The Czech Republic and the United Kingdom do not want bigger EU budget

During a meeting in Prague on 23 June, the prime ministers of the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic, David Cameron and Petr Nečas, stated they did not want the EU's budget for 2014–2020 to be increased and appealed for a concentration of the allocation of EU funds on supporting innovation and competitiveness, including via the cohesion policy. Cameron's official visit to the Czech Republic, which took place immediately before the inauguration of the European Council's summit, highlighted the similarities in the stances of these two countries on the issue of dealing with the crisis in the eurozone and also on the new financial perspective of the EU. This co-operation of the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom at the EU level is adding strength to the group of members of the Czech government who are sceptical about closer integration inside the European Union, and is at the same time bringing the Czech Republic closer to the group of states which are cautious about enhancing European integration.

The meeting of the two prime ministers immediately before the EU summit (to which they travelled on the same plane) was an opportunity to emphasise the two countries' unwillingness to participate in another package of aid for Greece, which is plunged in crisis. In the opinion of Cameron and Nečas, the new loan for Greece should be granted by eurozone member states, without support from the other members of the EU. They also supported a further liberalisation of the internal EU market, primarily in the sector of digital services and technologies.

David Cameron, the leader of the British Conservatives, and Petr Necas, the chairman of the Civic Democratic Party, also expressed their satisfaction with the level of the two parties' co-operation in the European Conservatives and Reformists Group in the European Parliament.

The scepticism about enhancing European integration, which the British and the Czech prime ministers have in common, is not shared by the Czech minister of foreign affairs, Karel Schwarzenberg. The fear of overly strong integration, which is predominant in the Czech government coalition, caused the Czech Republic along with the United Kingdom, Sweden and Hungary, to remain outside the Euro-Plus Pact, which is aimed at a closer coordination of the economic policies of EU member states. <grosz>