

Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University Comes to CUFA to a Discussion on the Political Roles of Universities

The Centre for Philosophy, Ethics and Religion invites everyone interested to a high-profile academic discussion about the political role of universities in contemporary society.

Venue: New Stage ("Nová scéna") of the National Theatre, Národní 4, Prague

Time: 21st of March 2018, 17:00

Our speakers will be:

- Louise Richardson, vice-chancellor of Oxford University
- Péter Balázs, Director of the Center for European Neighborhood Studies, CEU
- Stefan Collini, professor of intellectual history at Cambridge University
- Tomáš Halík, Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Universities are nowadays in an ambivalent position. On one hand, they seem to be very successful: there has never been so many of them, they cover a vast field of subjects and the proportion of population entering university has never been higher. On the other hand, the role of experts and academics is ruthlessly undermined in the public sphere and universities feel that they are under increasing pressure to justify their place in society. Yet while the question of academic or social role of universities (the moral role of higher education was abandoned long time ago) is reasonably well-covered, we want to open a new topic – their political role.

The political role of universities plays a big part in several contemporary controversies. The discussions concerning the curriculum of US colleges back in the seventies and eighties or the contemporary struggle of several academic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe to keep their independence are just two possible examples. So what can the *political* role of university be? We do not want to equate the political with the social or the public. Therefore, we do want to look for a specific role of universities in contemporary politics. Perhaps there is none, and there should be no such role. Or perhaps universities are vital for the preservation of liberal democracies. Whatever will be the outcome, we believe that discussion on topic is crucial in contemporary political environment. Therefore, we would like to invite you to the following discussion.

This occasion is the first one in a series of academic discussions organized by the Centre for Philosophy, Ethics and Religion at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University. The Centre will organize up to three discussions each year.

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