

From the Fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 to the  
Enlargement of the European Union in 2004: the Role of  
Civil Society and the Idea of Europe in the Process of  
the Democratic Transformation of Central and Eastern  
Europe Countries

INTERNATIONAL FORUM

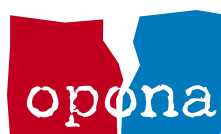
1 May 2009

Prague Congress Centre

Organizers:



EU2009.CZ



On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the accession of the Czech Republic and other post-Communist countries to the European Union, Opona (a non-profit company) and the European Commission (the Directorate-General for Education and Culture and the Directorate-General for Enlargement) are organizing an international forum on the role of civil society before and after the fall of the Iron Curtain. This forum is a side event on the programme drawn up by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

This year, the Czech Republic and other Central and Eastern Europe countries are celebrating two significant anniversaries. It will be 20 years since the bipolar division of the world came to an end, and 5 years since the Czech Republic and other post-Communist countries definitively

confirmed their commitment to the path they had set out on after the fall of the Iron Curtain. On 1 May, we will celebrate the fifth anniversary of accession to the European Union.

The aims of the conference are to look, with the benefit of hindsight, at significant events of 1989 and, through three panel discussions, to determine their impact on the European integration process. Czech and foreign guests will address issues such as the role of the European Union and its expansion in the unification of Europe, the process of restoring democracy in Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the prominence of civil society in this process, as well as the significance of a working civil society and democratic values for the functioning of democracy and preservation of the legacy of European historical experience.

The forum will be attended by numerous important figures, including **Ján Figel**, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture and Youth; **Olli Rehn**, the European Commissioner for Enlargement; **Alexandr Vondra**, the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs; **Karel Schwarzenberg**, the Minister for Foreign Affairs; **Hido Bišćević**, the Secretary-General of the Regional Cooperation Council; **Lee Edwards**, Chairman of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation; and **Vytautas Landsbergis**, Lithuania's former president and a current member of the European Parliament.

#### Programme of the International Forum

**Oldřich Černý**, executive director of the Forum 2000 Foundation, will welcome all delegates shortly after 9:00 a.m. Opening remarks will be delivered by **Alexandr Vondra**, the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs, **Marek Vocel**, the Chairman of the Management Board of Opona, o.p.s., and **Ján Figel**, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture and Youth.

Panel I: The role of EU enlargement in the unification of Europe - reflections on the past and prospects for the future

Chair: **Lenka Rovná**, Jean Monnet Professor, Charles University

- **Olli Rehn**, European Commissioner for Enlargement
- **Karel Schwarzenberg**, President of the General Affairs and External Relations Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs
- **Ursula Plassnik**, Member of the Austrian Parliament and Special Envoy of the Women's Network for European and International Affairs in the Austrian Federal Parliament
- **Hido Bišćević**, Secretary-General of the Regional Cooperation Council

Panel II: The fall of the Iron Curtain in Central and Eastern Europe and the restoration of democracy, accompanied by the emergence of civil society and civic participation

Chair: **Pavol Demeš**, Director of the German Marshall Fund, Slovak Republic

- **Pavel Žáček**, Director of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes
- **Lee Edwards**, Chairman of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, USA
- **Marek Benda**, Chairman of the Constitutional Law Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament
- **Sylvie Goulard**, President of Le Mouvement européen, France
- **Elzbieta Matynia**, Expert on democratic transition in Central and Eastern Europe, Associate Professor at the New School for Social Research, USA

Panel III: How to deal with Europe's past? Preserving the legacy of historical experience and strengthening democratic values

Chair: **Martin Bútora**, co-founder of Public against Violence in 1989, Honorary President of Institute for Public Affairs

- **Vytautas Landsbergis**, Former President of Lithuania and Current Member of the European Parliament
- **Tomáš Sedláček**, Analyst, Lecturer at Charles University
- **Gergely Romsics**, Historian, Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs
- **Jan Zahradil**, Member of the European Parliament

The Forum is planned to begin at 9.15 a.m. The final contributions will be delivered before 4:00 p.m.

On the occasion of this International Forum, a **press conference** will be held in the Congress Centre's Small Auditorium (ground floor, Entrance 7) with **Olli Rehn**, the European Commissioner for Enlargement, and **Ján Figel**, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture and Multilingualism. Names of other guests will be released later. The conference will begin after the first panel discussion at 11.30 a.m.

**Journalists can register** for the forum and press conference by e-mailing [pavla.kantnerova@oponaops.eu](mailto:pavla.kantnerova@oponaops.eu).

#### **International Forum Side Programme**

- 1 May 2009, 1.30 p.m. Interactive presentation of the **Totalitarian Simulator** exhibition (Prague Congress Centre)
- 1 May 2009, 1.00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. **Fashion behind the Iron Curtain**, fashion show at the Calendarium of Totalitarianism, open space in nám. Republiky (Republic Square), Praha 1
- 1 May 2009, 8.00 p.m. concert: **5 Years without Frontiers, 20 Years without the Curtain** (Archa Theatre, Praha 1)
- 1 May 2009, 8.00 p.m. theatre performance: **PERSONAL HISTORY In 1989 I was five years old.. it's just skin deep for me** (Experimental Stage, Roxy/NoD, Praha 1)

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