

Abstract

The main aim of this rigorous thesis is to interpret the development of attitudes of three Czech presidents to the process of European integration in a broader international context. The thesis answers the question of which topics they dealt with in relation to European unification, how their attitudes differed and whether those attitudes had been changing over time. Within the framework of theoretical anchoring, the thesis inclines to the perspective of social constructivism and from an epistemological point of view, it is based on an interpretative qualitative research based on the method of critical discourse analysis. Departing from the studied texts, the thesis concludes that Europe of Václav Havel was not an economic or geographical concept, but exclusively a philosophical concept, as he perceived Europe primarily as a spiritual unit. Havel was also a supporter of the federalized European Union, in which the Czech Republic would increase its international political influence. Václav Klaus had a significantly different opinion which defended the intergovernmental model of governance and he considered the merging of Europe with the European Union at the European level a methodological mistake. Maintaining the concept of national states was a necessary condition for maintaining the regime of liberal democracy. On the contrary, current President Miloš Zeman calls himself a Euro-federalist, pushing for the strengthening of the powers of the European Parliament and the establishment of collective European government. In recent years, however, his criticism of EU leaders has been growing, and he even publicly supported a referendum on the Czech Republic's withdrawal from the European Union. Interpretation of the development of attitudes and thinking of three Czech presidents in relation to European integration serves not only to understand the so-called essential past, but also to inspire possible future arrangement of the European House.