

Press release

Opening Ceremony of the Aspen Institute Prague

Prague, July 19, 2012

The Aspen Institute Prague commenced its operation in Central Europe with an international conference titled “Crisis as Opportunity: Europe and the United States in a Globalized World” on Thursday, July 19, 2012 in the Czech Senate. Among those in attendance were former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and 20 former ministers of foreign affairs.

The Aspen Institute Prague is a non-ideological and non-partisan platform that supports the development of a society based on democratic values. In April 2012, the Board of Directors of the American Aspen Institute under the leadership of Walter Isaacson approved the establishment of a Czech partner organization with headquarters in Prague. This non-governmental organization was registered with the Prague municipal court in early July under the name **Aspen Institute Prague, o.p.s.**

“Thanks to great personalities both from Europe and America, such as Václav Havel, Lech Walesa, George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, the partnership between the United States and Central European countries, based on democratic values, was established and started to thrive. From this cooperation evolved a plan of creating a non-partisan Central European institution with transatlantic links. The mission of the Institution is to promote these democratic values and to lead both Central European and transatlantic dialogue about important issues of our time,” remarked at the opening ceremony the President of the Aspen Institute Prague, **Michael Žantovský**. Ambassador Žantovský then signed the “Memorandum of Understanding” together with Walter Isaacson, the President of The Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C.

The Aspen Institute Prague is non-partisan and non-ideological organization and the composition of the Board of Directors embodies this idea. Members of the Board come from the fields of politics, public administration, business and the non-profit sector (**a list of them is attached at the end of this document**).

“As in the case of American Aspen, where Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice sit on the Board of the Institute in US, the Aspen Institute Prague Board of Directors



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consists of a renowned professionals, respected Czech and European businessmen, leading representatives of key political parties across the political spectrum, thus forming a diverse combination of people in the Czech setting,” said Radek Špicar, Executive Director of the Aspen Institute Prague and Vice-president of the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic.

Prominent individuals will participate in further development and operations of the Institute through the formation of the International Advisory Board of Aspen Prague. Participants include: Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State and current chairwoman of the Albright Stonebridge Group, Walter Isaacson, Executive Director of the Aspen Institute US, Frederic V. Malek, Chairman of Thayer Capital Partners and Lord Peter Mandelson, member of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom.

Planned activities of Aspen Institute Prague

The activities of Aspen Institute Prague are divided into **Leadership, Policy and Public programs**.

- The Institute supports future decision-makers in politics, business, the arts and civil society by providing scholarships and by connecting them with their peers abroad.
- Aspen Prague facilitates closed-door policy discussions on current political and economic issues.
- The Institute promotes public debate of these key topics by hosting international conferences and through the dissemination of its publications.

The Institute’s quarterly publication, **Aspen Review**, will be available in three languages (Czech, English and Polish). The first sample issue will be distributed at the opening ceremony on July 19, 2012. The list of members of the Editorial Board is attached at the end of the document.

Contact person for media

Tomáš Bouška, +420 603 713 351, tomas.bouska@aspenprague.cz



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