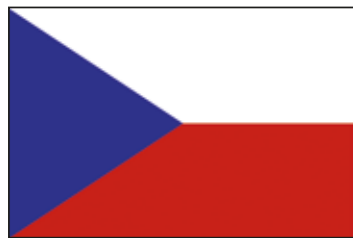


**THE
CZECH REPUBLIC
AT A GLANCE**



Czech Republic

PRACTICAL INFORMATION



Flag of the Czech Republic



State emblem of the Czech Republic

Practical information:

Area:	78,864 sq.km
Population:	10,512,400
Official language:	Czech
Political system:	Parliamentary republic
Currency:	1 Czech crown (CZK)
Capital:	Prague
Administrative division:	14 regions

Time zone:

GMT + 1

Average temperatures:

Summer: +16°C, winter: -1°C

International country code:

+420

Calling abroad from the Czech Republic: 00 + country code + number

TV/Video system:

PAL

Voltage:

230/400V, 50 Hz/AC

System of weights and measures:

Metric system (kilometre, metre, kilogram, gram)

Payment system:

International credit cards are accepted (Eurocard/Mastercard, American Express, VISA, Diner's Club, Japan Credit Bureau, Access and Carte Blanche)

Mobile telephone operators:

Mobile system – GSM
Telefónica O2, T-Mobile, Vodafone

Health care for foreigners:

- Patients covered by the health insurance scheme receive health care free of charge
- Other patients are required to pay in cash
- Patients covered by international healthcare agreements receive urgent and necessary care free of charge (outpatients will pay for medications and materials; hospital care is free of charge including medications and materials)
- EU citizens should carry the European Health Insurance Card

Opening hours of shops and other services:

Shops: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. on weekdays
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Saturdays
Shopping centres are also open on Sundays
Banks: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. on weekdays
Pharmacies: same as shops; larger towns (regional capitals) have pharmacies with nonstop operation

Important contacts:

Integrated Rescue System:

- 112 – European emergency number (police, emergency medical service, fire and rescue service)
- 150 – Fire and Rescue Service
- 155 – Emergency medical service
- 158 – Police

Non-stop roadside assistance:

ABA (Autoklub Bohemia Assistance), tel.: 1240, www.aba.cz



Prague public transport:
Tel.: +420 239 191 817, www.dpp.cz

Public transport in the Czech Republic: www.idos.cz

Non-stop airport information service:
Czech Airlines: +420 239 007 007, Prague airport: +420 220 111 111

Train connections in the Czech Republic and Europe:
Tel.: +420 840 112 113, www.cd.cz

Bus and train timetables: www.jizdnirady.cz

Useful links:

About the Czech Republic: www.czech.cz, www.e-cesko.cz
About Prague: www.pis.cz
Accommodation: www.travelguide.cz
Maps: www.mapy.cz, www.shocart.cz

Monuments, museums: www.pruvodce.com
Czech literature: www.czechlit.cz
Spas: www.lecebne-lazne.cz
Golf: www.cgf.cz
Caves: www.caves.cz
Mountain climbing: www.czechclimbing.com
Skiing: www.ceskehory.cz
Water sports: www.rivers.raft.cz
Adrenaline sports: www.adrex.cz

Czech Trade - trade promotion agency: www.czechtrade.cz
CzechInvest - business and investment promotion agency: www.czechinvest.org
CzechTourism - tourism promotion agency: www.czechtourism.cz
Czech Centres - cultural activities: www.czechcentres.cz
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic: www.mzv.cz
Government of the Czech Republic: www.vlada.cz
Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament: www.psp.cz
Senate of the Czech Parliament: www.senat.cz

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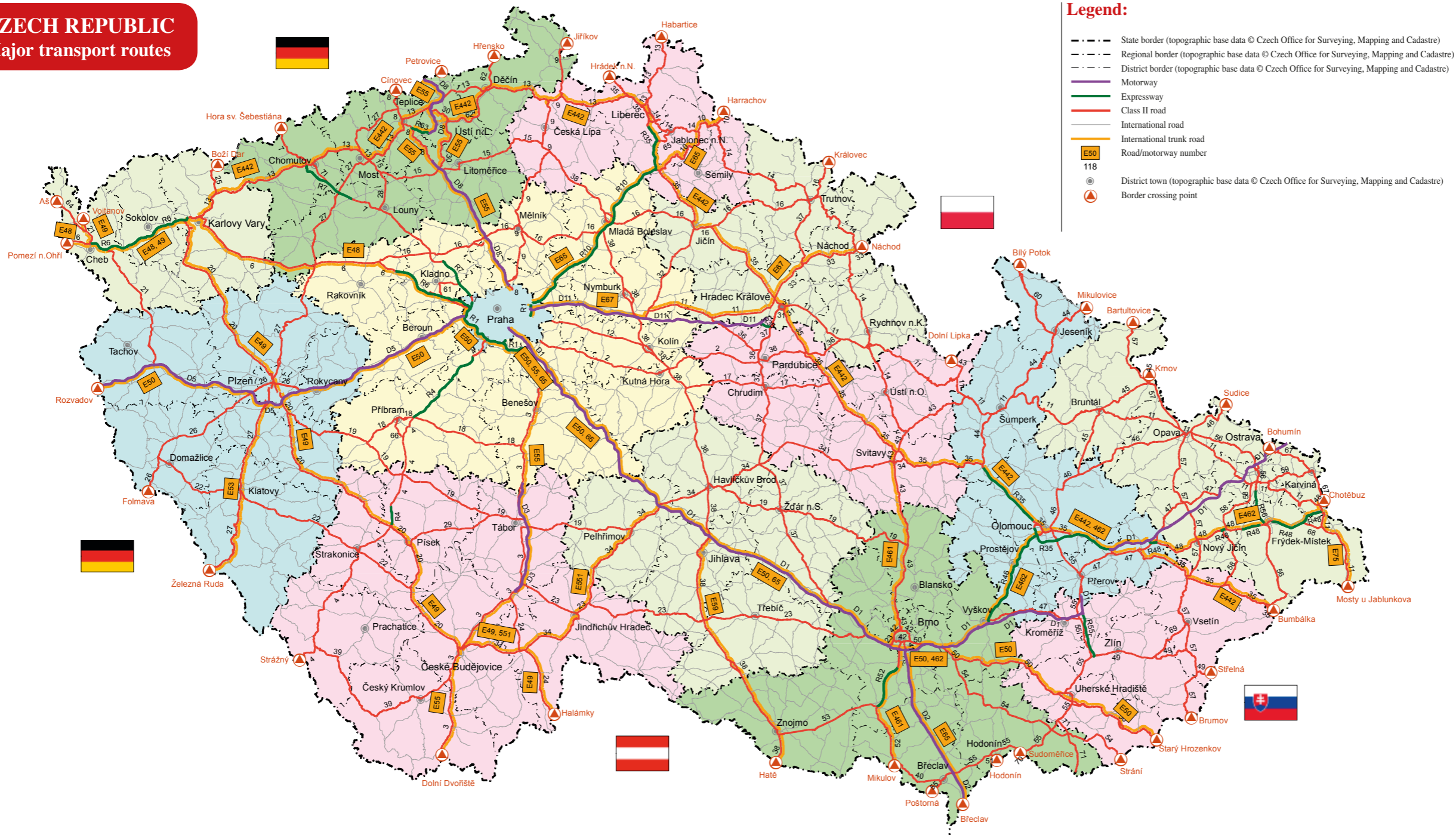
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The Czech Republic is located in the heart of Europe, in a region with a stirring past and an equally interesting present. Though not large, it is a good place to visit, no matter whether you look for an attractive business location with committed and skilled people, or whether you just want to stop off for a relaxing break and enjoy a holiday steeped in history or exploring beautiful landscape areas along hiking, boating and cycling trails.
The Czech Republic is a wise choice. Welcome!



CZECH REPUBLIC

Major transport routes



Driving regulations:

- Zero alcohol tolerance
- Ban on holding telephones and other communication devices while driving
- Mandatory use of seat belts
- Mandatory use of headlights at all times
- Children up to 36 kg or 150 cm must use a children's car seat
- Mandatory use of helmets by cyclists and motorcyclists

Speed limits:

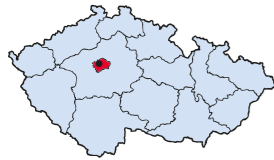
- In-town speed limit: 50 km/h (including at night)
- Roads: 90 km/h
- Motorways: 130 km/h
- Motorcycles: 90 km/h
- Trucks over 3.5 t: 80 km/h

Fees / motorway stickers:

- Yearly
- Monthly
- 10-day

Motorway stickers are sold at border crossing points, at petrol stations and post offices.

WWW.MVCR.CZ



and jazz (www.agharta.cz) music to independent and club music (Palác Akropolis, www.palacakropolis.cz) and the experimental scene (Roxy, www.roxy.cz). Czech film has a long tradition; famous filmmakers include Miloš Forman, Jiří Menzel, Jan Svěrák (Oscar winners), Věra Chytilová, Jan Svankmajer and many others. The Barrandov Studios in Prague (www.barrandov.cz) were established in 1932 on the initiative of film producer Miloš Havel. His brother Václav, father of the future Czech President Václav Havel, built the studios as well as the nearby Barrandov residential quarter. Prague also offers a wide selection of restaurants, pubs, and cafés in interesting parts of the city (an overview with ratings can be found at www.squaremeal.cz). With regular flights to nearly seventy destinations, Václav Havel International Airport in Prague is one of the major European transport hubs (www.csa.cz). The Prague Metro has been in operation since 1974.

Flowing through the Czech capital for a length of 31 kilometres, the Vltava River is used for recreational transport and pleasure cruises (www.prague-venice.cz). The nine Vltava islands in the city are popular destinations for fun and relaxation.

Recommended links:
 Official website of the Capital City of Prague - www.praha.eu
 Prague Information Service - www.prague-info.cz, www.pis.cz
 Ticketpro advance ticket sales - www.ticketpro.cz



City of Prague

▶ The country's top tourist destination, traditional seat of the kings of Bohemia and later of Czechoslovak and Czech presidents. Developed from a settlement around Prague Castle (founded in the second half of the 9th century), described in the journal of Abraham ben Jacob, a Jewish-Arab travelling merchant, as early as in 965. Originally divided into several autonomous "towns": Old Town (known already before 1280 as Caput Regni - Capital of the Kingdom), Lesser Quarter, New Town and Hradčany. A dominant feature of the Prague skyline is Saint Vitus Cathedral on the grounds of Prague Castle, the last resting place of Saint Wenceslas and other Bohemian rulers and the repository of Bohemian crown jewels (www.hrad.cz). The most popular sight is the Charles Bridge (its foundation stone was laid on July 9, 1357 at 5:31 a.m., an auspicious moment chosen by astrologers). The Old Town Hall with its much-admired astronomical clock is located on the Old Town Square, the original central marketplace. The main city square is the Wenceslas Square with its well-known landmark - the equestrian statue of Saint Wenceslas. Prague's historical centre was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1992. Other sights include the Jan Žižka monument on Vítkov Hill (one of Europe's largest equestrian statues); the Petřín Lookout Tower on the Petřín Hill (a steel structure resembling the Paris Eiffel Tower,

accessible by a funicular); the Municipal House (a beautifully renovated Art Nouveau building where the independence of Czechoslovakia was declared in 1918, today serving as a multifunctional venue with a concert hall, gallery, café, restaurant and lounges - www.obecnidum.cz); the Old Town's Jewish cemetery and synagogue associated with the legend of Rabbi Loew and his Golem (www.jewishmuseum.cz); the National Museum (the country's largest museum, located on Wenceslas Square - www.nm.cz); and the National Technical Museum (a very popular museum with some unique collections - www.ntm.cz). Prague is home to Charles University (a symbol of Czech learning, the third oldest university in Europe founded in 1348 - www.cuni.cz) and to several other well-ranked schools offering university education in technical fields (www.cvut.cz), the arts (www.amu.cz, www.avu.cz), economics (www.vse.cz) and agriculture (www.czu.cz). Major art galleries include the National Gallery (www.ngprague.cz) and Prague Castle Gallery (www.hrad.cz), the Czech Museum of Fine Arts (www.cmvu.cz) and the Rudolfinum Gallery (www.galerierudolfinum.cz). In addition to the National Theatre (www.narodni-divadlo.cz), Prague has many interesting venues for performing arts, for example the Archa Theatre (www.archatheatre.cz). Prague's rich offer of music events ranges from classical (www.rudolfinum.cz, www.obecnidum.cz)

Prague Castle

▶ National cultural monument, symbol of the country's long history. Continuously evolving since its foundation in the last quarter of the 9th century, the vast compound includes palaces, fortifications, administrative, ecclesiastical and residential buildings representing all architectural styles. Prague Castle has three courtyards and an overall area of 45 hectares. Originally the home of Bohemian princes and kings, it has been the country's presidential seat since 1918.

WWW.HRAD.CZ

Saint Vitus Cathedral and the Bohemian Crown Jewels

▶ The Gothic Saint Vitus Cathedral dominates the Prague Castle compound. Founded in 1344, initially designed and built by master builders Matthias of Arras and Peter Parler. Left half-finished for several centuries, completed in 1929. Visitors can admire rare architectural ornamentation and works of art; notable sights include the tombs of Bohemian kings and the Chapel of Saint Wenceslas with an underground chamber where the Bohemian Crown Jewels are held. The Crown Jewels, including the Saint Wenceslas crown commissioned by Charles IV, the royal sceptre and apple, coronation vestments and other items, are very rarely exhibited to the public and never leave the Prague Castle compound.

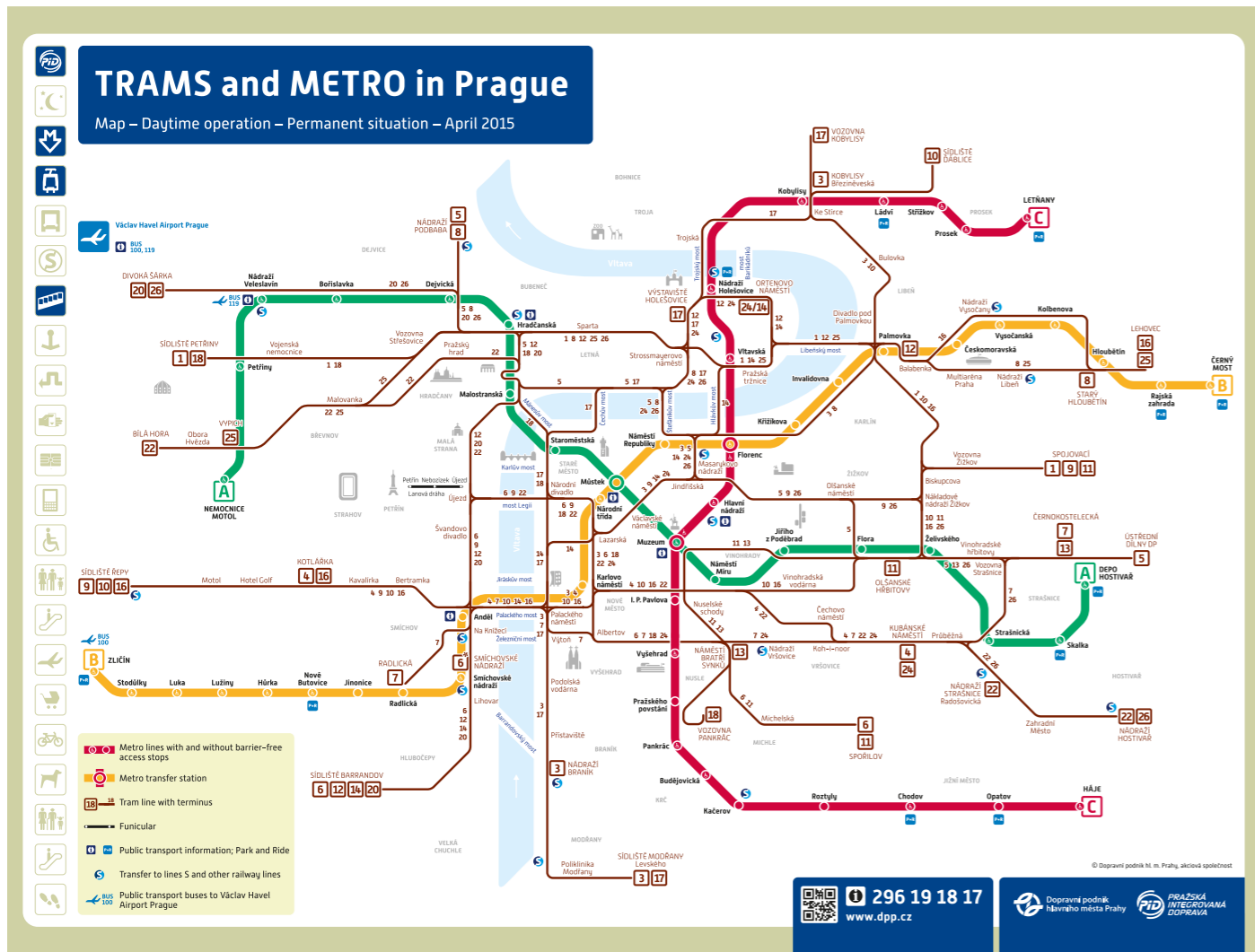
WWW.HRAD.CZ

Villa Müller

▶ The most important work by the architect Adolf Loos (1870-1933) in the country, a jewel of the 20th century Functionalism. The villa was built between 1928 and 1930 for the family of František Müller, co-owner of a Prague construction company. Its airy and open interior layout is in keeping with the "Raumplan" idea that Loos introduced into architectural practice. Loos turned radically away from Art Nouveau and ornamental décor ("Ornament and Crime" essay) to take full advantage of the natural structures of high-quality stone, wood and other luxury materials. Thoroughly renovated in 1998-2000, the villa now houses the Adolf Loos Study Centre.

WWW.MULLEROVAVILA.CZ

PRAGUE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM



Jihočeský kraj

South Bohemian Region

Regional capital: České Budějovice

The Czech Republic's second largest but most sparsely populated region, situated along the border with Austria and Germany. A unique region with over two hundred heritage sites and protected areas, including the Šumava National Park (www.sumavanet.cz). Until World War II South Bohemia enjoyed close contacts with the neighbouring Austria and Germany; a well-developed network of cross-border transport links included the first European railway line – the 120.8 kilometres long horse-drawn České Budějovice-Linz railway opened in 1832 (www.muzeumcb.cz). Economic, cultural, and human contacts with Upper Austria and Bavaria have been renewed since 1989. South Bohemia's cultural legacy includes two UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Český Krumlov mediaeval town centre and the historical village of Holašovice) and many other castles, chateaux and monasteries. Popular destinations include typical South Bohemian fish pond systems, Orlík and Lipno artificial lakes, as well as the Šumava mountain range with cross-border hiking, cycling and skiing trails. The region has two major spa centres: Třeboň (www.mesto-trebon.cz)

and Bečyně (www.bechyne.cz), a town known for its interesting architecture. Towns of greatest tourist interest: Blatná, Český Krumlov, České Budějovice, Jindřichův Hradec, Prachatic, Tábor and Třeboň. Important castles and chateaux: Český Krumlov, Červená Lhota, Hluboká nad Vltavou, Landštejn, Orlík nad Vltavou and Zvíkov. Monasteries: Vyšší Brod, Zlatá Koruna and Nové Hrady. Hiking and trekking: Šumava, Blanský les (Blansko Forest) and Novohradské hory (Nové Hrady Mountains), Česká Kanada ("Czech Canada") landscape area around the town of Jindřichův Hradec, Třeboňsko landscape area around the town of Třeboň, and Prácheňsko landscape area around the town of Písek. For additional information about these destinations see www.jiznicechy.org/cz and www.jiznicechy.cz. Important manufacturers based in the South Bohemian Region: Budějovický Budvar, n.p., Koh-i-noor Hardtmuth, a.s., Robert Bosch, spol. s r. o., Madeta, a.s., Brisk Tábor, a.s., Jitex Písek, a. s., ZVVZ, a. s. Milevsko, Schneider-Electric Písek, and ČZ Strakonice. www.kraj-jihocesky.cz



Holašovice, Historical Village Reservation

An exceptionally complete and well-preserved example of a traditional central European village. Holašovice has a large number of outstanding 18th and 19th century vernacular buildings in a style known as the "South Bohemian folk Baroque", and preserves a ground plan dating from the Middle Ages.

WWW.HOLASOVICE.EU



Historic Centre of Český Krumlov

Situated on the banks of the Vltava River, the town was built around a 13th-century Gothic castle. Despite the traces of later architectural styles, the town centre, castle and chateau are an outstanding example of a central European mediaeval town whose architectural heritage has remained intact for more than five centuries.

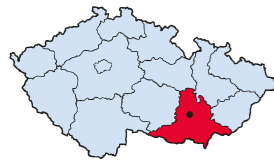
WWW.CKRUMLOV.INFO



Červená Lhota, water chateau

A charming mid-16th century chateau standing on a rock in the middle of a lake surrounded by a small English-style park. Furnished in the style of a summer residence of the last aristocratic owners, the Schönburg-Hartensteins. In addition to tours of the chateau, visitors may enjoy boating on the lake. The chateau is a popular wedding venue.

WWW.CERVENALHOTA.CZ



South Moravian Region

Regional capital: Brno

▶ Brno (www.brno.cz) is the Czech Republic's second largest city with a population of 380,000, served by its own international airport (www.brno-airport.cz). Four universities: Masaryk University (www.muni.cz), Veterinary and Pharmaceutical University (www.vfu.cz), Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry (www.mendelu.cz), University of Defence. Other institutions of higher education: Brno University of Technology (www.vutbr.cz), Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts (www.jamu.cz). Regular venue for international trade fairs (www.bvv.cz) and motorcycle and automobile races (www.auto-moto-brno.cz). Brno has a rich history and architectural heritage. The nearby Slavkov (called Austerlitz in German) was the scene of one of Napoleon's greatest victories, the Battle of Austerlitz (also known as the "Battle of the Three Emperors") in 1805 (www.austerlitz.org). The Bata Canal built in 1936-1938 is an interesting technical monument, a reminder of the old plan to connect the Danube, Oder and Elbe Rivers (www.batacanal.cz). Moravský kras (Moravian Karst) is the Czech

Republic's largest karst area with more than thousand caves, four of which are open to the public. The Moravské Slovácko (Moravian Slovakia) cultural region is known for preserving folk customs and traditions (costumes, music, crafts, architecture) as part of its living heritage. Strážnice, one of the local centres, regularly hosts the Strážnice International Folklore Festival (www.nulc.cz). Dolní Věstonice and Pavlov are major Early Stone Age archaeological sites. The most famous find coming from this systematically excavated area is the "Venus of Dolní Věstonice", an Upper Palaeolithic ceramic statuette of a woman. The area of Southern Moravia (www.jizni-morava.cz) is associated with the earliest periods of national history and culture. The region has many castles, chateaux, fortified manor houses and monasteries (www.jm-unesco.cz). Southern Moravia is a well-known wine growing region, accounting for 96 per cent of the Czech Republic's total vineyard area (www.wineoftheczechrepublic.cz).

www.kr-jihomoravsky.cz



Lednice-Valtice area

▶ The present appearance of the castle is the result of a late 19th century Neo-Gothic reconstruction, the 18th century riding hall is Baroque. Other sights include a conservatory, a hunting manor, John's Castle (an artificial castle ruin in Neo-Gothic style), large French gardens and a park with follies - a minaret, an Apollo Temple, an Empire-style Temple of the Three Graces and the Border House.

WWW.LEDNICE.CZ



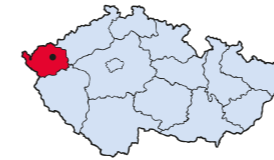
Brno - Villa Tugendhat

▶ The villa was designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in 1929 for the family of Fritz Tugendhat, a textile factory owner. It has a reinforced concrete frame and a glass facade (van der Rohe's "skin and bones" architecture). The workmanship is perfect down to the finest detail, the materials are durable and of high quality, all in keeping with the architect's most famous principle "less is more." Some of the furnishings were designed specifically for the villa ("Brno chair").

WWW.TUGENDHAT-VILLA.CZ



BRNO



Karlovy Vary Region

Regional capital: Karlovy Vary

▶ The Czech Republic's second smallest region, known for its spa towns including the regional capital of Karlovy Vary (www.karlovyvary.cz), Mariánské Lázně, Františkovy Lázně, Lázně Kynžvart, and Lázně Jáchymov. As part of the traditional spa experience, the region offers a wide range of opportunities for sports (horse riding, golf - www.kvgolf.cz) and a programme of regular cultural events: the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (www.kviff.cz), Dvořák's Autumn Festival, JazzFest international jazz festival and the Beethoven Days festival in Karlovy Vary, and the International Chopin Festival in Mariánské Lázně (www.chopinfestival.cz). Karlovy Vary is served by its own international airport (www.airport-k-vary.cz). The town of Bečov nad Teplou has one of the oldest Jewish quarters in the Czech Republic; the Bečov Chateau (www.becov.cz) is the repository of the Czech Republic's second most precious artefact after the Crown Jewels - the Saint Maurus Reliquary (an Early Romanesque chest from the early 13th century that used to hold the

relics of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Maurus). The region's traditional industries are glassmaking (www.moser-glass.com, www.crystalex.cz), porcelain production (www.thun.cz), and the manufacture of musical instruments (www.amati.cz); other traditional products include the Becherovka herbal liqueur (www.janbecher.cz) and mineral water (www.mattoni.cz). The region's largest protected landscape area is Slavkovský les (Slavkov Forest), an ancient cultural landscape, now thinly populated, with a wide range of ecosystems (forests, meadows, peat bogs, rock formations, mineral springs and gas emanations). A site of international importance is the SOOS Nature Reserve, a "moonscape" formed by mineral springs, "mud volcanoes" (mofettes) and white and yellow layers of mineral salts. Krušné hory (Ore Mountains) and parts of the Slavkov Forest offer excellent conditions for winter sports (www.ceskehory.cz/krusnehory).

www.kr-karlovarsky.cz



Karlovy Vary

▶ The Czech Republic's best known and largest spa town, founded around 1350. Interesting sights: Saint Andrew Church, Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Municipal Theatre, Mill Colonnade, Saint Mary Magdalene Church. The town is located in a romantic landscape in the foothills of the Ore Mountains. A major spa and social centre, Karlovy Vary has a rich programme of festivals and concerts; another attraction is the offer of locally produced crystal glass and porcelain.

WWW.KARLOVYVARY.CZ



Mariánské Lázně

▶ Mariánské Lázně is the second largest town of the West Bohemian "spa triangle". The town has more than a hundred cold ferrous mineral springs of differing chemical composition; some of them have been known since the 16th century. The town's architecture is mostly Neoclassical; a prominent feature is a beautiful colonnade built in 1889 around the Singing Fountain.

WWW.MARIANSKELAZNE.CZ



LOKET



Kraj Vysočina



JIHLAVA

Vysočina Region

Regional capital: Jihlava

▶ The Vysočina (“Highlands”) Region takes its name from the highland area of Českomoravská vysočina (Bohemian-Moravian Highlands) that forms the natural border between the historical lands of Bohemia and Moravia. Vysočina is a landscape of rolling hills, low mountain ranges (800 metres above sea level) and villages clustered around small towns of three to nine thousand inhabitants. There are four towns with a population over 20,000 and the regional capital Jihlava has 50,000 inhabitants. Located on the historical border between Bohemia and Moravia, Jihlava used to be a silver mining town - the oldest, and one of the richest in the mediaeval Bohemia (www.jihlava.cz). Vysočina Region forms the centre of the country’s transport network and is traversed by the D1 motorway. In terms of economic catchment areas, the region’s eastern part belongs to the Brno agglomeration and the north-west to the national capital Prague. This strategic location has attracted many foreign investors in the manufacturing as well as research and development sectors. The region’s historical heritage includes three

UNESCO World Heritage Sites (the historic centre of Telč, the Pilgrimage Church of Saint John of Nepomuk at Zelená Hora near Žďár nad Sázavou, and the Jewish Quarter and Saint Procopius’ Basilica in Třebíč). Natural sites include the Žďárské vrchy (Žďár Hills) and Železné hory (Iron Mountains) Protected Landscape Areas and the Mohelno Serpentine Steppe and Velký Špičák National Nature Reserves. Clean natural environment makes Vysočina and “island of health” between the Prague, Brno and Vienna agglomerations. Vysočina is good place to live and work in, to do business or just to relax and explore.

www.kr-vysocina.cz



Zelená Hora near Žďár nad Sázavou

▶ The Pilgrimage Church of Saint John of Nepomuk dates back to the 1720s. Constructed on a star-shaped plan and surrounded by a cemetery and a cloister, the church is one of the finest works by the architect Jan Blažej Santini and the most original example of the so-called Baroque Gothic.

WWW.ZDARNS.CZ



Telč historic centre

▶ The town was rebuilt on its old foundations after a fire in the late 14th century. Today the Renaissance and Baroque burghers’ houses are still protected by a system of man-made ponds. The Gothic castle was rebuilt in the Renaissance style at the end of the 15th century.

WWW.TELC-ETC.CZ



Třebíč

▶ Saint Procopius’ Basilica was built in the mid-13th century in a transitional Romanesque-Gothic style. The church is an architectural jewel. The completely preserved Jewish quarter with over 120 houses and narrow alleys represents the original ground plan of a ghetto wedged between the Jihlava River and Hrádek Hill.

WWW.TREBIC.CZ



Hradec Králové Region

Regional capital: Hradec Králové

▶ The region has played an important part in Czech history, both as the scene of historical events (the Battle of Hradec Králové, called Königgrätz in German, on 3 July 1866 decided the Austro-Prussian War) and as the birthplace of famous people, including the writers Božena Němcová, Josef Škvorecký and Karel Čapek (creator of the word “robot”). A traditional industrial area, it has a large pool of highly skilled workforce concentrated mainly in the automotive industry (Škoda Superb, the most luxurious Czech car, is manufactured in the Škoda Auto factory at Kvasiny), textile and food industries and the medical technologies industry. Another major company based in the region is PETROF, a renowned piano manufacturer (www.petrof.com). The largest ongoing investment project in the region is the construction of a segment of the D11 (E67) motorway connecting the Czech Republic’s and Poland’s motorway networks. Traditional local products include the Vamberk lace, produced in the region for four centuries

(www.vambereckakrajka.cz), and culinary specialities such as the Hořice waffle tubes, Miletín gingerbread “prayerbook” cakes, “kyseló” (typical sour soup from the Krkonoše mountains), plum sauce and fried potato pancakes. The regional capital Hradec Králové (www.hradeckralove.org) was the country’s first town to have a comprehensive urban development plan; in the 1920’s and 1930’s it was known as the “(Czechoslovak) Republic’s salon” because of its distinctive modern image consistently shaped by the architects Josef Gočár and Jan Kotěra. However, the interesting architectural heritage of Hradec Králové includes buildings in the Renaissance, Baroque, Classicist, and Art Nouveau as well as Functionalist styles. Hradec Králové is a university town (www.uhk.cz) and the seat of a diocese. It has a congress centre, a network of cultural institutions, and offers some popular sights such as a giant aquarium (www.obriakvarium.cz). The region includes parts of the Český ráj (Bohemian Paradise) tourist area with “rock town” landscape areas, castles and chateaus (Kost, Humprecht, Dětenice) and vernacular architecture (www.ceskyraj.cz). Another major tourist area is the Krkonoše mountain range (www.krkonose.eu) with the country’s oldest national park (www.krnep.cz) and highest peak (Sněžka, 1,602 m above sea level). Most valuable examples of the region’s historical heritage are its chateaus: Častolovice (www.zamek-castolovice.cz), Hrádek u Nechanic, Karlova Koruna, Kuks, Nové Město nad Metují, Opočno and Rychnov nad Kněžnou. Other famous sights are the Dvůr Králové Safari Zoo (www.zoodk.cz) and the mechanical nativity scene in Třebechovice.

www.kralovehradeckyregion.cz



Kuks

▶ A large Baroque compound founded by Count Franz Anton von Sporck (1692), combining architecture, sculptures and landscape. Includes a park, a hospital and pharmacy, the Holy Trinity Church and the Sporck family crypt. Numerous sculptures by Matthias Bernhard Braun, including Biblical figures and scenes hewn into rocks in the adjoining forest.

WWW.KUKS.CZ



Opočno

▶ A castle located on an old trading route is mentioned by the early mediaeval historian Cosmas of Prague as early as in 1068. The castle was destroyed during the Hussite Wars in 1425. A Renaissance chateau was built on the ruins by the Trezka family in the mid-16th century. In 1813, the Russian Tsar Alexander I, Prussian Emperor Friedrich Wilhelm III and Austrian Foreign Minister Metternich met at the chateau to plan a strategy against Napoleon.

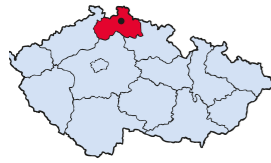
WWW.OPOCNO.CZ



Janské Lázně

▶ A spa town on the southern slope of the Krkonoše mountain range (670 m above sea level), in a relatively warm climate of the foothills, with abundant solar radiation. The 29.6°C mineral springs are used for rehabilitation therapies.

WWW.JANSKELAZNE.COM



Liberecký kraj



LIBEREC

Liberec Region

Regional capital: Liberec

▶ The Czech Republic's smallest region, a mostly mountainous area along the border with Germany and Poland. The regional capital Liberec with a population of nearly one hundred thousand (www.visit.liberec.eu) forms an agglomeration with the neighbouring Jablonec nad Nisou. Liberec is home to the Technical University (www.vslib.cz), Regional Research Library (www.kvkl.cz) and the North Bohemian Museum (www.muzeumlb.cz). Other attractions include a zoo (www.zooliberec.cz) and a botanical garden (www.botanickazahradaliberec.cz). Primarily an industrial region with highly developed glassmaking industry (including the production of costume jewellery) as well as plastics, engineering and other industries closely linked to the automotive sector. The region's traditional textile industry has lost its dominant position due to the recent economic downturn. The region has five protected landscape areas: České středohoří (Central Bohemian Uplands), Jizerské hory (Jizera Mountains) and Lužické hory (Lusatian Mountains), the Bohemian Paradise

area, and the Kokořínsko landscape area around the Kokořín Castle. The Jizera Mountains (www.jizerskehory.cz) and Krkonoše (www.krkonoše.eu) offer many opportunities for hiking, cycling and winter sports. The Ještěd ski resort (www.snowhill.cz) near Liberec has ski slopes of various difficulty levels as well as ski jumping facilities. Major ski jumping events annually take place in Harrachov (www.harrachov.cz). Liberec hosted the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in 2009 (www.liberec2009.com). The region's most popular sights are its castles and chateaux: Sloup (www.hradsloup.cz), Trosky (www.trosky.cz), Sychrov (www.zamek-sychrov.cz), Hrubý Rohozec (www.hruby-rohozec.cz), Bezděz, Lemberk, Valdštejn, Zákupy and Frýdlant. The Máchovo jezero artificial lake and its surroundings are popular destinations for summer trips and recreation (www.mestodoksy.cz). The spa towns of Libverda (www.lazne-libverda.cz) and Kundratice (www.laznekundratice.cz) draw many visitors from neighbouring countries. **www.kraj-lbc.cz**



Frýdlant v Čechách

▶ A combination of a mediaeval castle and a Renaissance chateau. Built in the 13th century to guard the junction of trade routes. The first castle in Europe to be opened to the public (1801).

WWW.FRYDLANTVC.CZ



Ještěd

▶ A mountain-top hotel with a restaurant and television transmitter, designed by the architect Karel Hubáček in the 1960's. The rocket-shaped building received the Perret Award for Design from the International Union of Architects. The hotel is on the tentative list of properties considered suitable for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

WWW.JESTED.CZ



LIBEREC



Moravskoslezský kraj



OSTRAVA

Moravian-Silesian Region

Regional capital: Ostrava

▶ A region of contrasting landscapes and great ethnic diversity, Moravia-Silesia has successfully emerged from the turbulent economic changes of the recent years. Today it is fittingly described as a region of contrasts and opportunities. Moravia-Silesia has six distinct tourist areas: the Jeseníky and Beskydy mountain ranges, the Opavské Slezsko (Opavian Silesia) area around the town of Opava, the Ostrava-Karviná area, the Těšínské Slezsko (Těšín Silesia) area around Těšín, and the Poodří area in the Oder (Odra) River valley. The regional capital Ostrava (www.ostrava.cz) with a population of approximately 311,000 is the Czech Republic's third largest town. After 1989 Ostrava went through a radical transformation that has no parallel in the country. Today's Ostrava is a cosmopolitan town of business and commerce with vibrant cultural and social life. It annually hosts major events such as the Janáček May international music festival (www.janackuvmaj.cz), Colours of Ostrava ethnic music festival (www.colours.cz), and the Ostrava Golden Spike

(Zlatá tretra) athletics event. Ostrava's Stodolní street "that never sleeps" is famous across the region and beyond (www.stodolni.cz). The region's highly interesting historical heritage ranges from castles, chateaux and vernacular architecture to urban and industrial sites. The best known castles and chateaux are Hradec nad Moravicí, the romantic Raduň, Empire-style Fryštát in Karviná and the Baroque Kunín. The Hukvaldy Castle ruins and imposing Sovinec Castle are also worth a visit. Spa centres have grown since the 19th century around the region's numerous mineral springs. Darkov (www.darkov.cz) and Klimkovice (www.sanatoria-klimkovice.cz) offer a wide range of spa treatment and wellness programmes. Other popular destinations are the Beskydy (www.beskydy-info.cz) and Jeseníky (www.jeseniky.net) mountain ranges. Praděd, Moravia's highest peak (1,491 m above sea level) is located in the Jeseníky mountains. **www.kr-moravskoslezsky.cz**



Štramberský zámek

▶ An urban heritage reservation since 1969, the picturesque Štramberský zámek is a unique grouping of timber and masonry houses on a dramatic slope below the ruins of Štramberský zámek. The castle's "Trúba" tower is the area's main landmark.

WWW.STRAMBERK.CZ



Fryštát Chateau

▶ The grand Fryštát Chateau in Karviná has no parallel in the region. The Empire-style chateau was transformed from a Renaissance castle. Visitors can admire valuable furniture from aristocratic homes and parts of the original collections of 16th to 20th century art.

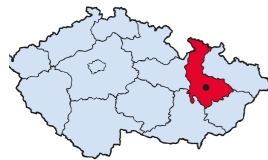
WWW.ZAMEK-FRYSTAT.CZ



Hukvaldy Castle ruins

▶ One of the largest ruined castles in Central Europe, third largest in the Czech Republic. Founded in the 13th century by the German Counts of Hückeswagen. The village of Hukvaldy is closely associated with the life and work of the composer Leoš Janáček. The local game preserve with fallow deer and mouflon.

WWW.JANACKOVY-HUKVALDY.CZ



Olomouc Region

Regional capital: Olomouc

▶ A region with a long and colourful history, rich historical heritage and traditions, and picturesque landscape areas. The Olomouc Region is an increasingly attractive destination for foreign investors who appreciate its strategic location, industrial and economic diversity, easy accessibility, developed infrastructure and skilled and flexible workforce. The leading investors are Meopta and Olympus C&S (United States and Germany) in Přerov and Honeywell – Mora Aerospace (United States) in Olomouc. Other major investors include Miele (Germany, www.miele.cz) in Uničov and Toray Textiles (Japan, www.toray.cz) in Prostějov. The region's central Haná flatland is one of the most fertile parts of the Czech Republic, as well as a major centre of folk culture and heritage. Haná is known for its atmosphere of cordiality and hospitality as well as for its distinct dialect, customs, songs, dances and folk costumes that can be admired during traditional festivals (harvest, kermesse and carnival feasts). Part of the region's folk culture are typical local products such as "Olomoucké

tvářůžky" (strong-smelling ripened soft cheese produced in Loštice for more than six centuries), local beers (Litovel, Hanušovice and Přerov breweries), and the Priessnitz herbal liqueur (named after Vincenz Priessnitz, a pioneer of hydrotherapy). The historical heritage includes Helfštýn Castle (annually hosting the Hefaiston, an international gathering of artist blacksmiths -www.helfstyn.cz), and the Bouzov (www.bouzov.cz) and Šternberk (www.sternberk.cz) castles with a fairytale atmosphere. The regional capital Olomouc (www.olomouc.eu) is a particularly rich in historical monuments. Its long history and traditional status as an archbishop's seat and university town (the present Palacký University in Olomouc was founded in the 16th century) make Olomouc the natural centre of its region.

www.kr-olomoucky.cz



Olomouc, Holy Trinity Column

▶ The memorial column, erected in the early years of the 18th century, is an outstanding example of the type of monument specific to Central Europe. The 35 metres high column is built in the characteristic regional style known as Olomouc Baroque and decorated with many sculptures by the distinguished Moravian artist Ondřej Zahner.

WWW.OK-TOURISM.CZ



Velké Losiny

▶ A compound comprising a historical paper mill was founded by the Zerotín family in 1596. The production of handmade paper continues to this day, making Velké Losiny the oldest plant of its kind in Central Europe. The paper mill is on the tentative list of properties considered suitable for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

WWW.MUZEUPAPIRU.CZ



OLOMOUC



Pardubice Region

Regional capital: Pardubice

▶ A region offering great natural and historical heritage, business opportunities, skilled workforce as well as a broad range of cultural and sports facilities. It has fertile lowlands in the Elbe (Labe) River valley as well as high mountains (third highest in the Czech Republic), numerous rivers, ponds and forests. Notable landscape areas include the picturesque foothills of Orlické hory (Orlice Mountains), romantic surroundings of the town of Svitavy, attractive places in the spurs of the Iron Mountains and Žďár Hills and the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands. The regional economic centre is Pardubice with a concentration of industry, commercial and public services. The industrial structure is diverse, with a dominant share of engineering, chemical, textile, clothing and leather producing industries. The agricultural sector also plays an important role; agricultural land accounts for 60 per cent, forest land for 29 per cent and water surfaces for 1 per cent of the region's total area. A true "land of the horse", the region has a horse population exceeding 2,000. The Pardubice Region

is becoming an increasingly popular destination for foreign investors thanks to its integration in the European motorway network (since 2006), its waterway and air transport links and its offer of industrial zones. The region's heritage – castles and chateaux, museums, open-air museums and other monuments – bears witness to its very long history. Its cultural legacy was formed by dozens of remarkable personalities – painters, musicians, architects and inventors – who were born in the region and made it their home. The region is known for its programme of sports events (ice hockey, horse racing and speedway motorcycle racing), it also has ideal conditions for many other sports including cycling, hiking, skiing and tennis. Visitors can enjoy numerous international cultural and sporting events such as the Smetana Litomyšl Opera Festival, the Kocian Violin Competition, the Grand Pardubice Steeplechase and the Golden Helmet (Zlatá přilba) speedway motorcycle race.

www.pardubickykraj.cz



Litomyšl Chateau

▶ A 16th-century Renaissance chateau with more than 8,000 sgraffito decorations on its facade. The interior included the impressive Battle Hall and Grand Dining Room, and an exceptionally well preserved late 18th century chateau theatre. The brewery on chateau grounds is the birthplace of famous composer Bedřich Smetana (1824).

WWW.LITOMYSL.CZ



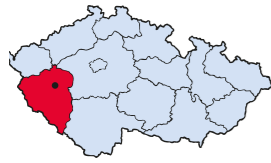
Kladruby nad Labem

▶ The National Stud at Kladruby nad Labem is the oldest of the world's major stud farms. It is located near Přelouč in the Elbe River valley where the soil conditions are ideal for horse breeding. At present the National Stud operates two horse-breeding farms: Kladruby (white Kladruber horses) and Slatiňany (black Kladruber horses).

WWW.NHKLADRUBY.CZ



KUNĚTICKÁ HORA



PLZEŇSKÝ KRAJ



PLZEŇ

Plzeň (Pilsen) Region

Regional capital: Plzeň (Pilsen)

▶ An industrial and beer-producing region, but also a region of great historical and natural heritage and many opportunities for sports and leisure. The Český les (Upper Palatinate Forest) and Šumava borderline mountain ranges offer many cycling trails and ski resorts (www.spicak.cz). The unique ecosystem (“the green roof of Europe”) consisting of the Šumava National Park and Landscape Protected Area and the adjacent Bayerischer Wald National Park was designated as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1990. The region’s most interesting historical monuments include the Starý Plzenec hill fort with Saints Peter and Paul rotunda and the nearby ruins of Radyně Castle, the ruins of the Romanesque Přimda Castle (the country’s oldest stone castle - www.primda.cz), the monumental ruins of the Gothic Rabí Castle (www.hrad-rabi.eu), the unique Švihov water castle (www.hradsvihov.cz) and the charming Kožel Chateau (www.zamek-kozel.cz), as well as fine examples of ecclesiastical architecture by leading Bohemian Baroque architects Santini and Dientzenhofer: the Benedictine monastery at Kladruby founded in 1115 (www.klasterkladruby.cz) and the Cistercian monastery in Plasy founded in

1146 (with uniquely preserved Baroque sanitary facilities - www.klaster-plasy.eu). The regional capital Plzeň (info.plzen-city.cz) was founded in 1295. The dominant feature of its skyline is the tower of the Church of Saint Bartholomew (102 m, the highest in Bohemia). Plzeň has the world’s third largest synagogue (the Great Synagogue), Europe’s largest collection of Gothic guns (housed in the West Bohemian Museum), and one of the oldest brewery museums in the world (www.prazdrojvisit.cz). Other popular sights include a zoo and botanical garden with a new Japanese garden (zoo.plzen.cz). Plzeň is home to the University of West Bohemia (www.zcu.cz) and the Medical Faculty of Charles University (www.lfp.cuni.cz). The leading companies based in Plzeň are the Plzeňský Prazdroj/Pilsner Urquell brewery (www.pilsner-urquell.cz), Škoda Holding (www.skoda.cz) and the sparkling wine producer Bohemia Sekt (www.bohemiasekt.cz). The picture shows the historical brewery gate.

www.plzensky-kraj.cz
www.touristparadise.com



Nebílovy Chateau

▶ An example of pure Viennese Baroque architecture, called the “flower chateau” because of the floral patterns that dominate its interior decorations. Rebuilt from a Renaissance fortified manor, the chateau consists of an entrance tract a tower and two wings forming a courtyard. The wings were connected by arcade corridors with remnants of the original Renaissance sgraffito decorations. Today the chateau houses a unique collection of Venetian glass chandeliers. Nebílovy is a popular tourist destination and wedding venue.

WWW.ZAMEK-NEBILOVY.CZ



Manětín

▶ Originally a 16th-century Renaissance chateau, rebuilt in the Baroque style following a fire. A roofed passageway connects the chateau with the decanal Church of Saint John the Baptist. Historical interiors with frescoes and a collection of Baroque art. Remarkable collection of paintings by Václav Dvořák depicting chateau servants at work.

WWW.ZAMEK-MANETIN.CZ



Mariánská Týnice

▶ The origins of the pilgrimage site go back to 1230 and are connected with the activities of the Cistercian monastery in nearby Plasy. A provostry was established and the original church enlarged in the second half of the 17th century. The former provostry building now houses a regional museum.

WWW.MARIANSKATYNICE.CZ



Středočeský kraj

Central Bohemian Region

Location of the regional office: Prague



BEROUNKA

▶ The remarkable and diverse region surrounding the Czech Republic’s capital is one of the most attractive destinations in Central Europe thanks to its rich natural and cultural heritage as well as to its easily accessible location in the heart of Europe. Central Bohemia’s natural heritage includes five very diverse protected landscape areas, including the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Křivoklátsko (area around the Křivoklát castle), recognized as the region’s most valuable ecosystem. Český kras (Bohemian Karst) and the Kokořínsko landscape area, the Blaník hill as well as the UNESCO Geopark Bohemian Paradise are also of great natural beauty. Charming places can be found on the banks of meandering rivers and in the coves of ponds and artificial lakes. The largest and best known Central Bohemian rivers – Berounka, Elbe, Jizera, Vltava and Sázava – are popular for water sports and fishing. The Slapy and Orlík artificial lakes offer excellent facilities for water sports, including accommodation and equipment rentals. The region has hundreds of historical monuments. The most popular sights include the Karlštejn, Křivoklát

and Kokořín castles, Konopiště, Kačina and Veltrusy chateaux and exceptional examples of ecclesiastical architecture such as the Church of Saint Barbara in Kutná Hora and the pilgrimage sites in Svatá Hora (Sacred Mountain) near Příbram and Stará Boleslav. Almost all Central Bohemian towns have well-preserved mediaeval quarters with a special atmosphere. The most impressive example is the historical centre of Kutná Hora with the Church of Saint Barbara, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List together with the Cathedral of Our Lady in nearby Sedlec in 1995. Other interesting old Central Bohemian towns are Mělník, Beroun, Kolín and Kouřim.

www.centralbohemia.cz
www.kr-stredocesky.cz



Karlštejn

▶ Ranked among the country’s most beautiful castles, Karlštejn captivates visitors at first glance. Founded by Charles IV, one of the wisest European rulers, it bears witness to a great period in the history of Bohemia. The castle is decorated with valuable paintings and frescoes, original wooden panelling dating back to the times of Charles IV, and many other masterpieces of mediaeval art and crafts.

WWW.HRADKARLSTEJN.CZ



The Church of St. Barbara in Kutná Hora

▶ The Church of Saint Barbara is a perfect textbook of Gothic architecture. The interior of the monumental triple-aisled church is decorated with remarkable frescoes, some of them depicting life in a mediaeval mining town; the carved 15th century choir stalls are also of great value.

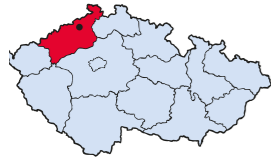
WWW.KUTNAHORA.CZ



Vysoká u Příbrami

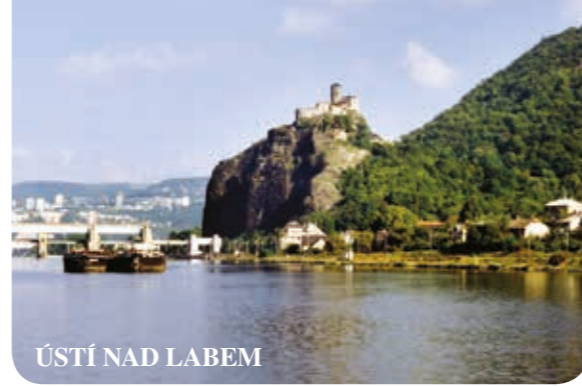
▶ Czech music is recognized around the world for its warm-hearted, at times humorous and playful feel. Visitors can discover and enjoy it at many places of interest in Central Bohemia. One of them is the chateau at Vysoká u Příbramě where Antonín Dvořák created many of his works during his most productive period.

WWW.ANTONINDVORAK.CZ



Ústí Region

Regional capital: Ústí nad Labem



ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM

▶ The Ústí Region is lined with borderland mountain ranges. The regional capital Ústí nad Labem is located in the Elbe River valley near the German border approximately 100 kilometres from Prague. Ústí nad Labem is the country's ninth largest town, with a history going back to the mid-11th century. The centuries-old tradition of industry, agriculture and commerce has led to the development of efficient transport links. At present there are major efforts to create favourable conditions for investors with environment-friendly manufacturing methods and business plans that will enrich the region's production structure. The environment in the region's borderland districts has greatly improved in recent years. Coal-fired power plants have been desulphurized; the Elbe River is now relatively clean thanks to new water treatment plants; polluting chemical production has been reduced. Any industrial operations must meet environmental criteria consistent with European Union standards. Agricultural production is concentrated around Litoměřice, a traditional fruit and vegetable producing area. The area around Žatec is famous for its excellent

hops. High-quality vineyards are concentrated around Most and Velké Žernoseky. Remarkable landscape areas in the Ústí Region include parts of the Ore Mountains, Lusatian Mountains and the Central Bohemian Uplands, Tiské stěny (area around the village of Tisá with interesting sandstone rock formations), the Česko-saské Švýcarsko (Bohemian-Saxon Switzerland) tourist area and the charming Porta Bohemica (Česká brána) valley on the Elbe River. The region has spas (Teplice and Bílina) and thermal springs (swimming pools in Ústí nad Labem and Děčín). The towns of Česká Kamenice, Duchcov and Teplice are urban conservation areas. The Děčín Museum has a standing exhibition on the history of shipping on the Elbe. There are many preserved castles and chateaux as well as romantic castle ruins set in the picturesque landscape (Krásný Buk, Kyjov Castle, Šaunštejn and others). The region has interesting educational trails such as the Kyjov Trail running through the deep Kamenice River canyon.

www.kr-ustecky.cz



Bohemian Switzerland National Park

▶ The area of the Bohemian and Saxon Switzerland National Parks has no parallel in Europe both in terms of size (a total of 172 km²) and scarcity of population (currently there are only two small villages in the two parks). The area is known for its typical sandstone rock formations, accessible by marked hiking trails.

WWW.CESKESVYCARSKO.CZ



Duchcov

▶ A Baroque chateau built at the site of a fortified Gothic manor and later rebuilt in the Classicist style. A restored fresco by Václav Vavřínek Reiner, removed from a demolished church, is on display in a special pavilion on chateau grounds. The chateau houses parts of the Czech Baroque collections of the National Gallery in Prague. There are also exhibits related to Giacomo Casanova who worked as librarian at the chateau for the last thirty years of his life.

WWW.ZAMEK-DUCHCOV.CZ



ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM



Zlínský kraj

Zlín Region

Regional capital: Zlín



ZLÍN

▶ A distinct tourist area with interesting natural and cultural landscapes, spas and vineyards. The region has nine major national cultural monuments: Kroměříž Castle and its gardens (inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list), the Hradiště sv. Klimenta pilgrimage site near the township of Osvětimany, the traces of a Great Moravian "agglomeration" at Staré Město, Uherské Hradiště and Modrá, the Pustevny resort in the Beskydy mountains, the Wallachian Open Air Museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, the site of the former village of Ploština with a memorial to anti-fascist fighters, the chateaux in Buchlovice and Vizovice and Buchlov Castle. Important landscape areas: the Bílé Karpaty (White Carpathians) UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the Beskydy Protected Landscape Area, the Chřibý Nature Park and other nature parks. A popular attraction is the Wallachian Kingdom (www.valasske-kralovstvi.cz) with its own postage stamps, currency and excellent Slivovitz plum brandy. The regional capital Zlín gained importance in the first half of the 20th century, after Tomáš Baťa founded his footwear company in the town. Zlín is known for its Functionalist architecture with urban

green spaces. It is a university town (Tomáš Baťa University was opened in 2001) and a popular congress venue, mainly for medical congresses. A remarkable municipal project was the reconstruction of the "Baťa Skyscraper", a former administrative building of the Baťa company designed by the architect Vladimír Karfík and completed in 1938. The "Baťa Skyscraper" is an outstanding example of interwar Czechoslovak Constructivist architecture, inscribed on the list of national cultural monuments. The reconstruction project completed in 2004 transformed it into a state-of-the-art administrative building while fully respecting its special heritage status. The "Baťa Skyscraper" now houses the Zlín regional office and revenue authority. Popular tourist destinations: Luhačovice spa town, Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, Velehrad and Svätý Hostýn pilgrimage sites, the Baťa Canal, Zlín-Lešná Zoo, parts of the Moravian Slovakia cultural region (wine festivals), the White Carpathians and Beskydy mountain ranges (winter sports).

www.kr-zlinsky.cz



Kroměříž, Archbishop's Castle and Gardens

▶ The castle built on old foundations in the 18th century is an exceptionally complete and well preserved example of a Baroque princely residence and its associated landscape: the Castle Garden, designed as a landscape garden, and the more formal late Renaissance Pleasure Garden. The castle and gardens are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

WWW.AZZ.CZ



Luhačovice Spa

▶ Located near Zlín in the Bílé Karpaty reserve, Luhačovice has been a spa resort for three centuries. It became especially popular following the rise of the country's spa industry at the beginning of the 19th century. Today Luhačovice is a resort of international importance.

WWW.LAZNELUHACOVICE.CZ



Wallachian Outdoor Museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm





▶ The oldest and largest museum of its kind in Central Europe, founded in 1925. More than 120 vernacular buildings are on display in the museum's "Wooden Townlet," "Wallachian Village", "Water Mill Valley", and a rich programme of traditional festivals, ceremonies and customs.

WWW.VMP.CZ

CZECH REPUBLIC UNESCO World Heritage Sites



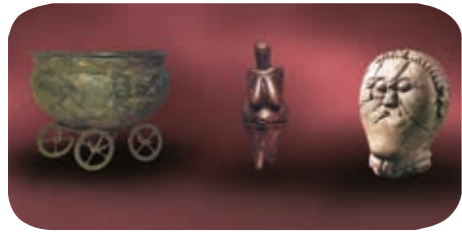
Legend:

-  UNESCO site
-  Castle
-  Chateau
-  Ruin

Properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

- | | |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| Český Krumlov | Kutná Hora |
|  |  |
| Prague | Kroměříž |
|  |  |
| Telč | Litomyšl |
|  |  |
| Holašovice | Brno – Villa Tugendhat |
|  |  |
| Lednice - Valtice | Olomouc |
|  |  |
| Zelená Hora | Třebíč |

HISTORY



Ancient history (up to the 9th century)

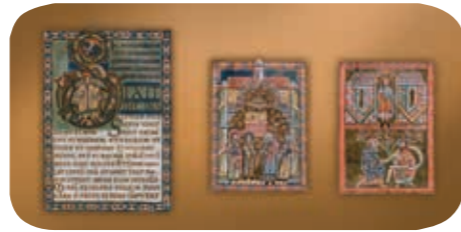
Archaeological evidence shows that the territory of today's Czech Republic was settled already 25,000 years ago. First farming communities appeared during the Stone Age, and during the 4th and 3rd centuries BC the area was a crossroads of different cultures (the picture to the right shows the head of a Celtic god). The first known inhabitants in this period were the Boii Celts (from whom Bohemia took its name); the Germanic Marcomanni and Quadi tribes arrived in the 1st century BC. At the peak of the Migration Period in the 6th century, Slavic tribes from the Carpathian region began to settle in the area. Around the year 630 the Slavs joined forces in Samo's Kingdom to fight the Avars and later the Franks.

The centre picture shows the famous Věstonice Venus statuette.



Early Christianity (9th and 10th centuries)

The first state located partly in the area that later became known as the Czech Lands was Great Moravia (the picture shows jewellery from the Staré Město archaeological site). Its rulers originally embraced Western Christianity, but later came under Eastern influence with the arrival of the Byzantine missionaries, Saints Cyril and Methodius in 863. For the purpose of their mission, Cyril and Methodius created the Slavic (Glagolitic) alphabet, the basis for today's Cyrillic script. By the time Great Moravia broke up around the year 900, a separate state began to form in today's Bohemia. The leading Přemyslid family, rulers of Prague, gradually conquered the whole region and consolidated their power by exterminating the rival Slavňík dynasty.



Přemyslid Dynasty (11th to 13th century)

Between the 10th and 12th centuries the Přemyslids grew in power and brought prosperity to the country. Vratislav II became the first King of Bohemia in 1085 (the picture shows the Vyšehrad Codex, a richly illuminated Gospel manuscript created for his coronation). In the first half of the 13th century, Přemyslid kings Přemysl Ottokar I (1197-1230) and Wenceslaus I (1230-1253) invited new settlers to colonize the mountainous border regions, encouraged the development of trades and business ventures such as silver mining, and founded many towns. A large number of castles, monasteries and churches were built in the new Gothic style. However, the Přemyslid dynasty became extinct in the male line when King Wenceslas III was murdered in 1306.



Luxemburg Dynasty (14th and 15th centuries)

The sole heir to the Přemyslid dynasty was Princess Elizabeth Přemyslid, whose marriage to John of Luxembourg in 1310 brought the House of Luxembourg to the Bohemian throne. Their son, King Charles IV, became Holy Roman Emperor in 1355. His reign is remembered as an era of great prosperity. Charles IV expanded the Kingdom of Bohemia and made Prague the imperial capital. His many lasting contributions to the country's economic development include major building projects such as Prague's New Town quarter and the Charles Bridge (built in 1357, the picture shows the Charles Bridge in 1606). A great patron of culture and arts, Charles IV founded a university in Prague in 1348. His son, Wenceslaus IV, was unable to defend his position against the ambitious Bohemian nobles. Wenceslaus IV was deposed as King of the Romans (1400) and the country fell into crisis.



Habsburgs (1526 to 1611)

The Habsburgs assumed the Bohemian throne in 1526. The Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand I gained hereditary succession rights for his dynasty. The reign of his successor, Maximilian II, brought unprecedented religious freedom. Rudolph II (1576-1611) settled permanently in Prague which became not only the capital city of the empire, but also the centre of European science and the arts. Rudolph's court hosted the greatest astronomers of the period, including the Italian Giordano Bruno, the Dane Tycho Brahe, the German Johannes Kepler and the Bohemian-born Tadeáš Hájek z Hájku. The picture shows Giuseppe Arcimboldo's famous portrait of Rudolph II.



The Thirty Years War and Germanization (17th and 18th centuries)

By the time Matthias II ascended to the Bohemian throne (1611), the country was embroiled in problems resulting from increasingly absolutist rule and growing authoritarianism of the Catholic Church. The series of conflicts between the ruler and the Bohemian nobility came to a head in the Bohemian Revolt (1618-1621) which marked the beginning of the Thirty Years' War. The defeat of the rebels in the Battle of White Mountain (1620) was followed by the execution of twenty-seven rebel leaders (see picture). The country fell into economic decline and lost many of its former political and religious freedoms. However, the end of this era brought some progressive changes (first census in 1754, introduction of compulsory school attendance in 1774, abolition of serfdom in 1781, abolition of lifelong military service in 1802) which enabled the country to rebound and mobilize its human resources for a new economic and intellectual revival.



National Revival (19th century)

The ideas of freedom and civil liberties that spread across Europe in the late 18th century set the stage for the Czech National Revival. A new class of Czech intellectuals promoted the Czech language, culture and national identity, and laid the foundations for modern arts and sciences. The government's clampdown on radicals after the failed revolutions in 1848 put an abrupt end to liberal political movements. However, their ideas were taken up by emerging modern political parties pursuing progressive aims such as universal suffrage (1907). Progress was interrupted by World War I, after which the first independent Czechoslovak Republic was established on October 28, 1918, with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk as its first President. The picture shows the National Theatre (built between 1868 and 1883). A massive fire destroyed a large part of the building in 1881. In a wave of national solidarity, large sums of money were collected and the theatre quickly rebuilt.



Modern history (20th and 21st centuries)

The end of World War II left Czechoslovakia in a power vacuum. The struggle for political control ended with a landslide victory of the Communist Party in the 1948 elections. After twenty years of totalitarian rule and economic decline, a brief period of liberalization and reforms known as the Prague Spring was brought to an abrupt end with the invasion of Warsaw Pact armies and a return to hardline Communist rule in 1968. The repressive "normalization" policies adopted to bring the population under control again remained in place throughout the 1970's and most of the 1980's. However, in 1989 latent popular discontent came to a head in the Velvet Revolution which removed the Communists from power and reinstated a democratic government with Václav Havel as President. The country underwent social and economic transformation, including privatization of state enterprises and sweeping legislative changes. On January 1, 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into two independent states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. The Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999 and became a member of the European Union in 2004.

IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS



Trade fairs in Brno

Veletřhy Brno, a.s. (BVV Trade Fairs Brno) is a prominent Central European trade fair company. Its large exhibition centre with excellent infrastructure and 80-year tradition of exhibition culture has made Brno a leading trade fair venue in the Czech Republic as well as in Central Europe. The parabolic arch of the historic Pavilion A on exhibition grounds is one of Brno's symbols and is also incorporated in the BVV logo. Easily accessible for European capitals, the Brno exhibition centre hosts 12,000 exhibitors every year. The centre opened in 1928 with an exhibition of Czechoslovak contemporary culture. Since then, it has developed into one of the largest facilities of its kind in Central Europe, annually hosting over fifty exhibitions. The Brno Exhibition Centre is also a venue for conventions, conferences, cultural and sporting events.

www.bvv.cz



The Prague International Marathon

The Prague International Marathon (PIM) was founded in 1995. It takes place in Prague every year and comprises several events. Despite its short history it is recognized as one of the world's major marathon events. The PIM was awarded the IAAF Gold Label Status in 2010.

www.runczech.com



Febiofest

An international film, television and video festival established in 1993 by FEBIO, an independent documentary film company. Febiofest offers a varied, cutting-edge programme of new films, retrospectives, alternative, student and amateur works. Part of the programme is the award ceremony of the "Kristián" Czech critics' prize. The format of the Febiofest festival has no parallel in Europe.

www.febiofest.cz



The Prague Spring International Music Festival

A classical music festival; features outstanding musicians, orchestras and ensembles from all over the world. The first Prague Spring festival was held in 1946 under the auspices of the Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš (all orchestral concerts were given by the Czech Philharmonic, then celebrating its 50th anniversary). In the years that followed the festival hosted musicians such as Karel Ančerl, Leonard Bernstein, Sir Adrian Boult, Rudolf Firkušný, Jaroslav Krombholc, Rafael Kubelík, Maura Lympany, Evgeny Mravinsky, Charles Munch, Ginette Neveu, Jarmila Novotná, Lev Oborin, David Oistrakh and Jan Panenka. A tradition inaugurated in 1952 is to open the festival with a performance of Bedřich Smetana's "My Country" cycle of symphonic poems. The festival's policy is to invite the best of performers and ensembles; the programme provides ample room for world and Czech premieres of works by contemporary composers, as well as for commemoration of important musical anniversaries. Prague Spring is one of the very few world-class festivals open to young musicians: the Prague Spring International Music Competition for instrumentalists was founded already in the second year of the festival. The competition is a founding member of the Geneva-based World Federation of International Music Competitions (1957).

www.festival.cz



The Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

One of the world's oldest film festivals, established in 1946. Classification as an FIAPF "A" category festival in 1956 placed it on par the Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Tokyo festivals. In 1959-1993 was held every second year, alternating with the Moscow International Film Festival due to a politically motivated decision that socialist countries would not host more than one "A" festival per year. After 1994 a new team of organizers headed by the Czech actor Jiří Bartoška and film writer Eva Zaoralová reinvigorated the festival and transformed it into a film event of international importance. The Karlovy Vary International Film Festival is open to the general public and experts alike and offers a carefully conceived programme, famous film stars, excellent facilities and a full range of services.

www.kviff.com



MotoGP Czech Republic

The Czech Republic MotoGP is held annually on the Masaryk Circuit in Brno. The history of the circuit goes back more than seventy years and can be divided into two chapters. The first chapter beginning in 1930 was the time when Tatra, Mercedes, Auto Union and Bugatti cars raced on a track that ran on amazing 29.1 km of public roads. After World War II the track was shortened to 17.8 km (the 1949 Czechoslovak Grand Prix). Later it hosted mainly motorcycle races and was shortened even more – to 13.9 km (the 1965 Grand Prix). The second chapter began in 1987 with the opening of a new 5.4 km racing circuit which annually hosts the motorcycle world championships, the Czech Republic Moto Grand Prix and many other events including the FIA GT world sportscar championship, German and Swiss motorcycle championships, Austrian car championships, races of vintage cars including F1s, the Six Hours of Brno endurance race and the FIA World Touring car Championship. Other facilities available at the circuit include a shooting range and a golf course.

www.automotodrom.cz

IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS



Jan Amos Komenský, Comenius *1592 – †1670

Educator, philosopher, theologian, minister, writer, and education reformer. His progressive approach to education remains relevant to this day. Comenius emphasized spontaneity and non-coercive approaches respecting the child's natural development. His concept of universal education is presented in his book *Didactica Magna*. Komenský's works such as the *Orbis Pictus*, the *Gate of Languages Unlocked*, and the *Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart* are published to this day. Komenský is buried in Naarden (Netherlands).



Bedřich Smetana *1824 – †1884

Composer, "father of Czech music" together with Antonín Dvořák. Owner of a music academy in Prague, conductor, pianist and teacher in Göteborg (Sweden), and later in Prague. Lost his hearing at the age of fifty. Smetana built on the principles of Wagner's opera reform to create his own operatic style (*The Bartered Bride*, *Dalibor*, *Libuše*, *The Two Widows*, and *The Secret*). Author of symphonic poems (*My Country*), piano music (polkas, Czech dances), chamber music (*From My Life*).



Antonín Dvořák *1841 – †1904

Composer, author of piano music (waltzes, humoresques, Slavonic Dances), string music, songs and choral works, chamber and concertos, oratorios and cantatas (*Stabat Mater*, *Requiem*), symphonies, symphonic poems and operas (*Rusalka*, *The Jacobin*, *Kate and the Devil*). In 1892 - 1895 Dvořák headed the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York. During that period he created his famous *Symphony No. 9* in E minor known as "From the New World" (a recording of *Symphony No. 9* accompanied Apollo 11 crew during the first Moon landing mission in 1969).



Alfons Mucha *1860 – †1939

Painter and graphic artist, lived in Paris and the United States from 1888, returned to Prague in 1910. Mucha's graphic works, book illustrations, furniture and jewellery designs are supreme examples of Art Nouveau. Especially famous are his Sarah Bernhardt posters and Tiffany jewellery designs. His "Slav Epic" series of twenty monumental paintings is on display at the National Gallery in Prague.



František Kupka *1871 – †1957

Painter, graphic artist, illustrator, pioneer of abstract painting. Kupka's non-figural paintings play with phased and rotational movement, colour harmony, space and the structure and movement of organic mass (*Little Girl with Ball*, *Amorpha: Fugue in Two Colours*). Kupka sought to express the natural order of being and its processes (*Cosmic Spring*); later he turned toward geometric abstraction (*Abstract Painting*). Kupka lived in France and gained recognition only after his death.



Emmy Destinn *1878 – †1930

Opera singer, born Emilie Pavlína Kittlová, took her stage name from her voice teacher. Performed at leading opera houses including London's Covent Garden and the Metropolitan Opera in New York, where she partnered the famous Enrico Caruso. On returning home at the beginning of World War I in 1914, Destinn was suspected of espionage and put under police surveillance because of her Czech patriotism. In later years she lived quietly at her chateau in Stráž nad Nežárkou, only rarely performing in public.



Franz Kafka *1883 – †1924

Writer of German-Jewish origin, born in Prague. Virtually unknown during his lifetime, he achieved great posthumous fame. In his last will he asked that his unpublished works be destroyed; however, his friend, the literary critic Max Brod, published them. The main theme of Kafka's work is a sense of discord, exclusion, isolation, alienation and fluidity of time and space. Kafka is the author of a number of short stories (*The Metamorphosis*, *The Judgement*) and novels (*America*, *The Trial*, *The Castle*). He died of tuberculosis.



Karel Čapek *1890 – †1938

Writer, playwright, journalist, translator, aesthetician, philosopher. The author of utopian novels (*The Absolute at Large*, *Krakatit*), short detective stories (*Stories from a Pocket*), utopian and fantastic plays (*The Makropulos Affair*, *Pictures from the Insects' Life*), travel books, essays and children's books (*Nine Fairy Tales*, *Dashenka or the Life of a Puppy*). Čapek invented the word "robot" for his play *R.U.R.*



Jaroslav Heyrovský *1890 – †1967

Physical chemist, recipient of the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1959; invented the polarograph (a device automatically recording current voltage curves) in 1924. Recipient of many honours and awards, including honorary doctorates from Dresden, Marseille, Paris and Warsaw; honorary member of academies of sciences in the United States, India, Hungary and Poland. Founder of the Polarography Institute (now incorporated in the Jaroslav Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic)



Jaroslav Seifert *1901 – †1986

Poet, awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1984 (the second Czechoslovak Nobel prize recipient after Jaroslav Heyrovský). Gained fame with poems expressing wonder at the beauties and values of the world (*The Apple from Your Lap*, *The Hands of Venus*). Forced to withdraw from public life after the 1948 Communist coup. In his later works Seifert reflected on the final affairs of man, the value and transience of life (*The Plague Column*, *To Be a Poet*, memoirs *All Beauty of the World*).



Otto Wichterle *1913 – †1998

Chemist, inventor of gel contact lenses and of the first Czechoslovak synthetic fibre, founder of the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry in Prague. Joined the research institute at Baťa Company in Zlín in 1940, developed the polyamide fibre (manufactured under the trade name "silon" since the 1950's). Otto Wichterle invented hydrogel contact lenses in 1961.



Jiří Kolář *1914 – †2002

Poet, artist, translator. Banned from publishing his works after the 1948 Communist coup. Moved to Paris in 1981, provided financial support to blacklisted artists at home. Author of poetry collections (*Odes and Variations*, *Master Sun on the Poetic Arts*, *Prometheus' Liver*). As a visual artist, Kolář is particularly famous for his collages that are featured in leading collections around the world.



Emil Zátopek *1922 – †2000

The most famous Czech athlete, four-time Olympic gold medal winner, the World's Greatest Athlete (1949, 1951, and 1952) and the Czech Athlete of the Century. Won three gold medals at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics (5,000 and 10,000 metre runs and the marathon). Holder of 18 world records, voted the best athlete of the 20th century in 1997. His wife Dana Zátopková won the Olympic gold medal in javelin throw in 1952.



Milan Kundera *1929

Writer, poet, playwright and translator. Began by writing poetry, moved on to philosophical short stories and novels (*Laughable Loves*, *The Joke*, *The Farewell Waltz*, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*). His best works written abroad are the novels *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1982) and *Immortality* (1988) exploring the problems of responsibility and inner and outer freedom.



Miloš Forman *1932

Director, screenwriter and actor. His many successful films include the 1974 adaptation of Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Oscar winner in five categories) and *Amadeus* (Oscar winner in eight categories, including both main categories).



Václav Havel *1936 – †2011

Playwright, essayist, critic of Communism and politician. The ninth (and last) president of Czechoslovakia (1889-1992) and the first president of the Czech Republic (1993-2003).



Madeleine K. Albright *1937

Politician, born in Prague, moved with her family to the United States after the 1948 Communist coup. Graduated from Columbia University. Lectured at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service under the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations. United States ambassador to the United Nations during President Clinton's first term, Secretary of State during his second term.



Eva Jiřičná *1939

Renowned Czech architect, famous particularly for her interior designs using metal-and-glass structures. Eva Jiřičná runs her own architectural practice in London with an associated office in Prague. Since 1996 she has been professor and head of the Department of Architecture at the University of Applied Arts in Prague. Her best known projects in the Czech Republic are the Orangery in the Prague Castle's Royal Garden and the renovation of Saint Anna Church in Prague; foreign projects include, for example, the entrance and reception area of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Eva Jiřičná has been elected a Royal Academician by the Royal Academy of Arts and made honorary fellow of the American Institute of Architects. She has received many awards and honours including the honour of Commander of the British Empire.



Jiří Kylián *1947

Dancer and choreographer. Graduate of the Royal Ballet School in London, choreographer and artistic director of the Netherlands Dance Theater in The Hague. His best known works include the *Intimate Pages*, *Sinfonietta*, *Glagolitic Mass* (Leoš Janáček), *Fieldmass* (Bohuslav Martinů). Received the Nijinsky Award for Choreographer of the Year and Best Choreography of the Year in 2000. Knight of the French Order of the Legion of Honour.



Martina Navrátilová *1956

Born in Czechoslovakia, emigrated to the United States in 1975. Considered one of the greatest women tennis players of all time. Winner of 59 Grand Slam tournaments, 18 singles titles (including nine Wimbledon titles), 31 women's doubles and 10 mixed doubles titles, which makes her the best player of the Open Era.



Jaromír Jágr *1972

Hockey player, considered one of the world's greatest players. Inducted in the Triple Gold Club (group of hockey players and coaches who have won the Olympic Games, World Championship and the Stanley Cup) in 2005.

TRADITIONAL CZECH BRANDS



Barum Continental, spol. s r. o.

Largest Czech tire manufacturer, Europe's largest manufacturer of passenger car tires since 1999. Merged with Continental AG, one of the leading companies in its field in the world, in 1993. Barum Continental successfully combines tradition and experience with modern trends and business strategy. The history of tire production in the Zlín Region dates back to the 1930's when Bata shoemakers started producing tires for their own company trucks.
www.conti-online.cz
www.barum-online.cz



České aerolinie, a. s.

Established in 1923, Czech Airlines is one of the oldest European air carriers. Cooperation with partners in the Sky Team alliance enables it to provide better services and more benefits to travellers at more places worldwide. The benefits include the possibility to earn miles on a single frequent flyer account with several different carriers, and a guaranteed standard of services with all Sky Team members. The high quality and reliability of service has earned Czech Airlines many awards such as "The Best Airline in Central and Eastern Europe" and ranking among the top eight airlines of the world. The Czech Airlines fleet consists of Airbus and ATR 72 turboprop aircraft.
www.czechairlines.com



Budějovický Budvar, n. p.

Budějovický Budvar, n. p.
The history of brewing beer in České Budějovice (formerly called Budiwoy or Budweis) dates back to 1265 when King Přemysl Ottokar II founded the town and granted it brewing rights. The 19th century industrial revolution brought new fermentation methods (bottom-fermenting), new machinery and the rise of large industrial breweries. During this era, the Bohemian Joint-Stock Brewery, direct predecessor of Budějovický Budvar, was established in České Budějovice in 1895. Budějovický Budvar is best known for its Czech Premium Lager, exported to fifty countries of the world (the largest markets are Germany, Great Britain, Slovakia, Austria and Russia). The original inimitable flavour and outstanding quality of this lager are guaranteed by its original recipe, the ninety-day lagering process, and 700 years of brewing tradition. "Budweiser Beer" and "České Budějovice Beer" are geographical indications protected by the European Union. This type of official protection is extended to products with an excellent international reputation and long tradition.
www.budvar.cz



Moser, a. s.

The Moser company was founded in Karlovy Vary in 1857 by Ludwig Moser, a glass engraver and talented businessman. Moser glassware has been used at royal courts and presidential palaces and received many awards at international exhibitions. The lead-free glass with traditional sophisticated decoration makes Moser stand out in the international glass market. The blown, hand-engraved and gilded Paula and Splendid sets are just as attractive today as when they were designed at the turn of the 20th century. Visitors to the glassworks can admire the fine craftsmanship and premium quality of Moser glassware. The company's products can be bought at Moser retail shops in Karlovy Vary, Prague, Brno and Český Krumlov.
www.moser-glass.com



Koh-i-noor Hardtmuth, a. s.

Currently one of the world's largest producers and distributors of high-quality art, school and office supplies. KOH-I-NOOR HARDTMUTH was founded by Josef Hardtmuth in Vienna in 1790 to produce pencil leads. The company relocated to České Budějovice in 1848 and continued to broaden its product line. Today, KOH-I-NOOR HARDTMUTH manufactures a full range of stationery products at its own facilities in the Czech Republic and abroad, including a printing factory, rubber factory and a tool plant producing injection and blow moulds.
www.koh-i-noor.eu



Škoda Auto Mladá Boleslav, a. s.

Established in 1895, the family business of Laurin and Klement in Mladá Boleslav originally produced bicycles, motorcycles and, starting in 1905, automobiles. The company merged with Škoda Plzeň in 1925 and began to expand rapidly, producing cars with many fine details and achieving success at international races. In 1991 Škoda Auto returned to the international market as part of the Volkswagen Group. Today it enjoys a prominent standing on the market and sells over 550,000 of its Fabia, Octavia, Superb and Roomster models each year. Over 80 per cent of these cars are exported to more than 90 countries around the world, and Škoda Auto remains the country's largest exporter.
www.skoda-auto.com



Plzeňský Prazdroj, a. s.

A leading brewery in Central and Eastern Europe, its products can be purchased in almost fifty countries around the world. Plzeňský Prazdroj supplies the Czech and foreign markets with Pilsner Urquell, Gambrinus, Radegast and Velkopopovický Kozel beer. Plzeňský Prazdroj is part of the SABMiller plc group, the world's second largest brewing company. The long tradition of beer brewing in Plzeň (Pilsen) dates back to the founding of the town at the end of the 13th century. The "Pilsner Bier" brand name was registered with the Plzeň Chamber of Commerce and Trade in 1859; the new Prazdroj/Urquell mark was created in 1898. The Plzeňský Prazdroj joint-stock company was established in the 1990's and in 1999 it became part of South African Breweries plc. The merger of Plzeňský Prazdroj, a.s. with Pivovar Radegast, a.s. and Pivovar Velké Popovice, a.s. was approved in the same year and completed in 2002.
www.prazdroj.cz



Baťa, a. s. ČR

The Baťa brand is firmly associated with the town of Zlín where Tomáš Baťa and his siblings started a footwear business in 1894. Thanks to Tomáš Baťa's business acumen the company soon became one of the world's leading footwear manufacturers. After an absence of over fifty years, the company returned to the country in 1992. Today it has a sales division in Zlín and a production division in Dolní Němčí. Its products are sold in a network of 80 retail shops across the Czech Republic. The largest Baťa store in Europe is on Wenceslas Square in Prague. Baťa is a leading global brand; the company sells its products in over 4,700 own shops in 68 countries around the world and employs over 50,000 people at 75 production facilities and retail locations.
www.bata.cz

Investment environment in the Czech Republic

▶ The Czech Republic has attracted the interest of many foreign investors and is now well on its way to become an ideal location for sophisticated investment. Over the past decade, the structure of incoming FDI has changed in response to the country's changing economic environment. In contrast to the situation in the 1990's when FDI went mainly into the manufacturing sector, today's investors are drawn to more sophisticated alternatives. In 2013 CzechInvest (the government agency responsible for incoming FDI) brokered 108 investment projects totalling CZK 47.949 billion and including many projects with high added value. CzechInvest supports primarily FDI projects in the following sectors:

- aeronautics industry
- precision engineering
- electrotechnology and electronics
- biotechnology and medical technology
- nanotechnology and material engineering
- energy
- IT, software development
- business support services

According to the Ernst&Young 2013 European Attractiveness Survey, the Czech Republic ranks 13th in Europe by FDI projects and 12th by FDI job creation. The Czech Republic has been especially successful in attracting FDI in the automotive industry. The special advantage of this sector is that it opens up opportunities for a wide range of suppliers, ranging from plastics and electronics to textile manufacturers, and drives the demand for advanced technologies. Concentration of automotive suppliers creates room for projects of smaller scale but great technological significance.

The Czech Republic's investment climate has achieved good rankings in other surveys – the Pardubice region was rated the top Eastern European Region in the fDi Magazine's "European Cities and Regions of the Future" (March 2014), and the Czech Republic came second in the "Global Best to Invest" survey of the Site Selection magazine (United States, May 2014) .

System of investment incentives in the Czech Republic

Between 1998 and 2014, the Czech Republic agreed to grant investment incentives to 829 investors. The total volume of FDI pledged by investors amounted to over EUR 22.5 billion. Domestic and foreign companies promised to create over 157,000 new jobs. The incentives went mainly to the automotive sector, engineering, plastics and other high-tech industries. An amendment to the Investment Incentives Act (Act No. 72/2000) which took effect on 12 July 2012 makes the incentives available to investors launching or expanding production in the manufacturing sector, as well as to technology centres and business support services centres. The amendment also introduces the concept of "strategic investment projects".



Supported Areas

- Industry
Launching or expanding production in the manufacturing sector
- Technology centres
Building or expanding research and development centres
- Business support services centres
Launching or expanding
 - shared services centres
 - software development centres
 - high-tech repair centres

Forms of investment incentives

Tax incentive	Full corporate income tax relief for ten years for new companies;
	partial corporate income tax relief for ten years for existing companies
Job creation grant	A cash grant per one newly created job
Training and retraining grant	A cash grant for the training and retraining of new employees
Cash grant on capital investment	Support provided only in the case of strategic investments into manufacturing and technology centre projects
Transfer of land at favourable prices	Transfer of state-owned land at favourable prices

Corporate income tax relief

Full or partial corporate income tax reliefs are granted for a period of ten years. Investors who set up a new company in the Czech Republic can claim a full corporate income tax relief. Partial corporate income tax reliefs are available to investors who expand an existing company. The tax relief must not exceed the ceiling of state aid. The current corporate income tax rate is 19 per cent.

Job creation grants and training and retraining grants

The job creation grant is CZK 200,000 per one newly created job. The training and retraining grant is equivalent to 25 per cent of total training and retraining costs in the case of large companies, 35 per cent of total training and retraining costs in the case of medium-sized companies, and 45 per cent of total training and retaining costs in the case of small companies. These cash grants are available only to companies in regions where the unemployment rate is at least 50 per cent higher than the Czech Republic's average unemployment rate.

Cash grants for capital investment

This form of support is provided only in the case of strategic investments in the manufacturing sector and in technology centres. The cash grant can cover up to 5 per cent of eligible costs. It must not exceed the ceiling for state aid and is subject to prior approval by the Czech government.

Transfer of land at favourable prices

Land, including land with infrastructure, owned by the government, by a government organization or by a municipality can be transferred at a favourable price, subject to the consent of the owner of such land. In this case, the difference between the purchase price and market price is deemed to constitute an investment incentive.

Eligibility criteria

Investors applying for any type of investment incentives must not begin to implement their project (acquire assets, order equipment, start construction work, etc.) before receiving a notice from CzechInvest confirming the registration of the project. The assets and jobs covered by the incentive must remain in place throughout the period during which the investor benefits from state aid (but not for less than five years). In addition, there are special eligibility criteria set for each Supported Area. The criteria must be fulfilled within three years from the date of the notice informing the investor that the government agrees to grant the investment incentive.

Manufacturing industry – general eligibility criteria

The main eligibility criterion is the amount of investment into long-term tangible and intangible assets. The required minimum investment depends on the region:

- Region I* – minimum investment CZK 50 million, of which at least CZK 25 million must be invested in new machinery
- Region II – minimum investment CZK 100 million, of which at least CZK 50 million must be invested in new machinery

*Regions I are regions with maximum state-aid intensity. Regions II are all other regions.

At least half of the minimum investment must be financed from the investor's own capital. A "strategic investment" is an investment wherein the minimum amount invested in long-term tangible and intangible assets reaches CZK 500 million, of which at least CZK 250 million is invested in new machinery and at least 500 new jobs are created.

Technology centres – general eligibility criteria

The main criteria for technology centres are:

- The minimum investment into long-term tangible and intangible assets is CZK 10 million, of which at least CZK 5 million must be invested in new machinery
- At least half of the minimum investment must be financed from the investor's own capital.
- At least 40 new jobs must be created

A "strategic investment" in the area of technology centres is an investment wherein the minimum amount invested in long-term tangible and intangible assets reaches CZK 200 million, of which at least CZK 100 million is invested in new machinery and at least 120 new jobs are created.

Business support services centres – general eligibility criteria

The centre must create at least 40 new jobs (in the case of software development centres) or at least 100 new jobs (in the case of other business support services centres).

State aid

State aid includes tax incentives, job creation grants and cash grants for capital investment; in cases where state-owned land is transferred at favourable prices, the difference between the purchase price and market price of the land also counts as "state aid". Training and retraining grants are not counted against the ceiling for state aid. The ceiling for state aid is 25 per cent of total eligible costs. No investment incentives can be claimed for investments made in the territory of the Capital City of Prague.

Eligible costs

The "eligible costs" from which the maximum state aid intensity is calculated are either long-term assets (in cases where the value of machinery represents at least half of the value of acquired assets) or two years' gross wages for each newly created job. The investor must select one of these options; in the case of investments in manufacturing industry, the only eligible cost is the cost of long-term assets.

www.czechinvest.org
www.mpo.cz



The Czech Republic is a child-friendly country

▶ According to latest surveys, more than three quarters of Czech families with children spend nearly every weekend together. Over half of them prefer active weekends, trekking and hiking, biking and camping, visiting castles and chateaux. Visitors from abroad will easily find opportunities for water-based sports and recreation, visits to amusement parks, museums and galleries, zoos and botanical gardens, observatories and open-air museums. The country offers a wide range of activities that both parents and children will enjoy. The Czech Republic has more than two thousand castles, castle ruins, chateaux and manors, almost each of them associated with some legend or fairy tale. And children do love fairy tales. Castle guides will tell exciting stories and stage costumed tours to give the children an authentic experience. During evening ghost tours the children will meet the legendary White Lady or hunt for treasure in secret passages. Czech castles and chateaux often stage historic feasts where children can meet princesses, kings and knights.

www.kudyznudy.cz



OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDY THE CZECH LANGUAGE

The Czech language is an Indo-European language belonging to the Slavic languages subgroup.

Information on Czech language courses for foreigners and Czechs living abroad:

www.msmt.cz
www.dzs.cz
www.mzv.cz



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