



## **First training in Kyiv at “Communicating Europe – Making the EU Understandable” project**

### **Summary on How to shape narrative of European integration: lessons learned from the Czech Republic**

Lecture given by Michal Vit, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Kyiv, July 7, 2017

The lecture consisted of two main parts: the lessons learned from the accession process of the Czech Republic to the EU followed by experience gained from the “early” membership. Second part was devoted to the issue of informing about the EU when the EU is used as a tool for failures in domestic politics.

The first part of the lecture touched the main elements of accession process from perspective of the Czech politics, society as well as business. This was demonstrated on the case of structural funds and its use during the accession negotiations and during the first decade after joining the EU in the 2004. The main point was to show difference between political and social consensus when it comes to distribution of the EU funds and its erosion after the 2006. The emphasis was given on the relationship between level of subsidiarity and central decision making during implementation of individual projects funded by structural funds.

This was taken as a substance for the second part which focused on the framing of the EU issues in domestic politics. Due to significant level of missus and low effectiveness of structural fund in the Czech Republic several political formations started to blame the EU for supporting projects with low added value for society. This trend was followed by rising negative perception of the Czech society toward the EU as a source of corruption. The discussion thus focused on the way how to cultivate public discussion on the EU in situation when high number of political representatives stress negative elements of the EU membership. As it was in case of the first part, example of low effective EU funds were taken as an example of difficult task when reporting on the EU issues.

The discussion with participants touched also topics related to political system of the Czech Republic and way how public administration was reformed during the accession period. This was a matter of intense debate among participants – the need of rule of law before implementation any kind of structural funds as well as readiness of political representation to cope with enforcement of norms that correspond with European standards. As follow up the discussion touched the role of so called “EU positive imagination”, in other words how to support positive image of the EU in Ukraine but to keep objectivity of journalism. Based on content introduction, the discussion focused on very basic tasks – how to report on the EU integration without destruction of positive image of the EU but knowing that the integration brings very limited financial resources for average people so far.

As a follow up for field trip of Ukrainian participants, several ideas for meeting have been collected such as regional political representatives, success stories from society and business.