

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,
good afternoon.

It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome all of you to the Czech Embassy in Beijing on the occasion of the 101st anniversary of the establishment of our independent state – former Czechoslovakia. On the eve of the 28th October 1918, an agreement was reached and the Czechs together with the Slovaks achieved their dream of a united and independent state. At the end of 1992, this joint state was peacefully divided into two countries, and the Czech Republic has started its new history.

Within the past of 101 years, the Czech State had to deal with various complex geopolitical circumstances, situations and challenges. Today, we are very pleased and proud to be an independent country, which is a member of the European Union, which allows us to benefit from both the European unity and the European single market.

Similarly, 70 years ago, the People's Republic of China was established and former Czechoslovakia was the 5th country in the world which recognized the new Chinese state and we have immediately established diplomatic relations.

Throughout the 70 years our relations pivoted around Czech and Chinese pioneers who – disregarded the geographical distance between our nations – wanted to create new bonds and new ways of cooperation in business, art or tourism. The seven decades of partnership are full of success stories, for instance in the early days in industry and agriculture through booming cooperation and investment in automotive industry and service sectors, nowadays to IT and computing solutions provided to tech-savvy Chinese customers. Very few know that the most popular virtual reality game in China – Beat Saber – is a Czech product.

I truly hope that economic cooperation will thrive further. My goal as an ambassador is to **create more opportunities and work on delivering an “all weather” political dialogue that will allow us to keep diplomatic channels open despite road bumps along the way.**

Implementing the Strategic Partnership signed by President Zeman and President Xi in 2016 is, I believe, the best way forward and offers a clear roadmap for our relationship to develop in the future. There are high expectations on both sides to deliver tangible results in all the major areas of cooperation. I believe **creating stable economic growth, new job creation, free trade and investment opportunities and increasing the standards of living, based on a level playing field, are our joint interests.**

We have marked the 70th anniversary of the Czech-Chinese diplomatic relations by several events organized in China this year. The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra had a very successful tour in China, “Alfons Mucha - Pioneer of Art Nouveau” was introduced to the Chinese audience in Chinese museums across the country, Czech-China Contemporary Museum, an art gallery in Beijing, has continued to show the exceptional work of Czech and Chinese artists. I of course cannot name every activity as the list continues to grow every year. I sincerely hope that next year the Chinese audience will be able to enjoy more Czech art, cultural as well as musical performances. Some of the highlights will be the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra Tour 2020 and the exposition of the Czech “koruna” history in China.

Besides diplomatic channels, other sectoral as well as parliamentary direct interaction are also very crucial for implementation of wide range result oriented collaboration. Therefore it is my honour to welcome here today the Chairman of the Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport of the Czech Parliament, Professor Karel Rais and his colleagues from the delegation of the Czech Parliament.

Dear Chairman, Professor Rais, we will be glad to hear your views on the importance of education and research for our fruitful cooperation. The floor is yours.

Vladimír TOMŠÍK
October 29, 2019 in Beijing