



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic

Diplomatic Protocol Handbook II.

Ceremonies, Rules and Procedures

Diplomatic Protocol
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Introduction

The aim of this guidance is to promote common standards for the organisation of high-level visits and formal events in the Czech Republic. The guidance builds on internationally recognised protocol and ceremonial rules and adapts them to the local situation and established practice.

The Czech Republic does not have a State Protocol service. Each public institution has its own independent protocol department, which means that it is very important for everybody to have clear common standards and to be able to work effectively together.

The role of the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic is to set the common standards and coordinate the practice. Special responsibilities of the Diplomatic Protocol include administering the system of privileges and immunities accorded to diplomatic missions, consular posts and offices of international organisations in the Czech Republic, and preventing abuses of diplomatic privileges and immunities.

This guidance is the result of cooperation between the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Protocol of the Office of the President of the Republic, the Independent Protocol Unit of the Chancellery of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, the Protocol Unit of the President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, and the Protocol and Foreign Relations Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

1 General rules

1.1 Senior visitors

For the purposes of this guidance, the term “top level visitors” refers to counterparts of the President of the Czech Republic, President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Arrangements made for top level visitors, including protocol and support services, are the responsibility of the protocol department of the host institution. The protocol department is expected to consult and cooperate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the diplomatic mission of the country concerned, and the Czech diplomatic mission accredited to the country concerned. The same rule applies when a top level Czech official is to travel abroad.

1.2 Types of visits

Visits are categorised according to their nature as official, working, and private visits.

The length of the visit depends on many factors, including the availability of the host and of the visitor, reciprocity, and the level of bilateral relations.

(a) An official visit is initiated by an invitation from the visitor’s Czech counterpart. An official visit by a Head of State is a state visit.

The visitor is met at the airport/railway station by a representative of the host, the head of the Czech diplomatic mission in the visitor’s country, the head of the country’s diplomatic mission in the Czech Republic, and the head of the host institution’s protocol department. Visitors arriving by car are met by protocol officers at the border crossing point.

Heads of State are welcomed with military honours in the First Courtyard of Prague Castle. Prime Ministers are welcomed at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

In addition to a meeting with the host, the visitor is expected to make courtesy calls on other top level Czech officials.

The normal length of an official visit is two or three days.

Generally, the protocol and ceremonial side of an official visit should respect the rules of the host country. This means that Czech rules of protocol apply in any case; however, it is also necessary to take into account the visitor’s wishes. Visitors may raise issues of personal as well as political nature (medical issues, traditional dress codes, religious and other customs). Any protocol implications should be discussed during planning meetings.

(b) A working visit is also initiated by an invitation from the visitor's Czech counterpart. Courtesy calls on top level Czech officials are not envisaged.

A working visit is normally shorter than an official visit (as a rule it takes one day) and the visiting delegation is smaller.

The category of working visits includes participation by top level officials in conferences, meetings of international organisations and other political, economic and cultural events.

(c) Any other visits by top level officials fall into the category of private visits. Normally there are no ceremonies and no courtesy calls. No personnel is provided to accompany the visitor.

However, the protocol department of the host institution is expected to assist the diplomatic mission of the visitor's country as necessary in organising the visit and addressing any protocol issues.

2 Organisation of visits

The persons arriving with the visitor fall into two categories: delegation and accompanying persons.

2.1 Delegation

The delegation includes the visitor and other official participants (politicians and senior officials). The partner institution is expected to provide a delegation list in advance. The list should be sent through the diplomatic mission of the visitor's country in the Czech Republic, or through the Czech diplomatic mission in the visitor's country.

The Czech Government may agree to meet some costs of the delegation (such as the VIP lounge at the airport, transport, and accommodation). In such case, the agreement is confirmed in a government resolution.

The resolution sets the limit for the costs for which the Government assumes responsibility. The Government determines these limits on a case by case basis with reference to reciprocity (the maximum admissible amount is set in Government Resolution No. 894 of 5 December 2012 concerning coordination of foreign travel of government members and financing of top level visits).

The resolution also sets out the maximum number of eligible persons (members of the delegation and accompanying persons) whose costs will be met on this basis. The visitor's country is responsible for any costs in excess of the set limit.

If the visit is not covered by a government resolution, the host institution or the visitor's country as at case may be assumes responsibility for the costs.

There is a separate mechanism for costs incurred by parliamentary delegations. The number of eligible members of the delegation is set by the Chancellery of the Senate or, as appropriate, the Office of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

2.2 Accompanying persons

The term "accompanying persons" refers to persons with organisational, support and logistics roles (junior government officials, protocol officers, interpreters, medical personnel, technical personnel, security officers, etc.).

The visitor's country is expected to assume responsibility for expenses incurred by accompanying persons (accommodation, meals, other services) in excess of the set limit.

2.3 Transport

The host institution provides transport during the official programme. The number of persons to be provided with transport should be agreed at planning meetings with reference to reciprocity. This agreement is then confirmed in the government resolution covering the visit (where applicable).

The Protection Service of the Police of the Czech Republic will assume responsibility for the transport of the top level visitor, if he/she falls into the category of "Protected Persons" and for accompanying security officers, in accordance with the international obligations of the Czech Republic. The Protection Service will provide a vehicle and bear the costs.

The visitor's country is expected to assume responsibility for the transport for any other accompanying persons, including journalists, in excess of the set limit.

2.4 Security

Top level visitors are provided with the necessary arrangements of protective security in accordance with the Czech Republic's international obligations¹. The measures taken to protect the visitor are commensurate to the risks facing the visitor in the Czech Republic.

Security arrangements should be agreed in advance between the protocol department of the host institution and the Protection Service of the Czech Republic Police.

The visitor's country is expected to obtain in advance firearm import permits for its security officers, and a permit to use mobile radio equipment in the Czech Republic (where appropriate). Requests for these permits should be directed to the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

2.5 Gifts

Czech rules of protocol permit the exchange of gifts between principals during official visits (unless otherwise agreed).

Gifts may be exchanged directly or through protocol departments. Heads of State are expected to exchange gifts strictly through protocol departments.

2.5 Information on the programme

The host institution should prepare a detailed programme booklet in the appropriate language (normally in English, or in German or French). The booklet also includes a list of members of the delegations and other persons attending meetings, addresses of the institutions concerned, motorcade seating plan, important telephone numbers, and other information as necessary.

The delegation may receive the booklets on arrival from a protocol officer, or in advance through the diplomatic mission of the visitor's country.

The booklets should be also distributed to the Czech delegation, other involved persons and institutions, Czech security officers and support staff (drivers, control room officers).

2.7 Spouse programme

A partner (spouse) accompanying the head of the delegation during an official visit is not expected to participate in all parts of the programme (as a rule the participation is limited to arrival and departure ceremonies, and social events). The host institution should prepare a separate spouse programme (typically a sightseeing tour) unless otherwise agreed. The spouse's personal wishes and interests should be taken into account, depending on the capacities of the host institution. The spouse is accompanied during the separate programme by the host institution's protocol officer and, if possible, by the spouse of the Czech principal (another person may be asked to perform this duty).

¹Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, published in the Czech Republic Official Journal [*Sbírka zákonů*], Notice No. 131/1978.

2.8 Engagements outside the capital

Engagements outside the capital are organised by the host institution's protocol department in cooperation with the local authorities and with the diplomatic mission (or consular post) of the visitor's country. The protocol side should respect the nature of the engagement (official, working, or private). The protocol department should choose a suitable person to accompany the visitor. Courtesy calls on senior local officials (regional governor, head of regional office, mayor) are expected in the case of official and working visits.

2.9 Media coverage

The host institution's press department should assume responsibility for media coverage of the visit. The press department is expected to cooperate with the protocol department and the diplomatic mission of the visitor's country.

Issues such as press conferences, briefings, photo opportunities, preferred languages, and interpreting modalities should be discussed at planning meetings between press officers and the visitor's side.

2.10 Programme for accompanying business missions and personalities

Programme for groups accompanying the delegation (business missions, personalities from the cultural and academic sectors) is arranged by the respective partner institutions (e.g. Ministry of Industry and Trade, Czech Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic) and specialised departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in cooperation with the diplomatic mission of the visitor's country.

2.11 Flags

The rules for the use of the national flag of the Czech Republic are set out in Act No. 352/2001 concerning state symbols of the Czech Republic as amended.

Flags of the Czech Republic and the visitor's country should be flown on buildings (host institution, the visitor's temporary residence) and at the airport/railway station. A car pennant should be flown on the principal's car, and table flags may be used at meetings.

For guidance on the use of flags in the Czech Republic see Petr Exner, Pavel Fojtík, Zbyšek Svoboda: *Vlajky, prapory a jejich používání, Základní pravidla pro vyvěšování vlajek na území České republiky*, Libea s.r.o., 2004, 2nd edition 2013 (available on the Internet).

3 Formal and state events, social events attended by the diplomatic corps

3.1 National Day of the Czech Republic

Resident and non-resident Heads of Mission accredited to the Czech Republic and their partners are received by the President of the Republic and his spouse at Prague Castle on the National Day of the Czech Republic (28 October, Foundation of the Independent Czechoslovak State).

Heads of Mission are also invited to attend the state honours ceremony, followed by a reception, at Prague Castle in the evening of 28 October.

National Day celebrations are organised by the Protocol of the Office of the President of the Republic in cooperation with the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

The Director of the Diplomatic Protocol is present when the President receives the diplomatic corps, and at the state honours ceremony and evening reception.

3.2 Inauguration of the President of the Czech Republic

In accordance with Article 59 of the Constitution of the Czech Republic, the new President must take an oath of office at a joint session of the two parliamentary chambers. The joint session takes place in the Vladislav Hall at Prague Castle. The procedure is set out in the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

Invited guests include representatives of foreign States and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Czech Republic.

The inauguration ceremony is organised jointly by the Office of the President of the Republic, the Chancellery of the Senate of the Czech Parliament and the Office of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament, in cooperation with the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

3.3 Christmas and New Year events for the diplomatic corps

Christmas and New Year events for the diplomatic corps are hosted by the Presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic coordinates the dates and participates in the organisation together with the protocol departments concerned. The Director and staff of the Diplomatic Protocol are present at the events.

4 State honours of the Czech Republic

The President of the Republic awards state honours (orders and medals) on the National Day of the Czech Republic – 28 October, Foundation of the Independent Czechoslovak State. Heads of Mission accredited to the Czech Republic and their partners are invited to the state honours ceremony.

5 State funeral

State funerals are held to honour distinguished representatives of the Czech Republic. There are no established rules of protocol and ceremonial rules.

The Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic informs the diplomatic corps by a verbal note about the death and the funeral arrangements.

The condolence book is opened and there is specified time during which condolences can be expressed.

No social events are allowed during national days of mourning.

6 Order of precedence

The order of precedence in the Czech Republic is based on the principle that elected officials take precedence over appointed ones, and officials with nationwide powers take precedence over local ones. The order of precedence reflects international customary rules as well as established practice dating back to pre-war Czechoslovakia.

6.1 Order of precedence in the Czech Republic

1. President of the Republic
2. President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
3. President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
4. Prime Minister of the Czech Republic
5. President of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic
6. President of the Supreme Court, President of the Supreme Administrative Court
7. Vice-Presidents of the Senate
8. Vice-Presidents of the Chamber of Deputies
9. Deputy Prime Ministers
10. Members of the Government of the Czech Republic
11. Diplomatic corps (Dean, Heads of Missions)
12. Senators
13. Deputies
14. Members of the European Parliament elected in the Czech Republic

7 The Dean and the diplomatic corps

The order of precedence of Heads of Missions is set out in Article 16 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The established practice in the Czech Republic (adopted upon the foundation of independent Czechoslovakia in 1918) is to recognise the Apostolic Nuncio as the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. This practice is consistent with Article 16 (3) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. If necessary due to the Dean's absence or other circumstances, the Dean may be temporarily represented by the longest-accredited resident Ambassador.

The Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic keeps the list of precedence of Heads of Missions in the Czech Republic, and the Diplomatic List.

The main partner for the diplomatic corps as a collective body is the Diplomatic Protocol, namely its Director.

7.1 Order of precedence of the diplomatic and consular corps

1. Dean (Apostolic Nuncio)
2. Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
4. Chargés d'Affaires *en pied*
5. Chargés d'Affaires *ad interim*
7. Consuls General
8. Consuls
9. Honorary Consuls General
10. Honorary Consuls

The order of precedence within each group depends on the dates of presentation of credentials, first arrival or taking up duties in the Czech Republic.

8 Heads of Missions and other persons whose nomination is subject to the prior consent of the receiving State

8.1 Heads of Diplomatic Missions

According to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the nomination of a new Head of Mission is subject to the prior consent of the receiving State (*agrément*). Requests for *agrément* must be submitted by the diplomatic mission or Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending State in the form of a verbal note addressed to the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The verbal note is normally presented in person. The request must include the nominee's full name, exact date and place of birth and the nominee's structured curriculum vitae.

The time for a response takes into account reciprocity. The Diplomatic Protocol will inform the diplomatic mission by a verbal note when the *agrément* is granted.

8.2 Defence Attachés and Police Attachés

Similar rules apply to Military and Air Attachés, Defence Attachés, and to their assistants and adjutants (holders of diplomatic passports). Requests for consent to the nomination must be presented to the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in the form of a verbal note. The request must include the nominee's full name, exact date and place of birth and the nominee's structured curriculum vitae.

The above applies also in the case of Police Attachés.

8.3 Heads of Consular Posts

According to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, nominations of heads of consular posts headed by career consular officers and honorary consular officers are subject to the prior consent of the receiving State. Requests must be submitted by the diplomatic mission or Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending State in the form of a verbal note. Requests concerning career consular officers must be addressed to the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic; requests concerning honorary consular officers must be addressed to the Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The request must include the nominee's full name, exact date and place of birth and the nominee's structured curriculum vitae.

Once the consent is granted, the sending State sends the nominee's consular commission to the Consular Department or Diplomatic protocol, respectively, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The head of the consular post may take up his/her functions on receiving an exequatur.

9 Heads of Missions: Taking up duties in the Czech Republic

9.1 Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

9.1.1 First arrival

The diplomatic mission must inform Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in advance of the arrival of an Ambassador-designate. The information should be provided in verbal note stating the date and hour of the arrival, means of transport, and the names of all persons accompanying the Ambassador-designate.

On arrival at Václav Havel Airport Prague, the Ambassador-designate will be met by a Diplomatic Protocol officer if the arrival is on a working day between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic will book a VIP lounge at the airport.²

If the arrival is outside the above mentioned hours, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic will only book a VIP lounge. The Ambassador-designate will be formally welcomed by the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol during the initial call at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the same rule applies when the Ambassador-designate arrives by car or by rail).

9.1.2 Initial call on the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol, presentation of copies of the Letter of Credence

When the Ambassador-designate arrives, the diplomatic mission must immediately contact the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and arrange the initial call on the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol. During the call the Ambassador-designate presents the copies of his/her Letter of Credence and his/her predecessor's Letter of Recall. The Ambassador-designate is briefed on the ceremonial procedure for the presentation of credentials to the President of the Republic at Prague Castle (see *Annex*).

9.1.3 Introductory calls to be made by Ambassadors-designate

After presenting copies of the Letter of Credence to the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol, the Ambassador-designate should make the following introductory calls:

(a) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

- director of the appropriate department responsible for bilateral relations
- head of the appropriate section
- any other senior officials as appropriate (except for the political heads of the Ministry)³

² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic pays for services provided in the lounge to the Ambassador-designate and accompanying family members.

³ Ambassadors-designate should maintain only working level contacts in the receiving State. They should avoid contacts with political bodies and politicians (members of government, members of parliament and senior regional officials) and refrain from speaking to the media in an official capacity.

(b) Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

The Ambassador-designate should call on the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps after presenting the copies of credentials. The diplomatic mission is expected to arrange the call directly with the Apostolic Nunciature.

Before presenting credentials to the President of the Republic, Ambassadors-designate may attend social events hosted by members of the diplomatic corps. However, they should not host any social events themselves, and they should not attend official events organised by Czech senior officials and government institutions.

9.1.4 Introductory calls to be made after presenting the Letter of Credence

Following presentation of the Letter of Credence to the President of the Republic, the Diplomatic Protocol will arrange the Ambassador's introductory call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The diplomatic mission is expected to arrange any other introductory calls directly with authorities and institutions concerned.

9.2 Chargé d'Affaires

A Chargé d'Affaires taking up the duties of Head of Mission is expected to immediately call on the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and present a *lettre de cabinet* or a verbal note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the sending State confirming the appointment.

The Diplomatic Protocol will arrange an introductory call on a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Chargé d'Affaires is not required to make any other introductory calls, but he/she may choose to do so. In such case, the diplomatic mission is expected to arrange the calls directly.

10 Departure of the Head of Mission

10.1 Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

10.1.1. Notification of departure

The diplomatic mission must inform Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in advance of the planned departure of an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. The information should be provided in verbal note stating the date of the Ambassador's departure.

10.1.2 Farewell calls

A departing Ambassador should make the following farewell calls:

(a) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic:

- Minister of Foreign Affairs / Deputy Minister
- head of the appropriate section
- Director of the Diplomatic Protocol
- director of the appropriate department responsible for bilateral relations

The Diplomatic Protocol will arrange the farewell call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The diplomatic mission is expected to arrange the other calls directly with the secretariats of the officials concerned.

(b) Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

The diplomatic mission is expected to arrange the call directly with the Apostolic Nunciature.

(c) President of the Republic

The diplomatic mission may contact the Office of the President of the Republic to seek a farewell call. If the departing Ambassador wishes to call on other senior officials, the mission should arrange the calls directly with the competent departments of the institutions concerned.

10.1.3 Departure of an Ambassador

The protocol side of the departure of an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary is the same as on the Ambassador's arrival.

10.2 Departure of a Chargé d'Affaires

A departing Chargé d'Affaires should make a farewell call on the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol.

11 Main protocol departments in the Czech Republic

Each government institution has a protocol department responsible for organising visits to the institution concerned. There is no central State Protocol service.

11.1 Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

- Cooperates with the appropriate departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in organising visits by Ministers of Foreign Affairs (and visitors of equivalent status) and representatives of some international organisations;
- Assists the protocol departments of the Office of the President of the Republic, the Government Office and the Parliament of the Czech Republic in organising visits by Heads of State, Government and Parliament;
- Assumes responsibility for the protocol side of meetings and other activities of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, including visits abroad;
- Takes charge of documentation and formalities required from Czech ambassadors and diplomatic agents taking up their duties abroad, and from foreign ambassadors and diplomatic agents taking up their duties in the Czech Republic;
- Keeps a register of state symbols and National Days of countries with which the Czech Republic maintains diplomatic relations;
- Arranges for the delivery of private and official messages of congratulations and condolence from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other senior officials of the Czech Republic; arranges for the delivery of correspondence from foreign senior officials addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- Keeps a register of the staff of diplomatic missions and consular posts of foreign States and the staff of offices of international governmental organisations accredited to the Czech Republic; arranges for the issuing of personal identity documents to such staff and their family members; updates the Diplomatic List (www.mzv.cz/protokol);
- Administers the system of diplomatic privileges and immunities accorded to diplomatic mission and their staff under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, and other sources of international law; monitors compliance with Czech laws and regulations by persons and entities enjoying diplomatic and consular privileges and immunities.

11.2 Protocol of the Office of the President of the Republic

The Protocol of the Office of the President of the Republic is responsible for the protocol side of the programme of the President of the Republic, including the programme of the President's spouse. It prepares and organises visits by Heads of State and visitors of equivalent status (royalty, vice-presidents, etc.) in the Czech Republic and the President's visits abroad.

The Protocol of the Office of the President of the Republic administers the Czech Republic's state honours system.

The Director of the Protocol of the Office of the President of the Republic is the keeper of the State Seal of the Czech Republic.

11.3 Independent Protocol Unit of the Chancellery of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

The Independent Protocol Unit of the Chancellery of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic is responsible for the protocol side of the Senate President's meetings with the President of the Republic, President of the Chamber of Deputies, the Prime Minister and other Czech and foreign senior officials.

The Independent Protocol Unit is responsible for the protocol side of meetings with the Senate President and Vice-Presidents.

The Independent Protocol Unit makes arrangements for the participation of the Senate President and Vice-Presidents in formal and social events, and organises events hosted by the Senate President.

The Independent Protocol Unit cooperates with the Foreign Relations Department of the Senate Chancellery in organising the foreign travel of the Senate President and Vice-Presidents.

11.4 Protocol Unit of the President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

The Protocol Unit of the President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic is responsible for the protocol side of the Chamber President's meetings with the President of the Republic, President of the Senate, the Prime Minister and other Czech and foreign senior officials.

The Protocol Unit cooperates with the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Protocol of the Office of the President of the Republic, the Protocol and Foreign Relations Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, and the Independent Protocol Unit of the Chancellery of the Senate. It is responsible for formal correspondence of the Chamber President, for the protocol side of the Chamber President's meetings with ambassadors and other representatives of diplomatic missions of foreign States, and for courtesy calls made by guests of the President of the Republic, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic during official visits.

The Protocol Unit makes arrangements for the participation of the Chamber President in formal social events, and organises events hosted by the Chamber President. It organises the Chamber President's visits abroad and visits made by delegations headed by the Chamber President.

11.5 Protocol and Foreign Relations Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

The Protocol and Foreign Relations Department is responsible for the protocol side of the programme of the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, including the programme of the Prime Minister's spouse, both in the Czech Republic and during visits abroad.

12 Annexes

12.1 Presentation of credentials

An official of the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanying the Ambassador arrives at an agreed place on the day of the presentation of Credentials a few minutes before it is necessary to leave for the Prague Castle.

The Ambassador departs with the official of the Diplomatic Protocol in the car of the Office of President for the Prague Castle followed by the cars of the Mission with five diplomatic officials of the Mission as maximum.

Upon the arrival at the First Courtyard of the Prague Castle the Ambassador, having left the car, is greeted by the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol. To the tune of the ceremonial march the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol guides the Ambassador in direction towards the Presidential Standard where the Commander of the Guard of Honour reports to the Ambassador.

The officials of the Mission form a line at the side of the official of the Diplomatic Protocol.

By bowing the head the Ambassador accepts the report and together with the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol approaches the Presidential Standard, which is placed on the left, stopping about two meters from the Standard. Having shown his respect to the Standard with a moderate bow, the Ambassador listens to his/her national anthem.

To the tune of the ceremonial march, the Ambassador, accompanied by the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol, inspects the Guard of Honour, in direction towards the Matthias Gate of the Prague Castle.

Before entering the Matthias Gate the Ambassador stops to thank the Commander of the Guard of Honour. He/She does so by bowing the head.

The Ambassador accompanied by the Director of the Diplomatic Protocol walks through the Matthias Gate where the officials of the Mission and the official of the Diplomatic Protocol rejoin him/her. The whole party proceeds up the ceremonial staircase to the reception rooms of the Prague Castle.

The Ambassador and the officials of the Mission are welcomed by the Director of the Protocol of the Office of the President at the top of the staircase.

The Director of Protocol of the Office of the President guides the Ambassador and his/her party to the Throne Room and informs the President of Ambassador's arrival.

The President, accompanied by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and officials of the Office of the President, enters the Throne Room.

The Ambassador makes the following statement:

"Mr President, I have the honour to present to your hands the Letter of Credence by which(respective Head of State) has accredited me to Your Excellency as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of(respective State). At the same time, I am presenting the Letter of Recall of my predecessor."

The Ambassador advances towards the President and presents his/her Letter of Credence and the Letter of Recall of his/her predecessor.

The President receives the Letters from the Ambassador and thanks him/her with a handshake.

The Ambassador invites the President to his party and introduces the members of the Mission to the President.

The President likewise introduces the members of his party to the Ambassador.

Then, a photograph of the President and the Ambassador is taken.

Both, the President and the Ambassador, together with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the President's suite proceed to the Brožík Room where a short conversation is held. All other present in the ceremony remain in the Throne Room.

After the conversation with the President the Ambassador receives congratulations in the Throne Room. Then, the Ambassador leaves the reception rooms of the Prague Castle.

The Director of Protocol of the Office of the President bids farewell at the top of the ceremonial staircase.

The Director of the Diplomatic Protocol accompanies the Ambassador to the car and bids farewell. The Ambassador, accompanied by the official of the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, leaves the Prague Castle for his/her residence in the car of the Office of the President. The officials of the Mission follow in the cars of the Mission.