „degree mobility“.

Another expert who can confirm the argument that there is no state run programme for supporting students is Mr Šindelář, The Head of Department of Tertiary Education at The Centre for International Cooperation in Education, which is a "semi-budgetary organisation, established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic, performing tasks involved with ensuring educational, training and other relations with foreign countries

¹⁵ „NÁVRAT“ programme: <http://www.msmt.cz/vyzkum-a-vyvoj/program-navrat?lang=1>

¹⁶ EDUin (Accessed on May 10, 2014). <http://www.eduin.cz/>

under the instructions of the ministry"¹⁷. He stated: "there are only bilateral or multilateral programmes...There is also cooperation of individual Czech universities with foreign universities..."

Finally it was confirmed by Mrs Šebková, The Director of Centre for Higher Education Studies¹⁸, and Mr Martin Zelenka, The Researcher at Centre of Educational Policy¹⁹.

¹⁷ About DZS (Accessed on May 10, 2014). <http://www.dzs.cz/en/about-dzs/>

¹⁸ Center for Higher Education Studies: http://www.csvs.cz/_en/CHES_People.shtml

¹⁹ Centre for Educational Policy: <http://www.strediskovzdelavacipolitiky.info/>

„Private“ scholarships

The absence of state support can be partially replaced by private foundations of various roots that can help co-finance studies abroad.

One such an example is the foundation “Endowment of Josef, Marie and Zdeňka Hlávkových”²⁰. The foundation is the Czech oldest one, founded in January 1904. Since 1991 the foundation has granted more than 55 million Czech crowns to students mostly of Prague universities and young scientific workers and artists.

Great example regarding the topic of this study is Zdeněk Bakala Foundation. Main activity of this foundation is exactly offering scholarship to talented students who want to study at prestigious schools.

“Much of the financial aid we provide goes to high school students endeavoring to make their undergraduate education as challenging (and rewarding) as possible. We also give scholarships to ambitious university graduates looking to advance even further by means of a top-notch graduate program.”

Very similar activities are done by The Kellner Family Foundation²¹ which has got similar programme „the UNIVERSITIES“. Kellners say about the programme: „Extremely gifted young people from socially disadvantaged environments who are enrolled at Czech and foreign colleges and universities can obtain financial support from the UNIVERSITIES project. The Nadace Educa foundation accepted the first students to the UNIVERSITIES project in 2008. Since 2011, when Nadace Educa merged with THE KELLNER FAMILY FOUNDATION, this project has continued under the heading of the new Foundation. In the 2014/2015 school year, the Foundation has included 57 students in this project.“

²⁰ Foundation „Endowment of Josef, Marie and Zdeňka Hlávkových“

²¹ The Kellner Family Foundation: <http://www.kellnerfoundation.cz/univerzity/index.php?page=7>

Economic sphere of the society

In this section the study focuses mainly on two areas or questions: a) How are they perceived by potential employers? Are the potential employers interested in hiring these western alumni? Do they focus on them?

b) How have these students influenced the labour market?

Regarding the first area the author contacted 15 top companies²². They have been selected based on the list of 100 most significant companies in The Czech Republic, it is a chart put together by the association CZECH TOP 100, which has been following Czech companies since 1994 and since then it has been cooperating with major partners on measuring objective criteria to make those charts²³.

Due to the big corporate structures it was hard to manage phone interviews with corresponding staff. The author was in most of the cases directed to personnel which was not able to answer the question and was asked to send an email, which were not answered later on.

The author managed to have interviews with Mrs Doudová (Foxconn CZ) and Mrs Purnochová (HR Specialist in Metrostav a.s.). Mrs Doudová was quite brief and stated that there is no focus on Czech western alumni. Mrs Purnochová was more communicative. She summed up that the company has great collaboration and experience with students and graduates from Czech (technical) Universities, mainly Czech Technical University in Prague (ČVÚT).

The fact stated by Mrs Purnochová seems to be a trend in Czech Republic. Based on the web presentations most of the companies have high interest in recruiting current students or fresh graduates. The companies have what seems to be interesting trainee programmes²⁴ and internships. But with no „inside“ information it needs to be said that

²² 1) Škoda Auto a.s.; 2) ČEZ a.s.; 3) RWE Supply and Trading a.s.; 4) Agrofert a.s.; 5) Unipetrol a.s.; 6) Foxconn CZ s.r.o.; 7) Energetický a průmyslový holding, a.s.; 8) Čepro, a.s.; 9) Třinecké železárny a.s.; 10) Moravia Steel a.s.; 11) Eni Česká republika a.s.; 12) Telefónica Czech Republic a.s.; 13) Ahold Czech Republic a.s.; 14) Bosch Group; 15) Metrostav a.s.

²³ The Results of the 100 the most significant Companies 2013. On-line:
<http://www.czechtop100.cz/menu/aktualne/100-nejvyznamnejsich-firem-cr.html>

²⁴ Škoda Auto a.s.: <http://new.skoda-auto.com/kariera/absolventi-vs>
ČEZ a.s.: <http://www.kdejinde.cz/cs/studenti/trainee-program.html>
RWE a.s.: <http://startkariery.jobs.cz/studenti-a-absolventi/trainee-program-v-cr/?brand=g2&exportRCM=1773802&trackingBrand=rwe.jobs.cz&rps=186&ep=>
Agrofert a.s.: <http://www.agrofert.cz/?1463/kariera-uplatneni-pro-studenty-a-absolventy>
Unipetrol a.s.: <http://www.unipetrol.cz/cs/Kariera/Stranky/default.aspx>
Foxconn CZ s.r.o.: <http://www.foxconn.cz/czech/pro-studenty-a-skoly/>
Třinecké železárny a.s.: http://www.trz.cz/web/trzocel.nsf/link/spoluprace_se_skolami_vsech_stupnu_cz

there is no special interest for Czech western alumni. This statement could be supported by the fact that high amount of the mentioned companies have well-established cooperation with Czech high schools and universities.

The fact that there is no extra focus on western alumni was supported by Mr David, The Secretary of The Association CZECH TOP 100. He claimed that western title does not guarantee success, as it might have been in 90s. He adds that nowadays Czech universities produce highly qualified graduates who have in many cases (short-term) foreign experience and claims the structure of the programmes is also mostly designed based on the foreign influences, so the differences between Czech “non-western” and “western” alumni is diminishing.

Mr Dobrovský, Labour Market Expert from Jobs.cz²⁵, the biggest Czech online job searching engine, told the author that there are no special recruiting or trainee programmes for western alumni. He even added that a lot of companies are afraid of such alumni as they are quite ambitious and it can be assumed that their needs will grow quite rapidly. So in this sense their job possibilities are even narrower. On the other hand they fill the most prestigious vacancies. But Mr Dobrovský too confirms that there is no systematic effort in mapping how or whether this kind of alumni influenced Czech labour market. They are considered maybe prestigious but part of entire Czech alumni.

According Mrs Kotíková, Head of the Research Team at Labour Market and Employment Department at the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs²⁶, there is absolutely no systematic initiative to map the possible influence. She went even further and added that methodologically it is almost impossible to measure their possible influence. It is mainly due to partial correlation - that it is hard to separate them from the rest of graduates.

Unfortunately Czech chamber of commerce which is an institution representing small, medium as well as large business public which “goal is to create opportunities for business, promote and support arrangements which help the development of business in Czech

Telefónica Czech Republic a.s.: http://www.chcido2.cz/studenti_a_absolventi/absolventi/index.html

Ahold Czech Republic: <http://www.albert.cz/kariera/pro-studenty-a-absolventy-vs>

Bosch Group:

http://kariera.bosch.cz/cs/cz/pridejte_se_k_nam/absolventi/vstupni_program_pro_mlade_inzenyry/trainee-programy.html

Metrostav a.s.:

http://www.metrostav.cz/cz/pracovni_prilezitosti/prilezitosti_pro_absolventy/absolventi_strednich_a_vysokych_skol

²⁵ Jobs.cz: <http://www.jobs.cz/>

²⁶ the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs. On-line:

<http://www.vupsv.cz/index.php?p=index&site=en>

Republic and therefore to overall economic stability of the state”, did not allow to re-sent a questionnaire to all its subjects based on the argument that its database is for internal communication only.

Civil society and NGOs

In order to operationalize the concept of "civil society" the author has defined it in terms of non-governmental organisations. Non-governmental organisations are (considered) dominant actors in civil society of the West. Non-governmental organisations have stable (mainly) vertical structures with employees etc. It is easier to contact them and map them. So in this regard they were pragmatically used for this part of research even though.

Another reduction needed to be performed as there is thousands of NGOs with sometimes suspicious goals and practices. The author has collected contacts of NGOs associated in AVPO (Association of Public-Benefit Organisations) which gathers about 100 like-minded NGOs from various fields and towns in Czech Republic trying to be truly transparent and clear about their beneficial status.

Moreover the author has collected contacts on NGOs from field of human rights and minorities (according to NGO List of Czech Centre for Human rights and democratization), migration (Associated in Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organizations in the Czech Republic), anti-corruption (Associated in project called The Reconstruction of the State) and a field of ecology-environment protection.

Lastly the author has contacted ANNO (Association of NGOs in Czech Republic; member of European Council of Associations of General Interest) which connects more than 900 members.

A short questionnaire based mostly on questions mentioned in "Terms of reference 25. 03. 2014" has been sent. The main interest of it was to find out:

- If there are any "western" alumni in Czech non-governmental sector
- If there are, whether they represent "western" values and experiences
- and how they (if anyhow) influenced Czech non-governmental sphere
- and if there not whether there is a demand for them

78 questionnaires have been received back, filled by palette of NGOs. They represent various fields and various geographical contexts, so it can be considered fine base for a solid sample.

Only 11 organisations have a western alumnus in their NGOs. 8 of them have only one, while 3 other have more than 1. They are the graduates of University of Colombia, Leiden, Sorbonne, Hamburg, Cambridge, Aberdeen, London College of Fashion, Uppsala, Exeter, Nottingham, Strasburg and Passau. They are graduates of International Relations (2), Political Science (2), and Marketing (1), Middle East Politics (1), North African Politics (1),

Contemporary Chinese Studies (1), Linguistics (1), Fashion Management (1), Archaeology (1), NGO Management (1) and Law (1). There is no answer from Sorbonne graduate. Regarding the coverage of the tuition and living cost, 5 of the respondents have skipped the answer unfortunately. The rest was not sponsored by a state scholarship. One was supported by the employer; 6 said there was no programme covering the fees therefore it can be assumed they covered it as private payers; alumnus from Uppsala was supported by Svenska Institutet; the graduate from Hamburg just stated "the scholarship". Two of the alumni work as directors of respective NGOs, one as an assistant of a director, two of them are fundraisers, there is one PR expert, there are also two lawyers and four alumni are analytics. Last two skipped the answer.

Regarding the second set of questions, nine of the alumni answered that they feel to represent "western" values and that it is mainly manifested in their approach to work and in relationships with colleagues. Twice it was also mentioned it influenced the relationship with clients.

Most of the NGOs with "western" alumnus agreed that they feel that the presence of him/her has brought the organisation closer to "western"/European standards. Twice it was said that they do not. One of the NGOs commented that the issue (gender equality) their organisation deals with while being common in the West is controversial in Czech Republic. The influence of the presence of these alumni can be seen according to the answers mostly in work relationships and in a change of a value framework of the organisation, followed by change in behaviour externally and change of the practice of fundraising. Once there was mentioned that the presence of the alumnus brought "Nothing". And once the respondent answered: "I do not perceive that the person would engage in any way. The colleague follows the schedule, yet she is not able to pay attention to acute cases." (Lawyer). The same organisation also mentioned while having such an alumnus, the degree does not matter; it is all about the skills.

What is more interesting is a pattern that could be seen in answers of NGOs where there were no "western" alumni. Main portion of the organisations answered negatively to the question "whether they have any interest in employing such an alumnus" (31). But it seems not that important as most of the organisations answering "yes" commented on the same issue. There were two streams of argumentation. Most of the organisations answering "No" went along the argument: A) The country of the education is not important or relevant; local graduates are good enough; "we do not discriminate". The rest of the organisations answering "No" and most of them saying "Yes" answered: B) No we could not pay them; Yes we would be

interested, but we are afraid we could not pay them. C) There is also last set of answers, which stated that these organisations have not just thought about it at all.

It needs to be added that even the organisation which would appreciate such an alumnus would not actively seek for him/her. One of the answers summed it up nicely: "There have been no graduate from western university making any effort to apply in our NGO". So to answer the last question, in the NGOs which answered so far there is no (active) demand for the western alumni.

The author has asked the NGOs whether there are workers who experienced any kind of study exchange even though they are western graduates. Big part (17) of the NGOs has experienced employees with short-term the study exchange experience. There are alumni of Fulbright scholarship, Erasmus programme, Exchanges between universities etc. So there is quite a high level of internationalization of the Czech civil society sector yet it is not based on the western alumni.

Alumni and Alumni groups

The alumni organisations of many prestigious universities are non-existent in the Czech Republic. And even the ones that exist are not very active in shaping the society around. The author managed to gather contacts to Czech alumni organisation of LSE, OxBridge (Oxford - Cambridge joint group) and University College London.

The most well-known and probably biggest alumni organisation is OxBridge. According to their report shared by their president Jan Baláč, OxBridge organizes mostly networking events, which focused more inside than outside - Garden Party, Goose Feast or Christmas party. This is nicely summed up in the report itself: "At the beginning of summer 2013, we asked all our members two questions about the future ... The majority was in favour of continuing in the direction we have been going in the past few years. There seems relatively little appetite for larger and charitable events, fundraising activities or even Oxbridge promotion. Most people expect the Society to be a place to meet friends, both old and new²⁷. There was one event which could be considered as some effort to play an active social role - „Oxford and Cambridge University Promotion“. The respective representatives spoke to prospective students. Based on this we can claim that OxBridge alumni organisation does play vital social role.

Similar attitude was observed in London School of Economic's alumni group. As for the activities of the LSE group, Steve Hercher, the leader of LSE Czech alumni association, told the author that "We are actually a pretty informal, small group, which has events only a few times a year at present, although very enjoyable ;)... We don't have an organized formal charter or program along the lines you looking at. Sorry about that."

University College of London have had a Czech contact person on their webpage. After contacting him, the author received the answer: "Regarding the alumni group, I am the contact person for alumni University College of London, but apart from several informal meetings in London, this group does not show any activity."

The author has not managed to find out about existence of other alumni group of prestigious western universities. In order to find more he contacted respective alumni sections of other

²⁷ Bi-annual Report 2012-2013. Oxford and Cambridge Alumni Society, Czech Republic, pp. 3.

twenty most prestigious universities in Europe based on the ranking of Forbes²⁸ and QS World University Ranking²⁹ via email and facebook page.

Only some of the alumni sections responded all claiming that they do not have any alumni chapters in Czech Republic, including King's College London, Copenhagen University, Lund University, University of Geneva, ETH Zürich, University of Cologne, Imperial College London and University of Glasgow.

Moreover the sections were asked whether it was possible to pass to their Czech alumni the questionnaire. Only some accepted and re-sent the questionnaire to Czech alumni of the respective.

And only some of the individual alums filled the questionnaire, raising the number of respondents on 20. Unfortunately 20 answers are not many to make any broad generalization but some basics of pattern can be observed.

The biggest motivation for studying abroad was mainly personal growth (12) and better career opportunities abroad (10), followed by low quality of education in the Czech Republic (9) and better career opportunities in the Czech Republic (9).

16 had wanted to find a job in corporate world and 14 have actually found it. Only 6 said they were thinking about going to work in public service. Five of them found a job in public administration.

16 of the respondents (80%) answered that it was really easy or quite easy to find a job and 14 agreed on that the western degree was much of a help. 6 of them were neutral about positive influence of the western degree on getting a job. Yet still we might say that western degree facilitates employment of the graduates. We could also confirm it by the fact that 15 of the respondents said that their degree is perceived with a positive bias.

Regarding their mid/long term goals the dominant answer was that the graduates want to feel the satisfaction from doing the activity itself (17). The high position in a corporate world, high financial remuneration and high social impact and recognition were all supported by 7 respondents. Only 4 stated that their goal is to be part of public service. It is hard to make any generalization, but from the sample it is quite obvious that state apparatus is not a dream job for most of the western alumni.

15 of them really wanted or quite wanted to participate on change in their respective field/Czech society. But none of them feels that he really helped to change something. Yet 8

²⁸ The Top Universities in Europe 2013. Forbes. On-line:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2013/10/02/the-top-universities-in-europe-2013/>

²⁹ Top 200 QS World University Rankings 2013. The Guardian. On-line: <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/table/2013/sep/10/qs-world-university-rankings-2013>

of them feel that they quite helped to change their field/Czech republic, 6 were neutral. 5 of them stated that they almost did not help to change anything.

12 are part of the alumni organisation, but as a follow-up to what was said hereinbefore, they do not use an alumni platform as a tool for social change in Czech Republic or other countries. It was also confirmed by the fact that 12 of them said that they make no effort to engage in social change with their alumni organisation.

As for the identity of the alumni, they dominantly live in the Czech Republic but also in UK (2), Israel, Sweden, Switzerland or USA. None of the graduates were obliged to come back after the studies. The main reason is that almost all of them paid for the studies on their own (16), sometimes in combination with a scholarship offered by private foundation (2) or by the state scholarship of the country of studies (3). They are dominantly graduates in social sciences (17). They all graduated in recent years (apart of two graduates, who graduated in 1998 and 1999). And they are mainly graduates of LSE, Cambridge and Lund University. There was one respondent from UCL, University of Geneva and University of Birmingham.

It is hard to read and would be truly presumptuous make big generalization out of just 20 answers. We can just sum up that it is not state effort which would support these alumni and would attract them back to Czech Republic to support any effort of "westernization" of Czech public administration and Czech society.

Conclusion

The relationship between the Czech alumni of western universities and Czech society is the one of mutual ignorance or at least limited mutual interest.

As showed in the study the state produces absolutely no systematic effort in order to support the students at prestigious universities or to attract them back to the country of origins in order to raise the quality of public service. If the state feels the need to hire these alumni, it is mostly for short-term purposes as showed on the example of the EU presidency.

The alumni as well are not quite interested in shaping the major institutions of the country. They are not interested in influencing the country in general as well. The alumni groups which in many countries play important social role are in the Czech Republic just clubs for meeting friends.

Even though some of the western alumni played important roles during the accession period or during the presidency, it is not them who have shaped the process of the transformation and the Europeanization. These processes have been led by ex-dissidents, experts and ex-emigrants mostly with “old” education or with no university education at all.

In the offices mainly focused on the European affairs these alumni play vital role but in general they have not been a dominant force as can be shown by major influence of Mr Telička e.g.

In order to understand Europeanization and the role of the social forces in it, it is important to perceive broader social, historical and international context which cannot be explained just by the geographical origins of degrees. Moreover there is no obvious reason to believe that western education produce any affection for the European project.

In addition as explained by the experts it is quite hard to study this kind of alumni. Mostly they are perceived only as part of alumni in general.