
President Zeman appoints Professor Tomáš Zima Rector of CU

In a ceremony held at Prague Castle on 21 January, the new Rector of Charles University, Professor Tomáš Zima received, together with other newly elected rectors of public universities, his decrees of appointment from the President of the Czech Republic, Miloš Zeman. Also attending the ceremony on behalf of the university were the incumbent Rector, Professor Václav Hampl, and the Chairman of the Academic Senate, Professor Jan Hála.

The President said that, prior to the appointment, he had carefully studied documentation on the individual rectors, including records of the election processes. "It is with respect and admiration that I appraised your professional qualifications, expressed in terms of your publications and, amongst other things, your list of citations, apart from autocitations, which are more typical for compulsive writers," said President Zeman, wishing the rectors luck in combining their managerial and professional activities.

The Rector of Charles University, Professor Václav Hampl, spoke on behalf of the rectors of public universities, whose mandate ends at the end of January. In his speech, amongst other things, he recalled two significant dates in January for Czech higher education – 18 January, the day on which the oldest technical university in Europe, the Czech Technical University in Prague, and 26 January, the day on which a papal bull was issued permitting the founding of a studium generale in Prague, considered by historians to be a key date in the history of higher learning in the Bohemian lands. "It would not be proper to assess the work done by us outgoing rectors – that is the task of history," said CU Rector Václav Hampl, while also expressing the hope that history would one day find his work to have had a positive effect.

A speech of thanks was given on behalf of all newly elected rectors by the incoming Rector of Charles University, Professor Tomáš Zima, who said that the rectors realised the responsibility of their new position, not only towards the academic community, but also towards society as a whole, as universities were institutions whose activities affected events in the country. "We shall endeavour to continue all the good things that took place in our universities, from the development of modern trends in the education of students to the transmission of information to society, creation of new, high-quality centres of research and the influencing of events in society, as universities are traditionally places of free, expert and open discussion," said Rector Zima.