

Standpoint of the Czech Rectors Conference Presidium

Prague, 22 January 2014

As a follow-up to the CRC President's request for discussing the issue of the appointment of higher education institutions professors, members of the CRC Presidium were received by the President of the Czech Republic Mr. Miloš Zeman on the 20th January 2014. President Zeman insists he will not sign any letters of appointment to new professors in the present condition. He stated that he had preliminary negotiated with a part of parliamentary parties to speed up the discussion of the amendment to the Higher Education Institutions Act, submitted (without discussion with representations of higher education institutions, which is mandatory by the law) by the minister without confidence in his resignation Mr. Dalibor Štys, according to which professors should be appointed by the Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The CRC Presidium underlines that the current version of the proposed amendment is unacceptable, especially for the newly introduced substantive assessment of the applicants' expertise by the chairman of the legislative body, thus by another assessment authority beyond a higher education institution. Such actions threaten the autonomy of higher education institutions and do not correspond with internationally common practice either.

The CRC Presidium disagrees with the suspension of new professors' appointments up to the potential adoption of the amendment, which was the intention declared repeatedly by President Zeman at the meeting. The Czech Rectors Conference is ready for constructive negotiation with all relevant political actors in order to unblock the process of professors' appointments but the solution must respect the autonomy of higher education institutions and not increase the influence of politicians on their functioning.

Prague, 22 January 2014

On behalf of the Czech Rectors Conference Presidium

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Czech Rectors Conference President