
Slovak president Ivan Gašparovič receives Charles University Gold Medal

28 May 2014 – Slovak President doc. JUDr. Ivan Gašparovič, CSc., today received the Charles University Gold Medal from Rector Tomáš Zima at the Carolinum in Prague. He received the award for services to the development of cooperation and mutual understanding between nations.

In his speech the Slovak president talked about his pleasure at returning to familiar territory and a place where he has spent part of his career, as well as recalling his time as a member of the academic community of Komenský University. Gašparovič also talked about his joy that the fears about the division of Czechoslovakia had not come true, and said that “our shared history has created the future of today.”

CU Rector Tomáš Zima gave a highly positive appraisal of the friendship and alliance between the two nations, which have remained – despite the division of Czechoslovakia – united by thousands of connections and relationships at all levels of society. At the same time he emphasised the uniqueness of the relationship between the Czechs and Slovaks in modern Europe. The division of Czechoslovakia did not weaken it – on the contrary, it made it more natural and spontaneous. The relationship is not restricted merely to certain parts of the two countries’ political spectra, but it is, at the very least, one that touches thousands of normal, interpersonal relationships. The friendship and alliance between the two nations is especially valuable today, when the world, Europe and our region is facing new, complicated issues and challenges. The Rector expressed his firm belief that both countries, as each other’s closest neighbour and friend, will have, in this respect, greater opportunities to cooperate in the future – while fully respecting each other’s natural and, to a certain extent, different national interests.

Rector Tomáš Zima emphasised that one of the long-term goals of Charles University is the development of relations with its partner universities in Slovakia. More than 3,500 students from Slovakia are studying at Charles University in the 2013/2014 academic year – the largest group of non-Czech students at the university.

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