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EES NEWS

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Strengthening US-Slovak Cooperation and the Transatlantic Partnership: Opportunities and Challenges in Today's World

Jan Kubis

Jan Kubis is Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic. He spoke at the 9th Annual Czech and Slovak Freedom Lecture, which was held on November 21, 2008. The event was co-sponsored by the Friends of Slovakia, the American Friends of the Czech Republic and the Embassies of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The following is the text of his speech. Meeting Report 356.

For Slovakia and for our friend and neighbor the Czech Republic, autumn is a good time of balancing out, commemorating and remembering many common historical events that determined the future for both of our countries. This particular autumn is marked by a growing number of global challenges, including the global financial crisis and recession which require bold and comprehensive global solutions. At the same time, for the USA and the whole world, this autumn is a time of much hope and expectation, given the presidential elections and accession of the new U.S. administration in January 2009.

Today's Slovakia is an integral part of all global processes and efforts and shares with others its part of global responsibility. I say this with a feeling of pride, because I represent a country that, less than 20 years ago, was part of Czechoslovakia but then broke free from communism and began to build a democratic future for its citizens as an independent country.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, you have been able to follow the radical transformation of Slovakia and the Czech Republic and their efforts to build democratic societies that respect fundamental rights and freedoms, to build market economies, and to find their rightful place among the most developed and progressive nations of the world. You know that for Slovakia it has not been and it is not a simple or straightforward process. But I maintain that all these trials and tribulations, problems, failures as well as the achievements and victories have made us stronger and more mature in the short period that we have existed as an independent country, and thus have quickly caught up with others.

For both Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the years ending with the number eight have a special significance—we often talk about “the magic eight” in our history. From the last century, 1918, 1938, 1948, 1968 were significant years. For Slovakia, 2008 is particularly special, since it is the year when Slovakia became a full member of the Schengen area's freedom of travel, and when we achieved visa-free travel with the U.S. This year, Slovakia became the first truly post-communist country to have joined the eurozone—well ahead of our Visegrad neighbors.

From the historical perspective, in 2008 we are commemorating the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak Republic, the emergence of which we owe to the U.S. and President Woodrow Wilson, as well as to the Slovaks and Czechs living in the United States. We are grateful to the Slovaks that were present at the birth of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh agreements and who supported the founding of Czechoslovakia as a democratic state of two equal nations. The founding of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 has helped reinforce and indeed save the Slovaks as a nation. It helped to create the political, economic and social basis for the successful future of both nations and has strengthened the identity of both our peoples.

Nor can I overlook 1968, the year of the invasion of the then-socialist Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops. This invasion put an end to the illusion that the communist system could be reformed, which saved us from harboring any illusions in and after 1989, when communism finally collapsed also in Czechoslovakia. The events of 1968

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sowed the seeds for the profound societal changes that began on November 17, 1989.

The events of 1968 and the 20 years of darkness that followed reinforced in the minds of a majority of the citizens of Czechoslovakia that communism means a future without perspective, life in an isolated and closed society, without personal and social freedom, without access to unbiased information, with very limited opportunities to travel abroad, with weak possibilities for professional and intellectual development and success, and primarily without a chance to choose one's own future and destiny. This feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness led many to make a fundamental life decision

The transformation of Slovakia is a fascinating story that has a great potential to inspire and motivate. From a country that received democratic tutoring and foreign development assistance, we have become a country that shares its democratic experience and wealth of the spirit of solidarity with others.

to leave their country, friends and family, in order to start a new life in an unknown, foreign but democratic environment, such as the U.S.

Those who remained in Czechoslovakia were not often able to imagine how difficult it was to begin in a new place, but how rewarding it was in comparison with the reality of communism. Many of those who witnessed someone dear to them go beyond the iron curtain, but who were unable or unwilling to follow, often wondered which side was better. History ultimately solved that dilemma, but let us pay tribute to both those who left in 1968 and to our fellow Slovaks and Czechs from older waves of emigration as well as to all those who stayed in Czechoslovakia and longed and worked for democratic change.

In Slovakia, we also commemorated the 20th anniversary of the mass candlelight Christian demonstration for human rights and civic freedoms, which was in March 1988 in Bratislava. The communist regime managed to put out the candles on the square in front of the Slovak National Theatre with water hoses, but the light of freedom continued to burn. Only one year later, on November 17, 1989, the participants in that candlelight demonstration, who longed for the fall of the totalitarian regime and strove to build of a free society, saw their dreams and prayers come true. It is because of them and many others that I feel great pride and satisfaction that November 17 is marked in Slovakia as the National Day of the fight for freedom and democracy.

After the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia on the eve of 1993, Slovakia launched an independent path of transformation to an open, democratic society and

socially-oriented market economy. From the beginning, membership in the EU and NATO was the driving force for political developments in Slovakia. Notably, in the 1990s, when the path became a thorny and at times painful road of failed experiments and errors, it was not as simple as it may look today. At that time, there were deliberate attempts to divert us from that path. Due to the courage of the majority of the citizens of Slovakia and of an increasingly mature civil society, Slovakia made it through this test and came out of it stronger. By 2004, we joined both the EU and NATO as a truly democratic country.

The transition from a totalitarian system to a democratic one for Slovakia was thus rather complicated. One important external factor was the role of the United States. Thanks to the U.S.'s support and trust in our people, Slovakia, together with the Central European region, joined the community of democratic countries. In a broader context, it can be said that, thanks to transatlantic relations and America's interest in our fate, it was possible to build a more integrated, freer and more peaceful Europe: a Europe whole and free, with the U.S. as its strategic ally and partner.

Slovakia and the U.S. enjoy excellent bilateral relations. They have significantly expanded since Slovakia joined NATO five years ago. Political and security cooperation, economic and cultural ties, expanding contacts of our citizens and common engagement in operations such as KFOR and Afghanistan, represent parts of this strategic relationship. As recently as last month, Slovak President Ivan Gasparovic and President George Bush confirmed this partnership when they met in Washington.

I am extraordinarily pleased that today, a few days after the 19th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, I can state that our partnership has also been expressed through the inclusion of Slovakia in the visa waiver program. We view this as a gesture of trust and recognition of our partnership and equality between good friends. I would like to thank all of you, most notably the Friends of Slovakia, for your assistance on this issue. Your efforts here in Washington helped a lot.

Today's Slovakia is a success story. But because of our rather complicated path we consider it our responsibility to share our experience with those who wish to learn from it. The transformation of Slovakia is a fascinating story that has a great potential to inspire and motivate. From a country that received democratic tutoring and foreign development assistance, we have become a country that shares its democratic experience and wealth in the spirit of solidarity with others. We strive to contribute to positive developments in countries where we have historical ties and our story carries weight: in the Western Balkans and in Eastern Europe, but also in Cuba. From the humanitarian and development perspective, we try to help in Africa and Asia as well.

To effectively promote democracy in another state, it is necessary to cultivate suitable political, social, cultural and economic conditions. One cannot export or

import democracy, but can continuously work for democratic change by engaging ourselves not only with states but also with civil societies. From our experience, we know that transformation to democracy through the development of civic freedoms and the rule of law pays dividends because it empowers people, makes people's lives more authentic and provides them with better opportunities.

Slovakia began engaging more deeply in support for democratic change in the Western Balkans in 1999, when a series of conferences and workshops attended by the pro-democratic representatives of political opposition parties, media and civil society from and in the former Yugoslavia was launched within the framework of what is known as the Bratislava process. Later, with the purpose of supporting civil society, renewing infrastructure, enhancing regional development and supporting EU and NATO integration, the Bratislava-Belgrade Fund was established as a part of direct Slovak development assistance. In a similar vein, we have worked with civil society in Ukraine, Belarus and Cuba.

After the EU accession talks were opened with Croatia, Slovakia carried out a series of expert meetings to provide its knowledge of the accession process. Similarly, we work with Serbia and other Western Balkan countries in support of their EU membership ambitions. Slovakia also supports Ukraine's efforts to become closer to the EU, among other things, with a governmental action plan for achieving the goals of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). To help the countries east of the EU's borders to build a closer association with the EU we promote a new EU policy of Eastern Partnership.

The Slovak Embassy in Kiev is NATO's official Contact Point Embassy, and its role is to inform the Ukrainian population about the opportunities that exist for deepening cooperation with NATO, with a view to diminishing the bias against the Alliance that still exists in a large part of Ukrainian society. Slovakia fully supports Croatia's and Albania's entry into NATO and the relevant documents have already been ratified by the Slovak Republic. We equally support NATO membership for Macedonia, as well as offering the MAP for Ukraine and Georgia. By this account, I wanted to confirm that the notions of freedom and democracy, which accompanied the birth of Czechoslovakia in the year 1918 and were also the foundation of the 1989 Velvet Revolution, are at the core of the foreign policy of the Slovak Republic and our efforts to spread the zone of democratic stability in Europe.

Slovakia's EU and NATO memberships mean that we have assumed all of the obligations arising from membership. The Slovak Republic entered the EU and adopted its *acquis* with a strategy for a rapid introduction of all the internal rules governing the EU, including the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, with as few transitional restrictions as possible. We continued the implementation of this strategy by joining

the Schengen area, which allows for free travel without checks at the internal borders of the Schengen member states. This was achieved near the end of 2007.

In a few weeks, the process of our European integration will be completed, as Slovakia accedes to the eurozone. The Slovak koruna will cease to be the legal tender as of January 1, 2009, when the euro will take over as Slovakia's currency. We in Slovakia are convinced that this is a means to ensure a more stable economic development and greater social security for Slovak citizens. At the same time, it is a means to improve the competitiveness of the Slovak economy and also to make it more attractive for foreign investors, especially in the context of the current global financial crisis and recession. Although we will not be spared some of its negative consequences I am convinced that it will not have a dramatic impact on the still very favorable economic growth of our country. This prediction, supported by the European Commission and International Monetary Fund, indicates that in the coming years Slovakia will remain the fastest growing economy in the EU and the eurozone, with an annual GDP growth between 4.5 and 5 percent. For further illustration, in the third quarter of 2008 we registered a GDP growth of 7.1 percent and for the entire year of 2008, the growth is likely to be well above 7 percent. The source of our optimism is the competitiveness and growing productivity of the Slovak labor force, with its ability to produce high quality goods and to master technology-intensive processes. For this reason, we do not expect any substantial downsizing in the activities of major foreign investors such as Volkswagen, KIA, Peugeot-Citroen, Sony, Samsung, US Steel and others.

As a currency, the euro also has psychological and social dimensions. The introduction of the euro makes Slovak citizens feel truly European, equal with others as members of this exclusive club of the most developed European countries that make up the eurozone. This is not a minor achievement for a country that lived under communism for more than 40 years and that started its independent history less than 16 years ago.

Internationally, Slovakia acts as a responsible partner. We are actively engaged in a number of peacekeeping operations under the UN, NATO and EU umbrella. Our diplomats serve in top international positions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Central Asia. This year, Slovakia successfully chaired the Council of Europe, and in 2006-2007 we served with honors as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, where we closely cooperated with the U.S. and our EU partners at the service of the international community.

At this point, it is appropriate to express my great appreciation for the solidarity, help and understanding of our main regional partners—above all, our friends from the Visegrad countries, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. It has helped us a lot not to be alone in the process of transition, and it has

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been and is fundamentally important for Slovakia and for stability and prosperity in the entire Central European region that we have good cooperation between neighbors.

This does not mean that there are no challenges to political, economic and social development in our country or in the other countries of the region. It is evident that our rapid transformation has brought hardships, notably to older generations and to people with limited social mobility. Democracy is not a simple system. Rather, it is more complicated than the authoritarian system of government, to which many generations had grown accustomed. The market economy, with its competition and limited social security, is far more complicated as well. Too many people long for easy solutions to social ills. Within the nearly 20 years since the totalitarian regimes were crushed, some wish they had achieved larger social dividends for themselves. Our citizens witnessed successions of centre-right and centre-left governments take power, waves of privatization under conditions that were less than transparent, instances of grave corruption, growing social inequality, all accompanied by too many promises of politicians, many of which were soon forgotten. The result is a tangible disappointment with “traditional” policies and politicians, and a readiness to accept simple slogans, populist rhetoric and radicalism.

Globalization and its accompanying insecurity, the rapid disappearance of traditional ways of life and growing economically-motivated migration have given rise to a similar phenomenon throughout Europe. New radicalism finds an easy marriage with nationalism and intolerance in too many EU countries, old and new, Slovakia included. And all of this is being exacerbated by the current financial crisis.

Another major problem, at least from our perspective, is the rise of aggressive nationalism, which strives for revision of the existing borders, chauvinism, extremism (including neo-Nazism and neo-fascism) as well as anti-Semitism. In Slovakia, the government has a policy of “zero tolerance” for such ideologies and implements it. In the past weeks, the government proposed several amendments to strengthen the laws against extremism and intolerance. But as recently as three weeks ago, a group of uniformed neo-Nazis from Hungary crossed into the territory of Slovakia to commemorate the Munich Treaty-linked Vienna Arbitrage that in 1938 deprived Slovakia of a major part of its territory, including Kosice. This was an outrage! A positive sign has come from a meeting between Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany in Komarno, Slovakia, where they declared their readiness to take measures against extremism and aggressive nationalism, as well as hate speech. Thus, in spite of all

the successes of democratic transformation in our region, there are new challenges emerging that require our attention and action. Promoting and protecting democracy is obviously a never-ending process.

Transatlantic relations are the foundation of Slovakia’s security, and we also believe in furthering the development of global security and stability. In the face of urgent global challenges, it is imperative to recognize their importance and to give increased attention to their development on both sides of the Atlantic. This is why we are building Slovak-US and EU-US relations on the principles of mutual trust, responsibility and understanding.

The world is facing a number of old and new threats. New emerging economies in the developing world do not always share our values and approaches, and the value system of international relations and international law itself are being frequently challenged. There has been an upsurge of nationalism and fundamentalism, an undiminished threat of terrorism, a threat of irreversible environmental damage and the financial and monetary world is in the grips of a crisis. No country in the world can cope with these challenges alone, nor can the transatlantic community that is in disarray. This calls for the rallying of all countries that adhere to our shared values and objectives, and for stronger and more effective transatlantic links. This is why we have sent our soldiers in the south of Afghanistan: it is vital to demonstrate the strong impact of our joint endeavors and the capacity to be a genuine factor for democratic change, security and stability as a prerequisite for sustainable development.

Now, after the elections in the United States, what do we expect from the President-elect Barack Obama? The world and, in particular, Europe expect the expression of a strong political will for genuine partnership, broad and intensive dialogue, a change in style of foreign policy, a departure from unilateralism, a restoration of the U.S.’s high moral ground. It will be important to seek out the most effective modes of communication between the transatlantic allies, creating an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation. We want to work with the United States in searching for answers to the challenges we face in these turbulent times, through a strengthened strategic character of the transatlantic partnership.

We understand the U.S.’s insistence that the EU assume a greater share of responsibility in addressing common problems. The EU should indeed be ready to do this. We know that for the EU, failure in this area could mean risking the loss, not only of the confidence of its transatlantic ally, but also the respect of a large part of the international community. And without that, we cannot expect to improve cooperation in global affairs.

The alliance with the United States through NATO constitutes the only real security guarantee for Slovakia. Article 5 of the Treaty has been the mainstay of our security. NATO will have to continue to be ready to fulfill its key mandate and tasks vis-à-vis its allies and

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A Litmus Test of the Century and its Social and Moral Order: Lithuania in the 20th Century

Leonidas Donskis

Leonidas Donskis is Professor of Political Science and Director of the School of Political Science and Diplomacy at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania. He spoke at an EES Noon Discussion on October 14, 2008. The following is a summary of his presentation. Meeting Report 354.

Lithuania cherishes historical memories of once belonging to a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country. It also cherishes the most generous and noble-spirited traditions of the Romantic ethos of liberal nationalism, and quite justifiably so. In the late 1980s, Lithuania's national rebirth movement, Sajudis, and its "singing revolution" not only revived the spirit of the 19th Century epoch of the springtime of the peoples (whose slogan—*For your and our freedom!*—was raised as the banner), but also became a litmus test for the Soviet policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (reorganization). As the first republic to breakaway from the Soviet Union, Lithuania came to embody the historical triumph of East-Central Europe's time-honored struggle for freedom.

It was with good reason that the great Polish Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz, who was born in Lithuania and who regarded it as his motherland, depicted Lithuania as a mysterious country, which disappears from history and then returns to it repeatedly. In 1990, Lithuania restored its independence after 50 years of political and cultural isolation. In 1918, Lithuania declared its independence after spending 123 years as part of Tsarist Russia. Each time, Lithuania came into existence through the revival of its historical memory and culture, rather than through an overt exercise of power. Culture led Lithuania from a political non-entity to a political presence. Its culture paved the way to politics, and not the other way around.

As a culture, Lithuania had long had at least two visions of how to fulfill itself as a modern historical actor. One of them, as mentioned, views Lithuania as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country deeply grounded in the political and cultural realities of the epoch of the Renaissance and Baroque. Another sees Lithuania as having its roots in Romanticism—the Lithuania of mystical influences, spirituality and organic community. Both visions and interpretations of Lithuanian culture are richly supported by historical evidence.

As a polity, Lithuania dates back to the early Middle Ages. It has an ancient language and an old culture both recalled and revived during the national rebirth movement in the 19th Century. One of the greatest powers in medieval Europe whose territory stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, Lithuania eventually

crumbled and lost its influence in modern Europe. Bearing in mind the fact that the country was part of Tsarist Russia from 1795 to 1918, that the Lithuanian elite adopted the Polish language and, finally, that Lithuania underwent considerable Russification in the 19th Century, the emergence of the Republic of Lithuania in 1918 was nothing short of miraculous. Yet, Lithuania enjoyed parliamentary democracy for just eight years: a coup in 1926 replaced the democracy with a mild authoritarian regime which lasted until 1940. Incidentally, this was the case in all three Baltic States. What happened in 1940 was a tragedy for the Baltic States, which were occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union.

To cut a long story short, Lithuanian cultural history reads like an exciting novel, if not an adventure story. Small wonder, then, that much of it has yet to be discovered by our fellow Europeans. The same applies to us—only now do Lithuanians appear to be capable of truly challenging themselves and offering new interpretations of their complex historical past. Having experienced the worst nightmares of both totalitarian ideologies and regimes during the Second World War, Lithuania was repeatedly occupied by the Soviets in 1945, condemning the country to five decades of isolation from the Western world. Lithuania lost considerable groups from its society: hundreds of thousands of

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Lithuanian Jews perished in the Holocaust, the most educated and prosperous part of Lithuanian society was either exterminated or exiled to Siberia. Tens of thousands of Lithuanians fled to Germany after WWII. Having spent several years in displaced persons camps in West Germany, some of them moved to the U.S., Great Britain, Canada, and Australia, while others found shelter in continental Europe. As a result, many planes of Lithuanian identity have been developed over the past 70 years, especially among diverse émigré groups.

For instance, Aleksandras Shtromas, a major figure in the political science academic world, a Lithuanian-born British and American political scientist,

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a Lithuanian and Russian dissident, and an ardent patriot of Lithuania, regarded himself both as a Jew and a Lithuanian. In addition, he was a man who possessed a Russian sensitivity and who felt at home in Russian culture. Shtromas was a native bilingual, who spoke to his father in Lithuanian and to his mother in Russian. Leonid Pinsky, a noted Russian scholar of Renaissance

Modern Lithuania has emerged as a characteristically East-Central European Nation with an emphasis on a strong sense of history and on the critical role of culture and language in the process of political emancipation

literature and Shakespeare, and Grigory Pomerantz, an eminent Russian philosopher and scholar of Oriental cultures, made a great impact on Shtromas. As a Soviet dissident active in Lithuania and Russia, Shtromas knew in person and co-operated with such great Soviet dissidents as Andrei Sakharov, Elena Bonner, Andrei Sinyavsky, Yuli Daniel and Vladimir Bukovsky. Alexander Galich and Alexander Ginzburg were his close friends. Yet, his attachment to Lithuania and Russia did not prevent Shtromas from becoming an enthusiast of Great Britain and the United States, where he spent much of his time as an émigré scholar.

Another towering figure in Lithuanian academia and philosophy was Vasily Sesemann, who was born in Finland, and was the son of a Swedish-speaking Finnish father and of a Russian-speaking German mother. Sesemann was brought up in Russia and spent much time in Germany before moving to Lithuania in the 1920s and accepting a full professorship in philosophy at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania. Exiled to Siberia in 1945, Sesemann survived the Soviet camp and returned to occupied Lithuania, where he continued his research and gave lectures at Vilnius University. Influenced by German neo-Kantians of the Marburg School and phenomenology, Sesemann stood close to the Russian Formalists and may have laid the theoretical foundations for semiotics. Fluent in Lithuanian, Russian, German and Swedish, Vasily Sesemann (Wilhelm Sesemann in Finland and Vosylius Sezemanas in Lithuania) could be interchangeably described as a Finnish, Russian, German or Lithuanian philosopher. He, perhaps, merits the title of a great Baltic philosopher more than anyone else.

Throughout the 20th Century, Lithuania's self image as the Athens of the North has peacefully coexisted with a moderate messianic construct, casting this small nation as an important bridge between East and West (the former often reduced to Slavic civilization or Russia).

The concept of a synthesis of civilizations—East and West—was elaborated and promoted by the Lithuanian philosopher Stasys Salkauskis, particularly in *“Sur les confins de deux mondes”* (“On the Boundary of Two Worlds,” 1919), a book on Lithuania written in French, in Switzerland. An examination of several inter-war Lithuanian philosophical texts reveals just how strongly Lithuanian philosophy was affected by 19th and 20th Century Russian philosophy. Two key Lithuanian intellectuals—Stasys Salkauskis and Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas—wrote their doctoral dissertations at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland (both written in French), focusing on the prominent Russian religious philosopher Vladimir Soloviev.

Salkauskis studied Soloviev's philosophy of religion, while Putinas analyzed the Russian thinker's aesthetics. Salkauskis's dissertation was titled *“L'âme du monde dans la philosophie de Vl. Soloviev”* (“Love of the World in the Philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev,” 1920), Putinas's *“L'Esthétique de Vladimir Soloviev”* (“Vladimir Soloviev's Aesthetics,” 1923). During that period, in addition to Soloviev, other Russian writers and thinkers—Nikolai Berdyaev, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Konstantin Leontyev, the Russian nihilists, among others—influenced many Lithuanian academics and public intellectuals. In addition to other influences of Russian culture on Lithuania, these thinkers' ideas can, in part, be seen as a principal source of Lithuanian messianism. Roughly speaking, Salkauskis's vision of Lithuania as a bridge between the civilizations of East and West is nothing but another term for the specifically Russian notion of Eurasia, though this concept is usually reserved exclusively for Russia and its historic mission. A devout reader and follower of Soloviev, Salkauskis's concept of a synthesis of civilizations is merely a Lithuanian variation on a classic theme in 19th and 20th Century Russian social philosophy.

Eurasianism, both as a philosophical tendency and model of cultural or civilizational identity, was a central concept in Lev Karsavin's work and writing—he spent several decades lecturing in Lithuania, and fundamentally influenced the development of Lithuanian philosophy of culture and cultural history. In 1928, he was offered a professorship at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, where he had arrived from Paris. An eminent Russian religious thinker and an erudite cultural historian, Karsavin soon became a fluent speaker of Lithuanian and established his reputation as one of the most brilliant lecturers at the University of Lithuania. A man with several planes of identity, and also of multidimensional spiritual and moral existence, Karsavin converted to Roman Catholicism. His five-volume magnum opus, *“Europos kulturos istorija”* (“The Cultural History of Europe,” 1931-1937), written in Lithuanian and published during the inter-war period, is a work of European significance and has yet to be

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Do Markets Punish EU Backsliders? The Role of Enforcement

Julia Gray

Julia Gray is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh. She spoke at an EES Noon Discussion on November 12, 2008. The following is a summary of her presentation. Meeting Report 355.

Scholars of international institutions have long praised the ability of international organizations such as the European Union (EU) to promote cooperative behavior, stability and the rule of law. Implicit in that praise is the idea that the EU closely monitors member states' behavior and punishes those that break the rules. In practice, however, the EU rarely enforces its own rules, restricting itself for the most part to strongly worded statements, taking states to court for non-compliance with directives, and only occasional formal punishment. Indeed, the EU's freezing of structural funds to Bulgaria this past summer, due to the country's lack of progress on anticorruption measures, was one of the rare examples of Brussels making good on its threats to rein in its members' behavior: so much for the rule of law, in practice.

This raises an empirical question: how important is enforcement of rules within the European Union for a country's credibility? Do the reputational benefits of the EU mean that markets overlook the occasional bending of EU rules? Or do markets take rule-breaking in the EU seriously and use those instances as indicators for how countries might behave in the future? How important is enforcement to the credibility of the EU? Since much of the credibility of the European Union hinges on ideas of convergence, and on its members abiding by the many regulations and requirements for entry and membership, it is important to know how much weight outside observers put on actual adherence to those rules.

Some would argue that markets take their cues from the institutions that organize countries' behavior, and that institutions can act as important distillers of information in a world of uncertainty. Hence, if we thought that market signals converged around signals from institutions, and not from countries themselves, we might predict three different levels of market reactions to three different categories of offenses. For countries that visibly break EU rules but go unpunished, we would expect no market reaction. Second, countries that break EU rules but are only reprimanded verbally should generate minimal market reaction. The strongest reaction should come from a third category: when countries are actually punished by the European Union for rule-breaking.

Simple regression analysis can test the first proposition, specifically by examining whether markets respond to volatility in excess of Stability

and Growth Pact (SGP) conditions. The SGP was originally designed to ensure that countries in the eurozone maintained a pre-established level of economic soundness, and to prevent any persistent structural economic problems in an individual country that would damage the health of the eurozone as a whole. Among other conditions, the SGP mandated that no country's budget deficit exceed 3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), and that public debt should stay below 60 percent of GDP. These valiant targets did not last; in 2006, German public debt clocked in at 66.8 percent of GDP, France's at 64.7 percent, and Greece and Italy's were over 100 percent of total output. Similarly, Hungary's budget deficit in 2005 was well over 13 percent of GDP, and the country was unrepentant about its errors, maintaining that the EU would never punish them because Germany was already off the hook. Though the SGP contained a provision for a fine to be imposed upon members

Markets barely reacted to occasions when countries were visibly in violation of EU rules if there was no official rebuke. This confirms our first hypothesis—that if Brussels does not formally punish members for breaking rules, markets too are sanguine about the breach.

found in breach—and these breaks with EU policy were public and widely reported in the media—the EC confined itself instead to informal expressions of disappointment, and has recently scrapped the SGP altogether, explaining that it needed to devise more realistic expectations for its members.

What were those informal rebukes worth to markets? Even holding constant other possible confounding factors—such as the level of foreign-currency and other reserves in a country's coffers, which they can draw on in case of emergency; the level of inflation, which has an impact on a currency's worth; and the exchange rate of the country's currency to the dollar—we find no statistically significant reaction of markets to budget or public debt volatility in excess of SGP conditions. Markets barely reacted to occasions when countries were visibly in violation of EU rules if there was no official rebuke. This confirms our first hypothesis—that if Brussels does

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not formally punish members for breaking rules, markets too are sanguine about the breach.

Similarly, in cases where the Commission brought offending countries to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), market reaction was mixed. I looked at 1071 cases across 18 years—from 1990 to the present—in which the Commission brought a suit against countries that were found to be in violation of EU rules, and the ECJ found those countries in offense. In aggregate, markets in those countries suffered statistically significant losses on the order of a few percentage points, but the reaction varied depending on the country and on the case. Since ECJ cases usually deal with regulatory infractions, this relatively mild market reaction is perhaps not too surprising. Interestingly, however, markets also did not react in a statistically or substantively significant manner to the initial filing of cases—a public moment when markets became aware that a country in question was alleged to be noncompliant with EU standards. Thus, the fact that Brussels charged a country with rule-breaking was insufficient to provoke a loss of confidence in the country;

Though it may be difficult to disentangle the extent to which the response stemmed from the anticipated economic effects of the huge loss of cash for Bulgaria, this is certainly an indication that markets only take rule-breaking seriously when Brussels does so first.

markets instead waited for a formal acknowledgment that rules had been broken. This further suggests that markets look to signals from international institutions in formulating their expectations of countries' behavior.

A further test could be made on cases in which Brussels actually punishes members who have broken EU rules. We might consider two such cases: the fine imposed on Bulgaria in June 2008 for corruption, and cases in which countries' entry into the eurozone is delayed. Postponement of entry into the eurozone is perhaps the strongest form of conditionality that the EU can impose on states once they have already become members. Thus, actual fines or freezing of funds—often threatened but rarely delivered—and delays of entry into the eurozone are among the few real “sticks” that Brussels has to leverage.

The Bulgaria case is of interest because Romania was rebuked at the same time and for the same reasons, but went unpunished formally. The case unfolded as follows: the EU imposed unprecedented penalties on one of its members in June 2008, freezing 500 million euros in aid to Bulgaria because of its failure to combat corruption, organized crime and for misusing EU funds. It also warned the country that 7 billion euros of structural funds over the following six

years were in jeopardy, and barred two Bulgarian payment agencies from receiving any money from Brussels. The Commission said, however, that payments would be resumed if the country's authorities introduced proper financial controls on farm subsidies. A report issued at the same time found Romania lacking in those exact areas as well, and threatened to freeze 150 million euros of funding for Romania under the EU's “Sapard Programme,” for helping the Danube neighbors improve the competitiveness of their agriculture. Romania had already faced a fine for failing to meet a June 30 deadline to disburse to farmers all funds available under the EU's common agricultural policy. However, the fine was imposed on Bulgaria but not on Romania, which was let off with a stern warning.

We find here that the Bulgarian bond index lost 95 percentage points in an event window around the announcement of the fine (benchmarked against expected normal returns). By contrast, the displeasure expressed by the Commission toward Romania only merited a drop of around 12 percentage points. Note the contrast in these two market responses: even though the offense was identical in both cases, markets reacted not to the breaking of rules per se, but rather to the punishment handed down by Brussels. Though it may be difficult to disentangle the extent to which the response stemmed from the anticipated economic effects of the huge loss of cash for Bulgaria, this is certainly an indication that markets only take rule-breaking seriously when Brussels does so first.

The last test involves examining the effects of postponement of the date on which a country was slated to adopt the euro. This is perhaps the final bit of real leverage that Brussels maintains once countries are admitted into the EU, after which conditionality of reform can no longer be enforced through delays in negotiation for entry. Nearly all the countries entering the EU in 2004 had talked of entering the eurozone within a few years of accession. Structural problems and misaligned economic fundamentals, however, meant that those countries that had had a concrete date of euro adoption on the books—a practice that Brussels has now dropped, refusing to commit to target dates for the newest entrants, Bulgaria and Romania—often saw that date pushed back or suspended indefinitely.

Entry into the eurozone is a critical achievement for accession countries. It allows them to reap the full economic benefits of membership in the EU, since having a single currency lowers the transaction costs of foreign exchange, and adoption of the euro allows participating countries a voice in the European Central Bank (ECB). However, once countries surrender their currency and join the eurozone, economic misalignments within their borders can have serious spillover effects on other eurozone countries. Thus, the economic soundness of

individual countries in the eurozone is critical to the health of a system as a whole. Even though accession countries must ostensibly have their accounts reviewed prior to entering the EU—negotiations on the economic chapter of the *acquis communautaire* are often longer than on any other chapter—countries can still be viewed as falling short after accession. Therefore, delay of entry into the eurozone is a judgment of a country's economic standing with respect to the other economies, and signifies that allowing that country to adopt the euro would jeopardize the other eurozone countries.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, we see strong market reaction to the announcement of these delays. Formal announcements of delays in entry to the eurozone were associated with a drop of around 19 percentage points, set against expected market returns. Individually, of the countries for which the announcement was made, Hungary and Estonia suffered the biggest losses (statistically significant drops of around 15 and nearly 90 percentage points, respectively), followed by Lithuania, Latvia and the Czech Republic (statistically significant losses of around five, 10, and one percentage points, respectively), with mixed results for Poland (an 11-point loss, but without statistical significance). The variance across countries is interesting; there is doubtless a degree to which markets were already pricing information about poor economic fundamentals into their expectations for future performance. This would help explain the large losses suffered by Estonia, which had long been considered a star performer among the new member states. Timing could also be a factor; Poland was one of the first countries to delay formally its entry into the euro, in November 2005, but its economic health was already widely acknowledged to be unsound. Hungary's delay followed a year later, in July of 2006, but that occurred after a very public budget crisis, in October 2005, when Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany was caught on tape admitting that his government had lied "morning, noon, and night" to Brussels about the state of the budget, and acknowledging that his government had long cooked their books. (Incidentally, Brussels responded with not much more than verbal statements of disappointment—and Hungary's stocks barely slid. In fact, even in the midst of opposition riots, Hungary brought a new type of government bond to credit markets, with spreads at 25 basis points over European bonds—only slightly more risky than the initial price guidance. Though some investors complained that the bond was too expensive, it sold briskly, with various Western European funds buying up 80 percent of the issue. "It just shows that investors are wearing rose tinted glasses as long as you are a EU-member country, regardless of the real quality of your credit," said one investor.) Thus, markets were already well-informed about Hungary's troubles. Estonia's announcement came soon after, but subsequently markets may have been inured to the idea

that the majority of the new members would not be entering the eurozone at the dates already set.

As in the example of the suspension of fines for Bulgaria, delayed entry into the eurozone has economic effects—for example, the continued cost of cross-border transactions—that markets no doubt price into their expectations once postponements are announced. Nonetheless, the punishments from Brussels seem to be critical in allowing markets to organize their expectations.

This indicates that international organizations such as the EU can still wield considerable power if they choose to enforce their own rules. Markets are very responsive to signals from Brussels, and mete out judgments on countries' creditworthiness based in no small part on how seriously Brussels takes rule-breakers. By contrast, they go easy in cases when rules were broken but no formal punishment was levied by the Commission. This could have serious consequences for subsequent patterns of behavior, as well as the prospects for compliance, in the EU. Countries that go unpunished, not only by Brussels, but also by investors might have little incentive to change their behavior. If the Commission chooses to sanction members verbally, however, it seems that market actors are unsure as to how serious the offense might be. Thus, the EU might consider more frequent and more tangible punishments to members who break their rules. Furthermore, institutions hoping to gain credibility should make monitoring and enforcement of primary importance in the design of their agreements. ■

CALL FOR SHORT-TERM SCHOLAR GRANT APPLICATIONS

With funding provided by Title VIII (the Research and Training Act for Eastern Europe and the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union), East European Studies offers residential short-term scholar grants to scholars working on policy-relevant projects on East Europe. **While South-East Europe remains a primary focus, projects on Central Europe and the Baltic States are again eligible.** Grants provide a stipend of \$3000 for one month.

DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2009

For application guidelines and eligibility requirements, please consult the EES website:

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partners in the future. Security guarantees of the Alliance and its members must remain absolutely credible and indivisible: we must indeed return to the basics. The Alliance must also be serious about its obligations, which involves determining where and how far to extend the reach of our enhanced engagement and cooperation and NATO's security guarantees. We might be called upon to deliver, and we must understand this when engaging with other countries. We must be serious about our commitments to our allies and partners.

In my view, the key prerequisite for a stable and effective system of international relations is strict compliance with international legal norms and standards and with the internal rules of international organizations and integration structures. This attitude is extremely important for all the countries to share, but it is particularly vital for small and medium-sized countries, especially in terms of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. We are concerned about the erosion of this respect as illustrated by the cases of Kosovo, South Ossetia or Abkhazia, and believe that it is necessary to stop the spread of these tendencies. I also believe that it is extremely dangerous to distort the exercise of collective rights of minorities or ethnic groups as an argument for violating the territorial integrity of internationally-recognized states. For example, Russia justifies its stance on South Ossetia and Abkhazia by invoking the protection of its citizens' rights abroad. We need only remember what aggressive nationalism and chauvinism brought to the nations of the Western Balkans in the 1990s.

The changing conditions in the world call for a coordinated response by the EU and the United States. In this regard, I also consider it advisable to forge stronger links between the activities and the plans of NATO and those of the EU. Revision of the security concepts of the two structures offers a great opportunity in this regard.

In my view, another potential opportunity for strengthening the transatlantic link is offered by the rapid expansion of transatlantic economic integration. The Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) created at the June 2007 EU-US summit is a promising endeavor. I believe that it is necessary to make progress in the areas of regulation, innovation, protection of intellectual property and financial markets in order to gradually build a barrier-free transatlantic market.

Only jointly can we effectively address these and other crucial issues of international security, including important priorities such as climate change and energy security. Energy security and the related development of regional cooperation within the Baltic Sea, Caspian Sea and Central Asian regions should continue to be an important theme for EU-US cooperation. If the EU and the United States want to reduce their dependency on hydro-carbon energy imports, the only option is to jointly explore alternative

sources of energy and new technologies, which would enable a more efficient use of our resources. As a hotly-debated issue during the U.S. presidential campaign, the world expects the new administration to strongly support innovation. For Slovakia, nuclear energy is one way to achieve energy independence and to reduce carbon emissions. Here again, we have to find an agreement with the United States concerning the post-Kyoto arrangements on carbon emissions. If the new administration does not take an active position on this issue, we will probably end up again with unfulfilled ambitions and commitments. In addition, this global problem must be addressed jointly with other emerging global economies such as India and China.

Naturally, there are also other important issues to be discussed with the United States, such as combating terrorism, solving the Middle East and other conflicts, the Iranian nuclear program, improving NATO's capabilities in the area of ballistic missiles, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Of special relevance for Slovakia is addressing the issue of how to work with the new, assertive Russia. It is imperative to define a common approach to forming relations with this ambitious country, although this could lead occasionally to nervous reactions. Russia is a country with which the EU and the United States share a number of common concerns and interests, mainly in connection with the resolution of regional crises and conflicts, energy security, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and others. Slovakia is committed to maintaining an open dialogue and cooperation with the Russian Federation on political, economic, security, human rights, cultural and other issues, and on establishing a new EU-Russia framework agreement. This offer of a close partnership and critical dialogue is a desirable objective that is possible only if Russia is dissuaded from reviving historical rivalries.

A conscientious attitude on the part of India, China and Brazil and effective cooperation in the G-20 format will be essential for effective multilateralism. The transatlantic dialogue must therefore also include the issue of these countries' growing influence. Together we must address global poverty and growing inequality, by taking the necessary steps to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals.

The United States and Europe can indeed become a decisive force in the service of the general good. However, they need to unite over a common vision for a safe and successful future. A strong transatlantic partnership is the best answer to the global challenges we face. We can act together to safeguard and strengthen our common values. Let us begin by working together on finding solutions for urgent issues without delay after the new administration takes office. Let us lead the way to a more responsible and just international political,

economic and financial system. To have a stabilizing effect, it must be based on the respect for international law and the role of the U.N. Let us take advantage of a global atmosphere of positive expectations. Let us use the global crisis as an opportunity to build healthier global relations and healthier economies, and a better life of increased equality and dignity for citizens of the world. This is what they rightly expect us to do. ■

— *DONSKIS*

(continued from page 6)

surpassed by other Lithuanian contributions. When the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania after World War II, Karsavin was exiled to the Komi ASSR, where he died in 1952.

At the same time, Lithuania would be unthinkable without its magnificent Jewish legacy. Prior to World War II, Lithuania was famous for its very large Jewish community: about 240,000 Jews lived in Lithuania, yet only 20,000 survived the Holocaust. The Lithuanian capital, Vilnius (which had been occupied by Poland from 1920 to 1939), was known around the world as the Jerusalem of the North, and many internationally renowned Jews originated from or had lived in Lithuania. The history of Jewish civilization cannot be told without mentioning Lithuania's Jews—the Litvaks. Recall those who inscribed the names of the Litvaks and Lithuania on the cultural map of the 20th Century: the philosophers Emmanuel Lévinas and Aron Gurwitsch, the painters Chaim Soutine (a close friend of Amedeo Modigliani in Paris), Pinkus Krémègne, Michel Kikoine, Marc Chagall, Neemija Arbitblatas, the sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, the violinist Jascha Heifetz and the art critic Bernard Berenson—all were Litvaks. How else can Berenson be described other than as a Lithuanian-born, Italian-British-American art critic; or Chagall as a Belarusian-born, Russian-French and deeply Jewish painter?

But then the question remains why and how is Chagall, born in Vitebsk, described as a Belarusian- or Russian-born French painter and why and how is Soutine, born in Smilovichi, characterized as a Lithuanian-born French painter? Both towns, Vitebsk and Smilovichi, throughout the 19th Century and in the beginning of the 20th, belonged to the Vilnius administrative area in Tsarist Russia. Moreover, both towns are historically related to what was once the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Is not this difficulty to strictly define an artist with several planes of identity a symptom of the absurdity of the “one-language, one-nation, and one-culture” logic of mainstream nationalism? How can we “categorize” far and away the greatest ethicist of the 20th Century, Emmanuel Lévinas, other than as a Lithuanian-born French philosopher deeply rooted in both Russian and Jewish culture? Do any of them belong exclusively to the Litvak or Yiddish legacy? Should they not instead be identified as

Europeans, who chose a country and a language of self-fulfillment? Do they tell a story about their culture, or is it the other way around?

Modern Lithuania has emerged as a characteristically East-Central European nation with an emphasis on a strong sense of history and on the critical role of culture and language in the process of political emancipation. Lithuania quite legitimately might be described as a nation of language, culture and historical memory. Having been confined to a world of total control, severe censorship, violent politics, cynical lies, sinister ideological indoctrination, and brutal violation of basic human rights, Lithuania, like other nations of Central and Eastern Europe, knows the taste and value of freedom better than any Western European country. Torn away and isolated from the family of free nations for half a century, Lithuania finally made its return to where it belonged, namely, the Western world as a shared space of values.

Lithuania has thus reappeared in history as a small nation, whose political existence was bound to become, once again, a challenge to and an examination of the world order. The right to self-determination of nations, proclaimed and strongly advocated by Woodrow Wilson, has made Lithuania's emergence possible. Yet, becoming the first rebel and break-away republic in the former Soviet Union made it a litmus test for examining the *modus vivendi* between the Soviet Union and the West. The third fundamental change that took place recently, in which Lithuania and the other Baltic States and Central European countries became part of the Western security system, was a decisive event in world history, one that can profoundly influence this long-abandoned part of Europe. ■

JUNIOR SCHOLARS' TRAINING SEMINAR 2009

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East European Studies and the NCEEER are soliciting applications for the 22nd annual training seminar for junior scholars in East European studies, to be held August 7-10, 2009. JSTS, funded by Title VIII, combines formal and informal meetings to promote a variety of intellectual exchanges, including: individual presentations; constructive feedback and question and answer sessions; one-on-one meetings for Junior Scholars with Senior Scholars; advice regarding publishing; and discussions about the state of the profession and obtaining employment in the field. **Research conducted on all countries of postcommunist East Europe are eligible to apply.** Application guidelines and forms are available on the EES website: www.wilsoncenter.org/ees/ or call 202-691-4222 for more information.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please Note: Events are subject to last minute changes. For the most up-to-date information on events please visit our website at <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/ees>.

WEDNESDAY, 14 JANUARY: Noon Discussion, 12:00-1:00
Challenges to EU and US Policy in the Western Balkans

5th Floor Conference Room

JAMES LYON, Senior Associate,
Democratization Policy Council

WEDNESDAY, 21 JANUARY: Noon Discussion, 12:00-1:00
Serbia Confronts 2009: Opportunities and Challenges

5th Floor Conference Room

IVAN VUJACIC, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to
the United States

WEDNESDAY, 28 JANUARY: Noon Discussion, 12:00-1:00
*The Racist Paradox and the Failure of Minority Policies
in Central and East Europe since 1989*

5th Floor Conference Room

MICHEL VASECKA, Assistant Professor of Social Studies,
Masaryk University-Brno and Director of the Center for
the Research of Ethnicity and Culture

WEDNESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY: Noon Discussion, 12:00-1:00
*A Few Bumps in the Road: Obstacles to State-Building in
Bosnia and Herzegovina*

5th Floor Conference Room

DOUGLAS DAVIDSON, Visiting Transatlantic Fellow,
German Marshall Fund

WEDNESDAY, 11 FEBRUARY: Noon Discussion, 12:00-1:00
*Soft Borders: Rethinking the Nation State
in Southeast Europe*

5th Floor Conference Room

JULIE MOSTOV, Associate Vice Provost for International
Programs and Professor of Political Science, Drexel
University

WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY: Noon Discussion, 12:00-1:00
Into the Weeds:

Obstacles to Good Governance in the Balkans

5th Floor Conference Room

MARK BASKIN, Senior Associate and Research Professor,
Center for International Development, Rockefeller College,
University of Albany; and **PAULA PICKERING**, Associate
Professor of Government, College of William and Mary

WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY: Noon Discussion, 12:00-1:00
Party Systems and Conditionality: The Case of ICTY

Cooperation in Serbia and Croatia

5th Floor Conference Room

ANDREW KONITZER, Associate Professor of Political Science,
Samford University

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