

**“The Symbiosis of Criminal Law and Criminology”
Scientific Conference
Litomyšl, 26 and 27 May 2022¹**

On 26 and 27 May 2022, the picturesque East Bohemian town of Litomyšl hosted a scientific conference entitled “The Symbiosis of Criminal Law and Criminology”. The conference was held in honour of Professor Oto Novotný, who headed the academic Department of Criminal Law at Charles University Faculty of Law for many years and was a renowned representative of criminal jurisprudence and criminology. Professor Novotný passed away on 3 November 2020 at the venerable age of 92. He had remained active in academia until an old age and was the main author of university textbooks on substantive criminal law and criminology which are still in use or are gradually being updated. Professor Novotný remains highly acclaimed by the expert public, in particular for his work entitled “On Punishment and the Penitentiary System” which was published in the 1960s. This book, which criticises the legislature and criminal law practice of the period, caused great reverberations in the then Czechoslovakia and abroad and remains one of the most influential works in the field of law and penology. The Czech Society of Criminology was the main organiser of the conference, with the assistance of the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention of the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic and the Union of Prosecuting Attorneys of the Czech Republic.

The conference was opened with a keynote address by Professor Tomáš Gřivna, followed by speeches from Dr. Miroslav Scheinost, Vice-President of the Czech Society of Criminology, Dr. Petr Zeman, Director of the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention, and finally Dr. Jan Lata, President of the Union of Prosecuting Attorneys. After the introductory speeches Jan Musil, Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Law of Charles University and Justice Emeritus of the Constitutional Court, remembered Professor Novotný as a reformer, lawyer, criminologist, and penologist. Professor Musil noted not only the major professional contributions Professor Novotný made, but also his high moral standards, cultivated manner, and the ability to connect law, history, philosophy and social science.

The scientific part of the conference commenced after the tribute to Professor Novotný. Compared to similar events held to date, the conference was structured in a novel way with the aim of contributing to a comprehensive coverage including not only oral presentations. The presentations were structured into ten sections by topic, and a presentation was prepared for each topic by one Czech and one Slovak participating organisation. Therefore, both the Czech and the Slovak perspective was presented on individual topics and institutions, fostering a comprehensive insight and comparison of approaches in theory and practice of the Czech and Slovak Republics to the topics addressed: 1) The subsidiary role of criminal sanctions – the doctrinal, normative, and judicial perspective; 2) Criminalisation and decriminalisation – where are we going?; 3) The system of punishments; 4) Penalisation and depenalisation – where are we going?; 5) Sentencing adults – practical application findings; 6) Sentencing juveniles; 7) “Punishments” imposed on legal entities; 8) Non-punitive measures; 9) Service of punishments and non-punitive measures imposed – procedural context; and 10) Working with offenders in the 21st century. A summary presentation by Professor Gřivna and Dr. Drápal concluded the day of deliberations on the symbiosis of criminal law and criminology. It exposed the commonalities and differences between criminal law and criminology and raised many questions which will need to be addressed in the future. The conference day saw the presentations of numerous experts, whose papers will soon be published in full in a collective monograph. The event involved many discussions among the participants on individual presentations, or to be more precise, on the perspectives on the topics presented, which were often contentious or burning issues.

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The two-day event concluded with a ceremony in Dolní Újezd near Litomyšl, birthplace of Professor Ota Novotný, and a plaque was unveiled on the house where he was born.

The May scientific conference, which was rounded out with the unveiling of a plaque to Professor Oto Novotný, was a clear success in all respects. It offered many new scientific findings, pleasant encounters, and unusual experiences. All members of the organisational team deserve commendation for their work commitment and ensuring a smooth course of events. The authors of this report would like to appreciate in particular the courage of the organisers to hold an event outside of the university in an environment that is not typical for such conferences and the inclusion of the plaque unveiling ceremony commemorating a legend of not only Czech criminal law and criminology. These elements of the programme enlivened the event and boosted its attraction for all participants, many of which said that thanks to the conference they had visited Litomyšl for the first – but most certainly not the last – time.

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