

Dzurinda: NATO to Become the Backbone of EU defense

October 21st, 2019



On 10 October 2019, Webster Vienna Private University and the Foreign Policy and United Nations Association of Austria (UNA) hosted a guest lecture at the Palais Wenkheim by Mikuláš Dzurinda, elected president of the [Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies](#) (WMCES).



Wolfgang Schüssel – President of UNA and former Chancellor of Austria for two consecutive terms between February 2000 and January 2007 – welcomed the guest along with Univ. Dr. Johannes Pollak, director of Webster Vienna Private University. Dr. Pollak opened the floor for presentation and discussion of the numerous challenges facing the EU, such as: What is the future of the Transatlantic Alliance in such circumstances?

Webster Vienna students, faculty and staff, as well as members of the Viennese diplomatic and business communities, took the opportunity to engage with Dzurinda on a number of serious issues – a highly unstable neighbourhood, the aggressiveness of Russia, unprecedented immigration, and the rise of populism, extremism and nationalism – that the EU, as a key pillar of the transatlantic community, is encountering.

To uphold the achievements of transatlantic cooperation, Dzurinda argued for a renewal of the EU, stating: „*There is a need to deal with the negative aspects of ‘mainstream Europeanism’ that requires sharing sovereignty in an ever-growing number of policy areas. This approach has been characterized by the growing pervasiveness of ‘political correctness’ generating pressures on EU member states’ societies in cultural and ethical spheres yet disregarding cultural foundations of European unity. This has led to centrifugal forces undermining European integration*”.

As a response to the current crisis, Dzurinda advocated promoting the establishment of a limited EU federation. This would entail a dual approach: deeper cooperation in the spheres of foreign and security policy and external trade, as well as border protection. “*NATO should become the backbone of EU defense*”, concluded Dzurinda.

Strengthening national control in the sphere of tax policy and respecting diversity in development dynamics in the cultural and ethical spheres will, according to Dzurinda, enable the EU to become a stable pillar in the transatlantic community.

These opinions provoked a lot of interesting questions from the audience, as discussions continued over a glass or two of wine.

This event was the first joint event by Webster Vienna Private University and the Foreign Policy and United Nations Association of Austria. The next event is scheduled for 23 October 2019 featuring Ambassador Prof. Maxime LEFEBVRE, ESCP Europe Business School and former permanent representative to France to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).