

# **Information Booklet for Foreign Nationals Czech Republic**

**Prague 2009**



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This Information Booklet for Foreign Nationals in the Czech Republic that we are presenting to you has been updated within the framework of the Foreign Nationals Integration Concept by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic in collaboration with other ministries and non-governmental non-profit organizations. This publication is primarily intended for foreign nationals from so-called third countries, i.e. non-EU member states, EEA and Switzerland. The publication may also be of service to all those who are in contact with foreigners and wish to deepen their knowledge regarding the respective issues. The publication is not primarily intended to persons applying for international protection and those who have already been granted international protection.

The objective of this publication is not to provide a detailed and exhaustive source of all information necessary for anyone who wishes to live in the Czech Republic as this would not be possible anyway considering a limited scope of this booklet. Rather, the purpose of this publication is to provide a **comprehensive overview of basic information about the Czech Republic and provide assistance in handling everyday situations** encountered by third-country nationals in the process of their integration into the Czech society. In addition to the basic information about the Czech Republic, this booklet also deals with the structure and functioning of state administration, handling emergency situations, the school, healthcare and social care systems, issues related to employment, housing, transportation, etc. This publication also includes a list of integration centres (see Chapter 15) and selected non-governmental, non-profit organizations (NGNPO) pursuing activities in the field of foreign nationals integration (see Chapter 16).

This publication is available in both a printed and electronic format, with the electronic format available at <http://www.cizinci.cz>, Booklets and Publications Section. In addition to the Czech version, we are also planning to translate this booklet into English, Ukrainian, Russian, Vietnamese and Mongolian. This publication should serve as an easy-to-understand and practical guide referring to more detailed sources of information if the reader is seeking more detailed information on a particular topic. Considering the fact that the Czech Republic is striving to join the 21<sup>st</sup> century information society efforts, it has become increasingly common for the individual institutions and authorities to use their own websites for the purpose of providing information to the general public, in addition to the use of traditional information channels (printed materials, post, telephone). You will find more detailed information on specific topics on such websites. Valuable information can also be found on the main internet address of the Czech public administration:

**<http://portal.gov.cz>**

The following symbol is used whenever it is possible to obtain further information:



The following symbol is used to indicate more detailed structuring of concrete websites: "►".

We are aware of the fact that the use of the internet with its extensive sources of information is not a part of a daily routine for each of you. However, you are recommended to pay interest to the use of the internet because its importance as a source of essential information and as a means of prompt settlement of both personal and official matters remains to grow. If you don't have any prior experience with the use of the internet, but are still interested to take advantage of its potential, you can turn to integration centres or NGNPOs dealing with foreigners integration issues for assistance. As a standard, clients are provided free access to the internet. Free internet access is also provided by the network of public libraries across the Czech Republic and affordable internet access (with prices usually ranging from CZK 40 to 100 per hour) is available at internet cafés.

With respect to the constantly changing social conditions and the creation of new legal regulations, you should keep in mind that any internet links **and information contained in this publication refer to the situation prevailing as at 1 January 2009** (should a different date apply, it will be noted in the text referring to a concrete detail). **This publication therefore cannot reflect any changes that may have occurred after the above-mentioned date.**

Considering the nature and purpose of this information booklet, certain **simplifications and generalizations** have been found unavoidable. We have also not been able to include all of the legislation involved due to a limited scope of this document. This publication should therefore not be regarded as a substitute for the law, and you should remember that only **the current version of the law is the official source of legislative information**. Should you need any additional information or a further explanation of any of the issues covered in this publication, please contact the appropriate authority for assistance in processing your matter. Do not hesitate to use the services of integration centres and non-profit organizations operating in the field of foreigners integration. **Integration centres and NGNPO's provide most of their services for free and will be glad to provide assistance regarding any problem that you might encounter in the Czech Republic.**

This type of publication naturally includes statements of basic and seemingly generally known facts. Nevertheless, it is necessary to bear in mind that the Czech Republic is being entered by people of different cultural backgrounds from various parts of the world who may find these basic facts hardly understandable. Essentially, the text is meant to be neutral and general. It should therefore not be considered as advice to a certain group of foreigners sharing a common language or culture.

We are aware of the fact that the process of integration into the Czech society which has become a new home – whether temporarily or permanently – to many foreigners, is a difficult task which requires them to obtain and learn new skills, last but not least the Czech language which enables them to handle basic everyday situations and communicate with both the authorities and other people. We hope that this booklet will serve as a useful and practical guide in the efforts to integrate into the Czech society.

## 2. GENERAL INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE CZECH REPUBLIC

- **Official name of the state:** Czech Republic (abbreviation: CR, international code: CZE);  
Abbreviated name: Czechland)
- **Official language:** Czech
- **Population:** approximately 10 million  
The majority of population is unaffiliated (approximately 60%) and approximately 30% affiliate themselves with some religion or religious group. Christianity is considered as the traditional religion. The majority of people with a religious affiliation are Roman Catholics. Almost 95% of the population claim to be of Czech nationality, other nationalities include Bulgarian, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian, Russian, Greek, Slovak, Serbian, Ukrainian. and others.
- **Form of government:** parliamentary democracy  
The executive power is exercised by the President and the Government, while the legislative power is vested in the two-chamber Parliament of the Czech Republic (consisting of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate).
- **Currency:** Czech crown (*koruna* in Czech, abbreviated as *Kč*, CZK)  
One crown (1 *koruna*) is equal to 100 halers. Coins of the following denominations - CZK 1 , CZK 2, CZK 5, CZK 10, CZK 20, CZK 50, and banknotes of the following denominations - CZK 50, CZK 100, CZK 200, CZK 500, CZK 1,000, CZK 2,000 and CZK 5,000 are valid. Czech crown exchange rate: CZK/EUR 24.959; CZK/USD 17.071 (average 2008 values).
- **Geography:** The Czech Republic is located in Central Europe and consists of 3 historic lands – Bohemia (western part), Moravia (eastern part) and Silesia (northeastern part). The country shares borders with 4 countries: Germany (western border), Poland (northern border), Slovakia (eastern border) and Austria (southern border).  
  
The Czech Republic lies on the boundary of two mountain ranges. The Bohemian Highlands (Česká Vysočina) are located in the central and western parts of Bohemia, and the Western Carpathian Mountains extend into the eastern part of the country. The main watercourses are the Labe and Vltava Rivers (Bohemia), the Morava and Dyje Rivers (Moravia) and the Odra and Opava Rivers (Silesia).
- **Administrative structure of the country:** 14 self-administration regions and municipalities (municipalities, municipalities with authorized municipal councils and municipalities with extended powers).
- **Capital City:** Prague (the largest Czech city with a population of approximately 1 million)  
It is located in the central part of Bohemia on the Vltava River. The historic centre of the city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Other major cities:** Brno (second largest city in the Czech Republic and the historical capital of Moravia; Brno is the home of many institutions, e.g. the Constitutional Court), Ostrava, Plzeň, Olomouc, České Budějovice.
- **Time Zone:** UTC (coordinated universal time) + 1 hour (in summer + 2 hours)
- **Public Holidays and Other Holidays:**  
Public and other holidays are considered as non-working days (work can only be ordered under exceptional circumstances on these days).

Public holidays:

1 January - Independent Czech State Restoration Day  
8 May - Victory Day (1945)  
5 July - Slavonic Apostles Saints Cyril and Methodius Day  
6 July - John Hus Day (anniversary of John Hus execution in 1415)  
28 September - Czech Statehood Day  
28 October - Independent Czechoslovak State Day (1918)  
17 November - Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day (1989)

Other holidays:

1 January - New Year  
Easter Monday - a moveable feast in spring  
1 May - May Day  
24 December - Christmas Eve  
25 December - Christmas Day  
26 December - St Stephen's Day

- **Brief History:**

The Celts, living here from the beginning of the 4th century, were oldest historically recorded ethnic group. In the 6th century, the area began to be populated by Slavonic peoples, who created the so-called Samo Empire in the 7th century. After the year 820, the first recorded state system – Great Moravia - was established in what is now the territory of the Czech Republic, associated with the beginnings of Christianity in this region. After the decline of Great Moravia, the centre of statehood shifted to Bohemia in the early 10th century. The Czech state was united by the Premyslid Dynasty in 995.

From the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century on, the area witnessed economic and cultural growth supported besides others by, an flow of German settlers. In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Czech state became stabilized in terms of internal organization, its economy strengthened, and the state achieved the largest territorial expansion in its history. The establishment of the university in Prague by King Charles IV in 1348 (today's Charles University) can be seen as a demonstration of cultural development.

The deep crisis in the society within Europe and the Czech state at the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> century led to the rise of the Hussite movement whose the initial efforts aimed at religious reforms escalated into violent upheavals known as the Hussite Wars. Since the Middle Ages, the borders of the main historic lands have not changed to any significant extent; other territories were annexed to the Czech state only temporarily. In 1526, the Czech lands became part of the Habsburg Monarchy. After the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in consequence of World War I, the historic Czech territories (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) were united with parts of the former Hungarian Empire (Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia) in 1918 to establish Czechoslovakia as one of the succession states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (this period is associated with the first Czechoslovak President, T. G. Masaryk).

Following the Munich Accords signed on 29 September 1938, Nazi Germany invaded the Czech borderland (supported by a lack of loyalty to the Czechoslovak state shown by a significant part of the German minority); subsequently, on 15 March 1939, the Germans occupied the rest of the country and established the so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Slovakia was declared an independent Slovak state which became a satellite of Nazi Germany. After the end of World War II in 1945, Czechoslovakia was restored (without Carpathian Ruthenia); at the same time, the German minority with a population of 3 million, was evicted or transferred from the country.

In February 1948, the Communist Party took power and established a totalitarian regime in the country. In the 1960's, the totalitarian regime oppression decreased to a certain extent; however, this trend was brought to a halt in 1968 when the military forces of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries intervened.



The fall of the communist regime in November 1989 (known as the Velvet Revolution) paved the way for the restoration of pluralistic democracy. In December 1989, Václav Havel, one of the founders of the dissident movement known as Charta 77, was elected the first non-communist president since 1948. In the subsequent years, the Soviet occupation forces left, and the state underwent democratic reforms.

At the end of 1992, the Czechs and the Slovaks reached an agreement to split the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic into two independent states. On 1 January 1993, the Czech Republic was established in consequence of the break-up of the existing federation, joining the NATO on 12 March 1999 and the European Union on 1 May 2004. Since 21 December 2007, the Czech Republic has been part of the Schengen area.



### Links to similar sources of information

- The Czech Statistical Office (collects, processes and provides a large scope of statistical information about the social, economic and environmental development of the Czech Republic) – <http://www.czso.cz>
- Towns and municipalities in the Czech Republic – <http://epusa.cz/>
- Public Administration Portal (detailed directory of state administration and self-administration bodies in the Czech Republic, legislation, situations in life, online filing, information intended for foreigners – ► Foreigner) – <http://portal.gov.cz>

### **3. THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL POWERS; PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

*"The power of the State may be asserted only in cases and only within the limits set by the law and in a manner determined by the law". (Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms)*

#### **3. 1. Parliament of the Czech Republic**

Legislative power, i.e. the authority to adopt new laws in the Czech Republic, is vested in the Parliament which is composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The sessions of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate are usually open to the public. The laws passed by the Parliament are published in the Collection of Laws.

##### **➤ Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber)**

The Chamber of Deputies passes bills which are then submitted to the Senate, and decides on giving a vote of confidence to the Government. The Chamber of Deputies has 200 members elected for a 4-year term. The elections are held by casting anonymous votes on the basis of a general, equal and direct voting right.

As of 1 January 2009, the following political parties were represented in the Chamber of Deputies: the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM), the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak Peoples Party (KDU-ČSL) and the Green Party (SZ).

##### **➤ Senate (upper chamber)**

The Senate reviews the bills submitted to it by the Chamber of Deputies. The Senate has 81 senators who are elected for 6-year terms (with one third of the senators being elected every two years). The elections are held by casting anonymous votes on the basis of a general, equal and direct voting right.

#### **3. 2. Executive Power**

##### **➤ President**

The President of the Czech Republic is the Head of the State. The President is elected by the Parliament and serves a 5-year term. The President's powers include the authority to sign laws, negotiate and ratify international treaties and grant pardons and amnesties

##### **➤ Government**

The Government is the top executive power body. The Government is composed of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers who are appointed by the President. As a collective body, the Government is primarily responsible for governing the State and creating its legislation; the Government also manages activities of the state machinery, implements laws and issues orders within the framework of these laws. The Government reports to the Chamber of Deputies which can express a lack of confidence in the Government as a collective body.

### 3. 3. Courts, Public Prosecution

*"Anyone who claims that his or her rights have been violated by a decision of a public administration body may turn to a court for a review of the lawfulness of such a decision, unless provided otherwise by the law. However, no review of decisions affecting the fundamental rights and freedoms listed in the Charter may be excluded from the jurisdiction of the court". (Article 36, Paragraph 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms)*

#### ➤ Courts

The courts represent the most important guarantee of human rights protection. Courts of general jurisdiction deal with the practice of civil law (which also includes business, family and heritage law), criminal law and administrative law. Only courts may make decisions regarding guilt and punishment.

The key attribute of the judicial system is its independence of the State. The judicial system is administered by the Ministry of Justice which, however, may not intervene with the decisions made by the courts in any way. This enables the courts to resolve disputes even in the event that one of the parties is the state (e.g. administrative judiciary).

A ruling given by the court may usually be appealed against to a court of a higher level. The general court system of the Czech Republic is composed of the Supreme Court, the Supreme Administrative Court, high courts, regional courts and district courts. Most applications are first heard before district courts.

Judges are appointed by the President of the Republic for an indefinite term.

#### ➤ Constitutional Court

The Constitutional Court stays out of the general court system and plays the roll of a judicial body protecting the Constitution. It makes decisions regarding proposals for the revocation of legal regulations (or parts thereof) and constitutional complaints which may be filed after exhausting all other remedial possibilities by anyone who feels deprived of their rights, as established under the Constitution, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms and under other constitutional laws of the Czech Republic (the plaintiff must be represented by legal counsel in such proceedings).

#### ➤ Public Prosecution

The Public Prosecutors' Offices have the following responsibilities when representing the State in the protection of the public interest:

- bring charges against individuals accused of criminal offences with the court on behalf of the state and prosecute them as a representative of the public in the court,
- supervise the activities of police bodies and investigators in the detection and investigation of criminal offences,
- supervise facilities imposing a limitation of personal freedom (prisons, institutions, etc.),

The Public Prosecution Office is not an independent body and it reports to the Ministry of Justice. The seats and the districts of the individual Public Prosecutors' Offices correspond to the seats and districts of courts.

### 3. 4. Public Administration

Public administration represents the management of matters of public interest through state or other public bodies. The state maintains its authority over the administration of selected public issues and it has delegated this authority to its executive bodies (referred to as "**state administration**"). The control over other specific matters of public interest has been delegated by the state to local authorities (referred to as "**self-administration**").

➤ **State Administration**

The ministries act as the major central bodies of state administration (denoted as the central administration bodies by the Constitution). Regional state administration bodies include e.g. labour offices or revenue authorities. An important part of state administration is handled by **regions** (through regional authorities) and **municipalities** (through municipal councils). Further specification according to the scope of state administration functions include municipalities with extended powers and municipalities with authorized municipal councils.

➤ **Self-Administration**

**Municipalities**

Municipalities represent the basic territorial self-governing communities of citizens. The bodies of a municipality are as follows:

- Municipal Board of Representatives (the highest municipal body exercising the key powers within the independent competence of the municipality,
- Municipal Council (executive body)
- Mayor,
- Municipal Office,
- special bodies established for the purpose of exercising assigned competencies.

**Regions**

There are 14 regions in the Czech Republic. The Capital City of Prague is both a region and a municipality.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Seat</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Seat</b>
The Capital City of Prague	Prague	The Region of Olomouc	Olomouc
The Region of South Bohemia	České Budějovice	The Region of Pardubice	Pardubice
The Region of South Moravia	Brno	The region of Plzeň	Plzeň
The Region of Karlovy Vary	Karlovy Vary	The Region of Central Bohemia	Prague
The Region of Hradec Králové	Hradec Králové	The Region of Ústí nad Labem	Ústí nad Labem
The Region of Liberec	Liberec	The Region of Vysočina	Jihlava
The Region of Moravia--Silesia	Ostrava	The Region of Zlín	Zlín



The bodies of a region are as follows:

- Regional Board of Representatives (the highest regional body adopting decisions regarding all matters falling within the independent competence of the region),
- Regional Council (executive body),
- Regional Marshall,
- Regional Office
- special bodies established for the purpose of exercising assigned competencies.

The bodies of the Capital City of Prague are as follows:

- the Board of Representatives of the Capital City of Prague:
- the Council of the Capital City of Prague,
- the Mayor of the Capital City of Prague,
- the Municipality of the Capital City of Prague,
- special bodies of the Capital City of Prague,
- the Municipal Police of the Capital City of Prague.

### **3. 5. e-Government in the Czech Republic**

The development electronic public administration - e-Government - is a long-term and step-by-step process whose aim is to make the procedures employed by public administration authorities more efficient, which will result in improving services rendered by public administration bodies to the public. Taking advantage of the new opportunity to use electronic communication leads not only to making the access to public administration information easier, but also opens the door to the possibility to perform selected acts towards public administration directly on the the internet..

The basic information regarding public administration intended for foreigners can be found on the Public Administration Portal - <http://portal.gov.cz> (Foreigner). This link refers to the basic information (partly in English) intended for foreigners interested in staying in the territory of the Czech Republic (CR). The link also refers to a list of links to the central public administration bodies offering more detailed information.

All the important information regarding the operation of public administration bodies in the Czech Republic intended for foreigners can be found on their respective websites. For an up-to-date list in general, see <http://portal.gov.cz/> (Directory) or the ePUSA electronic portal of public administration at <http://www.epusa.cz>, summarizing links to all regional, town and municipal authorities in the Czech Republic.

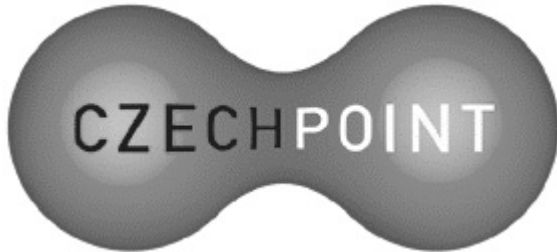
Contact data for both the conventional and electronic communication is available from the websites of the respective authorities. This means that using the electronic filing system, it is possible to communicate with the authority through the mediation of the internet (remotely), e.g. even from a place located outside the territory of the Czech Republic.

The website of every public administration body contains a so-called "Electronic Official Notice Board", showing important topical information, as well as published information on the service of official documents to foreigners - among others (Public Notice - notice of the possibility to take over a document for), see e.g. at <http://www.mvcr.cz>

The development of e-Government services aims at several fields. The key element enabling the electronic processing of public administration acts is Act No. 300/2008 Sb. of the Collection of Laws, on electronic acts and authorized conversion of documents. Effective from 1 July 2009, this law stipulates the actual equality of electronic and printed documents which can be used while dealing with various public administration bodies. The law also defines possible methods of transferring printed documents into electronic ones and electronic filings towards public administration authorities. So-called "data boxes" have been established for the purpose of communicating with public administration, the aim being to enable guaranteed and safe electronic communication with

authorities. Considering this, the mode of service is also regulated on the principle stating in simple terms that public administration documents are considered served 10 days following the service into a data box (so-called "service fiction").

The Czech POINT centres can be used for the purpose of dealing with public administration authorities. These centres are marked with the following symbol (logo):



The Czech POINT is an assisted point of contact with public administration in the Czech Republic. Czech POINT centres can be found at town and municipal offices, post offices and offices of the Chamber of Commerce, they are also operated by some notaries and can be used at Czech representations abroad. See <http://www.czechpoint.cz> for an up-to-date list of Czech POINT centres.

The respective centres offer a large number of services. Extracts from the Criminal Records, extracts from the Land Register and extracts from the Companies Register rank among the most frequently requested services. Electronic filings pursuant to the Small Trades Licensing Act (Article 72) represent another frequently used service. The conversion of printed documents into an electronic form and vice versa (so-called "electronic conversion") is a newly-established service.

The following services are provided at Czech POINTs (as at 1 July 2009):

- **Extract from the Land Register**
- **Extract from the Companies Register**
- **Extract from the Companies Register**
- **Extract from the Penal Register**
- **Acceptance of a filing pursuant to the Small Trades Licensing Act (Article 72)**
- **Application for an extract from the Penal Register or a copy of the Penal Register record pursuant to Act No. 124/2008 Sb. (Coll.)**
- **Extract from a driver's penalty points record**
- **Issue of a verified output from the List of Qualified Suppliers**
- **Filing to the ISOH (Waste Management Information System) Register of Car Wreck Module Operation Participants**
- **Extract from the Insolvency Register**
- **Authorized conversion of documents and data boxes (services pursuant to Act No. 300/2008 Sb., Coll.)**
- **Czech POINT E-SHOP - extracts by post**

The Czech POINT services are subject to permanent enhancement; the complete and up-to-date list of these services is available at <http://www.czechpoint.cz>. Selected types of the Czech POINT services can be used in places chosen by the user, with the internet access possibility being under progress.

Another important e-Government effort is the Key Registers project to be launched on 1 July 2010; its objective is to enable public administration bodies to share data - besides others - on persons living and transacting business in the Czech Republic, regional information (addresses and data from the Land Register) and information on legislation in the Czech Republic. The basic reference data available to public administration authorities (depending on their respective competencies) will be comprised in these registers and therefore will not be requested repeatedly.

The Public Administration Digital Map project creates the basic visual document for area-related information, i.e. the visualization of basic information on the map of the Czech Republic, see <http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/digitalni-mapa-verejne-spravy.aspx><http://www.egoncentrum.cz>

See <http://www.egoncentrum.cz> for comprehensive information on the respective projects.

### 3. 6. Official Language

All authorities in the Czech Republic use Czech as the official language. **All documents and records executed in a foreign language must be presented to authorities in the original version and, at the same time, translated into Czech by a sworn translator unless it is notified by the administration authority that such a translation is not required.** If you do not expect that you will be able to fully understand while dealing with an authority, you are entitled to be accompanied by an interpreter incorporated in the registry of interpreters; the costs of interpreter's services are at your expense with certain exceptions (such as administrative proceedings in which an obligation is imposed on a participant - minor offence proceedings or proceedings regarding another administrative offence).



#### Links to similar sources of information

- Basic information for foreigners in the Czech Republic <http://www.mvcr.cz/sluzby-pro-verejnost-informace-pro-cizince.aspx>
- General asylum and migration problems <http://www.mvcr.cz/o-nas-azyl-a-migrace.aspx>
- General information for foreigners including links to the central public administration bodies (in Czech and English) Public Administration Portal <http://portal.gov.cz/> ► Foreigner
- List of public administration bodies <http://portal.gov.cz/>
- Portal containing links to regional, town and municipal offices in the Czech Republic <http://www.epusa.cz/>
- Information on serving official documents to foreigners (Public notice - notice on the possibility to take over a document in writing for ...) <http://www.mvcr.cz/>
- Information on the Czech POINT contact centres <http://www.czechpoint.cz>

- Digital public administration map - project information <http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/digitalni-mapa-verejne-spravy.aspx>
- See <http://www.egoncentrum.cz> for information on the respective projects.
- See the website of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament at <http://www.psp.cz> for detailed information on the activities of the Chamber of Deputies, its members, documents published by the Chamber of Deputies including laws etc .
- See <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public ► List of political parties) for the list of political parties and movements registered in the Czech Republic.
- See the website of the Senate at <http://www.senat.cz> for detailed information on the Senate, its bodies, activities, documents, members etc.
- See the website of the President of the Czech Republic at <http://www.hrad.cz> for detailed information on the President of the Czech Republic.
- See the website of the Government at <http://www.vlada.cz> for detailed information on the activities of the Government and links to the websites of the respective ministries.
- See <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Laws) for the wordings of laws and international treaties.
- See the website of the Ministry of Justice at <http://www.justice.cz> (► Courts) for detailed links to the respective courts.
- See <http://www.concourt.cz> for detailed information on the Constitutional Court.
- See the website of the Ministry of Justice at <http://www.justice.cz> (► Public Prosecutor's Offices) for detailed links to the respective public prosecutor's offices.
- See <http://epusa.cz> for a list of municipalities (towns) with extended powers.
- See <http://epusa.cz> for information on a concrete municipality or town/city.
- See <http://www.kr-urady.cz> for information on the respective regions.
- See the website of the Ministry of Justice at <http://www.justice.cz> for the list of interpreters recorded by regional courts.
- See the Public Administration Portal – <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Directory) or <http://www.statnisprava.cz> for a detailed overview of the respective authorities broken down by location or competency.
- See <http://www.czechpoint.cz> for detailed information on the Czech POINT centres and services (see Chapter 3.5.).



## **4. FOREIGNER'S STAY IN THE TERRITORY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC/SCHENGEN AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **4. 1. Basic Information on Foreigner's Stay**

The stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic is subject to Act No. 326/1999 Sb. (Coll.), on the stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic and on amendments to certain acts, as amended with later regulations (hereinafter referred to as the "Aliens Act"). See the website of the Ministry of the Interior for the current full wording of the Aliens Act [www.mvcr.cz](http://www.mvcr.cz): (► Services for the public ► Information for foreigners ► Conditions for the stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic ► Laws and regulations).

The following categories of aliens are established by the Aliens Act:

- a) EU citizens (the same regime is applied to the citizens of Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) and their family members.
- b) nationals of so-called "third countries" (considering the purpose of this publication, this chapter contains information on the stay of third-country nationals).

The stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic is subject to the legal regulations of the EU/EC. Visa issues are primarily regulated by Council Regulation (EC) No. 539/2001 (as amended with later regulations) listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement.

Being part of the Schengen area since 21 December 2007, the Czech Republic fully applies the regulations of the so-called Schengen acquis.

### **4. 2. Temporary Stay in the territory of the Czech Republic / Schengen**

#### **► Short-term stay in the territory of the Czech Republic / Schengen - up to 90 days**

The Schengen states have harmonized their conditions for the entry to and short-term stay in the joint territory.

- **Stay of third-country nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic / Schengen without a visa**

Nationals of third countries included in a so-called "positive list" pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No. 539/2001 may stay in the territory of the Czech Republic / Schengen. (See the website of the Ministry of the Interior for the list of countries whose nationals may stay in the territory of the Czech Republic / Schengen without a visa: [www.mvcr.cz](http://www.mvcr.cz) (► About us ► Asylum and migration ► Migration ► Visa policy ► Overview of a temporary stay in the Czech Republic of a foreigner without visa). The visa-free stay of the above-mentioned foreign nationals is limited by the Visa-Free Treaty, which means that it does not apply to stays for the purpose of gainful employment.

Foreign nationals who are exempt from the visa obligation may stay in the territory of the Czech Republic or another Schengen area state without a visa for up to 3 months in six months from their first entry to the territory of the Schengen area (the periods of stays in the territories of the respective Schengen states accumulate).

Other cases in which it is possible to stay in the territory of the Czech Republic without a visa are stipulated in Article 18 of the Aliens Act.

- **Stay of foreigners in the territory of the Czech Republic / Schengen on short-term visa**

#### **Short-term visa (uniform Schengen visa)**

The uniform Schengen visa is granted to a foreigner who complies with all the conditions for the entry to and stay in the territory of all states of the Schengen area and who intends to stay in the territory of the Schengen area for a period of time not exceeding 3 months in six months from the first entry to the territory of the Schengen area.

The uniform Schengen visa types are as follows: airport (transit) visa (type A), transit visa (type B) and visa for a stay of up to 90 days (type C).

The Czech Republic is competent to grant the uniform Schengen visa in the event that:

- a) it is the main or only destination of the applicant,
- b) it is the first Schengen state entered by the applicant in the event that the destination cannot be specified without doubts.

- **The airport (transit) visa** (Article 24 of the Aliens Act) enables the foreign national to stay in the transit area of an international airport in the territory of the Czech Republic or the Schengen area while waiting for another flight, i.e. in the event of transit landing or stopover between two parts of an international flight. The list of countries whose nationals are required to have the airport visa to stay in the transit area of an international airport in the territory of the Czech Republic is specified in Regulation No. 446/2005 Sb., Coll., as modified with later amendments.

- **The transit visa** (Article 22 of the Aliens Act) authorizes the foreign national to transit the territory of the Czech Republic / Schengen area while travelling from one third country to another third country. It authorizes the foreign national to stay in the territory of the Schengen area for a period not exceeding 5 days for each transit.

- **The visa for a stay of up to 90 days** (Article 26 of the Aliens Act) - authorizes the foreign national to stay in the territory of the Czech Republic / Schengen area for the period of time specified in such a visa, providing that the total duration of the stay may not exceed 3 months in a six-month period following the first entry to the territory of the Schengen area (the durations of the respective stays in the territory of the Czech Republic and other Schengen states accumulate).

Nationals of some third countries may stay exclusively in the territory of the Czech Republic for a period of time exceeding three months in a six-month period on the basis of a bilateral treaty concluded before the accession of the Czech Republic to Schengen, and in exceptional cases, a foreign national may be granted a restricted regional validity visa applicable exclusively to the territory of the Czech Republic or other Schengen states.

The application for a visa for a stay of up to 90 days, airport visa and transit visa shall be processed by a representation office abroad in 30 days following the application date (Article 170, paragraph 3 of the Aliens Act).

Nationals of some third countries are obliged to ask for a visa exclusively at a representation office in the state of which the foreign national is a citizen, or which has issued the passport of which the foreign national is a holder, or in the state where the foreign national has been granted long-term or permanent residence (see Regulation No. 462/2008 Sb., Coll.).

➤ **Long-term stay in the territory of the Czech Republic - visa for a stay exceeding 90 days**

**Visa for a stay exceeding 90 days**

The visa for a stay exceeding 90 days is issued by the Inspectorate of Alien Police at the request of a foreign national who plans to stay in the Czech Republic for a purpose necessitating a stay exceeding 3 months. Such a purpose may include for example: employment, business, study or research.. The application is filed with a representation of the Czech Republic (Section 53 of the Aliens Act); Nationals of some third countries are obliged to ask for the visa exclusively at a representation office in the state of which the foreign national is a citizen, or which has issued the passport of which the foreign national is a holder, or in the state where the foreign national has been granted long-term or permanent residence (see Regulation No. 462/2008 Sb., Coll.); the application may be filed in the territory of the Czech Republic only in cases stipulated by the law (Article 33 of the Aliens Act). The application should be processed in 90 days, or - in extremely complex cases - 120 days from the application filing date (Article 170, paragraph 6 of the Aliens Act), or 60 days from the application filing date in selected cases (e.g. for the purpose of a study).

In the event that the applicant for a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days complies with the conditions of granting the uniform Schengen visa (type C), he or she shall be granted a visa marked as the D+C-type visa. This visa authorizes its holder to stay in the territory of other Schengen states for the first three months of its validity; after this period expires, the validity of such a visa is equal to the D-type visa (see below).

In the event that the applicant for a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days does not comply with the conditions of granting the uniform Schengen visa, he or she shall be granted a visa marked as the D-type visa. This visa authorizes its holder to stay exclusively in the territory of the Czech Republic; however, he or she may transit the territories of other Schengen states (for a maximum period of 5 days) when travelling to the Czech Republic for the first time.

The following documents must be submitted with the application:

- passport,
- document proving the purpose of the stay,
- financial means needed for the stay (Article 13 of the Aliens Act),
- accommodation arrangement document,
- 2 photographs; this does not apply in the event that an image of the foreign national is to be recorded.

The following documents must be submitted by the foreign national upon request:

- a) a document similar to an extract from a penal register as a basis for the assessment of impeccability issued by the state of which the foreign national is a citizen, as well as any states in which the foreign national has stayed in the last 3 years for a period exceeding 6 months without interruptions, or a statutory declaration in the event that no such document is issued by the state concerned.
- b) a medical report stating that the foreign national does not suffer from a "serious" disease (the list of diseases is stipulated in Regulation of the Ministry of Health No. 274/2004 Sb., Coll.

Before the visa for a stay exceeding 90 days is granted, the foreign national must provide a document proving the conclusion of health travel insurance for the duration of his or her stay in the territory (for exemptions from this requirement see Article 180i, paragraph 2 of the Aliens Act). The extent and minimum coverage limits are stipulated in Article 180i, paragraph 1 of the Aliens Act.

If the purpose remains the same, the visa can be repeatedly extended. The maximum period of time for which a foreign national may stay in the territory of the Czech Republic on the same visa is 1 year. The purpose of stay may not be changed during the stay in the territory of the Czech Republic with respect to a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days. In the event of a change, it is necessary to leave the territory of the Czech Republic and file a new application. If a foreign national plans to reside in the

Czech Republic temporarily for a period exceeding 1 year, he or she may file an application for permanent residence from within the territory.

### ➤ **Extended Stay Permit**

The extended stay permit (Article 42 of the Aliens Act) can normally be applied for by a foreign national meeting the following criteria:

- he or she is staying in the territory of the Czech Republic on the basis of a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days,
- he or she wishes to stay in the territory on a temporary basis for a period of time exceeding 1 year, and
- the purpose of the stay remains the same.

An application for the extended stay permit can be filed at the inspectorate of the Alien Police appropriate to the place of registered residence in the territory of the Czech Republic. The application must be appended with the same documents as those required when applying for a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days; if staying for business purposes, the applicant must submit a tax arrears status certificate issued by a Czech revenue office and a certificate issued by the district social security administration office stating that the applicant has no arrears of the payment of insurance premium for social security and state unemployment policy, including any fines (see Article 46, paragraph 7 of the Aliens Act for more detailed information). The maximum application processing time is 60 days (Article 169, paragraph 2, letter e/ of the Aliens Act). The permit may be extended repeatedly. When staying in the Czech Republic on an extended stay permit, the purpose of the stay may be changed from within the Czech Republic. In such a case, the police will issue a new extended stay permit.

Under conditions stipulated by the law, a foreign national may also apply for an extended stay permit through a Czech representation abroad (i.e. without meeting the condition of a previous stay in the territory on a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days), e.g. in the event that such a permit is to be issued for the purpose of a family reunion (Article 42a, Article 42b of the Aliens Act) or for the purpose of study (Article 42d of the Aliens Act) or scientific research (Article 42f of the Aliens Act). Nationals of some third countries are obliged to ask for a visa exclusively at a representation office in the state of which the foreign national is a citizen, or which has issued the passport of which the foreign national is a holder, or in 'the state where the foreign national has been granted long-term or permanent residence (see Regulation No. 462/2008 Sb., Coll.). The application should be processed in 270 days following the day of filing the application if the purpose of the application is a family reunion (Article 169, paragraph 2, letter c/ of the Aliens Act), or 60 days following the day of filing the application if the purpose of the application is either study or scientific research (Article 169, paragraph 2, letter d/ of the Aliens Act).

### **Extended stay permit for the purpose of employment in the territory in special cases - Green Card** (Article 42g of the Aliens Act)

**An application for the Green Card** may be filed by a national of a country specified in the list of countries whose citizens are entitled to ask for the Green Card issuance (pursuant to Regulation No. 461/2009 Sb., Coll., provided that the purpose of his or stay in the territory of the Czech Republic is to obtain one of the jobs specified in the central registry of vacancies that can be occupied by Green Card holders (Article 37a of Act No. 435/2004 Sb.) and on condition that he or she meets the requirements regarding education and professional skills necessary to do the job. The issuance of the Green Card is subject to decision of the Ministry of the Interior.

The Green Card is issued for:

- a) qualified workforce with university education and key personnel - type A,
- b) other workforce with the minimum education requirement being a vocational certificate - type B,
- c) other workforce - type C.

The application is filed with a representation abroad. Nationals of some third countries are obliged to ask for a visa exclusively at a representation office in the state of which the foreign national is a citizen, or which has issued the passport of which the foreign national is a holder, or in 'the state where the foreign national has been granted long-term or permanent residence (see Regulation No. 462/2008 Sb., Coll.). An application for the Green Card issuance may be filed with the Ministry of the Interior in the territory of the Czech Republic by a foreigner who stays in the territory

- na zelenou kartu a žádost o novou kartu podává v tzv. ochranné lhůtě (viz § 46e odst. 3 cizineckého zákona),
- na zelenou kartu nejméně 1 rok, nebo
- na vízum k pobytu nad 90 dnů nebo na povolení k dlouhodobému pobytu nepřetržitě po dobu nejméně 2 let.

The Green Card authorizes the foreign national to stay in the territory and be employed for a period of time specified therein.

The following documents must be submitted with the application:

- passport,
- one photograph; this does not apply in the event that an image of the foreign national is to be recorded,
- documents proving the education and professional skills required for the job which the foreign national intends to take up.

On request, the foreign national is obliged to submit a medical report stating that he or she does not suffer from a "serious" disease (the list of diseases is stipulated in Regulation of the Ministry of Health No. 274/2004 Sb., Coll).

On request, the foreign national is obliged to append to his or her application (or with regard to his or her stay in the territory of the Czech Republic) a document similar to an extract from a penal register as a basis for the assessment of impeccability issued by the state of which the foreign national is a citizen, as well as any states in which the foreign national stayed in the last 3 years for a period exceeding 6 months without interruptions, or a statutory declaration in the event that no such document is issued by the state concerned.

Before the visa for a stay exceeding 90 days is granted for the purpose of accepting the Green Card, the foreign national must provide a document proving the conclusion of health travel insurance for the duration of his or her stay from the entry date to the date on which the Public Health Insurance Act (Act No. 48/1997) becomes applicable to his or her case

Third country nationals, holders of permits issued by another Schengen state, may stay in the territory of the Czech Republic without a visa for a maximum period of 3 months. Similarly, holders of residence permits issued by Czech authorities may stay in the territories of other Schengen states without a visa for a maximum period of 3 months.

#### **Exit Order (Article 50 of the Aliens Act)**

The exit order is issued by the Police and, in specified cases, the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if the foreign national's legal stay in the Czech Republic has terminated (e.g. in the event of cancelling a visa or temporary or permanent residence permit). The exit order allows the individual to stay in the territory of the Czech Republic temporarily for a period of time

required to make necessary arrangements and leave the country (up to 60 days). The foreign national is obliged to leave the territory of the Czech Republic by the specified deadline.

#### 4. 3. Permanent Residence in the Czech Republic

With respect to most aspects of everyday life, a foreign national with permanent residence in the Czech Republic has the same status as a Czech citizen.

➤ **Permanent residence permit for family members of citizens of the EU or the Czech Republic**  
**A foreign national (EU country or third-country citizen)** who is in a family relationship with a citizen of the EU or the Czech Republic within the framework stipulated in Article 15 of the Aliens Act, particularly within the following framework:

- a) *spouse,*
- b) *parent - applies to dependent EU citizens under 21 years of age living in a common household,*
- c) *child under 21 years of age, or such child of a spouse of an EU citizen, and*
- d) *dependent direct relative in an ascending or descending line, or such a relative of a spouse of an EU citizen*

may apply to the Ministry of the Interior for a permanent residence permit for a family member of an EU citizen. The maximum application processing time is 60 days. Nevertheless, the fact that a family member is concerned is not the only precondition of granting a permanent residence permit; other conditions stipulated in Article 87h of the Aliens Act must also be complied with.

Such conditions include namely:

- a) 5 years of uninterrupted temporary stay in the territory (Article 87h, paragraph 1, letter a/ of the Aliens Act), or
- b) 2 years of uninterrupted temporary stay in the territory provided that the applicant has been a family member of a Czech citizen with a registered permanent residence in the territory, or a family member of a citizen of another EU member state who has been issued a permit for permanent residence in the territory (Article 87h, paragraph 1, letter b/ of the Aliens Act).

Other conditions whose fulfilment preconditions the issue of a permanent residence permit to a family member of an EU or Czech citizen are specified in Article 87h, paragraph 1, letters c) and d) of the Aliens Act.

There is a legal title to the issue of a permanent residence permit for these reasons, and the Ministry of the Interior may reject the application only for strictly defined reasons specified in Article 87k of the Aliens Act. A family member of an EU or Czech citizen may also apply for the issue of a permanent residence permit for humanitarian reasons pursuant to Article 87h, paragraph 2, letter b) of the Aliens Act. In such a case, however, there is no legal title to the issue of the permanent residence permit. The issue of a permit to a family member of an EU or Czech citizen is exempt from administrative fees.

**The particulars of an application** for the permanent residence permit for an EU national or his/her family member are stipulated in Article 87i of the Aliens Act. Such particulars include: passport, 2 photographs, document proving accommodation arrangement and - provided that an application pursuant to Article 87g, paragraph 1 or Article 87h, paragraph 1 of the Aliens Act is concerned - a document proving the fulfilment of the condition set in those provisions.

➤ **Permanent residence of a foreign national who is neither an EU citizen, nor his/her family member, without previous uninterrupted stay in the territory of the Czech Republic** (Article 66 of the Aliens Act)

Under certain conditions, a foreign national may apply for a permanent residence permit without having previously stayed in the territory of the Czech Republic. In such a case, however, there is no legal title to the issue of the permanent residence permit, the only exception being an application pursuant to Article 66, paragraph 1, letter d) of the Aliens Act. In such cases, applications for permanent residence are filed with foreign representations of the Czech Republic abroad. Article 69 of the Aliens Act stipulates the conditions on which the application may be filed with the Ministry of the Interior in the territory of the Czech Republic.

- **Permanent residence of a foreign national who is neither an EU citizen, nor his/her family member, preconditioned by a previous uninterrupted stay in the territory of the Czech Republic** (Article 68 of the Aliens Act)

*After 5 years of an uninterrupted stay in the Czech Republic on the basis of a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days / extended stay permit, every foreign national is entitled to apply for permanent residence. (Further details regarding the treatment of the duration of the foreigner's stay outside of the territory are stipulated in Article 68, paragraph 2a and paragraph 3 of the Aliens Act; if the purpose of the stay was study, only one half of the duration of the stay counts.)*

**The particulars of an application** for the permanent residence permit for a foreign national who is not an EU national or his/her family member are stipulated in Article 70, paragraph 2 of the Aliens Act. The following documents are required:

- 2 photographs,
- passport,
- document proving the purpose of the stay in the territory, e.g. a birth certificate, marriage certificate or another document proving a family relationship, document proving the fact that the foreign national used to be a citizen of the Czech Republic; this does not apply in the event that the foreign national is applying for a permanent residence permit pursuant to Article 68 of the Aliens Act,
- document proving the procurement of financial means needed for the permanent stay in the territory,
- document similar to an extract from a penal register as a basis for the assessment of impeccability issued by the state of which the foreign national is a citizen or in which he or she has permanent residence, as well as any states in which the foreign national stayed in the last 3 years for a period exceeding 6 months without interruptions, or a statutory declaration in the event that no such document is issued by the state concerned; § 70, Paragraph 2, Letter e) of the Alien Act regulates exceptions from that obligation (this obligation does not apply primarily to foreign nationals under the age of 15; a foreign national applying for permanent residence pursuant to Article 68 is obliged to submit such a document when asked to do so,
- document proving that an arrangement has been made regarding an accommodation in the territory,
- agreement of a parent or legal guardian with the permanent residence of the child in the territory unless the cohabitation of a family with that parent or legal guardian is concerned; this does not apply if the foreign national demonstrates that he or she is unable to submit such a document for reasons independent on his or her will,
- document demonstrating the required level of knowledge of Czech (this document is not required in cases specified in Article 70, Paragraph 5 of the Aliens Act).

Pursuant to provisions of Article 70, Paragraph 2, Letter h) of the Aliens Act, the document proving the required competence in the Czech language must be issued by a school specified on the list of schools entitled to hold examinations in the Czech Language specified in Regulation of the Ministry of Schools, Youth and Sports No. 348/2008 Sb., Coll., on the teaching of and examinations in the

Czech language for the purpose of obtaining permits for the permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic. The scope of the examination is specified in the above-mentioned Regulation. It is required to prove competency in Czech at level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages. A sample document proving the required competence in Czech, as well as the list of schools entitled to hold examinations in the Czech language are appended to the Regulation.

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 70, Paragraph 5 of the Aliens Act, the document proving the required language competence is not required from a foreign national who:

- has not reached the age of 15,
- proves to have been a pupil or student of an elementary or secondary school using
- Czech as the school language for at least 1 school year without interruptions in 20 years preceding the filing of the application,
- is applying for a permanent residence permit pursuant to Article 66 or 67 or after the expiration of a permanent residence permit pursuant to Article 87, Paragraph 7, Letter a), Item 4 of the Aliens Act,
- proves to suffer from a physical or mental handicap affecting his or her ability to communicate, or
- has reached the age of 60.

A foreign national wishing to apply for a permit for permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic, which requires to append a document proving the required competence in the Czech language to the application, may apply for the examination with some of the schools specified in the list appended to the regulation. The first try to pass the exam is paid by the state to the foreign national on the basis of a voucher issued by a regional Department of Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior before the exam is taken. For detailed information on the language exam, see <http://www.msmt.cz/mezinarodni-vztahy/cestina-pro-cizince>; <http://cestina-pro-cizince.cz> or call the information line at **800 400 469** for free.

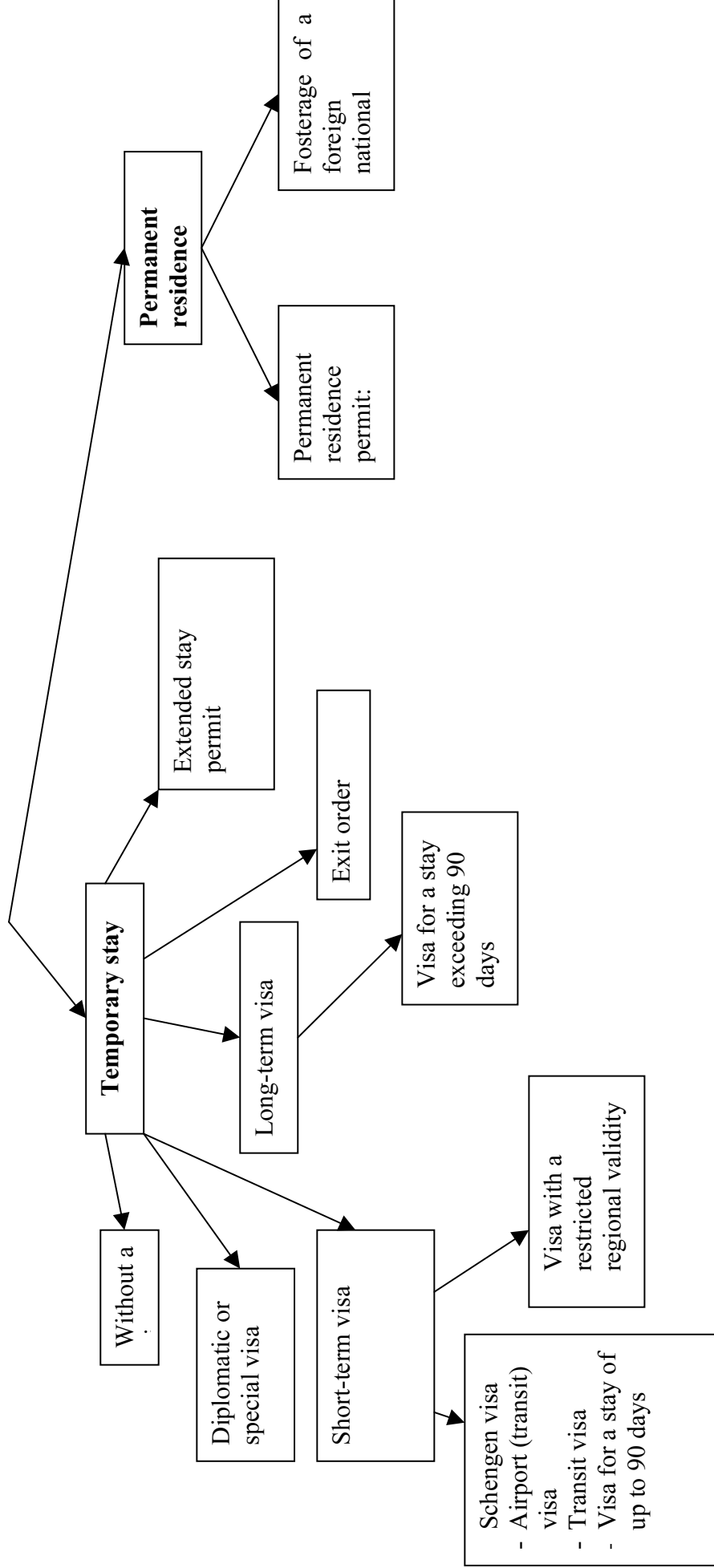
The **primary authority** deciding on applications for permanent residence permits is the **Ministry of the Interior, Department of Asylum and Migration Policy** (Article 165, letter c) of the Aliens Act). The application may be filed with the appropriate regional branch office of the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy, depending on the foreign national's place of residence (see Chapter 17.4. for a detailed list with addresses and contact information on regional branches). An appeal against the decision may be lodged in 15 days. If the second decision is negative, too, the case may be brought before the Municipal Court in Prague in 2 months following the service.

*The following conditions apply to filing an application for a permanent residence permit:*

- *None of the documents except of the passport, documents issued by the register office and photograph may be older than 180 days.*
- *In the event of a justified suspicion, you may be asked to submit a medical report stating that you do not suffer from a serious disease.*
- *All documents executed in a foreign language must be translated into Czech by a sworn translator unless the administration authority advises the foreign national that such a translation is not required.*



**Possibilities of the stay of third-country nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic**



#### 4. 4. Other Practical Information

##### ➤ **Travel Health Insurance**

Pursuant to the Aliens Act, a foreign national is obliged to submit a document proving his or her conclusion of travel health insurance policy in specified cases. Such a document is considered as a document used by the foreign national to demonstrate the coverage of the costs of medical treatment in the event of an injury or sudden illness while staying in the territory of the Czech Republic, including the coverage of the costs of relocation to a country whose passport he or she has, or to another state in which he or she has been granted a residence permit; the minimum level of coverage is EUR 30,000. If a Schengen visa is concerned, the insurance must be valid in the whole territory of the the Schengen area.

The document proving the conclusion of travel health insurance policy is not required in cases stipulated in Article 180i, paragraph 2 of the Aliens Act.

##### ➤ **Reporting the place of abode (Section 93 of the Aliens Act),**

Pursuant to the Aliens Act, a foreign national is required to report where he or she is staying in the Czech Republic to the police within 3 business days after entering the country. This does not apply to foreign nationals under the age of 15, staff members of consular offices or international government organizations accredited in the Czech Republic, including their family members who are registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or foreign nationals whose accommodation has been arranged by the Czech Ministry of the Interior. This obligation also does not apply to foreign nationals who have met this requirement by registering with an accommodation provider, e.g. in a hotel (Article 103, letter b) of the Aliens Act.

Foreign nationals who have been issued permanent residence permits are obliged to report any change of their place of abode to the Ministry of the Interior within 30 business days after such a change takes place provided that the expected change of the place of stay is to exceed 180 days.

Foreign nationals staying in the territory of the Czech Republic on the basis of visas for a stay exceeding 90 days or permanent residence permits are obliged to report any change of their place of abode to the Police within 30 days after such a change takes place provided that the expected change of the place of abode is to exceed 30 days. Foreign nationals who may stay in the territory of the Czech Republic without a visa are obliged to report any change of their place of abode within 30 days after such a change takes place provided that the expected change is to exceed 90 days.

##### ➤ **Reporting mailing address (effective as from 1 July 2009)**

Pursuant to Article 10b of Act 133/2000 Sb., Coll., on recording inhabitants and birth certificate numbers, and on the modification of certain acts, as amended with later regulations, the address to which documents are to be served pursuant to a special legal regulation may be recorded upon a foreign national's request. The address, any modification or cancellation thereof should be reported by the foreign national to the appropriate authority in the place of his or her abode.

##### ➤ **Legalization of public documents**

All documents executed in a foreign language and appended to an application for a visa or residence permit must be either:

- **superlegalized** – i.e. provided with a legalization endorsement issued by a Czech representation abroad. This endorsement verifies that the document has been issued or certified by an authorized party or appropriate authority, and it also verifies the authenticity of the signatures, official stamps and seals that are part of such a public document. Superlegalization is not required if it is so established under an international treaty of which the Czech Republic is a party; or
- provided with a verification endorsement - **apostille** (official certification attached to the document) – in this case, the document does not have to be legalized by a Czech representation abroad; instead, the final certification is done in the country where the document is issued (by a so-called "apostille body"). Such a certification verifies that the document has been issued by the proper authority and that it is authentic. Apostilles are issued

by countries that are parties to the Convention Abolishing the Requirement for the Legalization of Foreign Public Documents signed at The Hague on 5 October, 1961; or

- **exempt from the special certification requirement** – if so established under an existing international treaty.

The information as to whether or not it is necessary to have a document superlegalized or provided with an apostille or whether the documents to be submitted are exempt from any special certification requirements can be obtained by calling a Czech representation abroad.

#### **4. 5. Birth Certificate Number**

**A foreign national who has been granted permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic**, is assigned the birth certificate number by the Ministry of the Interior (the appropriate regional branch office of the Asylum and Migration Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior) by virtue of office pursuant to Article 14, letter d), point 5 of Act No. 391/2008 Sb., Coll., on recording inhabitants and birth certificate numbers For further information on the conditions of assigning the birth certificate number (required documents, application processing terms etc.), contact the appropriate branch office of the Asylum and Migration Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior which has granted the permit to a natural person concerned.

**A foreign national who has been granted a temporary stay permit for a period exceeding 90 days, or an EU citizen who intends to stay in the territory of the Czech Republic for a period of time exceeding 3 months** will be assigned the birth certificate number by the appropriate department of the Police of the Czech Republic by virtue of office pursuant to Article 14, letter c) of the Inhabitants Recording Act. For further information on the conditions of assigning the birth certificate number (required documents, application processing terms etc.), contact the appropriate department of the Alien Police which has granted the permit to a natural person concerned.

#### **4. 6. Citizenship of the Czech Republic**

The Czech citizenship can be obtained in two ways: by birth (a child automatically becomes a Czech citizen once being born if at least one of his or her parents is a citizen of the Czech Republic, or if the child was born in the Czech Republic and his or her parents are persons without citizenship and at least one of them is a permanent resident of the Czech Republic) and by granting.

The Czech citizenship may be awarded by the Ministry of the Interior at the request of a foreign national who meets all of the following criteria (there is no legal title to being granted citizenship).

- he or she has had a permanent residence in the Czech Republic for at least five years (the foreign national is required to stay most of the time in the Czech Republic for that period). In specified cases, the Ministry of the Interior may **waive the minimum stay duration** requirement.
- He or she demonstrates that he or she will lose the existing citizenship, or demonstrates that he or she has lost the existing citizenship by obtaining the Czech citizenship. The foreign national is not required to append a document proving the loss of the existing citizenship to the application. This document should be submitted after a so-called "promise of granting the citizenship of the Czech Republic" is issued in administrative proceedings. The demonstration of the loss of the existing citizenship may be waived in certain cases.
- He or she has not been lawfully sentenced for an intentional crime in the Czech Republic in the last 5 years. This condition may not be waived.
- He or she demonstrates a knowledge of the Czech language. This requirement can be waived by the Ministry of the Interior under circumstances of special consideration (e.g. due to the applicant's advanced age or health status)
- He or she fulfils obligations stipulated by the Aliens Act in the field of health insurance and social security, taxes and levies (e.g. he or she is not in arrears with the payment of health insurance premium, pays taxes in due manner and time, adheres to the reporting obligations).

This requirement can be waived by the Ministry of the Interior under circumstances of special consideration. This requirement can be waived by the Ministry of the Interior under circumstances of special consideration.

The particulars of the application for the citizenship of the Czech Republic are specified in the Act on the Acquisition and Relinquishment of Czech Citizenship. An application for the Czech citizenship, addressed to the Ministry of the Interior, must be filed with the regional authority in the location of the applicant's permanent residence (in Prague, the applications are filed with the District Offices of the city districts of Prague 1 to Prague 22; in Brno and Ostrava, the applications are filed with the respective municipalities, and in Plzeň, the applications are filed with the District Office of Plzeň 3). A married couple may file a single joint application and include a child under the age of 18.

The regional authority fills in the questionnaire with the applicant, verifies his or her knowledge of Czech, and - in 30 days following the application date - sends the application for granting the citizenship of the Czech Republic, accompanied with the regional authority statement, municipal authority statement and other documents, to the Ministry of the Interior for decision through the mediation of the Aliens Police that also appends its statement.

The Ministry is obliged to decide on the application in 90 days and, in the majority of cases, the applicant is invited for a personal interview as part of the review process. If the Ministry **rejects** the citizenship application, an **appeal** against such a decision may be lodged with the **Minister of the Interior** within 15 days after the decision is served. If the decision of the Minister of the Interior is negative, too, the case may be brought before the Municipal Court in Prague in 2 months following the service.

If the application is approved, the applicant takes the citizenship oath in front of the secretary of a municipal authority of a municipality with extended powers and then, he or she is presented with the Certificate of Czech Citizenship. The foreign national becomes a Czech citizen by taking the oath. **Children under the age of 18** acquire the citizenship with their parents. The administrative fee for granting the citizenship of the Czech Republic is CZK 10,000. At the applicant's request, the Ministry of the Interior may reduce this amount **down to CZK 1000** in specially justified cases of state interest.

**!!! NOTE !!!**

*▫The Aliens Act is subject to frequent amendments in relation to the membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union and the Schengen area and related modifications of the legislation of the EC/EU. You are therefore recommended to seek information from your local department of the Alien Police on a regular basis (Chapter 16.1.) or assistance from non-governmental non-profit organizations offering help to foreigners (Chapter 15.). You can also take advantage of the Alien Police Information Line at 974 841 356 or 974 841 357, email: [infoscpp@mvcv.cz](mailto:infoscpp@mvcv.cz)) or the website of the Ministry of the Interior.*



### Links to similar sources of information

- See the website of the Ministry of the Interior for the current full wording of the Aliens Act: <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public ► Information for foreigners ► Conditions for the stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic ► Laws and regulations).
- See <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public ► Information for foreigners ► Conditions for the entry and stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic ► Citizens of the EU, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland and family members of the citizens of the EU, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) for more detailed information on the stay of EU citizens in the territory of the Czech Republic.

- See the following websites for more detailed information on the stay of third-country nationals in the territory of Schengen/CR:
  - <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public► Information for foreigners)
  - <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► EU► Schengen)
  - <http://www.euroskop.cz/schengen> and also in the section Schengen and the Czech Republic
- See <http://www.mvcr.cz> for the list of countries with whom the Czech Republic has concluded treaties on cancelling the visa obligation (► About us ► Asylum and migration ► Migration ► Visa policy ► Overview of a temporary stay in the Czech Republic of a foreigner without visa).
- See <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public► Forms ► Foreigners) for a sample visa application with filling instructions in Czech and English.
- The residence permit application form can be downloaded from <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public ► Forms ► Foreigners).
- See <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public► Information for foreigners► Permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic) for detailed information on the conditions of obtaining a permanent residence permit.
- The following information can be also found at the website of the Ministry of Justice (<http://www.mvcr.cz>):
  - Sample forms and applications (► Services for the public► Forms► Foreigners)
  - Answers to questions most frequently asked by foreigners: (► Services for the public► Information for foreigners► Frequently asked questions)
  - Laws and regulations applicable to the entry and stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic (► Services for the public► Information for foreigners► Conditions of the entry and stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic► Laws and regulations)
- See the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.mzv.cz> (► Information for foreigners) for detailed information on visa issues.
- See the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.mzv.cz> (► About the Ministry ► Diplomatic missions) for a directory of representations of the Czech Republic abroad. and foreign embassies in the Czech Republic.
- Information on the stay of foreign nationals can also be found on the website of the Alien Police Service (<http://www.policie.cz>) (► Departments of the Police of the Czech Republic ► State-wide departments ► Alien Police service ► Information on the stay of foreign nationals)
- See <http://portal.justice.cz> (► Ministry of Justice ► International relations ► Legalization of document for foreign countries) for a list of countries which have acceded to the Convention Abolishing the Requirement for the Legalization of Foreign Public Documents and a list of countries with which the Czech Republic has concluded bilateral legal assistance treaties specifying public documents that are exempt from higher legalization requirements.
- See <http://www.nkcr.cz> for a list of notaries dealing with the official legalization of the concordance of transcripts or copies of documents with their originals (► Notaries contact information)
- See the website of the Ministry of Justice at <http://www.justice.cz> (► Penal Register) or contact any Czech POINT centre(<http://czechpoint.cz>) for detailed information on the Penal Register.
- The primary source of information on the procedure to be taken when filing an application for citizenship is the Public Administration Portal - <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Situations in life ► Foreigner ► Citizenship) and the website of the Ministry of the Interior – <http://www.mvcr.cz> ► Services for the public ► Advice and services ► Citizenship of the Czech Republic.

## **5. WHERE TO SEEK HELP**

### **5.1. Attorneys**

Attorneys represent their clients in before courts and other authorities, act as legal counsels during criminal proceedings, provide legal assistance in all types of legal matters, and assist their clients with the execution of documents (contracts etc.). Attorneys' services are provided subject to payment. All attorneys are members of the Czech Bar Association which oversees their operation and serves as a body dealing with complaints lodged by clients dissatisfied with the services provided by an attorney.

### **5.2. Ombudsman**

The Ombudsman (public rights defender) is in charge of protecting people against (wrongful) acts of authorities and other public administration institutions provided that such acts are contrary to the law or otherwise wrong or unfair, i.e. inconsistent with the principles pursued by a democratic state governed by law and the principles proper administration, or in the event that such bodies are dormant. The Ombudsman **cannot interfere with relations or disputes based on private law**, or decision-making activities of courts, and no appeals against court decisions can be lodged with the Ombudsman.

Although the Ombudsman has the right to carry out independent investigations in the respective matters, the law does not allow him/her to substitute state administration bodies, and therefore the Ombudsman is not permitted to **change or cancel any decisions issued by such authorities**. Nevertheless, in the event that any malpractice on the part of an authority or institution is identified by the Ombudsman, a remedy may be requested by his/her office.

### **5.3. Consumer Protection, the Czech Trade Inspection Authority**

The primary function of the **Czech Trade Inspection Authority** is to monitor compliance with the conditions specified for the purpose of quality, hygienic harmlessness and safety of non-food products and services; besides that, it is also in charge of supervising the provision of proper product information and ensuring that consumers are not being misled by false, unsubstantiated or incomplete information on the actual the properties of products or services. Consumers are offered **advice and information services** at each office of the Czech Trade Inspection Authority. Here the consumers may also submit suggestions for an inspection, file a complaint or ask for advice on how to deal with problematic situations regarding the purchase of goods or services.

As for food products, the Czech Trade Inspection Authority is only responsible for monitoring adherence to proper sales practices; food products and raw materials used for their production are inspected by the State Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority.

Other institutions participating in the monitoring efforts for the protection of the consumer include public health authorities, veterinary authorities, local trades licensing offices and customs offices (see Article 23 of Act No. 634/1992 Sb. - Coll., on consumer protection).

**Another option is to take advantage of services provided by non-governmental, non-profit organizations specializing in consumer protection** which enable the consumer public to access information related to consumers' rights. Specific consumer issues and problems can be discussed in specialized advice bureaus and on numerous internet discussion forums.

## 5. 4. Corruption

Useful advice and information on what to do if you become a witness to a situation involving corruption or corrupt practices can be found at **Anti-corruption website of the Ministry of the Interior** - <http://www.korupce.cz>. The website contains a wide range of information, laws, documents, suggestions, as well as and contact information on the respective authorities in charge of eliminating corruption.

In the Czech Republic, you can also use the anti-corruption line at 199. Line 199 is intended to provide legal advice to those who have encountered corruption on the part of representatives of state authorities, as well as in the private sector. You can call line 199 and obtain legal advice for free. The line is operated by the Czech branch of Transparency International, a non-governmental non-profit organization with several years of practice in providing legal advice to people affected by corruption. Line 199 can be called from anywhere and almost any time. See <http://www.linka199.cz> for more detailed information.

## 5. 5. Managing Emergency Situations

While staying in the Czech Republic, may witness or become directly involved in various situations that you might find difficult to solve, and you may need help. This chapter provides a brief summary of information as to what to do in such situations and which body to contact for assistance.

**!!! In the event of emergency, you can always call the line !!!**

**☎112 - Europe-Wide Emergency Number**

*(Calling the line is free of charge - a penalty is charged for misuse,  
you can also communicate in English or German.)*

When giving message at the emergency line, please state:

- What exactly has happened and what is the extent of the incident (e.g. what is at risk or has been affected, how many victims are there.),
- what is the exact location of the incident (address - town, street, land registry or orientation number of a house, road number, mileage marker, direction of travel or detailed indication of location in an open space etc.)
- Information about yourself (name, phone number and location where you are calling from).

After the end of the emergency call, the operator may call you back to verify the incident or to ask for more detailed information, e.g. how to get to the place concerned.

In the Czech Republic, there are also nation-wide emergency lines:

### ➤ **150 – Fire-brigade of the Czech Republic**

Call this number if you witness an emergency situation (fire, accident involving a leakage of a dangerous substance etc.) endangering persons, property or the environment.

### ➤ **155 – Lifesaving service**

Call this number if you, during your stay, find yourself in a situation threatening the health or even life of yourself, your family members or other people and immediate medical assistance is needed. The lifesaving service is operated so as to assist in situations involving a sudden serious illness or injury if the patient is unable to get to a doctor or hospital on his/her own and it is necessary to arrange for a prompt medical attention and transportation of the patient to a hospital so as to prevent an aggravation of the patient's condition.

➤ **158 – Police of the Czech Republic**

Each of us may encounter a situation entailing some type of illegal activity pursued by other people; thus, we may become informants, aggrieved parties or witnesses to certain events. **Criminal offences**, as the most serious type of illegal conduct are described in the Penal Act (Act No. 40/2009 Sb., Coll., the Penal Code that will become effective on 1 January 2010, substituting Act No. 140/1961 Sb., Coll., the Penal Code, effective prior to that date). Individuals over the age of 15 are considered responsible under penal law. The police and the Public Prosecutor's Office are in charge of investigating criminal offences and prosecuting perpetrators.

**Offences** are less serious violations of law which are not considered as a felony. The investigation of offences is within the competence of the police; offences are usually heard before municipal authorities.

If you have become a witness to or victim of a criminal act or offence, encountered a situation that puts you or your family members at risk, contact any police officer or the police station nearest to the place of your residence or stay for assistance, or call the above-specified telephone number. The police are required to accept and record your report. If you are not satisfied with the treatment you have received from the police, you can file a complaint. Such a complaint should be filed with the Inspection and Complaint Department of any administrative branch of the Police of the Czech Republic. If you believe that a police officer has committed a criminal offence with respect to you or your family members, you can contact directly the Inspection Office of the Police.

➤ **156 – Municipal (city) police**

The municipal police represent a municipal authority in charge of maintaining public order within the scope of the competence of the given municipality. Anyone may turn to municipal officers who are members of the municipal police for assistance; the officers are obliged to provide required assistance within the scope of their assignments. The municipal police forces collaborate closely with the Police of the Czech Republic. If you are not satisfied with the treatment you have received from the municipal or city police, you can file a complaint. Such a complaint should be filed with the establishing body, i.e. the board of representatives of the city or municipality concerned.

## **5. 6. Managing Other Emergency Situations**

In addition to the situations described above, you may also encounter some other difficulties during your stay, namely: domestic violence, particularly as regards children and women, drug addiction, human trafficking, HIV/AIDS, acute housing shortage, serious personal or family problems.





In the situations described above, you can take advantage of assistance provided by specialized organizations, namely:

ORGANIZATION NAME	CONTACT	WHO IS TO BE ASSISTED
HELPLINE - CRISIS INTERVENTION CENTRES	284 016 666 - non-stop	Psychological and social assistance to people in crisis
RIAPS (ambulatory psychological and social services)	Chelčického 39, 130 00 Prague 3, 222 580 697 <a href="http://www.mcssp.cz/riaps.php">www.mcssp.cz/riaps.php</a>	People in troublesome situation
SAFETY LINE	800 155 555 – free calling, non-stop <a href="http://www.linkabezpeci.cz">www.linkabezpeci.cz</a>	For children and young people
SPONDEA CHILDREN'S CRISIS CENTRE	Sýpka 25, 613 00 Brno <a href="mailto:krizovapomoc@spondea.cz">krizovapomoc@spondea.cz</a> 541 235 511 <a href="http://www.spondea.cz">www.spondea.cz</a>	Children experiencing cruelty and abuse, domestic violence victims, Brno
CHILDREN'S CRISIS CENTRE	241 484 149 <a href="http://www.dkc.cz">www.dkc.cz</a>	Children experiencing cruelty and abuse, Prague
DIAKONIE HELPLINE	Diakonie ČCE – Christian help centre in Prague, Belgická 22, 120 00 Prague 2 222 514 040 <a href="mailto:linka.duvery@diakoniecce.cz">linka.duvery@diakoniecce.cz</a> <a href="http://skp.diakoniecce.cz/">http://skp.diakoniecce.cz/</a>	People in troublesome situation
SDRUŽENÍ PODANÉ RUCE	Francouzská 36, 602 00 Brno 545 247 535 <a href="http://www.podaneruce.cz">www.podaneruce.cz</a>	People at risk of drug abuse, Moravia
K-CENTRUM LINE	283 872 186	People at risk of drug abuse, Bohemia
NATIONAL AIDS PREVENTION LINE	800 144 444 – free calling	HIV, AIDS
BÍLÝ KRUH BEZPEČÍ	257 317 100 (Prague) <a href="http://www.bkb.cz">www.bkb.cz</a>	Assistance to crime or domestic violence victims
LA STRADA ČR	INFO and SOS - line: 222 71 71 71, on Wednesdays from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M. also in Russian. Other languages spoken upon prior agreement. <a href="mailto:pomoc@strada.cz">pomoc@strada.cz</a> Office of the organization: 222 721 810 <a href="http://www.strada.cz">www.strada.cz</a>	Provision of social services to trafficking and exploitation victims and potential victims The service is also provided to foreign nationals disregarding their residence status; it can be rendered on an anonymous basis.
ELEKTRA	272 911 110; 603 812 361 <a href="http://www.centrumelektra.cz">www.centrumelektra.cz</a>	Assistance to women abused sexually during childhood
ROSA	Podolská 25, 147 00 Prague 4 241 432 466, 602 246 102 <a href="http://www.rosa-os.cz">www.rosa-os.cz</a>	Centre for domestic violence victims
INTERVENTION CENTRE OF THE PLZEŇ REGION AND FIELD CRISIS SERVICE	Cukrovarská 16, 301 00 Plzeň Non-stop telephone line: 777 167 004 <a href="http://www.dchp.cz">www.dchp.cz</a> ; <a href="http://www.dchp.cz/krize">www.dchp.cz/krize</a>	Assistance to people at risk of domestic violence and assistance in solving critical and emergency situations
CHARITA ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA	MAGDALA help line 737 234 078 <a href="http://www.charita.cz">www.charita.cz</a>	Assistance to human trafficking victims, assistance to foreigners in need
HELPLINE	800 200 007 - free calling	HELPLINE

You can also turn to **citizens' advisory bureaus** for help and advice in various situations in life. Free counselling is provided in the fields of social issues, family and interpersonal relations, human rights, labour relations, housing, property relations, insurance, financial issues, health care, consumer protection etc. For detailed information on social services, refer to Chapter 10.5.

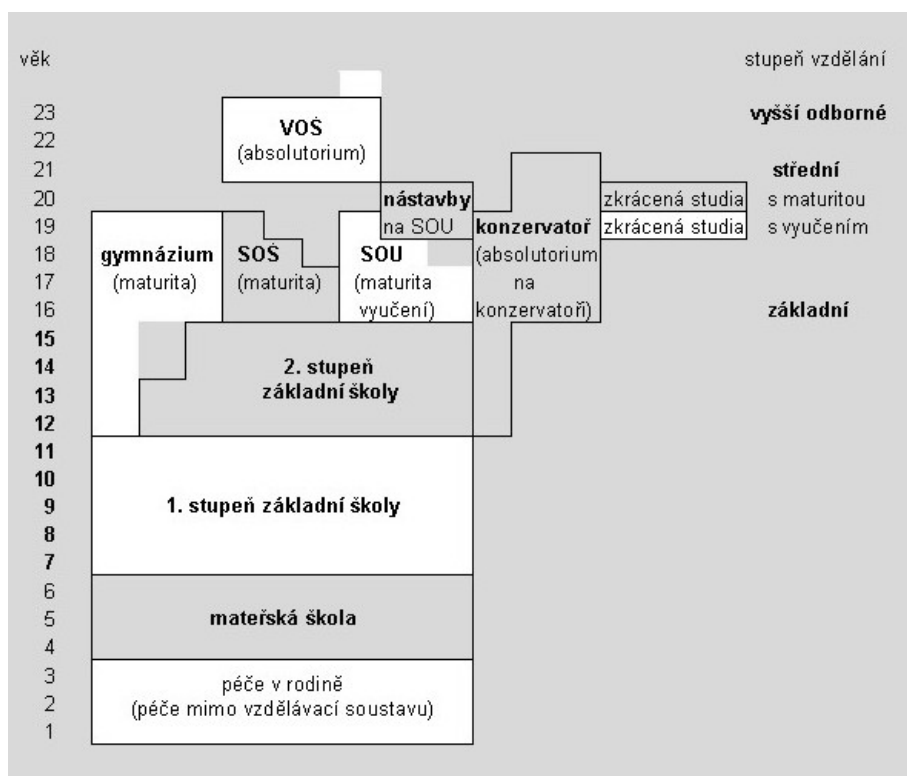
## 6. SCHOOL SYSTEM AND RECOGNITION OF EDUCATION

*It is everyone's right to have access to education. Schooling is obligatory for the period of time required by law.*

(Article 33, Paragraph 1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms)

The principal legal regulations governing education issues are the School Act and the University Education Act. The current versions of Act No. 561/2004 Sb., Coll., on preschool, elementary, secondary, higher vocational and other education (the School Act) and Act No. 111/1998 Sb., Coll., on universities, as well as other important regulations can be found, for example, on the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports at <http://www.msmt.cz> (► Documents ► Laws ► List of regulations applicable in the field of education, youth and sports) and (► Education ► University education ► Dokumenty ► Legislation (► Legal norms and related standards), or the website of the Ministry of the Interior at <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Legislation ► Collection of Laws).

Education is based on equal opportunities without any discrimination, on considering the educational needs and requirements of an individual, on mutual consideration and respect, tolerance of different views, solidarity and respect for dignity of all participants in the educational system. The elementary and secondary education of the citizens of the Czech Republic or other EU member states at schools operated by the State, region, municipality or a group of municipalities is free of charge. The educational system gives everyone the opportunity to engage in lifelong education. The educational system includes education aimed at obtaining specific education degrees, non-degree types of education (elementary, arts, languages, other areas of interest and other fields of education) and school services. The system also provides educational opportunities to individuals with special educational needs and provides institutionalized education, custody-type education and preventive care.



Věk	Age
Stupeň vzdělání	Education degree
VOŠ (absolutorium)	Higher technical school (leaving certificate)
Vyšší odborné	Higher professional
Gymnázium (maturita)	“Gymnázium” (general-purpose secondary school) (school-leaving certificate)
SOŠ (maturita)	Secondary technical school (school-leaving certificate)
SOU (maturita, vyučení)	Secondary vocational school (school-leaving certificate, vocational certificate)
Nástavby na SOU	Further training at secondary vocational schools
Konzervatoř (absolutorium na konzervatoři)	Conservatory (conservatory leaving certificate)
Zkrácená studia	Fast-track courses
Střední	Secondary
S maturitou	With a school-leaving certificate
S vyučením	With a vocational certificate
Základní	Elementary
2. stupeň základní školy	2 <sup>nd</sup> level of elementary school
1. stupeň základní školy	1 <sup>st</sup> level of elementary school
Mateřská škola	Kindergarten
Péče v rodině (péče mimo vzdělávací soustavu)	Family care (care outside the system of education)

**Education degrees** pursuant to the current School Act are as follows: elementary education degree, secondary education degree, secondary education degree with a vocational certificate, secondary education degree with a school leaving examination, degree of higher professional education at conservatory and higher professional education degree. (University education is subject to Act No. 111/1998 Sb., Coll., on universities.)

**Types of schools are as follows:** kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school ("gymnázium", secondary technical school and secondary vocational school), conservatory, higher technical school, elementary school of arts and language school with the state language examination right.

**Types of school facilities** are as follows: school facilities for further education of teachers, school counselling facilities, school facilities for special interest and further education, special-purpose school facilities, training and accommodation facilities), school catering facilities and school facilities for institutionalized care, care in correctional custody and preventive educational care.

Education is organized in cycles based on the **school year** beginning on 1 September and ending on 31 August of the subsequent year. Each school year is divided into teaching periods and periods of school holidays. The teaching period starts on 1 September and ends on 30 June of the subsequent year (the exact date may fluctuate considering the nearest workday or other circumstances) and it is divided into two terms/semesters. The period of school holidays include autumn holidays, Christmas holidays, end-of-term holidays, spring holidays, Easter holidays and summer holidays. Schools use a five-day teaching week.

**Specific issues** regarding education of foreign nationals are regulated primarily by Article 20 of the School Act. Persons who are not citizens of the Czech Republic and who are legally residing in the territory of the Czech Republic have the same access to pre-school, elementary, secondary and higher technical education under the same conditions as Czech citizens, including education provided to those in institutional or correctional custody. Foreign nationals become children, pupils and students of the respective schools under conditions stipulated in the School Act provided that they demonstrate to the headmaster that their stay in the territory of the Czech Republic is legal. The proof of legality of the stay in the territory of the Czech Republic is not required with regard to applications for admission to elementary schools. Citizens of other EU member states are not required to demonstrate the legal character of their stay in the territory of the Czech Republic. If a secondary or higher technical school entrance examination includes an examination in Czech, this requirement can be waived for applicants

who are not Czech citizens and who acquired their prior education at schools abroad. The knowledge of Czech necessary for studying the given educational programme is verified by the school by means of an interview.

## 6. 1. Pre-School Education

Pre-school education is non-compulsory and it is offered in **kindergartens** operated by the **state, region, municipality or private entities. Kindergartens may also be operated by private or corporate entities; they are subject to the School Act in the event that they are incorporated in the Register of Schools of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.** Pre-school education is generally offered to children from three to six years of age. Children are admitted to a kindergarten on the basis of applications filed by their parents (or legal guardians). The information on the place, term and deadline for the submission of an application for the admission of a child to a pre-school education facility for the upcoming school year is issued by the headmaster upon agreement with the entity operating the kindergarten; the **headmaster** is entitled to decide on admission of the child to the kindergarten, or - if necessary - a trial stay of a child (for a maximum period of 3 months. Children are given preference in the admission process in the year preceding the year in which they start their compulsory education. Admission to pre-school education in during the school year is allowed. **The payment for pre-school education is set by the headmaster of the given kindergarten; in the last grade, i.e. when the child reaches the age of 6, the education is provided free of charge (Article 123, paragraph 2 of the School Act).**

Pre-school education promotes the healthy emotional, intellectual and physical development of the pre-school child and its ability to master the basic code of behaviour and learn about the basic values and interpersonal relations. Preschool education sets out the basic prerequisites for the child's future educational efforts. Pre-school education also facilitates the compensation of any disparities in the child's development before starting elementary school and offers special care to children with special educational needs.

Further details regarding education in kindergartens, conditions of operation, catering, health care and safety, as well as the determination of fees are specified in Regulation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports No. 14/2005 Sb., Coll., on pre-school education, as amended by Regulation No. 43/2006 Sb., Coll., and **Regulation No. 410/2005 Sb., Coll., on hygienic requirements on the premises and operation of facilities and establishments used for the education of children and young people.**

## 6. 2. Compulsory and Elementary Education

**Free access to education** at elementary and secondary schools is declared in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. Private schools may provide education for a fee. Education is compulsory for nine years and applies to children who have reached the age of 6, unless they have been allowed a postponement. Compulsory education usually leads to the completion of basic education. All foreign nationals have an access to the basic education provided that they stay in the territory of the Czech Republic.

**An application for school admission** of a child is filed by its parents or legal guardians. The registration for the first grade of elementary school takes place from 15 January to 15 February. The individual elementary schools announce their exact registration dates in advance. The conditions of compulsory education of children whose permanent residence is in a given town or municipality are set by that municipality which either has its own elementary school or makes arrangements for its children to attend an elementary school operated by another municipality or group of municipalities. Municipalities, municipal districts or territories made up of multiple municipalities are divided into school districts with catchment schools in which the municipalities guarantee the provision of elementary education to all children from the such districts. The delimitation of school districts does

interfere with the right to apply for admission of a child to a school different from the catchment school.

**Elementary schools** are divided into the first and the second level **The first level** lasts for 5 years (grades 1-5) and the **second level** lasts for four years (grades 6-9). After the successful completion of the first elementary school level, the pupil can continue his or her compulsory education on the junior level of a six-year or eight-year "gymnázium" (type of secondary school). **Elementary education of physically handicapped pupils educated in classes or schools with adapted education programmes may (with a previous consent of the Ministry) last ten years, with the first level being grades 1 to 6 and the second level being grades 7 to 10.**

A person is considered to have completed **elementary education** after he or she has successfully completed the basic educational programme at an elementary school, the junior level of a six-year or eight-year "gymnázium" or the corresponding number of years in an eight-year programme at a conservatory. A person is also considered to have completed basic education after having successfully completed a course aimed at obtaining elementary education taken at an elementary or a secondary school provided that the applicant has complied with the requirement of compulsory school attendance.

**Since 2007, elementary schools are required to use their own school education programmes. Schools are obliged to teach the compulsory content guaranteed by the state; nevertheless, they also teach further non-obligatory content as a rule. Individual schools may therefore differ with respect to the content exceeding the binding framework, as well as teaching methods.**

*Children of all foreign nationals living in the Czech Republic have a statutory obligation to attend schools. If the obligation is not complied with, legal guardians of the child are subject to sanctions.*

### 6. 3. Secondary Education

After having completed elementary school or having complied with the requirement of compulsory school attendance, a student may continue his or her education at a secondary school ("**gymnázium**", **secondary technical school or a secondary vocational school**) or **conservatory**. Secondary schools prepare their students for further study or occupation and professional activities. The study may have a full-time, distance, evening or combined form. Depending on the type of education programme and field, the school leaver obtains secondary education, or secondary education with a vocational certificate, or secondary education with a school-leaving examination; the secondary education with a school-leaving examination is a precondition of admission to a university.

The headmaster of the given secondary school is entitled to make decisions regarding the admission to the secondary school within the scope of the appropriate admission procedure. The **conditions of admission procedures** for secondary schools and conservatories are subject to legal regulations.

**It is necessary to file an application so as to be admitted as a student of the first grade of a secondary school. In the first run of the admission procedure, applications for education at secondary schools are filed by adult applicants themselves or by the parents or legal guardians of minor applicants to the headmaster of the given secondary school, using a form specified by the Ministry and adhering to the term specified in Article 60 b.**

**As regards the full-time form of education, the applicants should submit their applications to the headmaster of the given secondary school by 15 March; if the application is submitted for a field of study for which a talent examination is required, the deadline is 30 November.**

**As for any non-full-time forms of education, the applicants should submit their applications to the headmaster of the given secondary school by 20 March; if the application is submitted for a field of study for which a talent examination is required, the deadline is 30 November.**

**Each applicant is entitled to file three applications for the first run of the full-time study admission procedure.**

Applicants completing their compulsory school attendance at a foreign school must submit an education completion certificate issued by the foreign school and an attestation of recognition of equality of the foreign school certificate issued by such a foreign school, or a decision recognizing the foreign school certificate validity in the event that the completion of a certain degree of education is required for admission.

The "**gymnázium**" curriculum is of a general academic character and it is designed to prepare students for university studies. The study may last four, six or eight years. The six-year and eight-year courses are intended for students who have completed the first level of elementary school education, while the four-year course is intended for students who have completed the ninth grade of an elementary school.

Besides the appropriate grade of education, **secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools** provide appropriate qualifications to their students so that they can practice given professions or engage in professional vocational activities; these schools also prepare their students for further studies at higher professional schools and universities. Secondary technical schools and secondary vocational schools offer a total of ca 240 **fields of technical education** which can be broken down by the duration of the study and degree of education provided. By completing a two-year programme, the student obtains the secondary level of education, by completing a three-year programme, the student obtains the secondary level of education with a **vocational certificate**, and by completing a four-year programme the student obtains the secondary level of education with a **school-leaving examination**. Secondary education with a school-leaving examination may also be completed by taking some of the **follow-up courses** offered to applicants who have already completed their secondary education with a vocational certificate in a field entailing a three-year study. The fields entailing two-year and three-year studies provide qualifications for workers in industry and services, while the fields whose study is completed by taking a school-leaving examination provide qualifications for pursuing middle technical, managerial and other activities. Secondary schools may also organize **abbreviated courses** for obtaining secondary education with a vocational certificate or school-leaving examination for applicants who have already completed secondary education with a vocational certificate or school-leaving examination and wish to obtain new qualification in another field of study. Such abbreviated courses last for 1 to 2 years (in the full-time form).

**Studies at conservatories** are designed to develop the students' knowledge, skills and other talents acquired during a regular elementary education or during elementary education at special art schools, to provide general education and prepare the students for a demanding professional career in the field of art, or a teaching career with a specialization in music, dance, singing or acting. The studies at a conservatory also prepare the student for a full-valued personal and public life, further education and future career. In order to be admitted to the first grade of a six-year conservatory programme, the applicant must have completed the compulsory school attendance or must have successfully completed his/her elementary education without completing the compulsory school attendance; applicants who have successfully completed the fifth grade of an elementary school and complied with the conditions of admission by demonstrating their abilities, knowledge, interests and health condition during the admission procedure can be admitted to the first grade of the eight-year education programme. The conservatory admission procedure has a form of a talent examination.

Upon the successful completion of a conservatory education programme, the student completes the **secondary education with a school-leaving examination or higher professional education at a conservatory**.

#### **6. 4. Higher Technical Education**

Higher technical education develops and enhances the skills and knowledge obtained by the students in the course of their secondary education, providing general and technical education and practical preparation for the performance of highly professional activities. Upon the successful completion of an appropriate accredited education programme, the student completes the degree of higher technical education. The duration of higher education programmes in the full-time form is 3

years (including professional internships), in medical disciplines the duration of the programmes may be up to 3.5 years.

In order to be admitted as a student at a higher technical school, the student must have completed his/her secondary education programme with a school-leaving examination and meet the admission criteria by demonstrating appropriate skills, knowledge interests and health condition.

The higher technical education is completed by obtaining a certificate of completion. The certificate of completion and diploma of a higher technical school graduate serve as documents proving the completion of higher technical education. Graduates of higher technical schools use the title of diploma certified specialist (abbreviated as DiS) after their name.).

## **6. 5. Recognition of Education Received Abroad by Elementary, Secondary and Higher Technical Schools**

A document verifying the completion of elementary, secondary or a higher technical education abroad may be submitted to the Department of Education of the appropriate regional authority, applying for:

- the issuance of a certificate of recognition of a foreign academic certificate in the Czech Republic,
- a decision on the recognition of a foreign academic certificate validity in the Czech Republic (validation).

**An attestation of recognition of a foreign school certificate in the Czech Republic can be issued by a regional authority** in the event that the Czech Republic is bound by an international treaty on the recognition of equality of proofs of education with the country in which the foreign school is established and recognized. If the content and scope of the respective subjects taught is not clearly stated in the foreign certificate, the foreigner must also submit a framework of the curriculum in the branch of study in which he/she has obtained his/her education. The application with a sworn translation of the appropriate proof of education from the country of origin is submitted to the department of education of the appropriate regional authority from which the appropriate form is available, too.

If the Czech Republic and the respective country have not concluded an international treaty on the recognition of equality of proofs of education, the decision on recognition may be issued by the regional authority on the basis of the original foreign certificate or its sworn translation into Czech. If the content and scope of the respective subjects taught is not clearly stated in the foreign certificate, the foreigner must also submit a framework of the curriculum in the branch of study in which he/she has obtained his/her education. In the event that there is no legal assistance treaty between the Czech Republic and the state concerned, the foreign school certificate must be superlegalized or provided with an apostille (see Chapter 4.4. for further details).

The **regional authority** may reach any of the following decisions:

1. if the content and scope of the foreign school curriculum does not significantly vary from an analogical education programme framework in the Czech Republic, the application will be **approved** and a validation endorsement on the recognition of the applicant's foreign school certificate in the Czech Republic will be issued,
2. if it is found out within the framework of the recognition procedure that the content and scope of the foreign school curriculum varies significantly from an analogical education programme framework in the Czech Republic, the application will be **rejected**, or
3. if it is discovered within the framework of the recognition procedure that the curriculum taught at the foreign school varies only partially, or the foreigner fails to submit the foreign certificate or the framework of the curriculum of the field of study, the regional authority requests that the applicant take a **recognition examination**. The purpose of this examination is to verify that the applicant's knowledge and skills comply with the objectives and content of education according to the appropriate curriculum framework, and it may entail a practical



part. The applicant does not have to take the recognition examination in Czech language and literature. A commission of at least three members decides on the result of the examination.

Detailed regulatory requirements regarding the recognition of education obtained abroad can be found in Article 108 of Act No. 561/2004 Sb., Coll., the School Act, as amended, and in Regulation of the the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports No. 12/2005 Sb., Coll., containing detailed information about the recognition examination and sample certificates on the recognition of equality of a foreign proof of education and sample recognition endorsement.

For further information on the recognition of education obtained abroad, contact the school department of your regional authority in person or by telephone.

## 6. 6. Universities

There are three types of **universities** in the Czech Republic – **public, state** (military and police academies) and **private**. An applicant must complete an admission procedure before being enrolled in any of these universities. The basic requirement for admission to a university (with an exception of art schools) is the completion of general secondary education or technical secondary education. Foreign nationals are required to meet the same criteria as Czech citizens so as to study at universities.. Public and state universities provide education for free, while private schools charge tuition fees of varying amounts. Foreign nationals who wish to study at a public university in the Czech Republic in a language other than Czech must cover the costs for their studies on their own. University studies may have the following forms: full-time (daily attendance based on selected courses), distance (school is attended only a several days a month) and combined.

## 6. 7. Recognition of Foreign University Education and Qualifications

A foreign national - graduate of a foreign university may apply for the recognition of foreign university education and qualifications. The applicant must be in possession of a foreign certificate of enrolment or completion of a study. An application in writing is submitted to:

- the rectorate of a public university offering an accredited study programme with a similar content,
- the Ministry of Defence – if the university education in a military area is concerned,
- the Ministry of the Interior – if the university education in the field of security services is concerned,
- the Ministry of School, Youth and Sports – if the university education has been obtained in any of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Poland, Georgia, Moldova, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

The applicant must submit a **written** application for the recognition of foreign education and qualifications to the above-mentioned appropriate authority (there is no standard form; sample applications available on the websites of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports or a given public university may be used), stating the date of birth, permanent residence address, name and address of the foreign university, name of the study programme and field of study, date of admission and completion of the studies. Each application must be accompanied with an officially verified Czech translation of the applicant's diploma with a list of examination, or a diploma supplement. All supplements must be certified with an apostille or superlegalized (see Chapter 4. 4.).

The maximum application processing time is 30 days. An appeal against a dismissible decision may be lodged with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports if the application for recognition was rejected by a public university, or directly with the Minister of Education if the contested decision was made by the appropriate Ministry.

## 6. 8. Other Forms of Education, Language Courses, Czech Courses and Adult Education

### ➤ Language Courses

Language schools with the state language examination right are incorporated in the Register of Schools and School Facilities and their operation is subject to the School Act. Language schools with the state language examination right differ from commercial language schools in the following aspects: 1) they guarantee the quality of language education defined by the state, 2) they hold state language examinations, 3) their teachers must be employed by the school and must comply with qualification requirements stipulated by law.

**<http://www.vuppraha.cz/> - a website presenting education documents of language schools with the state language examination right**

The current offer of language courses is quite extensive. There are numerous language schools and agencies offering various types of language courses – customized, group, fast-track, one-month, six-month, one-year courses with morning, afternoon or evening schedules. The number of languages taught is also quite extensive; the basic offer includes English, German, Russian, French and Spanish. Fees vary, depending on the duration and intensity of the respective courses (nonetheless, the prices are generally of the order of thousands Czech crowns).

### ➤ Czech language courses

Czech courses for foreigners are organized by language schools, language agencies, some non-governmental non-profit organizations and integration centres (see Chapters 15 and 16). There is a wide range of courses at different levels - from introductory to professional (e.g. business Czech); courses of various lengths and intensities are offered, some of them completed with an examination. Selected language schools offer the state exam in the Czech language for foreigners, including preparatory courses. Most universities offer language preparation centres for foreign students, with some of these centres organizing courses for non-students, too. The learning of the Czech language by foreign nationals is also supported by the central bodies of state administration as part of their integration programmes for foreign nationals who are residing in the Czech Republic on a legal, long-term basis, providing finance for projects organized by non-governmental organizations and integration centres. In some cases, passing an examination in Czech language is a precondition of the issuance of the permanent residence permit (See Chapter 4.3.).



### Links to similar sources of information

- For the wordings of legal regulations applicable in the field of education (including the Universities Act), see (besides others) the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports at <http://www.msmt.cz> (► Documents ► Overview of school regulations)
- See <http://www.msmt.cz> (► Education ► Registry of Schools and School Establishments) for the directory of kindergartens. Information can be also obtained from the headmaster of the given kindergarten or your local municipal authority.
- For a detailed overview of elementary schools in the Czech Republic, see the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports at <http://www.msmt.cz> (► Education ► Registry of Schools and School Establishments)
- For a detailed overview of secondary schools in the Czech Republic, see the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports at <http://www.msmt.cz> (► Education ► Registry of Schools and School Establishments); for further important information, see the website of the Institute for Information in Education at <http://www.uiv.cz>

- Information on fields of study can be found at the website of the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education at [www.nuov.cz](http://www.nuov.cz), including the database of schools (<http://data.nuov.cz/>) and career counselling (<http://www.nuov.cz> ► Education and labour market)
- For detailed information on how to deal with various situations in life with regard to education, visit the Public Administration Portal at <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Situations in life ► Citizen ► Education, science, research ► Secondary and higher schools)
- Besides other interesting information, the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Schools at <http://www.msmt.cz> also contains a directory of public and private universities, as well as accredited study programmes of the respective universities (► Education ► Tertiary education ► Universities), as well as a detailed overview of legal regulations applicable to tertiary education (► Education ► Tertiary education ► Universities (► Documents ► Legislation).
- For further information on the recognition of education obtained abroad, contact the School Department of your Regional Authority in person or by telephone (the addresses of regional authorities can be found at [www.portal.gov.cz](http://www.portal.gov.cz) (► Directory ► Regions); for the Municipal Authority of the Capital City of Prague, see [http://www.praha-mesto.cz/\(50fzh3rpmxs4jf453ckkkw45\)/Default.aspx](http://www.praha-mesto.cz/(50fzh3rpmxs4jf453ckkkw45)/Default.aspx)).
- For more detailed information on the recognition of foreign university education, visit also the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports at <http://www.msmt.cz> and the website of the Centre for Education Documents Equivalence - Tertiary Education Study Centre at <http://www.csvs.cz>.
- See <http://www.migraceonline.cz/e-knihovna/?x=2131271> for an overview of Czech language courses for foreigners.
- For information on language education institution, see e.g. <http://jazykove-skoly.cz/> or <http://www.jazykovky.cz/>.

## **7. HEALTHCARE SYSTEM AND HEALTH INSURANCE**

Pursuant to Article 31 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, everyone has the right to health protection. On the basis of public insurance, citizens are entitled to free health care and medical aids under conditions stipulated by law. Healthcare services are normally covered by health insurance. If a person does not have health insurance or if the respective healthcare services are not covered by such health insurance, the services are provided for a fee.

Every healthcare worker must immediately provide first aid to anyone whose life or welfare would be at serious risk without such an assistance whenever standard types of assistance are not immediately available, and to arrange for further professional medical assistance as necessary (e.g. at a healthcare facility).

Healthcare services are provided in accordance with *Act No. 20/1966 Sb., Coll., on public healthcare*, as amended. This covers both outpatient and institutionalized care – depending on the patient's condition.

### **Health insurance types**

There are two types of health insurance in the Czech Republic:

- **statutory public health insurance** – participation in this system is established by virtue of law (prevailing form),
- **travel health insurance**, effected on a contractual basis:
  - o **short-term**
  - o **long-term**

### **7. 1. Public Health Insurance**

The participation in the public health insurance system is **established** by virtue of law:

- to persons with a permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic,
- to persons who are employees of an employer whose registered office or permanent residence is in the territory of the Czech Republic,
- third country nationals who are legally staying in the territory of an EU member state and who are subject to Regulation (EEC) No. 1408/71 (i.e. comply with the condition of migration between EU member states - e.g. with a previous gainful activity in the territory of another EU member state - see Regulation (EEC) 859/2003, extending the personal scope of Regulation 1408/71).

The participation in the public health insurance system **ceases to exist**:

- by terminating the permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic,
- by terminating employment in the Czech Republic (applies to persons who do not have permanent residence in the Czech Republic),
- at the moment when the Czech legal regulations regarding social security cease to apply to third country citizens on whom Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1408/71 applies.
- when the insured person dies or is declared dead.

#### **➤ Payers of premium**

With regard to the participants of the public health insurance, there are several payers of premium, namely:

- insured persons,
- employers,
- the state.

If the participant of the public health insurance system is an **employee**, part of the insurance premium is paid by his or her employer.

The insurance premium is paid by the employer on behalf of the employees; the appropriate amount is withheld and remitted to the appropriate insurance company. When an employee takes up a

job, the employer is obliged to inform the insurance company accordingly in 8 days. If the employee finds out that the employer failed to do so, he or she is obliged to report this fact to the insurance company immediately.

For some individuals participating in the public health insurance system, the premiums are paid by the state. This applies particularly to dependent children (up to the age of 26), persons receiving pensions from the Czech pension insurance system, recipients of parent benefits, mothers on maternity leave, job seekers (registered with an employment bureau) and others. In order to have the state pay the premiums for the above-listed categories of people, these people must be participants of the public health insurance system - since it is clear that these are not people with an employee status, only persons with permanent residence are concerned.

#### ➤ **Rights and obligations of foreign nationals receiving health care in the Czech Republic**

A foreign national participating in the **public health insurance system** has the same **rights** as any other insured person, namely:

- the right to choose the health insurance provider (the insurance provider can only be changed once in 12 months period, effective as of the first day of a calendar quarter),
- the right to choose a doctor and health care facility which have concluded contracts with the respective insurance provider (the insured person may assert this right once every three months),
- provision of health care services without any direct payments (this excludes services and procedures that are not covered by public health insurance by virtue of law),
- provision of medicaments and food products for special medical purposes without any direct payments, provided that such preparations and food products are covered under the public health insurance system and prescribed in compliance with law.

Insured persons also have certain **obligations**, namely:

- to pay insurance premium to the appropriate insurance provider,
- to identify themselves with valid insurance identity cards when receiving health care services,
- to notify the respective insurance provider of the establishment or termination of employment in 8 days (unless it is done so by the employer), as well as the initiation or termination of business activities, obtaining of a permanent residence permit, health insurance provider change, any facts decisive for the creation and cessation of the obligation of the state to pay the insurance premium, birth of a child (to the health insurance provider with which the mother of the child is insured on the day of its birth) and the loss of or damage to the insurance identity card,
- to return the insurance identity card in the event of health insurance expiration, change of the health insurance provider or long-term stay abroad,
- to report any changes of personal and residence data (in 30 days),
- to pay regulation fees to the health care facility concerned.

In the event of any doubt as to whether or not any health care services are being provided in a proper manner, the insured person may contact the director or operator of the respective health care facility; in the event of any questions regarding the professional or ethical conduct of a doctor, patients can turn for assistance to the Czech Medical Chamber, the Czech Dental Chamber, the Czech Chamber of Pharmaceutical Professionals, or the appropriate health insurance provider, or the state administration authority that has registered the health care facility.

#### ➤ **Extent of health care services**

##### **Health care covered by the public health insurance system**

Health care services that are fully covered by the public health insurance system include outpatient and ward (hospital) care, emergency and rescue services, preventive care, dispensary care, supply of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and dental products, spa treatment, care provided in special pediatric treatment centres and sanatoriums, factory prevention care, transportation of patients (if the insured

person's condition requires it) and reimbursements for travel expenses, diagnostic opinions (to a limited degree), post-mortem examination and autopsy.

Insured persons contribute to the **payment of the costs for certain procedures** or medical devices exceeding the scope defined by law. This, for example, includes certain dental procedures, some spa treatment procedures and, most frequently, contribution to the payment for certain medicaments. Some drugs are fully covered by the insurance, while some of them are partly paid by the patient.. Each class of drugs must contain at least one product which is fully covered by the insurance; otherwise, the doctor must notify the patient in advance that a payment will be required when collecting the prescription at a pharmacy. The costs of any medicaments or medical devices that are required during hospitalization are fully covered by the insurance. Health care services that are not covered by the **public health insurance system** and which must be **paid for directly** are specifically defined by law. For example, this includes selected dental procedures or acupuncture.

## 7. 2. Travel Health Insurance

Foreign nationals, who do not comply with the requirements for the participation in the public health insurance system, may conclude travel health insurance for example with Pojišťovna VZP, a.s., Victoria Volksbanken, a.s., Pojišťovna Slavia, a.s., Maxima pojišťovna, a.s. and UNIQA pojišťovna.

**When effecting insurance with insurance companies which are not properly registered, there is a risk of a failure to pay for the necessary health care.** Make sure that the insurance company you intend to conclude insurance with is properly registered in the Czech Republic - see <http://www.cnb.cz>.

### 1. Short-term travel health insurance (for stays up to 365 days)

This type of insurance policy is suitable for short-term stays in the territory of the Czech Republic, e.g. for tourists or people travelling on business. The coverage only includes emergency and immediate care, including acute dental care. The coverage limits and terms and conditions of the policy are specified in the particular insurance contract. The policy is concluded for a specific number of days (the minimum coverage period is usually three days).

### 2. Long-term health insurance

This type of insurance is suitable for persons staying in the territory of the Czech Republic on a long-term basis, i.e. for at least six months, which is the minimum duration of this insurance. The insurance is established by concluding a contract as at the date specified in the contract, and ends upon the expiration of the term stipulated in the contract, or - if applicable - for other reasons specified in the Insurance Policy Act. The insurance covers a narrower scope of health care compared with the public health insurance. The coverage limits and terms and conditions of the policy are specified in the particular insurance contract and insurance terms and conditions.

Long-term health insurance is available to individuals up to the age of 70 who must undergo an entry exam at a health care facility selected by the insurance company. The policy is concluded for a term ranging from 6 to 24 months and always for full months; after the expiration of the policy, it can be renewed for up to another 24 months. The payment is made in Czech crowns in advance for the entire term of the policy. The terms and conditions for the policy, the extent of coverage, the rights and obligations of the insured person and the insurer, as well as and the premium payment methods are specified in the insurance terms and conditions which must be in conformity with the Insurance Act and the Insurance Policy Act.

#### ➤ Payers of premium

Regarding the **contract-based** health insurance, the insured persons are the premium payers as a rule.

➤ **Rights and obligations of foreign nationals receiving health care in the Czech Republic**

In the event of any doubt as to whether or not any health care services are being provided in a proper manner, the insured person (policy holder) may contact the director or operator of the respective health care facility; in the event of any questions regarding the professional or ethical conduct of a doctor, patients can turn for assistance to the Czech Medical Chamber, the Czech Dental Chamber, the Czech Chamber of Pharmaceutical Professionals, or the state administration authority that has registered the health care facility.

➤ **Extent of health care services**

**Health care services covered by long-term contract-based insurance**

The coverage limits applicable under a long-term contract-based health insurance policy are part of the insurance terms and conditions containing a list of procedures and types of care that are not covered by the long-term contract-based health insurance policy.

The scope of services that are covered under this type of contract-based policy usually include diagnostic, treatment, outpatient and hospital care, the costs of medicaments and medical devices (to the extent analogous to the coverage for individuals insured under the public health insurance scheme with rare exceptions) and costs related to the transportation of the patient to a health care facility.

**Health care services covered by short-term contract-based insurance**

The coverage limits applicable under a short-term contract-based health insurance policy are part of the insurance terms and conditions of the given insurance company.

**Free provision of health care services on the basis of international treaties**

Health care services (outside the scope of the public health insurance system) are also provided to foreign nationals on the basis of:

1. **international agreements on free provision of health care services** that have been concluded between the Czech Republic and the individual's home country. These specifically include agreements on the free provision of emergency and urgent health care in the territory of the Czech Republic and agreements on mutual waiver of payments. To receive health care services under these international treaties, the foreign national must prove his or her nationality by producing a passport and state a reason for staying in the Czech Republic. Health care services provided in this manner are paid for by the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic. Agreements of this type have been concluded with Afghanistan, Yemen, Cuba, Libya, Morocco and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
2. Bilateral social security agreements form another type of such agreements provided that they also regulate the provision of health care services. Generally speaking, the care provided under this type of an agreement is restricted to emergency and urgent assistance; however, if approved by the respective insurance provider, this type of coverage may be extended. When receiving health care services on the basis of such agreements, the recipients of such a care must prove their identity by supplying the forms issued to them by the respective institutions in their countries of origin. Such contracts have been concluded with Croatia, Macedonia, Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro.

**!!! NOTE !!!**

*If your condition requires acute and immediate medical assistance, you have the right to receive medical care at the nearest health care facility – even without identifying yourself with an insurance identity card. In such a case, every doctor is required to provide treatment to you. The payment for the costs of health care provided as specified above depends on the fact whether you participate in the public health insurance system, whether you have concluded an individual health insurance policy or whether you have not concluded any insurance at all and therefore will be required to settle the costs on your own.*

### 7. 3. Mandatory vaccination

The mandatory vaccination programme specifically applies to children (with the exception of tetanus shots which are re-administered to adults every 10-15 years). Your general practitioner or pediatrician should keep a record of your vaccinations and remind you about any necessary re-vaccinations as part of your regular medical check-ups. Vaccinations are essential for the healthy development of a child and they are fully covered by insurance providers as part of the public health insurance scheme (whether or not any vaccinations are covered under a contract-based health insurance policy depends on the general terms and conditions of each policy).

### 7. 4. Organization of Health Care System in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, there are both state-owned and privately-owned health care facilities. The majority of health care providers have an existing contract for the supply of and payment for health care services with some insurance providers, thus offering their services without any direct payments from patients insured with given insurance providers. However, it is recommended that individuals enquire in advance as to whether or not a particular doctor or facility has a contract with their concrete insurance provider.

#### ➤ Outpatient Care

In the event of an illness, the patient normally first seeks assistance from the local so-called **primary care provider**. This can be a general practitioner, pediatrician, dentist or a gynaecologist. If for any reason, a patient doesn't know any local doctor or health care providers he or she can ask for information at the local municipal office. It is also possible to request assistance from the insurance provider or to find a doctor in a telephone directory.. When choosing a doctor, one must keep in mind that the patient may only receive care from a doctor who has an existing contract for the supply of health care services with the patient's insurance provider. If the patient is a participant of the public health insurance system, he or she must first register with all primary care providers. By concluding such a registration, the doctor makes a commitment to care for the patient on a continuous basis – i.e. to provide basic care (including house calls) – and, if necessary, to arrange for the provision of specialized care by a specialist or at a hospital. Individuals with a contract-based insurance policy do not have to register with doctors and they are provided health care services by doctors who have concluded appropriate contracts with their insurance provider.

*A doctor may only refuse to register a patient if the acceptance of the patient would pose such an extra burden of work on the doctor that it would impact the doctor's ability to provide quality care to this or to other patients in his or her care. However, the doctor may not refuse to provide assistance in situations requiring urgent medical attention (accidents or sudden acute illness). If the patient is rejected, it is the patient's right to receive a written confirmation of such a rejection from the doctor. If you have any doubts regarding the reasons given, contact your health insurance provider and request a re-examination of the case.*

Should the patient's condition require the attention of a specialist, the primary care provider will recommend a **proper specialized health care facility** which has a contract with the patient's insurance provider, and issue a written recommendation for the provision of specialized care or request for a consulting opinion. If the patient's condition requires immediate specialized care, such a referral from a general practitioner is not required. After seeing the patient, the specialist provides the referring general practitioner with whom the patient is registered with a feedback on the diagnostic findings and recommended treatment procedures, or makes recommendations regarding the patient's ability to work.



### ➤ **Institutionalized care (hospitalization)**

If the nature of the illness requires it, the primary care provider or outpatient specialist recommend that the patient be treated at a hospital or directly arrange for the patient's hospitalization. After the completion of the examination and treatment at the hospital, the patient is released and the patient's general practitioner is sent a report on the treatment received at the hospital and its results, along with any related further treatment recommendations. In addition to hospitals, inpatient care is also available through a network of specialized treatment institutions.

### ➤ **Emergency and Rescue Services**

Medical assistance is also provided in situations involving a sudden illness or accident outside office hours or if the patient's doctor is absent and also in situations involving a sudden serious illness when the patient is unable to get to a doctor or hospital on his/her own and it is necessary to arrange for a prompt medical attention and transportation of the patient to a hospital so as to prevent an aggravation of the patient's condition or danger to life (cf. Chapter 5. 5.).

### ➤ **Pharmacies**

Pharmacies dispense medicaments and medical devices to patients either on prescription or without it. Pharmacies dispense drugs to patients according to prescriptions, either at no cost to the patient (if the drug is fully covered by a health insurance provider) or with a copayment (if the insurance only covers part of the cost of the drug. A fee of CZK 30 is paid for dispensing every prescribed item, disregarding the number of packages prescribed. Prescriptions issued by emergency care providers are valid for 1 day; prescriptions for antibiotics and antimicrobial chemotherapeutics are valid for 5 days; other prescriptions are usually valid for 14 days. In addition to drugs, pharmacies also dispense selected medical devices. These aids are usually also distributed by specialized facilities operating on the basis of contracts concluded with insurance providers, dispensing aids on a prescription basis – either at no additional cost to the patient, or with a co-payment, or with the full cost charged to the patient. Health insurance providers may also lend certain medical devices to patients.

## **7. 5. Protection and Promotion of Public Health**

The protection and promotion of public health is connected with the health care system in the Czech Republic.

The rights and obligations in this field are regulated by Act No. 258/2000 Sb., Coll., on the protection of public health, as amended. This act and its implementing regulations cover specific issues such as measures for the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics, occupational safety and health protection measures, health requirements related to water and its supply, etc. The state administration in this area is handled by public health authorities – amongst which are, based on the above-mentioned law, the Ministry of Health, regional health departments, some other ministries and regional authorities. Besides the above public health authorities, health care institutions are also active in the field of protection and promotion of public health. All health care institutions provide vaccination services and the majority of such facilities also operate health counselling centres offering assistance in the field of healthy nutrition, smoking issues, obesity, HIV/AIDS, etc.



### **Links to similar sources of information**

- See the website of the Ministry of Health at <http://www.mzcr.cz> (► Ministry of Health ► Sources of information ► Health insurance providers) for a directory of health insurance providers.
- Website of the Czech Medical Chamber – <http://www.lkcr.cz>
- Website of the Czech Chamber of Pharmacists – <http://www.lekarnici.cz>

- For information for persons insured according to Council Directive (EEC) 1408/71 and nationals of states with which bilateral treaties on social security have been concluded, see <http://www.cmu.cz> (► For policyholders ► Contracting states)
- Maxima pojišťovna, a.s. - Pojištění cizinců  
<http://www.maxima-as.cz/injury.php?id=01>
- Pojišťovna VZP, a.s. – Insurance of foreigners  
<http://www.pvzp.cz/cs/>
- Slavia pojišťovna, a.s. - Insurance of foreigners  
<http://www.pojistovna-slavia.cz/zdravotni-pojisteni-cizincu>
- UNIQA pojišťovna, - Insurance of foreigners  
[http://www.uniqa.cz/uniqa\\_cz/cms/privat/foreignes/index.jsp](http://www.uniqa.cz/uniqa_cz/cms/privat/foreignes/index.jsp)
- VICTORIA-VOLKSBANKEN pojišťovna, a.s.- Insurance of foreigners  
<http://www.victoria.cz/>.

## **8. EMPLOYMENT**



*All necessary information regarding the employment of foreign nationals in the Czech Republic can be obtained from labour offices or on the integrated employment portal operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz>.*

Foreign nationals may pursue gainful activities in the Czech Republic in two basic ways - either as **employees** or as **entrepreneurs** (for further information on entrepreneurial activities, see Chapter 9).

### **8. 1. Employment of Foreign Nationals - Procedures**

The requirements for the employment of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic are stipulated primarily in Act No. 435/2004 Sb., Coll., on employment, as amended (hereinafter as "The Employment Act"). Citizens of other EU member states and their family members are not required to have a work permit in order to work in the Czech Republic.

Third-country nationals may be hired and employed under the following conditions:

- **the foreign national has a valid work permit** and a valid visa issued for work purposes or a long-term residence permit issued for work purposes, **or**
- **he or she is a holder of the Green Card** (a new type of long-term residence permit issued for work purposes in special cases, intended for the nationals of countries specified in Regulation of the Ministry of the Interior No. 461/2008 Sb., Coll.), or

#### ➤ **Employment permit**

A foreign national may be employed in the Czech Republic on condition that he or she is a holder of a valid work permit and a **valid permit of residence in the territory of the Czech Republic, or provided that he or she is a Green Card holder**. However, there are **certain exceptions** to this rule (specified in Article 98 of the Employment Act); such a requirement therefore does not apply primarily to foreign nationals with permanent residence permits, asylum seekers and foreign nationals staying in the Czech Republic on the basis of permits of long-term residence for the purpose of co-habitation of a family with a foreign national who has been granted a permanent residency permit or asylum. No work permit is required from foreign nationals who study in the territory of the Czech Republic (applies to full-time study or a form of study entailing regular attendance), who have completed secondary or university studies in the territory of the Czech Republic, or who engage in regular educational activities as teachers, academic workers at universities or scientists, researchers or developers. Besides that, no work permit is required in the case of foreign nationals who are residing in the territory of the Czech Republic on a long-term residence permit issued to a resident of another EU member state for work purposes – provided the permit is at least 12 months old.

If a foreign national has multiple employments in the Czech Republic at the same time, he or she must possess a separate work permit for each job. The performance of routine tasks **ensuing from the scope of business** of a legal entity handled by a partner, statutory body or a member of the statutory or another body of a trading company for a trading company, or by a member of a cooperative or a member of a statutory or **another body** of a cooperative for a cooperative is also regarded as employment. A work permit is also required if a foreign national intends to work in the Czech Republic for a foreign employer who hired the foreign national for the position based on a business agreement or another contract with a Czech legal entity or natural person.

A work permit cannot be issued to a foreign national who has applied for asylum in the Czech Republic for a period of 12 months from the date of filing an application for asylum.

The issuance of a work permit is within the competency of the appropriate **Labour Office** in the location where the foreign national is to be employed. When submitting the application, the foreign national may be represented by the employer or another representative on the basis of a power-of-attorney. The filing of a work permit application is subject to an administrative fee of CZK 500.

The Labour Office may issue a work permit under the condition that a so-called "**reported vacant position**" is concerned (this refers to a job opening whose creation or availability has been reported by the employer to the Labour Office). The Labour Office will only issue a work permit after the vacant position has been listed under the available job openings offered by the Labour Office and after the Labour Office has been unable to staff the position with a person who is registered as a job seeker with the Labour Office or for which there is a lack of available candidates who can meet the qualification requirements for the job. For certain categories of foreign nationals, the Labour Office will issue a work permit regardless of the current situation on the labour market - this applies in particular to interns, i.e. foreign nationals who will be employed for a limited period of time (up to one year) in order to improve their skills and qualifications in the respective profession. The work permit is non-transferable and it can therefore only be used for the employment with the employer specified in the decision. This also applies to the type of job and the **job location**. A work permit for the employment in the Czech Republic is issued for a **determined period of time and for a maximum of two years**. Should any of the information provided change prior to the expiration of the work permit, the holder of the permit is required to apply for the issuance of a new permit with the appropriate Labour Office. If the employment (employment contract or contract for work) is terminated on an earlier date, **the validity of the residence permit issued for the purposes of employment expires at the same time**.

Considering the situation on the labour market, the Labour Office may **extend the work permit** at the foreigner's request; this may be done **repeatedly** for a maximum period of **2 years**. The application for the extension of the work permit must be lodged with the Labour Office 30 days before the expiration date of the current permit at the latest. The extension is preconditioned by the fact that the same work is done for the same employers in the same place of work. The particulars of the application for an extension of the work permit are identical with those of an application for a work permit. The application must be accompanied with a document issued by the employer stating that the employer will continue to employ the foreign national. Once the permit for work in the territory of the Czech Republic has been extended, the holder must also report to the local department of the Alien Police and apply for an extension of the period of residence (applies to visas for a stay exceeding 90 days for work purposes), or lodge an application for a long-term residence for work purpose or an extension thereof. Such an application must be filed **no sooner than 120 days prior to and no later than 14 days** prior to the expiration of the residency permit under a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days or the expiration of a long-term residency permit.

**Foreign national** who is employed without a work permit or performs work in a manner inconsistent with the work permit is committing an offence that is **subject to a fine of up to CZK 10,000**.

**An employer** (either a legal entity or a natural person engaging in business activities) who enables a foreign national to perform illegal work is **committing an administrative infraction that may be subject to a fine of up to CZK 5,000,000**.

#### ➤ **Protection period**

If your employment was terminated, you can take advantage of the **60-DAY PROTECTION PERIOD AFTER EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION PURSUANT TO THE LABOUR CODE** in some cases; this applies if:

- your employment was terminated for any of the reasons specified in Article 52, Letters a) to e) of the Labour Code or upon agreement for the same reasons or terminated with immediate effect pursuant to Article 56 of the Labour Code,
- as at the date of your employment termination, you have stayed in the territory for the purpose of work:
  - for at least 1 year if that period immediately preceded the termination of your employment, or
  - for a period of time shorter than 1 year, if you had stayed in the territory continuously for a period of 3 years before the date of the termination of your employment; in these

cases, your stay on a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days and on a long-term stay permit is not included in that period of time.

If you are a Green Card holder, the 60-day protection period applies to you without any further conditions if your employment is terminated based on a notice given for any of the reasons specified in Article 52, letters a) to e) of the Labour Code, or upon agreement for the same reasons, or terminated with immediate effect pursuant to Article 56 of the Labour Code.

## 8. 2. Labour Relations

Labour relations – i.e. relationships between employees and their employers – are regulated by a number of legal acts, in particular by the Labour Code (Act No. 262/2006 Sb., Coll.).

### ➤ Employment

In the Czech Republic, employment is the most typical and common type of labour relationship. It consists of the mutual rights and obligations of the employee and the employer. In the Czech Republic, employment is **usually established by an employment contract**. Employment can be arranged for an **indeterminate or determined period of time**. The employment contract may also include an arrangement regarding a trial period of **three months** – unless a shorter trial period has been arranged.

Employment may be terminated on the basis of any of the following:

- **agreement** on the termination of employment,
- **notice of termination** (submitted by the employee or the employer, wherein the employer may only terminate employment in situations that are specifically defined in the Labour Code; after the submission of the notice of termination, employment is terminated at the end of the notice period whose minimum duration is 2 months and applies to both the employer and the employee),
- **immediate termination** (by the employee or the employer; however, this type of termination may only be used in a limited range of circumstances);
- **termination during the trial period** (by the employee or the employer, neither of whom has to supply a reason for the termination),
- **expiration of the period of employment**, if the employment was arranged for a determined period of time
- with regard to foreign employees, employment may also be terminated **as of the date on which their residence permit for the Czech Republic expires**, based on an enforceable decision to revoke the permit, or on a date on which a judgment ordering the deportation of the individual becomes legally enforceable.

The **employment contract** is very important for the definition of the rights and obligations ensuing from the labour relationship. Before signing the contract, your employer should make you familiar with your rights and obligations associated with your employment contract, as well as the work and salary conditions applicable to the given job. When arranging for employment, the employer is required to adhere to the principle of equal treatment, no discrimination and no abuse of the rights and obligations that are part of labour relationships.

The employment contract must meet certain formal and content-related **particulars**. The most important requirement is that the contract must be in a written form. In the contract, the employer and the employee must agree to some **essential particulars**, including the type of work, place of work and the date of taking up the job; without these, the contract would be invalid.

The employment contract may also include other terms and conditions as required by the parties. Should the employment contract contain any provisions or arrangements inconsistent with the law with respect to their contents, the articles of the contract containing such provisions or arrangements

would be invalid. For example, an arrangement binding the employee to waive some of his or her rights would be considered invalid.

#### ➤ **Contracts for Work Performed on a Non-Employment Basis**

Such contracts and agreements **supplement** conventional employment contracts in a certain way. Under such contracts or agreements, the employee does not receive the same level of protection as under a regular employment contract, such as an entitlement to take a vacation. These contracts and agreements may exist alongside of regular employment; whether they are arranged for with the same employer (as a supplemental job assignment) or different employers. A differentiation is made between a "work agreement" (which can apply to a job performed for a specific employer, wherein the working hours must not exceed one-half of a regular work week) and a "contract for work" (which applies when the expected amount of work (extent of the assignment) does not exceed 150 hours of work for one employer in a single calendar year).

### **8. 3. Employee's Rights and Obligations**

Under the Labour Code, employers are required to **treat all of their employees equally in terms of their working conditions, remuneration for work, professional training and job promotions or other types of advancement. Direct and indirect discrimination in any in labour relations, based on the individual's gender, sexual orientation, language, beliefs, religious, political or other affiliations, etc. is prohibited.** If the rights and obligations related to equal treatment or discrimination are violated, the employee has the right to ask the employer to refrain from such violations of these requirements and to request a remedy and redress for the consequences of any such violation. Should such a remedy or redress be insufficient and should the employee feel that he or she has been inadequately compensated, the employee has the right to make a claim for a monetary compensation of an immaterial prejudice in the event that the employee's dignity was significantly injured. The level of any such compensation is decided by a court.

**40 hours** is the maximum allowable number of **working hours per week** under the Labour Code (*Article 79*). The basic duration of vacation (paid time off) in the Czech Republic is a total of **four weeks**.

**The minimum wage is the least amount that an employer may pay to an employee for work performed by an employee in a labour relation.** Its principal regulation is included in the Labour Law (Act No. 262/2006 Sb., Coll., as amended with later regulations). The basic minimum wage rate, other minimum wage rates structured according to the degree of impacts limiting the employee's ability to work, as well as the minimum wage payment conditions are stipulated in Government Regulation No. 567/2006 Sb., Coll., on the minimum wage, on the minimum levels of the guaranteed salary, on the definition of aggravated working environment and on the level of wages supplements for work in an aggravated working environment, as amended with later regulations.

**The minimum wage applies to all employees** in the labour relation or a legal relation based on agreements on work performed outside the scope of an employment relation (work agreement and contract for work). The fact whether the employment relation has been concluded for a determined or indeterminate period of time is not decisive. The title to a minimum wage arises in any labour relation or a legal relation established on the basis of agreements on work performed separately outside the scope of an employment relation.

As of 1 January 2007, the **basic gross minimum wage rate** for the set weekly working time of 40 hours is CZK 48.10 per hour or **CZK 8,000 per month**.

Government Regulation No. 567/2006 Sb., Coll., sets not only the minimum wage, but also the minimum guaranteed wage levels. The minimum wage is set as the only wage value applicable to employees in business organizations in which collective bargaining on wages is used. The respective collective agreements may stipulate higher minimum wages that as stipulated in the Government Regulation on the minimum wage.

In the non-business domain (public services and administration) and other business organizations in which no collective agreement is concluded or no wage conditions are stipulated in the collective

agreement, the **minimum levels of guaranteed wages** apply in addition to the minimum wage. Inspection activities focusing on the adherence to labour regulations in the field of employees remunerations are performed by the State Labour inspection Office and its regional branch offices according to the places of performing work activities (pursuant to Act No. 251/2005 Sb., Coll., on labour inspection, as amended with later regulations).

Due to the role of a **woman** as a mother and due to her physical differences, legislation gives women (especially pregnant women and mothers) an **increased** level of **protection and care** in labour relations. There are even certain types of jobs which women are precluded from performing.

#### ➤ **Maternity Leave**

The employer is required to tolerate the absence of a female employee for a period of time related to the birth of a child and care for a newborn child for a period of 28 weeks, or if the woman has had two or more children at the same time or is a single mother, 37 weeks (the standard maternity leave).

If the woman is giving birth to a child, her maternity leave may never be less than 14 weeks and it cannot be terminated or interrupted any sooner than six weeks after the birth of the child.

*While on maternity or parental leave, the mother/father is not entitled to any salary compensation. During this period, the individual receives financial assistance in the form of a sick leave benefit and state social support payments to which they are entitled under the conditions specified in the regulations covering sick leave benefits (financial assistance during motherhood and other financial assistance) and also under the State Social Support Act (parental contribution). For more detailed information, see Chapter 10. 4.*

#### ➤ **Parental Leave**

Parental leave is available to:

- female employees – mothers of children after the end of maternity leave, and/or
- male employees – fathers starting with the birth of the child.

This parental leave is granted for the period of time requested by the parent but for no longer than until the child reaches the age of 3. Just as with maternity leave, parental leave is also considered as a major personal obstacle preventing the performance of a job, and the employer is required to tolerate the person's absence. Male and female employees are entitled to take maternity and parental leave at the same time.

The Labour Code and its implementing regulations and related statutes cover in detail the employees' rights associated with their labour relations. The adherence to the rights and obligations that are established under the legal regulations covering labour relationships and related to employee compensation, salary replacement, working hours, vacation, occupational safety, employment of minors and employees caring for children is monitored by the **State Labour Inspection Authority** () and its local labour inspection offices. Any violation of the above-mentioned requirements by employers can be reported to these administration authorities.



## **8. 4. Employment Procurement and Other Employment Services**

Local **labour offices** play an important role in the enforcement of the right to employment. The most important services that are provided by labour offices in this area include (free) employment procurement, consulting and information services, arrangements for requalification and payment of unemployment benefits and requalification support grants.

#### ❖ **Range of eligible persons:**

Foreign nationals have the same rights to employment as Czech citizens, provided they have been granted a permanent residence permit or asylum in the Czech Republic.

Labour Offices maintain a **database of job seekers**. Any eligible person who is not currently employed (or in a similar type of labour relationship) or self-employed or a student may be included in this database. The job seeker must assist the labour office, as necessary, with the search for a job if requested to do so. A job seeker may be removed from the database if he or she refuses to take up a suitable job without a legitimate reason, or if he or she refuses to enter an appropriate retraining or requalification programme, or if the person doesn't cooperate with the labour office in its employment procurement efforts.

Under specific conditions, a job seeker is entitled to receive an **unemployment benefit**. The amount of the benefit provided is calculated as a percentage of the average monthly salary the individual was paid in the last employment. The maximum amount of such welfare is equal to 2.5 times the subsistence minimum.

Due to the changes in the concept of the subsistence minimum taking place as of 1 January 2007, the Employment Act was amended in the articles dealing with the subsistence minimum. This also applies to the maximum unemployment benefit amount. As from 1 January 2007, the maximum unemployment benefit amount is equal to 0.58 times the average wage (nationwide) for the first, second and third quarters of the calendar year preceding the year in which the application for the unemployment benefit was filed.



*Labour Offices maintain a database of available job openings which is also available on the integrated portal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz>*

In addition to the Labour Offices, job seekers can also use the services of various employment agencies licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. If the agency has been granted a the "Permit to procure employment to foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic", the agency may also mediate employment to foreigners with temporary residence permits. These agencies can provide their services either at no charge or for a fee which cannot however be **charged to the natural person for whom the employment is mediated**. Available job openings can also be searched for through the **classified adds** of newspapers and various **internet search engines**.

Please note that there is an **opportunity for foreign nationals to seek for employment** on the web portal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, available either at [www.praceprocizince.cz](http://www.praceprocizince.cz) or at [http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr\\_zam/prociz](http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/prociz). This website enables foreign nationals to search for jobs in a so-called "vacancies database" using information from all labour offices in the Czech Republic. The search engine is able to filter positions so as to show only vacancies suitable for foreigners, i.e. vacancies for which the employer has obtained a permission to employ a foreign national. The search is available in Czech, Ukrainian and English languages.

## **8. 5. Trade Unions**

Employees have the right to associate in unions set up to protect their rights and to bargain for the most favourable working conditions with employers. The Labour Code and other legal regulations vest a broad range of competencies to the unions. For example, the unions oversee adherence to labour law regulations and negotiate so-called "collective bargaining agreements" on behalf of employees, regulating employee rights within a single company or across an entire industrial segment.





## Links to similar sources of information

- Detailed information regarding the employment of foreign nationals in the Czech Republic can be found on the integrated employment portal operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz> (► Foreign employment).
- A list of categories of foreign nationals who do not need an employment permit can be found on the integrated employment portal operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz> (► Foreign employment ► Employment of foreigners ► special cases).
- A list of categories of foreign nationals who will be issues a permit disregarding the situation on the labour market can be found on the integrated employment portal operated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz> (► Foreign employment ► Employment of foreigners ► Special cases).
- List of Labour Offices – <http://portal.mpsv.cz> (► Employment ► Information from Labour Offices)
- A sample application for a work permit, as well as other necessary forms may be downloaded from the integrated employment portal of the Ministry of Labour and social Affairs – <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz> (► Foreign employment ► Download forms)
- A list of current labour legislation can be found on the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – <http://www.mpsv.cz> (► Labour and law).
- Forms of the application for a registration in the register of job seekers and application for unemployment benefit are available from any Labour Office; they can also be downloaded from <http://portal.mpsv.cz> (► Employment ► For citizens ► Download forms).
- For a list of employment agencies, see the integrated portal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at <http://portal.mpsv.cz> (► Employment ► For citizens ► Employment agencies ► click "search" - a list of all employment agencies will be displayed).
- More detailed information on trade unions and the respective professional unions can be found e.g. on the website of the Czech and Moravian Trade Unions Confederation at <http://www.cmkos.cz>.
- <http://www.mpsv.cz> (► Income and standard of life ), this site includes regularly updated information on the minimum wage.

## **9. DOING BUSINESS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Persons who are earning their living on their own, i.e. run business or engage in another economic activity are referred to as "**self-employed persons**".

### **9. 1. Commercial Activities on Trading Certificate**

In the Czech Republic, commercial activities on the basis of the Trading Certificate are regulated under Act No. 455/1991 Sb., Coll., on trades licensing, as amended. Natural persons with a permanent residence (domicile) outside of the Czech Republic or legal entities with a registered office outside of the Czech Republic (hereafter referred to as "foreign entities") may run a business in the Czech Republic under the same conditions and under the same limitations as a Czech person/entity unless it is otherwise established under the Trades Licensing Act or a special act. A natural person who is a holder of a permanent residence permit or who has been granted asylum, and a legal entity with a registered office in the Czech Republic are also treated as Czech persons/entities. **Foreign nationals with a permanent residence status and asylum holders therefore have the same status in terms of their ability to run a small business as Czech citizens.** Foreign nationals without permanent residence status in the Czech Republic (this excludes EU nationals, nationals of other countries that are part of the European Economic Area Treaty and citizens of the Swiss Confederation) must possess a valid residence permit in order to run business in the Czech Republic (a visa, long-term residence permit – see below).

The establishment of the right to run business by foreign natural persons is subject to the below listed general and special conditions. The general conditions are as follows:

- minimum age of 18,
- capacity to enter into legal acts,
- impeccability.

The special conditions of performing commercial activities on the Trading Certificate include professional or other abilities if they are required by the Trades Licensing Act.

The following types of businesses are defined in the current legislation:

- **announced businesses** (in the majority of cases, the right to conduct business is established upon reporting the business to the Trades Licensing Office and certified by the issuance of an extract from the Trades Register),
- **licensed businesses** (the right to transact business is preconditioned by an approval of the appropriate state administration authority, it is established by granting a licence and certified by the issuance of an extract from the Trades Register).

The **announcement** or the **business license application** may be submitted (in person, electronically or through the mediation of a public administration contact point) with **any appropriate Municipal Trades Licensing Office** (the Municipal Trades Licensing Office is a department of a municipal office of a municipality with extended powers) or through the mediation of the Czech POINT service (see Chapter 3.5.). Any documents accompanying the application which were not issued in the Czech language must be translated by a sworn translator and certified (superlegalized or apostille certified – for details see Chapter 4. 4.). With an exception of certificates of education issued in an EU member state, or submitted by a person from such a state, all certificates of education issued abroad are subject to the recognition procedure (cf. Chapters 6.5. and 6.7.). When registering an announced business, the Trades Licensing Office will make an appropriate entry in the Trades Register in 5 days following the date of delivering the application and issue an extract to the entrepreneur (applicant) provided that he or she has complied with the conditions stipulated by law. In the case of a licensed business, the decision on the issuance of a business licence is usually issued within 60 days following the date of delivering the application to the Municipal Trades Licensing Office provided that all particulars have been complied with, and make an appropriate entry in the Trades Register and issue an extract to the entrepreneur in 5 days following the decision effective date.

If the announcement of an announced business or an application for a business license for a licensed business is being submitted by a foreign national – a foreign natural person who is required to provide a permit of residence in the Czech Republic and who has proved the compliance with all the applicable requirements (with the exception of the requirement related to a residence permit) – the Trades Licensing Office shall issue to such a person a certificate for the purpose of residence permit (pursuant to Article 47, paragraph 7 of the Trades Licensing Act) stating that as of that date, the person meets the applicable general and special criteria for running a business (this certificate actually does not establish a title to run a business). The applicant can then use this statement to prove the purpose of his or her stay in the Czech Republic when applying for a visa for a stay exceeding 90 days or a residence permit for a long-term stay for business purposes with a foreign representation or the Alien Police. If the foreign national then submits the above-mentioned visa / long-term residence permit to the Trades Licensing Office within 6 months after the Trades Licensing Office has issued the above-noted statement, the Trades Licensing Office will subsequently issue an extract from the Trades Register pursuant to Article 10, Paragraph 4 of the Trades Licensing Act (in the opposite case, the Trades Licensing Office will initiate proceedings regarding the fact that the title was not established by the announcement, or the fact that the applicant has not complied with the conditions of the trade licence establishment). The foreign national may apply for an incorporation in the Companies Register on the basis of this extract.

A **natural person income tax return** must be filed by anyone whose yearly income has exceeded CZK 15,000. Such a tax return is filed with the appropriate Revenue Authority by 31 March of the given year or by 30 June if the tax return has been filed by a tax consultant. Any questions regarding your tax obligations while conducting business can be directed to the Revenue Authority in the location of your business.

## 9. 2. Trading Companies

Trading companies are subject to Act No. 513/1991 Sb., Coll., the Commercial Code, as amended. Trading companies are considered as legal entities.

A foreign entity's right to conduct business in the Czech Republic is established as at the date of incorporation in the Companies Register. In order to conduct business as a company, foreign nationals must possess a **residence permit issued for the purpose of membership in a legal entity** (when filing an application for an extended visa for a stay over 90 days / a long-term residence permit, the applicant provides an abstract from the Companies Register as a proof of the reason for his or her stay in the country).

The above-specified residence permit may be granted only to members of statutory bodies of a legal entities. Visas for a stay exceeding 90 days or permanent residence permits are not granted to foreign nationals who are only partners or members of a legal entity and who are not members of statutory bodies. These foreign nationals are granted residence permits for the purpose of employment provided that they have been granted a labour permit by a labour office. A foreign national who is not a statutory body of a company or does not perform such tasks for a cooperative, may exercise his or her rights and obligations with respect to the trading company or a cooperative during short-term stays in the territory of the Czech Republic while taking part in general assemblies of the trading company or meetings of members of a cooperative.

The following entities must be incorporated in the Companies Register: a) trading companies, and cooperatives, b) foreign persons pursuant to Article 21, paragraph 4, c) natural persons who are entrepreneurs and whose domicile is in the Czech Republic and persons pursuant to Article 21, paragraph 5, transacting business in the territory of the Czech Republic, provided that they apply for incorporation and d) other persons bound to be incorporated according to a special legal regulation. The **Companies Register** is a publicly accessible list maintained by the regional court (so-called register court), based on the registered office of the respective trading company. Anyone has the right to access this register and make copies and obtain abstracts from it. The registry contains data on entrepreneurs as provided by law.



## Links to similar sources of information

For detailed information on the **conditions applicable to foreign nationals pursuing business activities on the basis of the Trading Certificate**, see:

- Public Administration Portal - <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Situations in life ► Entrepreneur ► Tradig Certificate holders);
  - Each Trades Licensing Office, a list of which can also be found on the Public Administration Portal – <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Directory);
  - on the website of the Ministry of Industry and Trade at <http://www.mpo.cz> (► Business activities promotion ► 'Business activities on Trading Certificate);
  - in the *"Information material for foreign natural persons engaging in business activities pursuant to the Trades Licensing Act in the territory of the Czech Republic"* available in several language versions on the website of the Ministry of Industry and Trade at <http://www.mpo.cz> (► Business activities promotion ► Business activities on Trading Certificate ► Integration of foreign nationals ► Project No. 1/2008).
- The directory of Revenue Offices an be found on the website of the Ministry of Finance – <http://www.mfcr.cz> (► Taxes and customs duties ► Tax administration) and on the State Administration Portal at <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Directory ► according to type ► Tax administration).
- Tax return and other forms are available at filing rooms of Revenue Offices and can also be downloaded from the website of the Ministry of Finance at <http://www.mfcr.cz> (► Taxes and customs duties ► Taxes ► Download forms).
- See for detailed information on the Czech POINT centres and services (see Chapter 3.5.) – <http://www.czechpoint.cz>.
- The Companies Register is available on the website of the Ministry of Justice.

Main page:

- <http://www.justice.cz>

or advanced search:

- <http://www.justice.cz/xqw/xervlet/insl/index?sysinf.@typ=or&sysinf.@strana=searchSubject>

## 10. SOCIAL SECURITY

Individuals (Czech citizens and foreign nationals) are secured (protected) in the case of need through the following three systems:

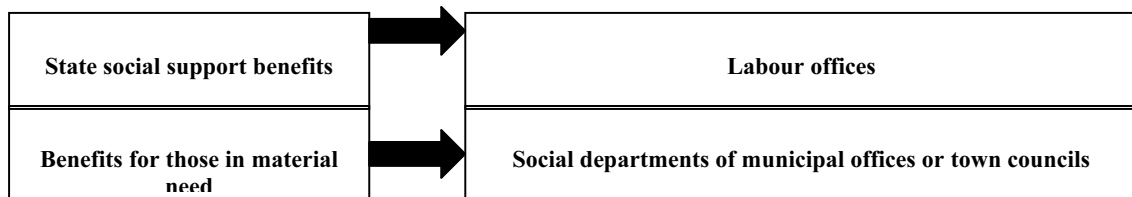
social insurance	state social support	social aid
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These three systems make up a mutually interconnected and complementary system.

### 10. 1. Organization and Administration of the Social Security System



The authorities responsible for managing and making decisions on the contributions distributed under the social security system are the District Social Security Administration Offices, in Prague, it is the Prague Social Security Administration Office and its local branches, and the Czech Social Security Administration Office in Prague. This authority manages and supervises the activities of the District Social Security Administration Offices and the Prague Social Security Administration Office. The authorities responsible for the distribution of the state social support benefits and the benefits for those in material need are local labour offices and authorized local municipal offices (town councils), respectively.



### 10. 2. Social Insurance

The social security system entails disability insurance and the basic mandatory pension insurance. In addition to the social security premium, a contribution to the state employment policy is collected within this system.

#### ➤ Disability Insurance

Disability Insurance (Act No. 187/2006 Sb., Coll.) is part of the social security system. **Disability insurance is intended for individuals engaging in gainful activities and its purpose is to financially secure these individuals at a time when they lose their income due to a temporary social situation**, e.g. temporary inability to work due to an illness, injury or quarantine, pregnancy and motherhood or care for a child. The citizenship of the insured person is not decisive for the purposes of disability insurance pursuant to the Disability Insurance Act.

#### ❖ Range of eligible persons:

All **employees** or other individuals with the same status (persons with the status of an employee'are defined under the Disability Insurance Act) and **self-employed persons** participate in the disability insurance system.

The disability insurance system in the Czech Republic is based on the following principles:

- only individuals who are insured and who work in a manner establishing eligibility for participation are covered by this insurance programme,
- at the time of the occurrence of a social situation, the person applying for a benefit must be a participant of the disability insurance programme or a protection period after the termination of employment must be applicable,
- the person applying for a benefit must meet legal requirements for the eligibility to receive the appropriate benefit,
- The amount of benefit is calculated on the basis of the applicant's previous income which was subject to social security contributions,
- participants of the disability insurance programme are obliged to pay premiums.

Under the disability insurance programme, **employees** (they are **obliged to participate** in this programme) receive four types of benefits:

- disability allowance,
- nursing allowance,
- compensatory contribution during pregnancy and motherhood,
- financial contribution during motherhood.

### **Disability allowance**

Employees participating in the disability insurance programme who are found temporarily unable to do their current job by a doctor, or who are ordered maintain quarantine are eligible for the payment of disability allowance. The disability allowance can be received for a maximum of 380 calendar days counted from the beginning of the temporary inability to work (including the previous duration of the period of temporary inability to work within one year before the beginning of the temporary inability to work).

The disability allowance is always paid for calendar days as from the 15th calendar day of the duration of the temporary inability to work. For the first 14 calendar days, the employee whose labour relation establishing his or her participation in disability insurance lasts is secured by means of wage compensation provided by the employer. The wage compensation is paid for workdays - from the 4th workday in the event of a temporary inability to work (from the 1st workday in the event of quarantine).

The disability allowance is also paid in specified cases if the temporary inability to work occurs after the termination of an insured employment during a so-called **protection period**. In the case of applying for the disability allowance, the protection period is **7 calendar days** from the termination of an employment that established participation in the disability insurance

### **Nursing allowance**

The nursing allowance is paid to employees who:

- are unable to work because they must care for a child under the age of 10 or another family member,
- share a common household with the family member who is being cared for; this condition is not reviewed when a parent is caring for a child under 10 years of age,

The nursing allowance is paid for no more than the first 9 calendar days (up to 16 calendar days for employees - single parents) provided that the need to provide care persists for that period.

### **Financial contribution during motherhood**

This type of financial contribution is paid to female employees who:

- have participated in the disability insurance programme for at least 270 days over a 2-year period preceding the date of initiating the receipt of the financial contribution during motherhood (the date of initiating the receipt of the financial contribution during motherhood

is set by the insured employee within the period ranging from the beginning of the 8th week to the beginning of the 6th week before the expected labour date).

- gave birth,
- does not work within the framework of the employment from which the contribution has been granted.

The financial contribution during motherhood is provided for a period of 28 weeks (37 weeks in the case of women who gave birth to two or more children at the same time and take care of at least two of them). The aid is provided from the 6th to the 8th week prior to the expected labour date.

The Disability Insurance Act allows the mother of the child and her husband or the child's fathers to take turns in taking care for the child, providing that each of them is entitled to receive the financial contribution in motherhood during such a care for the child under conditions and for a period of time specified in the Disability Insurance Act. Taking turns is allowed from the beginning of the 7th week following the labour date, and the frequency of taking turns is not restricted. In the event that the parents take turns in taking care of the child, the payment of the financial contribution during motherhood to the mother is discontinued, and it begins to be paid to the man on the basis of his disability insurance provided that he is eligible for the payment and vice versa.

For women whose insured employment was terminated during pregnancy, the length of protection period for the establishment of the title to the financial contribution during motherhood (in calendar days) is equal to the duration of that latest employment, with the maximum period of time being 180 calendar days.

### **Compensatory contribution during pregnancy and motherhood**

The compensatory contribution during pregnancy and motherhood is paid to female employees who:

- have been transferred to a different job due to pregnancy or motherhood or breastfeeding,
- is being paid a lower wage due to the transfer.

The compensatory contribution during pregnancy and motherhood may be provided until the female employee starts her maternity leave, and after the end of the maternity leave until the 9th month after the birth of the child; in the event that she has been transferred due to breastfeeding, the title to the contribution lasts for the whole period of time.

The participation of **self-employed persons** in the disability insurance programme is **voluntary**, and to subscribe to the programme, a person must register for the disability insurance of self-employed persons, using a standardized form. The participation is established as from the date specified in the registration form, but no earlier than on the date of its filing with the District Social Security Office in the subscriber's location. An exception would be a situation in which the self-employed individual can register retroactively. To register retroactively, the self-employed person has to submit the registration form within 8 days after the start (re-initiation) of their self-employment status. The disability insurance of a self-employed person ceases to exist as at the first day of the calendar month for which the appropriate premium has not been duly paid by such a self-employed person.

The following benefits are provided under the disability insurance programme for self-employed individuals:

- disability allowance,
- financial contribution during motherhood.

As for the provision of disability allowance, the same rules apply to self-employed persons as those applicable to employees, with the following differences:

- the self-employed person must have been a participant in the disability insurance programme for at least 3 months prior to the occurrence of inability to work. This requirement does not

have to be met if the participation in the insurance programme took effect as of the date of initiating/resuming the independent gainful activities,

- The disability insurance premium has been paid,
- in order to be eligible for financial contribution during motherhood, the self-employed person must have participated in the insurance for at least 180 days in the year preceding the first day of the period in which the allowance is paid,
- the self-employed person may not be personally engaged in a gainful activity.

### **Claiming Benefits**

The insured individual makes a claim for a disability allowance by submitting a form issued by the attending physician. Claims are submitted by employees to their employers. Employers accept applications for an allowance from their former employees, too. Self-employed persons file claims for the allowance with the District Social Security Office in the location of their permanent residence or in the location of the performance of their independent gainful activities (if the self-employed person is not a permanent resident of the Czech Republic).

### **Payment of disability allowance**

Disability allowances are paid by the appropriate District Social Security Administration Office. The District Social Security Administration Office pays the allowance in one month following the day on which the application is delivered to the Office. The participant is entitled to choose the method of payment. If he or she prefers to receive the payment on his or her **account** kept with a bank in the Czech Republic, the number of such an account is to be specified in the allowance application. Another option is payment in **cash** (by postal order); **in such a case, the costs of delivery are paid by the subscriber.**



**The** amounts of disability allowance, nursing allowance, financial contribution during motherhood depend on the wage/salary level. For more detailed information, see **.(► Disability insurance ► Calculation of disability allowance).**

For more detailed information on the disability insurance administration, see [www.cssz.cz](http://www.cssz.cz) (► Disability insurance),

### **► Pension insurance**

#### **❖ Range of eligible persons:**

Participation in the pension insurance programme in the Czech Republic is **mandatory** for all individuals engaging in gainful activities.

Benefits provided under the basic pension insurance scheme include the old age pension, full disablement pension, partial disablement pension, surviving spouse and orphan benefits (Act No. 155/1995 Sb., Coll.). The pension consists of two components – the basic benefit (a fixed amount which is the same for all types of pensions, regardless of how long the individual has been insured and regardless of the level of income) and the percentage-based benefit. The eligibility to receive the pension and its level and payment terms are determined by the Czech Social Security Administration Office in Prague (Act No. 582/1991 Sb., Coll.).

Effective from 1 January 2010, the disablement will be re-defined - the total disablement will be replaced with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade disablement, while the partial disablement will be replaced with the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade disablement. As a consequence, the current full disablement pension will be replaced with the pension for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade disablement, and the current partial disablement pension will be replaced with the pension for the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade disablement.



The insured individual is eligible to receive the **general old age pension** if:

- The person has been insured for at least 25 years and has reached an age establishing eligibility for the old age pension (hereinafter referred to as the "pension age"), or
- The person has been insured for at least 15 years and is at least 65 years of age.

Effective from 1 January 2010, the required insurance duration is extended by one year annually, with the target being to reach 35 years of insurance including alternative insurance periods (no-contribution periods), or 30 years of insurance excluding the alternative insurance periods. Analogously, the period required for the old age pension eligibility with a shorter insurance period (at least 15 years of insurance before 1 January 2010) will be extended to 20 years of insurance, providing that the age establishing eligibility for the old age pension will also increase in that case - from 65 years before 1. January 2010 to an age exceeding the pension age by 5 years.

The general retirement age still remains differentiated based on the gender of the recipient. Since 1996, however, the pension age has been gradually increased by 2 months per year (men) and 4 months per year (women), the aim being to reach a pension age of 65 years for men, childless women and women who have raised a single child, and 62 to 64 years for other women, depending on the number of children they have raised.

A retired person may receive the basic old age pension and remain to be employed provided that he or she has an employment contract for a determined period of time (a maximum of one year). As from 1 January 2010, the condition regarding the maximum duration of the employment contract will be abolished.

The insured person is eligible to the old age pension even before reaching the pension age, up to three years in advance; this is referred to as the **early old age pension**. A measure effective as from 1 January 2010 has been adopted, in consequence of which the early pension age is being increased in relation to the gradual increasing of the standard pension age. The opportunity to opt for the early old age pension (up to three years earlier with a pension age of 63 years or a lower age) will survive; in the event that the pension age exceeds 63 years, the duration of the period for the possible old age pension will be extended to a maximum of 5 years with a pension age of 65 years.

A recipient of an early old age pension may only engage in a gainful activity which does not require participation in the insurance programme.

An insured individual is eligible to receive a **full disablement pension** if:

- the person has become fully disabled (a decline in the ability to perform a job on a continuous basis by at least 66%, or ability to perform a job on a continuous basis only upon extraordinary conditions due to the disablement), and
- the person has been insured for the required period of time, or
- the person has become fully disabled as a result of a job-related injury or illness (in this case, the length of time for which the individual has been insured is immaterial).

It is permitted to obtain a full disablement pension and to engage in a gainful activity at the same time because the Pension Insurance Act does not prohibit such an arrangement.

An insured individual is eligible to receive a **partial disablement pension** if:

- the person has become partially disabled (a decline in the ability to perform a job on a continuous basis by at least 33%, or on condition that the general conditions of the person's life are significantly aggravated by the long-term deterioration of his or her health condition), and
- the person has been insured for the required period of time, or
- the person has become partially disabled as a result of a job-related injury or illness.

It is permitted to obtain a partial disablement pension and to engage in a gainful activity at the same time because the Pension Insurance Act does not prohibit such an arrangement.

Effective from 1 January 2010, the disablement will be re-defined and the current full and partial disablement pensions will be replaced with a single benefit - disablement pension (see above). An insured individual is eligible to receive a disablement pension if he or she has become:

- disabled, and has been insured for the required period of time, or
- disabled in consequence of a job-related injury.

The insured individual is considered disabled if his or her ability to work has decreased by at least 35%.

If the insured individual's ability to work has decreased

- a) by at least 35%, but not more than 49%, his/her condition is considered as the 1<sup>st</sup> degree disablement,
- b) by at least 50%, but not more than 69%, his/her condition is considered as the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree disablement,
- c) by at least 70%, his/her condition is considered as the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree disablement.

An insured individual is eligible to receive a **surviving spouse pension** if:

- the deceased spouse was either the recipient of the old age, full disablement or partial disablement pension (disablement pension as from 1 January 2010), or
- the deceased spouse had been insured long enough to be eligible for the full disablement pension (disablement pension as from 1 January 2010) or had met the eligibility requirements for the old age pension at the time of death,
- or died as a result of a job-related injury or illness.

The surviving spouse pension is always paid for a period of one year after the death of the other spouse. After that, the surviving spouse is eligible to receive the surviving spouse pension if he or she meets at least one of the following criteria:

- he or she is caring for a dependent child,
- he or she is caring for a child who is dependent on the assistance of another person (degrees II to IV),
- he or she is caring for his/her parents or parents of the deceased spouse who are living in the same household and who depend on the assistance of another person (degrees II to IV),
- he or she is fully disabled (3<sup>rd</sup> degree of disablement as from 1 January 2010),
- he or she has reached the age of 55 - or, in the case of a widower, 58 (As from 1 January 2010, the age limit at least 4 years lower than the pension age set for men born in the same year applies to both widows and widowers) or has reached retirement age if the retirement age is lower.

The eligibility to receive the surviving spouse benefit may reapply if any of the above conditions are met again within five years after the expiration of a former eligibility for the payment of this benefit.

To become eligible for the **orphan pension**, the recipient must be a dependent child whose parent (adoptive parent) or the person who has taken the child into a care replacing the parental care and on whom the child was financially dependent at the time of the person's death due to the fact that the child's own parents could not provide such care for legitimate reasons has deceased; however, it is required that the parent / adoptive parent / care giver have met the eligibility criteria listed above for the payment of a surviving spouse benefit. If both of the child's parents have deceased, the child is eligible to receive the orphan pension for each of the deceased parents.

A relatively long period of time required for the establishment of the eligibility to receive the Czech pension (the old age pension in particular) may result in a situation that a person fails to comply with the eligibility conditions in the course of his or her stay in the Czech Republic. A certain assistance is offered on the basis of bilateral international treaties on social security concluded with the Czech Republic. Such treaties are not equal as regards their contents, they may deal with various fields, nevertheless, they always deal with the issue of pensions. According to such treaties, the contracting states take into consideration the period of time registered in the other state for the purpose

of meeting the criterion of the required insurance duration. If the insurance duration requirement is complied with on the basis of such a count-up, the pension will be granted in an amount adequate to the respective duration periods. A person may receive a separate pension from the Czech Republic, as well as from the other contracting country in which he or she used to be employed and insured.

In addition to 30 states with which such an arrangement applies according to an EU regulation, it is also included in bilateral treaties of the Czech Republic with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Croatia, Israel, Japan, Canada, Québec, Korean Republic Macedonia, Serbia Montenegro, Turkey, Ukraine and the USA. These treaties are in effect, and other treaties are under preparation (currently with Australia, India, the Russian Federation, Moldova and Mongolia).

Applications for any of the above types of pensions are filed with the district Social Security Administration Office.



For more detailed information, see [www.mpsv.cz](http://www.mpsv.cz) or [www.cssz.cz](http://www.cssz.cz) (pension insurance).

**The Supplementary Pension Insurance with a State Subsidy** (Act No. 42/1994 Sb., Coll.) represents an upgrade to the basic pension insurance scheme and it allows for the subscribers to secure additional income in the form of long-term savings in addition to the pension received on the basis of the pension insurance scheme. This programme is also available to natural persons who are at least 18 years of age, residents of the Czech Republic (or any other EU country) and participants of the pension insurance scheme or recipients of pension benefits under the Czech pension insurance scheme, or participants of the public health insurance scheme in the Czech Republic and who conclude an agreement with a pension fund.

Subscribing to this programme is voluntary and is based on a contract between the subscriber and one of the pension funds operating on the Czech market. The pension funds manage financial means invested in the system and pay out the supplementary pension insurance benefits. The pension funds are managed in compliance with their respective pension plans. Before signing the contract with the pension fund, the subscriber must be provided with the respective pension plan and the statute of the pension fund.

Benefits distributed under the supplementary pension insurance programme include the old age pension (mandatory), disablement pension and early retirement pension, survivor pension, one-time settlement and lump-sum settlement.

#### ➤ **Social security insurance premium and contribution to the state employment policy**

Contributions to the social security insurance, which include pension insurance and disablement insurance premiums, are – along with the contributions to the government employment policy – regulated by Act No. 589/1992 Sb., Coll.

The premium rates paid from the assessment base are as follows:

- a) for employers (in 2009) 25 % (of that: 2.3 % for disability insurance, 21.5 % for pension insurance and 1.2 % for the state employment policy),  
(in 2010): 24.1 % (of that: 1.4 % for disability insurance, 21.5 % for pension insurance and 1.2 % for the state employment policy),
- b) for employees – 6.5 % (of that: 6.5 % for pension insurance),
- c) for self-employed persons – 29.2 % for pension insurance and the state employment policy (of that: 28 % for pension insurance, 1.2 % for the state employment policy and 1.4 % for disability insurance),
- d) for individuals voluntarily participating in the pension insurance programme – 28 % for pension insurance.

### 10. 3. Subsistence minimum

The subsistence minimum and existence minimum defined in Act No. 110/2006 S., Coll., on subsistence and existence minimum are very important for social systems. They are used primarily in the field of assistance **to those in material need** (pursuant to Act No. 111/2006 Sb., Coll., on assistance to those in material need), in assessing poverty, as well as socially protective quantities. Their levels are used for the purpose of deriving the **livelihood contribution** amount on the basis of set conditions.

The subsistence minimum is also used in **the field of state social support benefits** (on the basis of Act No. 117/1995 Sb., Coll., on state social support), particularly as regards the **child allowance** and **social contribution**. The comparison of the household income with the set multiple of the subsistence minimum serves as the basis for determining the eligibility to receive such benefits which secure a tailored assistance to families with children in specified social situations, and as regards the social contribution, the subsistence minimum forms a basis for its calculation.

**The subsistence minimum is a socially recognized minimum level of financial income needed for the purpose of securing nutrition and other basic personal needs.**

The subsistence minimum amounts can be broken down as follows:

- for an individual,
- for the first person in a household,
- for the second and next adult person in a household (who is not a dependent child),
- for a dependent child (three age groups).

The subsistence minimum is a sum of all the subsistence minimum sums applicable to the respective household members.

**The existence minimum represents the minimum level of financial income considered as necessary for the purpose of securing nutrition and other basic personal needs at the level needed for survival.** The existence minimum may not apply to a dependent child, old age pensioner, fully disabled person and person over 65 years of age.

**Neither the subsistence minimum nor the existence minimum include the necessary housing costs.** The protection in the field of housing is handled as part of the state social support system in the form of housing allowances and through the system for assistance with material needs as an additional housing allowance.

The **monthly subsistence minimum and existence minimum amounts** defined in Act No. 110/2006 Sb., Coll., on subsistence and existence minimum, are listed below (in Czech crowns):

The monthly subsistence minimum amounts as from 1 January 2007:

- for an individual, CZK 3,126
- for the first person in a household, CZK 2,880
- for the second and next adult person in a household who is not a dependent child CZK 2,600
- for a dependent child of the age of
  - up to 6 years CZK 1,600
  - 6 to 15 years CZK 1,960
  - 15 to 26 years CZK 2,250

The subsistence minimum is a sum of all subsistence minimum amounts of the respective household members.

The monthly existence minimum amount as from 1 January 2007:

- existence minimum CZK 2,020

The amounts of subsistence and existence minimum may be increased by an order of the government depending on the actual consumer prices development on the basis of the valorisation condition (pursuant to Act No. 110/2006 Sb., Coll., on subsistence and existence minimum.)

## 10. 4. State Social Support

### ❖ **Range of eligible persons:**

A person is eligible for the payment of state social support if the individual (and the persons who are reviewed as part of this individual's application – this applies to benefits that are based on the recipient's income) is a permanent resident of the Czech Republic. In the interpretation of the Act on State Social Support, the term 'permanent resident' also applies to foreign nationals who are registered in the Czech Republic for a stay exceeding 365 days, individuals who are covered by a directly applicable European Community regulation, etc.

Through the mediation of the state social support, the state provides contributions primarily to families with dependent children in the event that it is acknowledged that the families are unable to deal with their social situation using their own capabilities and means. The state social support system is regulated by Act 117/1995 Sb., Coll., on state social support, as amended with later regulations. The following allowances are provided pursuant to this law:

- child allowance
- parental contribution
- social contribution
- housing contribution
- foster care allowance
- birth allowance
- funeral benefit

When assessing the title to allowances, the assets of the family are not taken into consideration; the income is taken into consideration with certain allowances. Applications for allowances are filed with Labour Offices appropriate to the applicant's domicile, using prescribed forms (the forms are available from Labour Offices or at <http://forms.mpsv.cz/sspforms/>).

**The child allowance** is the basic long-term allowance provided to families with children. Families whose incomes **do not exceed 2.4 times the subsistence minimum** are eligible. The child allowance is provided at three levels depending on the child's age.

A parent who takes care of a child who is the youngest in the family on a full-time basis, properly, for a whole calendar month, is **eligible for the parental allowance**. The parent may choose the duration of withdrawal of the parental allowance: **two, three or four years**. By choosing the period of withdrawal, the parent also chooses the appropriate amount of allowance.

- **Fast-rate withdrawal of the parental allowance** - after the financial contribution during motherhood at a higher level (CZK 11,400) until the child reaches an age of 24 months; this form of withdrawal may be requested only by a parent who is eligible for the financial contribution during motherhood of a minimum amount of CZK 380 per calendar day.
- **Standard-rate withdrawal** of the parental allowance - after the financial contribution during motherhood at the standard level (CZK 7,600) until the child reaches an age of 36 months; this form of withdrawal may be requested only by a parent who is eligible for the financial contribution during motherhood.
- **Low-rate withdrawal** of the parental allowance - after the financial contribution during motherhood or from the childbirth (if the mother is not eligible for the financial contribution during motherhood) at the standard level (CZK 7,600) until the child reaches an age of 21 months and further at a lower level (CZK 3,800) until the child reaches an age of 48 months.

The parent is required to apply for the selected duration and amount of withdrawal of the parental allowance with the local State Social Support Office (Labour Office), using a prescribed form and adhering to certain firmly set time limits. Once the decision is made, the selected withdrawal option

cannot be modified any more. As regards handicapped children, the parent is entitled to the parental allowance at the basic level (CZK 7,600) until the child reaches the age of 7 as from the day of assessing the child as handicapped in the long term or heavily handicapped in the long term, disregarding the previously selected parental allowance withdrawal option (before the health condition of the child was assessed). If that child is entitled to the care contribution (pursuant to the Act on social Services), the parent is entitled to one half of the parental allowance. If the parent takes care of a child who is heavily handicapped in a long term and such a child does not obtain the care contribution, the parental allowance is paid at the lower level (CZK 3,000) from the child's age of 7 to the its age of 10.

The payment of the parental allowance is preconditioned by the full-time and proper care of the child. There are certain exceptions to that rule – the child may attend pre-school or rehabilitation facilities to a limited extent. The income of the parent is not taken into consideration. The parent is entitled to improve the social situation of the family by a gainful activity while being eligible to obtain the parental allowance; however, he or she is required to ensure that the child is taken care of by another person who must be of age.

The purpose of the **social contributory payment** is to assist low-income families to cover the costs connected with the provision for their needs. The eligibility to the social contributory payment is preconditioned by the care of a dependent child and a set level of family income which must have been lower than twice the subsistence minimum of the family in the previous calendar quarter. The contributory payment decreases with the increasing income of the family. The social contributory payment increases in the event that the child is considered as heavily handicapped in the long term, handicapped in the long term or suffers from a prolonged disease; parents' handicaps or single-parent situation are also taken into account. Higher social contributory payments are provided to families with several children born at the same time (until they reach the age of three), or to families whose children are full-time secondary school or university students.

**The housing contribution** is a contribution paid by the state to low-income families and individuals. The owner or lessee of a flat with permanent residence in the flat is eligible to the housing contribution in the event that 30 % (35 % in Prague) of the family income is not enough to cover their housing costs, and at the same time, such 30 % (35 % in Prague) of the family income is lower than the applicable normative costs stipulated by law.

**The childbirth allowance** is a one-time allowance granted to mothers to cover the costs relating to a childbirth. If the woman who has given birth dies without being paid the childbirth allowance, the child's father becomes entitled to it. The sum of the childbirth allowance is CZK 13,000 for every child that is born.

A person who has arranged for a funeral of a dependent child or a person who was a parent of a dependent child is eligible for **the funeral benefit** provided that the deceased person has permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic as at the day of death. The amount of the funeral allowance is CZK 5,000.

**Foster care allowances** (contribution intended to cover the child's needs, foster parent remuneration contribution paid upon accepting a child and contribution for the purchase of a motor vehicle) are intended to cover the needs connected with the care for a child for whom its parents cannot or do not wish to care and who is placed in the custody of foster parents. With an exception of the social contribution, the foster parent as well as the child in the custody may become eligible for further social support benefits, e.g. the parental allowance, child allowance etc.

**Range of eligible persons:** A person is eligible for the state social support allowances if he or she complies with the conditions provided that such a person and persons assessed with him or her comply with the following:

- they have a permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic (both Czech citizens and foreign nationals),
- they are persons on which the directly applicable regulations of the European Communities apply,
- they are foreign nationals registered for the stay in the territory of the Czech Republic (with an exception of applicants for international protection accommodated in accommodation facilities operated by the Ministry of the Interior) as from the day on which 365 days from the day of registration expire,
- they are foreign nationals up to the age of 1 year, born in the territory of the Czech Republic with a registered stay in the territory of the Czech Republic (with an exception of applicants for international protection accommodated in accommodation facilities operated by the Ministry of the Interior),
- they are minor foreign nationals in foster care replacing parental care or in institutional care in the territory of the Czech Republic,
- they are foreign nationals who are holders of permanent residence permits with an assigned legal status of a long-term resident of the European Community in the territory of another member state of the EU, and they have been issued a permit for a long-term stay in the territory of the Czech Republic provided that they have permanent residence in the Czech Republic or they are family members of such a foreign national provided that they have permanent residence in the Czech Republic,
- they are foreigners who have been issued a permit for a long-term stay in the territory of the Czech Republic for the purpose of scientific research,
- they are foreigners who have been granted supplementary protection.

Further information is available from Labour Offices or on the following websites: <http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz>, [portal.mpsv.cz](http://portal.mpsv.cz), [www.uradprace.cz](http://www.uradprace.cz).

## 10. 5. - Social Assistance

**Social** assistance entails primarily the provision of allowances to those in material need, social services, care contribution and social security benefits to physically handicapped persons.

### **System of benefits for those in material need**

- It is regulated by Act No. 111/2006 Sb., Coll., on benefits for those in material need, as amended with later regulations.
- It represents a modern form of assistance to persons with insufficient incomes, motivating them to endeavour actively after earning financial means needed to cover their needs. It is based on the principle stipulating that every working person has to earn more than someone who does not work or even evades work.
- It is stipulated that every person is eligible for the provision of basic information leading not only to the solution to his or her current situation, but also preventing the occurrence of material poverty. Social work with clients is an integral part of the assistance provided to those in material need.

**What is material poverty?** In fact, it is a situation when a person or a family do not have a sufficient income and their overall social status and property conditions do not enable them to satisfy their basic needs at least at the minimum level acceptable by the society. At the same time, they are unable to increase their income for objective reasons (by their own work, lodging claims or collecting receivables, sale or utilization of their property) and resolve their troublesome situation on their own.

The allowances provided to those in material needs include namely: the livelihood contribution, housing costs supplementary payment and extraordinary immediate assistance. The authorized municipal authorities decide on the payment of the benefits paid to those in material need.

## **Livelihood contribution**

- This is the basic allowance paid to those in material need, assisting to persons or families with insufficient incomes.
- A person or family are eligible for a livelihood contribution if the income of such a person or family (after deducting adequate housing costs) is lower than the livelihood amount.
- The livelihood amount is set on an individual basis for each person, depending on the assessment of his/her efforts and capabilities. The respective livelihood amounts are added up for the purpose of determining the livelihood of a family. The livelihood amount is based on the subsistence minimum and existence minimum amounts
- The amount of the livelihood contribution is determined as the remainder between the livelihood of a person or family and their income from which adequate housing costs are deducted. (The adequate housing costs are the housing costs; however, the maximum amount is 30 % of the income of the person or family; in Prague, the rate is 35 %).

## **Housing costs supplementary payment**

- The second type of allowance provided to those in material need is used as a solution in the situation when the income of an individual or a family (including the housing contribution from the state social support system) is not sufficient for the coverage of the housing costs.
- The allowance is provided to a tenant or flat owner who is eligible for the livelihood contribution and housing contribution. It is stipulated in the law that the housing costs supplementary payment can be provided in exceptional cases even if the applicant is not eligible for the livelihood contribution or to an applicant who is not entitled to the housing contribution because of the fact that he or she does not live in a rented flat.
- The amount of the housing costs supplementary payment is calculated in a manner ensuring that the livelihood amount remains available to the person or family concerned after the settlement of justified housing costs (i.e. the rent, services connected with housing and costs of water/power/gas supply).

## **Extraordinary immediate assistance**

It is provided to persons who find themselves in situations which require immediate solution. Five such situations are stipulated by law:

1. The conditions of material poverty are not complied with; nevertheless, the person concerned is at risk of a serious damage to health unless he or she is provided assistance. The allowance may be provided in an amount supplementing the person's income up to the existence minimum (subsistence minimum in the case of a dependent child).
2. Affection by a serious extraordinary event (natural disaster, wind disaster, incident damaging the environment, fire etc.) The allowance may be provided up to the level of 15 times the subsistence minimum applicable to an individual, i.e. up to CZK 46,890.
3. Lack of financial means for the settlement of a single payment connected e.g. with the payment of a fee for the issuance of a duplicate ID card or in the event of a loss of financial means. The allowance may be provided up to the level equal to such a single payment.
4. Lack of financial means for the purchase or repair of consumer goods or the payment of justified costs related with the education or leisure-time activities of dependent children. The allowance may be provided up to the level equal to such costs; the maximum amount paid during a calendar year is 10 times the subsistence minimum of an individual, i.e. up to CZK 31,260.
5. Social exclusion risk. This entails e.g. situations of persons returning from prison, children's home or foster care after coming of age or after completing an addiction treatment. The allowance may be provided in a maximum amount of CZK 1,000. It may be provided



repeatedly during a year, nevertheless, the sum total may not exceed 4 times the subsistence minimum of an individual, i.e. CZK 12,504.

The proceedings regarding the provision of an allowance are initiated on the basis of filing an application on a prescribed form which is available from authorized municipal authorities or at <http://portal.mpsv.cz>. Applications for benefits for those in material need are lodged with social departments of authorized municipal authorities according to the person's place of residence. In the course of the proceeding, it is assessed whether the person or family are actually in material need and whether they comply with the conditions of eligibility for the appropriate benefit. In the final phase, the amount of the benefit is determined.

### **Range of eligible persons**

The following persons are eligible for the livelihood contribution and housing costs supplementary payment

- a) a person with reported permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic or permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic,
- b) a person who has been granted asylum or supplementary protection,
- c) a foreign national without permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic who is entitled to such rights on the basis of an international treaty,
- d) a citizen of the EU member state provided that he or she is reported to stay in the territory of the Czech Republic for a period of time exceeding 3 months unless his or her eligibility for social benefits is based on a directly applicable regulation of the European Communities, and his or her family member under the same conditions,
- e) a person whose eligibility for social benefits is based on a directly applicable regulation of the European Communities,
- f) a foreign national who is a holder of a permanent residence permit with an assigned legal status of a long-term resident of the European Community in the territory of another member state of the EU, and his or her family member provided that they have been issued a permit for a long-term stay in the territory of the Czech Republic provided that they have permanent residence in the Czech Republic.

Besides the persons specified above, the extraordinary immediate assistance may also be provided to other persons staying in the territory of the Czech Republic.

## Social services

The system of social services is regulated by Act No. 108/2006 Sb., Coll., on social services, effective as from 1 January 2007. This act regulates the conditions of providing assistance and support to people in adverse social situations through the mediation of social services and contribution for care.

❖ **Range of eligible persons (Article 4 of the Social Services Act):**

Social services and contribution for care are provided upon compliance with the conditions stipulated by the law:

- to a person who is a permanent resident of the Czech Republic,
- to a person who has been granted asylum,
- foreign nationals who are not permanent residents of the Czech Republic but for whom eligibility is established under an international treaty,
- nationals of other EU member states if they are registered in the Czech Republic for a stay of longer than 3 months (unless such individuals are eligible to receive social benefits under a directly applicable European Communities regulation),
- family members of other EU member states nationals if they are registered in the Czech Republic for a stay of longer than 3 months (unless such individuals are eligible to receive social benefits under a directly applicable European Communities regulation),
- foreign nationals, who are holders of a permanent residence permit and who were awarded the legal status of a long-term European Community resident in another EU member state, if they are registered in the Czech Republic for a stay of longer than 3 months,

Selected social services are also available to individuals who are legally residing in the Czech Republic, provided they meet the criteria stipulated in the Social Services Act; such social services have been redefined as follows: (asylum houses, contact centres, crisis assistance, intervention centres, low-threshold day centres, low-threshold centres for children and teenagers, overnight shelters, field programmes). For more detailed information on such services, refer to Articles 57, 59-63 and 69 of the Social Services Act.

The contribution for care is intended for persons suffering from a long-term deterioration of health status.

The provision of the contribution for care to the citizens of other states than the EU member states is subject to Article 4 of Act No. 108/2006, on social services.

The provision of the contribution for care to the citizens of the EU member states, EFTA (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) and Switzerland is subject to Regulation of the Council (EEC) No. 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons and their families moving within the Community, according to which the state competent to pay the allowance is determined.

According to the Community Law, the contribution for care is considered as a financial benefit paid in the event of an illness by the appropriate state institution which is competent for the payment of health care.

The citizen of a member state is entitled to the allowance for care only in the event that he or she is subject to the Czech legal regulations, i.e. he or she **participates in the Czech health insurance system**. If the applicant fails to comply with this requirement, he or she is not eligible to be awarded the allowance.

Information on social services and their provision can be obtained e.g. from town, municipal or regional authorities (social security departments), civic or other specialized advisory centres or directly from the providers of social services. For information on the allowance for care, contact your local municipal authority of a municipality with extended powers which renders decisions on granting these allowances.



## Links to similar sources of information

- For detailed information on health insurance see the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at <http://www.mpsv.cz> or any District Social Security Administration Office (for a directory of district offices, see <http://www.cssz.cz> (► Contacts)).
- For detailed information on pension insurance and the respective types of pension, see the webpage of the Czech Social Security Administration Office at <http://www.cssz.cz> (► Pension insurance) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at <http://www.mpsv.cz> (► Pension Insurance)
- For detailed information on the state social support benefits, contact your local Labour Office (see Chapter 16. 2. for contact information) and the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at <http://www.mpsv.cz> (► State social support).
- Information on benefits for those in material need and social care benefits for physically handicapped persons are available:
  - from local authorized municipal authorities and municipal authorities of municipalities with extended powers, or from the authorities of city districts - in Prague.
  - on the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at <http://www.mpsv.cz>
- More detailed information on the subsistence minimum can be found on the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - <http://www.mpsv.cz> (► Income and standard of living)

## 11. HOUSING

### 11. 1. Living in One's Own Flat or House

One of the available housing options is to purchase a flat or house (the term "private ownership" is used in practice). The conditions applicable to the acquisition of real estate in the Czech Republic by foreign nationals are specifically defined under the Foreign Exchange Act (Act No. 219/1995 Sb., Coll., as last amended).

❖ **Range of eligible persons:**

**Under the Foreign Exchange Act**, the acquisition of real property by foreign nationals has specific limitations. In general, houses and flats can be acquired by natural persons with a permanent residence in the Czech Republic or by legal entities with a registered address in the Czech Republic. For further information, refer to Article 17 of the Foreign Exchange Act.

When purchasing a house or flat, the seller and the buyer sign a purchase agreement which is subject to the Czech Civil Code (Act No. 40/1964 Sb., Coll.). The agreement must be in a written form in order to be valid. **The buyer becomes the owner of the house or flat** upon the registration of the title of ownership with the land registry (not upon signing the purchase agreement). The entire process of purchasing the property, which starts with the signing of a purchase agreement and ends with the registration of the title of ownership with the land registry, is a complex process that can take several months. It is therefore advisable to seek the assistance of a real estate specialist such as an attorney, a real estate broker, etc.

### 11. 2. Living in a leased flat/house

Another way of solving the housing question is to rent a flat. Unlike private ownership, this option is available to a larger number of people. Legal regulations governing the rental of flats are also part of the Czech Civil Code. Under the Civil Code, a rental flat (or a part thereof) can be sublet (for either a determined or indeterminate period of time).

The leasing of a flat is based on a lease agreement concluded between the lessor of the flat and the tenant. **A lease agreement must be in a written form and contain the following data; otherwise, it is considered invalid:**

- identification of the contracting parties (lessor and tenant),
- identification of the flat (address, flat number, number of rooms etc.) and any adjacent amenities (hallways, laundry rooms, basement storage, balconies etc.),
- scope of their utilization,
- method for the calculation of the rent or its amount,
- method to be used for the payment for the services associated with occupancy of the flat or their exact amounts (central heating, hot water, elevator charges, waste disposal etc.),

The rights and obligations associated with the lease of a flat are regulated by the provisions of the Civil Code or the respective lease agreement.

The lease can be terminated in several different ways:

- upon a **written agreement** between the lessor and the tenant,
- **upon the expiration** of the agreed lease term,
- **upon a notice of termination in writing** – the notice must indicate the deadline by which the lease is to be terminated and the termination notice period must be at least three months and terminate at the end of a calendar month. The lease can be terminated by the tenant (even without giving a reason) or by the lessor. The lessor may only cancel the lease for reasons that are specifically listed in the Civil Code. The lease may be terminated with or without the consent of a court.

If the lessor decides to terminate the lease without the consent of a court, the tenant has the right to file a motion for declaratory relief with the court within 60 days. In such a case, the tenant is not required to vacate the flat unless the proceedings are not completed with a legitimate decision of the court.

### **11. 3. Living in Co-op Flats**

The leasing of a flat that is in the ownership of a flat co-op has certain specific elements. Each flat co-op usually owns one or more flat blocks and the flats in such blocks are allocated to the members of the coop. The **member** to whom the flat has been allocated has the right to **sign a lease agreement for that flat with the co-op**. When dealing with issues related to the lease of a co-op flat (i.e. the signing of a lease, the rights and obligations of the co-op and the tenant etc.), one must also take in consideration the **by-laws of the co-op** to which the Civil Code refers.

### **11. 4. Registering Utilities and Other Services into Your Own Name**

The utility services connected with standard housing (whether in a leased or your own flat) have to be provided for separately. This requires signing up for such services as gas, electricity, water and sewage, waste disposal, phone, etc.)

### **11. 5. Loss of Housing**

If the assistance of friends or relatives is not available after the loss of a place to live, individuals may turn for help to one of the available charitable organizations offering assistance in such situations. Among such organizations are for example, the Salvation Army, Charita ČR and many others.. These organizations can be found throughout the Czech Republic, and, among other services, they operate charitable shelters which are frequently referred to as ‘asylum homes’. If mothers with children are in a situation needing shelter, they can for example seek help at shelters for mothers with children which are available in some cities. One should keep in mind that all of these facilities and shelters offer accommodation only on a temporary basis and only to those in need. One can also use commercial housing services; however, the cost of such accommodations can be substantial – especially in larger cities. Their addresses can be found e.g. in telephone directories and on the internet.

See Chapter 10. 5. for more detailed information on social services.

### **11. 6. Other Useful Information**

#### **➤ Mortgage loan**

A mortgage is a loan intended for the purchase or construction of a flat or house for residential purposes or for the reconstruction of such a property. A mortgage can be applied for by a private individual or by a legal entity. Mortgages are available from banks which offer different terms and conditions. The repayment of a mortgage loan is usually secured by collateral in the form of a real property (completed or under construction). The term of mortgages can be as long as 30 years. For further information on mortgage financing, contact the respective banks.

#### **➤ Building savings**

Participation in a building savings programme is another option of obtaining financial means for the purchase, construction or reconstruction of a flat or house. A building savings account can be opened by a person who has a permanent residence in the Czech Republic and who has been issued a Czech birth certificate number. The benefits offered by these programmes (government subsidies) can

therefore also be enjoyed by foreign nationals with a permanent residence in the Czech Republic. Further information on these programmes can be obtained from any building savings bank.

➤ **Insurance**

No flat or house can be perfectly protected against fire, flood, burglary, etc. However, in order to alleviate the consequences of such events, the flat or house can be insured. Further information on the insurance can be obtained from the respective insurance providers.



### **Links to similar sources of information**

- The Land Register is also available on the internet at the following address: <http://www.cuzk.cz>.
- More detailed information on housing in the Czech Republic can be found at the website of the Ministry of Local Development at <http://www.mmr.cz> (► Housing policy).
- See <http://www.cizinci.cz> (► Information materials and booklets) for the information booklet "Housing for Foreigners" (available in several language versions).

## 12. TRANSPORTATION

### 12. 1. Urban Transport

The urban transport system includes primarily the **bus, trolley and subway** (Prague only) systems with certain differences depending on the size of the respective city and other local conditions. Public transport services are provided for **consideration**, with every town or city maintaining its own system of fares. Fares must also be paid for the transportation of dogs and luggage unless they comply with the conditions of free transportation. **The payment of a fare is checked by public transport inspectors, and a failure to pay the fare is subject to steep fines.**

Further information on fares and schedules can be obtained at the individual transportation offices (in person, by phone or through their websites).

Certain Czech cities have an **integrated** public transport system, which means that the tickets purchased for travelling within the city can also be used to travel between different cities. In such integrated transport systems, the different means of transport (bus, train, etc.) work together, creating a system of integrated routes with single fares, transport terms and conditions and regular waiting times for connections.

*Integrated Transport Systems in Selected Cities:*

**Prague** - Prague Integrated Transport System (PID) <http://www.ropid.cz>

**Brno** - South Moravian Integrated Transport System (IDS JMK)

<http://www.idsjmk.cz>

### 12. 2. Intercity Transportation

The system of intercity public transport in the Czech Republic entails primarily **bus** and **train** transport. Inland air transportation is used infrequently and only between the largest cities (Prague, Brno and Ostrava).

**Intercity bus lines** in the Czech Republic are operated by a number of carriers. Each of them has their own system of fares which includes both **one-time tickets and prepaid season tickets**. Just as with the municipal public transport systems, most intercity bus carriers offer **discounts** for certain categories of passengers (e.g. students, the disabled, senior citizens, children up to certain ages etc.). Additional information on fares, types of discounts offered, other transportation terms and conditions or schedules are available e.g. on <http://www.idos.cz>, at information centres of the individual carriers or at larger bus terminals (for example at the Prague Florenc central bus terminal, the Brno Zvonařka central bus terminal or the central bus terminal in Ostrava, etc.).

**Railway transportation** in the Czech Republic is operated by the Czech Railways (<http://www.cd.cz>). In addition to basic fares, this carrier also offers a number of discounted rates that are available to wide range of passengers.

Specific train, bus and municipal public transport connections can be found on the following website <http://www.idos.cz>. This site allows you to search for a separate connection with different means of transportation or to combine different means and find the best option for your particular needs.

### 12. 3. Driving Licence

In order to drive a motor vehicle in the Czech Republic, the driver must be a holder of a driving licence. The issuance of a driving licence is preconditioned by the completion of a practical and theoretical course at a driver's school and passing an examination verifying the driver's competence.

Driving licences are issued to qualified drivers by the local municipal offices or city councils in the Czech Republic. **A holder of a driver's license must carry the license when driving a motor vehicle and produce it to the police upon request.**

A Czech driving licence allows its holder to drive in other countries provided that the respective country recognizes such a license. If not, the driver must apply for the issuance of an **international driving licence**. Only the holder of a national driving licence can apply for an international driving licence.

Drivers can also drive motor vehicles in the Czech Republic with a valid driving licence issued by another member state of the European Communities or a driving licence/international driving licence issued by another country pursuant to the Convention on Road Traffic. If you are not sure whether your driving licence issued by another country is compliant with this Convention, consult the appropriate municipal authority or city council.

Every person who intends to use his or her own **vehicle** in the Czech Republic (with the exception of persons whose stay in the country does not exceed 185 days in a single calendar year) must **register** their vehicle with the local municipal authority.

Motor vehicles registered in the Czech Republic are subject to regular technical inspections, the purposes of which are to monitor the technical condition of vehicles and engine emission levels. The certificate on the technical condition of a vehicle and the emissions certificate are issued by special technical inspection stations and emission testing stations.

The Czech Republic has a toll road system comprising selected freeways and expressways. The payment of the toll is verified by presenting a toll sticker. These toll stickers can be purchased at almost any petrol station, post office, border crossing or from motoring organizations.

***Maximum Speed Limits in the Czech Republic:***

***Urban areas: 50 kmph***

***Non-urban areas: 90 kmph***

***Highway: 130 kmph***

***A policy of no alcohol tolerance is pursued in the Czech Republic with respect to driving motor vehicles.***



**Links to similar sources of information**

- Further information on driving licenses can be found on the website of the Ministry of Transportation <http://www.mdcz.cz> (► Road transport ► Driving licences, driver's schools ► Driving licences).
- Further information on vehicle registration requirements can be found on the website of the Ministry of Transportation at <http://www.mdcz.cz> (► Road transport ► Import, registration certification of vehicles ► Certification of vehicles).
- Further information on technical inspection stations and emission testing stations can be found on the website of the Ministry of Transportation at <http://www.mdcz.cz> (► Road transport ► Technical inspection stations and emission testing stations ).



## **13. FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND OTHER LIFE EVENTS**

*One must remember that family relationships between nationals of other countries can be governed by a legal system other than that of the Czech Republic. Act No. 97/1963 Coll. on private and procedural international law, as amended, establishes which legal system governs family relationships of foreign nationals. In addition to other areas covered by this law, this law establishes the following:*

- *The ability of a person to enter into a marriage relationship and the conditions for the validity of such a marriage are governed by the laws of the country of which the individual is a citizen.*
- *The act of the marriage (how the marriage takes place) is governed by the laws of the country in which the marriage takes place.*
- *The personal and property relationships between the married couple are governed by the laws of the country of which they are citizens; if the spouses are citizens of different countries, these relationships are governed by the Czech law.*
- *The dissolution of the marriage by divorce is governed by the laws of the country of which the spouses are citizens at the time of initiating the proceedings; if the two individuals are citizens of different countries, the divorce would proceed in accordance with the Czech law; if a foreign system of law would otherwise apply, but such laws would not allow for a divorce or would only allow for a divorce under highly restrictive conditions; and, if the married couple, or at least one of the two spouses have lived in the Czech Republic for a substantial period of time, the Czech rule of laws applies.*
- *Relationships between parents and their children, including the upbringing and maintenance of the children, are governed by the laws of the country of which the child is a citizen; if the child is living in the Czech Republic, these relationships may be governed by Czech rule of law, if it is within the child's interest.*

*The provisions of the above act shall only apply if a specific international treaty to which the Czech Republic is a party does not establish otherwise.*

. In a family, just as with other rights and obligations, a man and a woman have an equal status and they make joint decisions on family matters. Both spouses have the right to the same standard of living and each may assert a claim for child support.

Both parents should equally participate in the upbringing of their children. Parents are required to **maintain** their children. This requirement applies until the children are able to earn their living. Both parents contribute to the maintenance of their children – depending on their respective abilities and financial situation. Under the Czech law, children of married and of unmarried couples have the same rights and obligations.

### **13. 1. Registry Offices and their Competencies**

Registry Offices are state authorities in charge of registering births, marriages, registered partnerships and the deaths of natural persons in the territory of the Czech Republic and the births, marriages and deaths of Czech citizens outside of the country. The registry consists of the following sub-registries – the Birth Registry (which maintains the Book of Births), the Marriage Registry (maintains the Book of Marriages), the Registered Partnership Registry (which maintains the Book of Registered Partnerships) and the Registry of Deaths (which maintains the Book of Deaths).

The registry books are also used to store other information modifying and amending the existing entries.

The entries contained in the registry databases are used to issue **registry documents** (birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates and registered partnership certificates).

Registry offices are defined as municipal offices, city councils, the offices of the Prague city districts (in the Capital City of Prague), district offices of other statutory cities or the offices servicing the military zones designated and divided into administration districts by an implementing provision issued by the Ministry of the Interior.

### **13. 2. Marriage (conditions); Registered Partnership (conditions)**

**a) Marriage** is entered into based on the deliberate and full consent of a man and a woman, who agree to enter into marriage before a registry official, an official who is not part of the registry office (if one of the individuals has a permanent address in the jurisdiction of such an office) or before a religious body authorized to perform marriages under a special regulation. The marriage vows are made in public in a solemn way in the presence of two witnesses.

Prior to getting married, the couple must complete a standard form and submit it at the registry office in the location where the marriage is to take place. The form must be accompanied by the required set of documents. A church marriage may only be performed after the couple have verified to the priest performing the wedding ceremony that they have met the applicable legal requirements for getting married. This verification may not be older than 3 months and it is issued by the registry office in the location where the marriage is to take place.

A marriage may not be entered into with an already married man or woman and it may not be entered into between ancestors, progeny or siblings; the same applies to a relationship based on adoption, if the adoption is still in effect. A minor over the age of 16, a person whose capabilities of undertaking legal actions has been limited by the court or a mentally impaired individual whose impairment would result in a limited capability for undertaking legal actions must attach the approval of a court to permit the marriage to the marriage application form.

If the documents submitted as part of the application form were issued by authorities in a foreign country, they must be accompanied with a sworn translation into Czech with the necessary certifications (see Chapter 4.5.). The Registry Office may waive the requirement to provide such certified documents in the event that such a certification is prevented by serious obstacles.

Before the marriage is concluded, a foreign national is required to submit to the Registry Office a certificate proving the legality of his or her stay in the Czech Republic issued by the Police of the Czech Republic; this requirement does not apply if the foreign national is a citizen of the European Union, another contracting state of the European Economic Area Treaty, or a family member of such a citizen. This certificate may not be older than 7 workdays as at the day on which the marriage is concluded.

**b)** On 1 July 2006, Act No. 115/2006 Sb., Coll., on registered partnership and modification of certain related laws, came into effect. **Registered partnership** (hereinafter referred to as "partnership") is established on the basis of the manifestation of will of two persons of the same gender presented in the form of a consonant free and complete statement of such persons declaring that they establish a partnership. The statement is made in person before the Registry Office in a region that is competent to accept their statement according to the place of permanent residence of at least one of the persons entering the partnership. The competent Registry Offices (14) have been set on the basis of a regulation issued by the Ministry of the Interior.

Persons who wish to conclude partnership must complete a prescribed form and submit it to the appropriate Registry Office before entering into partnership. The form must be accompanied by the required set of documents. If the documents submitted as part of the application form were issued by authorities in a foreign country, they must be accompanied with a sworn translation into Czech with the necessary certifications (see Chapter 4.5.).

Similarly as with the conclusion of marriage, a foreign national who wishes to conclude partnership and who has not been granted permanent residence in the Czech Republic is required to

submit to the appropriate Registry Office a certificate issued by the Police of the Czech Republic proving the legality of his or her stay in the Czech Republic; this requirement does not apply if the foreign national is a citizen of the European Union, another contracting state of the European Economic Area Treaty, or a family member of such a citizen. This certificate may not be older than 7 workdays as at the day on which the partnership is concluded.

Anyone may enter into partnership unless he or she is prevented to do so by law. The conclusion of partnership is preconditioned by the fact that at least one of the persons concluding partnership must be a Czech citizen. The partnership may not be concluded by ancestors and progeny and siblings. In addition to that, partnership cannot be concluded by a person who is under 18 years of age, who is incompetent to perform legal acts, or who has already concluded marriage or partnership or a similar bond of persons of the same gender abroad provided that his/her marriage or partnership or similar bond still remains to be valid.

Women's surnames are created in compliance with the rules of the Czech grammar. Upon request of a female foreign national whom the conclusion of marriage or partnership concerns, it is possible to enter a male form of the surname she will be using after concluding marriage or partnership into the Registry Book when recording the conclusion of marriage or partnership.

### 13. 3. Divorce

In the Czech Republic, a married couple may obtain divorce. A marriage may be divorced by the court. Before ruling on the dissolution of the marriage through a divorce, arrangements must be made regarding the subsequent care for the couple's minor children. The Czech Republic recognizes two types of divorce – the so-called undisputed divorce and the disputed (more complex) divorce.

In the case of the **undisputed** type of divorce, the entire procedure is significantly faster and simpler. If

- the marriage has lasted for at least one year,
- the couple has reached a mutual agreement on obtaining a divorce,
- they have not lived together for at least 6 months,
- they have settled any ownership rights and custody rights to children,

the court will divorce the marriage without determining whether the marriage is permanently and deeply broken.

In the case of a **disputed** divorce (when one of the spouses does not agree with the divorce or if the couple are unable to settle their future relationships), the court may only divorce the marriage upon request of one of the spouses if the marriage has been permanently and irreparably broken. The court will only issue a decision after a hearing attended by the parents and the guardian of their child (children), appointed specifically for the divorce proceedings. In certain exceptional situations, the court may refuse to divorce the marriage.

Before issuing a decision to grant the divorce of a married couple who are parents of a minor child, the court will establish the rights and obligations applicable to the parents with respect to their child after the divorce, and decide in whose custody the child shall be placed and how each of the parents shall contribute to the upbringing of the child. If both of the parents are capable of raising the child and if they are interested in doing so, the court may place the child into either a joint custody or an alternating custody – provided such an arrangement is in the child's interest and its needs will be satisfied.

**The parent's obligation to support his or her child does not end with the divorce.** If one of the parents believes that the responsibility to support the child is not being properly attended to by the other parent, that parent may file a request for a change in the child's support arrangements with the court. Arrangements for the support of a child can be made not only within the framework of divorce proceedings, but also in the event that one of the parents fails to comply with his/her obligation to provide support to the child while the marriage lasts.

If the court places the child into the custody of one of the parents, the court may also set specific conditions for contact between the child and the other parent, a grandparent or a sibling, if such an arrangement is within the interest of the child and if the situation in the family requires it. A mutual arrangement between the parents, which does not require the approval of the court, is given a preference over the imposition of an arrangement by the court. Children have the right to enjoy the same standard of living as their parents. Unmarried parents of a child who is a minor may also turn to the court with a request for child support arrangements (i.e. the above does not apply exclusively to married couples).

A divorced spouse (a man or a woman) who is unable to support himself or herself on their own may request support from the ex-spouse, based on their abilities and financial situation.

#### **13. 4. Birth of a Child to a Foreign National**

The duty to report the birth of a child to the Registry Office lies with the health care facility where the child was born, or if the child was not delivered in a health care facility, the birth must be reported by the first doctor providing medical services during or after the labour. The registry office in the administration district where the child was born has the authority to enter the birth of the child into the Book of Births. The registry clerk will make an entry in the Book of Births, issue the Birth Certificate to the child. The Registry Office reports the birth of the child to the Register of Inhabitants.

As regards a child of a Czech citizen whose mother is a foreign national, the address of the appropriate authority in whose district the child was born becomes the child's permanent residence address unless agreed otherwise by the parents.

The current legislation protects a child born to a foreign national staying in the Czech Republic by means of considering the child's stay in the country after its birth as temporary residence. Nevertheless, the protection is temporary and within 60 days after the birth of the child, its parent must apply for a visa or long-term residence permit or permanent residence permit on behalf of the child. If an application for a permanent residence permit is filed within the above timeframe, the child's stay will be considered permanent from the date of its birth. If the parents leave the Czech Republic with the child, the child's residence status shall be regarded as temporary.

**A child born to parents who are staying in the Czech Republic under a visa (especially under an extended visa for stays over 90 days) is not covered under the public health insurance programme, even if the parents are covered (e.g. by virtue of employment).** If the mother is a participant of the public health insurance, the child's delivery and initial care is covered up to a limit of CZK 5,000. This covers the cost of a complication-free delivery. In the event of any (even the slightest) complications during the delivery, the medical care provided to the child – whether or not such care is absolutely necessary – is not covered by the Czech public insurance and the parents may be charged for such services at commercial rates. For such situations, the Pojišťovna VZP a.s. insurance company has established a product which requires a pregnant woman to pay slightly higher premiums ensuring that, once the child is born, extended medical care – covered by insurance – is available. Please note that individuals participating in the public health insurance are not insured by Pojišťovna VZP a.s., and we therefore recommend that they contact this or another insurance provider directly for further information about this or another suitable product.

If the child is born without coverage, the following applies. The parents must conclude a long-term, contract-based health insurance policy for the child (however, parents may of course choose the alternative of covering the medical expenses for the child in cash). In such a situation, the child would have to undergo an entry exam which would be paid for by the parents. Based on this exam, the insurance provider will structure a health insurance policy for the child and determine the premiums for such a policy. The insurer then issues an insurance card for the child. Any medical expenses incurred while the child is being cared for at a maternity hospital must be settled in cash because the policy will not be concluded before the entry examination of the child.

### 13.5. Death of a Family Member

The Registry Office in the administration district where the natural person died has the authority to enter the death into the Book of Deaths. The death is reported to the Registry Office by the medical examiner through a post-mortem examination report, on the basis of which the registrar makes an entry in the Book of Deaths and issue the Death Certificate to the members of the deceased person's family (spouse, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, great-grandchildren) or to the person's siblings or authorized representatives. The Death Certificate may also be issued to a foreign national demonstrating that this is necessary for the assertion of his/her rights before state or self-administration authorities.

The deceased person's family members have to arrange for the funeral or repatriation of the deceased on their own.



#### Links to similar sources of information

- Detailed information on Registry Offices can be obtained from your local municipal authority or city council or by visiting the following websites:
  - Public Administration Portal – <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Situations in life ► Citizen ► Citizen and the state ► Personal data ► Registry Offices) where you can also find instructions on how to proceed with the issuance of registry documents, accessing registry books, obtaining confirmations of the information recorded in registry books etc.
  - Website of the Ministry of the Interior – <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public ► Advice and services ► Visiting an office ► Registries - Registry Offices)
- Detailed information on the conclusion of marriage can be obtained from your local Registry Office or by visiting the following websites:
  - Website of the Ministry of the Interior – <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Advice and services ► Visiting an office ► Marriage)
  - Public Administration Portal – <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Situations in life ► Foreign national ► Marriage or ► Citizen ► Family ► Marriage) where you will also find detailed instructions on how to proceed with regard to concluding marriage, conclusion of civil marriages, church weddings, marriages to foreign nationals, etc..

## **14. SELECTED INFORMATION ON THE CZECH SOCIETY**

This chapter is included in all language versions of this publication, nevertheless, it is intended primarily to foreign nationals of different cultural backgrounds, coming from countries with significantly different customs in social life and traditions. Foreign nationals from countries which are closer to our country in terms of culture or geographic location are not likely to find any new information here as it can be supposed that their life style is similar to that of Czech people. Nevertheless, this information is included in all language versions for the sake of wording uniformity of the publication even though it may be considered redundant by some of the foreign readers.

### **14. 1. Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication**

When communicating with others, a person is expected to do so in a polite, non-confrontational and considerate manner. It is customary to give the chance to participate to all of the people involved in a discussion and to listen to all opinions – even those to which we are opposed and to which we should not respond impulsively.

Czech people are not usually loud or unduly boisterous in public. Rather reserved and tempered demeanour and certain self control are appreciated. A loud conversation accompanied with an excessive use of gestures may attract unwanted attention.

***When communicating with others (except when talking to close friends) the following is considered unmannered:***

- *picking a controversial topic for conversation,*
- *failure to respect the opinions of others and interrupting others when they are speaking,*
- *speaking too quickly,*
- *poor pronunciation,*
- *excessive use of gestures,*
- *highly emotional (theatrical) behaviour,*
- *use of profanity, picking on others, making fun of others,*
- *making derogatory remarks about others etc.*

***Inconsiderate behaviour, such as speaking with your hands in your pockets or while chewing gum or smoking a cigarette, etc. is also regarded as being impolite.***

As part of official communications, it is advisable to use proper Czech. A woman is an equal partner in a conversation. Native speakers will usually appreciate foreigners speaking (or trying to speak) Czech.

It is generally recommended to choose non-controversial topics for conversation and topics which do not require the participants to express strong opinions (e.g. politics or religion). It is regarded inadequate to speak (boast) about one's credits and achievements and material well-being. Extreme curiosity and intrusive questions regarding a person's medical condition, personal, family or work situation are also considered to be impolite. Such topics should only be discussed if brought up by the other person involved and amongst close friends.

***The following is considered inappropriate:***

- *enquiring about the age of a woman in the course of a conversation,*
- *asking about the other person's salary or income,*
- *asking about the value of the person's assets,*
- *mentioning sensitive information that could be subject to abuse (such as someone's birth certificate number),*
- *reminding others of a painful, traumatic or tragic event (such a family member's death, divorce, etc.),*

A single or multiple nods of the head are regarded as a gesture of **approval** or **agreement** and a turn of the head from side-to-side is regarded as a gesture of **disapproval** or **disagreement**. It is considered inconsiderate to point at someone or something with one's finger, to open one's mouth to indicate surprise or to pull someone's sleeve to let them know you want to talk to them etc. It is not customary to sit right next to another person in public transport vehicles (unless necessary,) to walk too close to someone else or to hold or touch the other person during a conversation. This particularly applies to a conversation between a man and a woman). One meter is considered to be a polite distance during conversations. An eye contact with the other person should be maintained in the course of a conversation (but not extensively). Avoiding an eye contact is looked upon negatively and can have a significant impact on the credibility of the speaker.

A greeting or an introduction is usually accompanied by a handshake. However, a handshake is normally not used in all situations – especially if the people greeting one another are not friends or if they are not introducing themselves to one another. A handshake is also commonly used during formal or business meetings. Only family members and good friends (even those of the opposite sex) may hug one another or kiss one another on the cheek during greetings or when saying goodbye.

*The following is customary:*

- *a handshake should be firm and brief,*
- *the right hand is used when shaking hands,*
- *hands are not shaken cross-wise,*
- *a woman offers her hand first to a man, a superior to a subordinate and an older person to a younger person,*
- *a handshake should be accompanied by brief eye contact.*

## 14. 2. Daily Routine

When attending business meetings, you should arrive on time; the time set for an appointment or meeting should be adhered to and any changes should be announced in advance and be accompanied by an apology. It is considered impolite to be more than 15 minutes slow.

The workday in the Czech Republic starts earlier than in many other European countries. Small businesses often open as early as 7:00 a.m. and hypermarkets usually open at 8:00 a.m.; many blue collar jobs start between 6 and 7:00 a.m., elementary and secondary schools usually start at 8:00 a.m., and public offices and banks generally open between 8 and 9:00 a.m. Days when public offices are officially open to the public are usually Mondays and Wednesdays.

The above-noted schedule has an impact on the daily routines of people in the Czech Republic and their general eating schedules; nevertheless, there are of course many exceptions. Lunch is usually taken between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., dinner usually between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. and most Czechs go to bed between 10:00 p.m. and midnight.

Restaurants and pubs are normally open from 10:00 a.m. till midnight; however, many bars and clubs stay open much later. Theatre performances and concerts usually start between 7 and 8:00 p.m.

## 14. 3. Czech Cuisine

Czechs like to follow certain rituals during their meals. They like to start their meal by saying "*dobrou chut*" (enjoy your meal). It is impolite to start eating before everyone else is sitting down at the table. In the Czech culture, men and women eat at the same table.

A **traditional Czech lunch** starts with a soup and the main course usually consists of a meat dish and a side dish (all kinds of meat are popular, and the most commonly served meats are pork and beef, the least common is lamb; poultry is becoming increasingly popular; traditional Czech dishes include *pork roast served with dumplings and sauerkraut*, *a duck served with dumplings and sauerkraut* and *beef goulash served with dumplings*), followed with a salad or stewed fruit. Local specialties include

e.g. "bramborák" (potato pancakes made from freshly shredded potatoes, fried in oil), "utopenci" (smoked sausage, pickled in a vinegar dressing with onions) and "olomoucké tvarůžky" (original ripened Moravian cheese).

Things to remember:

- guests usually seat themselves in a restaurant (except of luxury restaurants),
- the Czech cutlery usually includes a soup spoon, a dinner fork and a knife,
- the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right hand,
- a fork and a knife placed on a plate parallel to one another indicate that the diner is finished with the meal and the waiter can remove the plate; crossing the knife and the fork indicates that the guest has not finished eating yet,
- tipping is not obligatory but is common; the tip is proportional to the size of the bill,
- the tip should not be left lying on the table or placed into the hand of the waiter,
- it is considered very impolite to belch or to slurp one's food.

#### 14. 4. Customs and Traditions

The most important Czech customs and traditions are those associated with Christmas and Easter holidays and wedding customs.

##### **Christmas**

Christmas is celebrated from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> December as the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas holidays are normally preceded by a major housecleaning and the baking of traditional Christmas cookies of many different kinds (before Christmas Eve, the Czechs also like to bake traditional Christmas brioche type bread called "vánočka"); exchange of gifts on Christmas Eve (24<sup>th</sup> December). One for the symbols of Christmas is the Christmas tree. The traditional Christmas dinner includes fish soup and fried carp, served with a potato salad. There are many traditions that are followed and enjoyed on Christmas. A husband and a wife (partners) should kiss each other under a bunch of mistletoe; there is also a tradition of cutting an apple to predict the future for the next year, the tradition of floating a candlestick made out of an empty walnut shell, etc.

##### **Easter**

On Easter, which is a holiday celebrated on the occasion of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Czech families decorate Easter eggs as a symbol of the spring awakening of the nature. Easter eggs which are decorated by painting and other techniques are referred to as "kraslice". They are sold during the season at craft fairs and specialty shops. These Easter eggs are a part of the Czech Easter carol and traditional decorations. Special Easter bread, cakes in the shape of a lamb and a special stuffing are baked, and Czech homes are decorated with new branches of willow. Men and boys make (or buy) willow switches which they use on Easter Monday morning to give chase to women and girls. In the Czech Republic, the celebration of Easter is not heavily religious and Good Friday is not a public holiday.

##### **New Year's Eve and New Year's Day**

The end of the calendar year is a very popular celebration associated with drinking alcohol, fireworks, traditional fortune telling and New Year's resolutions.

##### **Wedding**

If two partners decide to get married, it is customary for the future husband to visit the parents of the future bride with a bouquet of flowers and to officially ask for their approval to **marry** their



daughter. In the Czech Republic, the majority of weddings take the form of a civil ceremony (*civil wedding*) which takes place in a wedding hall – usually located at a municipal offices (but also at castles or chateaus). The couple can also conclude marriage in the form of a religious ceremony held in a church (*church wedding*).

The newly married couple sends out cards with an announcement of their marriage to their friends and colleagues, some of whom may be invited to the wedding reception. The wedding ceremony involves a wedding cake, a wedding bouquet for the bride and both mothers; all wedding guests have a piece of myrtle attached to their clothing. The bride usually wears a white wedding dress. When taking their vows, the bride and the groom exchange wedding rings, kiss one another as a married couple for the first time and sign the wedding record along with their two witnesses. The bride usually takes the groom's last name, but can keep her original last name. As the couple leaves the wedding hall, the guests shower them with confetti or rice. As the bride and the groom arrive at the restaurant where the wedding reception is to be held, there is yet another tradition - the breaking of a plate or glass for good luck. The couple jointly cleans up the broken glass. During the reception, the newly married couple is served soup out of a single dish and they feed one another. The reception ends with the distribution of wedding gifts and the departure of the newly married couple on their honeymoon.

#### 14. 5. Religion

The Constitution of the Czech Republic guarantees the freedom of religion by incorporating the **Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms** (Articles 3, 15 and 16) in the Czech constitutional order. Churches are regulated by Act No. 3/2002 Sb., Coll., on churches and church associations, as amended with later regulations. This Act is based on respecting the freedom of religion and internal autonomy of churches and church associations, and on the consistent assertion of the principle of confessional neutrality of the state towards churches and church associations.

Church issues fall within the competence of the Department of Churches of the Ministry of Culture. This Department is in charge of preparing long-term concepts for the regulation of the relations between the state and churches and church associations and the concept of implementing religious freedom in the Czech Republic. The Department of Churches provides for the registration of churches and church associations, federations of churches and church associations, modifications of principal documents, as well as cancellation of their registrations. In addition, it operates a registry of legal persons established by registered churches and church associations and cancels their registrations.

An application for the registration of a church or church association can be lodged pursuant to Act 3/2002 Sb., Coll., on churches and church societies, as amended with later regulations; the application must be executed in writing, in two counterparts in Czech. An application for the registration of a church or church society must be lodged by at least three natural persons, at least 18 years old, capable to enter into legal acts, citizens of the Czech Republic or foreign nationals with permanent residence in the Czech Republic. The application for the registration of a church and church society must be accompanied by sign-up sheets with a list of at least 300 adult citizens of the Czech Republic or foreign nationals with permanent residence in the Czech Republic who support such a church or church society.

Church societies may operate freely in the Czech Republic even if they are not registered with the Ministry of Culture pursuant to Act No. 3/2002 Sb., Coll., on churches and church societies, as amended with later regulations.

For more detailed information on churches and church societies, visit [www.mkcr.cz](http://www.mkcr.cz) (► Churches and church societies).

For the list of registered churches, church societies and other legal entities, visit [http://www3.mkcr.cz/cns\\_internet/](http://www3.mkcr.cz/cns_internet/)

## 14. 6. Brief Cultural Overview

### ➤ Protected national monuments

The Czech Republic is the home to many historical landmarks which have become popular destinations for tourists from all over the world; twelve of these landmarks have been registered as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



Information on protected national monuments, museums etc. can be found at the website of the Ministry of Culture at <http://www.mkcr.cz>.

Among the most important educational and cultural institutions in the Czech Republic are Charles University, the National Theatre and the National Museum.

### ➤ Famous Czech artists and thinkers

The Czech lands were home to many well-known artists. Some composers (such as **Bedřich Smetana**, **Antonín Dvořák** and **Leoš Janáček**) have become famous all over the world.

### ➤ Writers and thinkers of the past

- **John Hus** (circa 1369/1370 – 1415) was a famous Czech religious thinker, reformer and preacher of the medieval period.
- **Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius)** (1592 – 1670) was a Czech writer and teacher whose work and achievements are known worldwide.

### ➤ Modern Czech Writers

- **Božena Němcová** (1820 – 1862) – a famous Czech writer.
- **Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk** (1850 – 1937) was a Czech philosopher, historian and the first president of Czechoslovakia.
- **Jaroslav Hašek** (1883 – 1923) – a writer, publicist and journalist.
- **Franz Kafka** (1883 – 1924) – a Prague-based German language writer of Jewish origin, one of the most influential and reputable authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- **Karel Čapek** (1890 – 1938) – a writer, journalist, playwright, philosopher and translator.
- **Bohumil Hrabal** (1914 – 1997) – a novelist and one of the most influential and unique writers of the late 20th century.
- **Arnošt Lustig** (\*1926) – a Czech writer and publicist and the author of a number of works on the Holocaust.
- **Milan Kundera** (\*1929) – a Czech-French writer, globally the most successful and most often translated author of Czech origin whose novels and essays have significantly contributed to the development of the novel as a genre.
- **Václav Havel** (\*1936) – an author and playwright, one of the first spokesperson of the Charta 77 dissident movement and a leading figure in the post-November 1989 political changes.
- **Michal Viewegh** (\*1962) – a writer and publicist, currently the best selling Czech novelist.

### ➤ Poets

- **Karel Hynek Mácha** (1810-1836) – a poet and the leading figure of the Czech Romantic Movement.
- **Karel Jaromír Erben** (1811-1870) – a writer, poet, translator, literary historian and collector of Czech folk tunes and fairy tales.
- **Jan Neruda** (1834-1891) – a famous Czech poet and journalist.
- **Vítězslav Nezval** (1900-1958) – a poet, writer and translator, the leading figure of the Czech Surrealism.
- **Jaroslav Seifert** (1901-1986) – a Czech poet, writer, journalist and translator. Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature.
- **Karel Kryl** (1944-1994) was a Czech poet and song writer, one of the leading figures of the Czech political protest song movement in the 1968–1989 period.

## **15. INTEGRATION CENTRES**

Foreign Nationals' Integration Support Centres (hereinafter referred to as "Integration Centres") are established on the basis of a multiannual programme of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals operated by the Ministry of the Interior. In 2009, the Integration Centres operation was initiated in the Regions of Moravia-Silesia, South Moravia, Pardubice, Plzeň, Ústí nad Labem and Zlín. In 2010, Integration Centres are planned to be launched in the Regions of South Bohemia, Liberec, Olomouc and Karlovy Vary (contact information will be published at [www.cizinci.cz](http://www.cizinci.cz)). Integration Centres are to be established in all regions of the Czech Republic in the years to come.

The Centres should pursue their activities in close co-operation with regional and local authorities and institutions, as well as other local entities, including non/governmental non/profit organizations. The primary role of Integration Centres will be that of information centres for foreign nationals. The Centres' main goals are as follows:

- advisory services,
- training courses and other prevention activities,
- permanent monitoring of the situation,
- civic society promotion.

**1. Provision and mediation of social and legal advisory services** (both at offices and in the field) and mediation of assistance to foreign nationals in collaboration with appropriate organizations or authorities, including assistance if needed.

**2. Training courses and other prevention activities:**

- Czech language courses for foreigners - for beginners, as a preparation for the exam needed for a permanent residence permit (level A1), courses for parents and children (with babysitting service during classes),

- initial courses aiming at the social and cultural situation of foreign nationals in the Czech society (including information on the rights and obligations of foreign nationals),

- other prevention activities cultivation of relations between foreigners and majority population (events focusing on the issues of mutual awareness and coexistence with foreigners); organization of the **regional advisory platform for the integration of foreign nationals** (sharing information on foreign nationals, identification of problems and their solution in practice or in relation to the appropriate bodies). The members of the platform will include the major parties interested in the integration of foreign nationals in the given region or municipality, e.g. regional or municipal officers, social security authorities officers, educational institutions, non-governmental non-profit organizations, police, entrepreneurs, Labour Offices, foreigners.

**3. Permanent monitoring of the situation** (tracking changes in the number, status, nationalities of foreigners etc.)

**4. Civic society promotion - the activities of the Centre will be pursued in collaboration with non-governmental non-profit organizations, as well as other partners; if needed, the Centres will promote the establishment of new non-governmental non-profit organizations or an extension of the activities of the current ones.**

## 15. 1. Integration Centres Contact Information

### ➤ Integration Centres operated by the Refugee Facilities Administration:

#### **Foreign Nationals' Integration Support Centre - Region of Pardubice**

Boženy Němcové 2625

530 02 Pardubice

**Mgr. Ivona Baklíková**

Head of the Centre

Mobile: +420 725 148 519

Tel.: +420 466 736 124

Tel./fax: +420 466 952 066

e-mail: [icpardubice@suz.cz](mailto:icpardubice@suz.cz)

[www.integracnicentra.cz](http://www.integracnicentra.cz)

#### **Foreign Nationals' Integration Support Centre - Region of Plzeň**

Resslova 14

301 00 Plzeň

**Mgr. Zuzana Sermešová**

Head of the Centre

Mobile: +420 725 874 975

Tel./fax: +420 377 223 157

e-mail: [icplzen@suz.cz](mailto:icplzen@suz.cz)

[www.integracnicentra.cz](http://www.integracnicentra.cz)

#### **Foreign Nationals' Integration Support Centre - Region of Zlín**

Lorencova 3791

760 01 Zlín

**Bc. Roman Baláž**

Head of the Centre

Mobile: +420 725 148 515

Tel./fax: +420 577 018 651

e-mail: [iczlin@suz.cz](mailto:iczlin@suz.cz)

[www.integracnicentra.cz](http://www.integracnicentra.cz)

#### **Foreign Nationals' Integration Support Centre - Region of Moravia-Silesia**

Československá 2227/7

702 00 Ostrava

**Bc. Kamil Vývoda**

Head of the Centre:

Mobile: +420 725 148 522

Tel./fax: +420 596 112 626

e-mail: [icostrava@suz.cz](mailto:icostrava@suz.cz)

[www.integracnicentra.cz](http://www.integracnicentra.cz)

#### **Business hours** (*same for all Centres*)

Monday 12:00 – 19:00

Tuesday - not open for the public

Wednesday 12:00 – 19:00

Thursday 8:00 - 12:00

Friday 8:00 - 12:00

➤ **Integration Centre operated by the Region of South Moravia:**

**Foreign Nationals' Integration Support Centre of South Moravia**

Mezírka 1  
602 00 Brno

**Mgr. Kateřina Zouharová**

Head of the Centre:

Tel./fax: +420 533 433 540

e-mail: [cizincijmk@centrum.cz](mailto:cizincijmk@centrum.cz)

**Business hours**

Tuesday 6:30 – 12:00 12:30 – 18:30

Wednesday 9:00 – 13:00 13:30 – 18:30

➤ **Integration Centre operated by the Integration Advisory Bureau:**

**Foreign Nationals' Integration Support Centre in the Region of Ústí nad Labem**

Velká Hradební 33

400 21 Ústí nad Labem

(the National Building)

Tel.: 475 216 536

email: [centrum@p-p-i.cz](mailto:centrum@p-p-i.cz)

[www.p-p-i.cz](http://www.p-p-i.cz)

**Business hours**

Monday 9:00 – 19:00

Tuesday 9:00 – 19:00

Wednesday 9:00 – 19:00

Thursday 9:00 – 19:00

Friday 9:00 – 16:00

## **16. ALPHABETICAL LIST OF SELECTED NON-GOVERNMENTAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING IN THE FIELD OF FOREIGN NATIONAL'S INTEGRATION**

### ➤ **Foreign Nationals' Integration Centre**

#### **Contact**

Address: Kubelíkova 55, 130 00 Prague 3

Telephone: 222 713 332

e-mail: [info@ci Praha.org](mailto:info@ci Praha.org)

Website: <http://www.ci Praha.org>

### ➤ **Charita Česká republika**

#### **Contact**

Address: Vladislavova 12, 110 00 Prague 1

Telephone: 296 243 330

e-mail: [sekretariat@charita.cz](mailto:sekretariat@charita.cz)

Website: <http://www.charita.cz>

### ➤ **Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům, o. s. (Refugee Assistance Organization)**

#### **Contact**

Address: Kovářská 4, Prague 9

Telephone: 284 683 714, 284 683 545

e-mail: [opu@opu.cz](mailto:opu@opu.cz)

Website: <http://www.opu.cz>

### ➤ **Poradna pro integraci, občanské sdružení (Integration Advisory Bureau, citizen association)**

#### **Contact**

Address: Senovážná 2, 110 00 Prague 1

Telephone: 224 233 034, 224 216 758

e-mail: [ppi@iol.cz](mailto:ppi@iol.cz)

Website: <http://www.p-p-i.cz>

### ➤ **Sdružení pro integraci a migraci (Integration and Migration Association)**

#### **Contact**

Address: Senovážná 2, 110 00 Prague 1

Telephone: 224 224 379

e-mail: [poradna@refug.cz](mailto:poradna@refug.cz)

Website: <http://www.migrace.ecn.cz>

### ➤ **SOZE**

#### **Contact**

Address: Mostecká 5, 614 00 Brno

Telephone: 545 213 643, 545 536 356

e-mail: [soze@soze.cz](mailto:soze@soze.cz)

Website: <http://www.soze.cz>

#### **SOZE office in Olomouc**

Address: Ostružnická 28, 779 00 Olomouc

Telephone: 585 242 535

e-mail: [okraj@soze.cz](mailto:okraj@soze.cz)

➤ **Komunitní centrum InBáze / o.s. Berkat**

**Contact**

Address: Legerova 50, 120 00 Prague 2  
Telephone: 224 941 415, 739 037 353  
e-mail: [info@inbaze.cz](mailto:info@inbaze.cz)  
Website: <http://www.inbaze.cz>, <http://www.berkat.cz>

➤ **Český helsinský výbor (Czech Helsinki Committee)**

**Contact**

Address: Štefánikova 216/21, 150 00 Prague 5  
Telephone: 220 515 188  
e-mail: [sekr@helcom.cz](mailto:sekr@helcom.cz)  
Website: <http://www.helcom.cz>

➤ **Slovo 21**

**Contact**

Address: Francouzská 2, 120 00 Prague 2  
Telephone: 222 520 037  
e-mail: [slovo21@centrum.cz](mailto:slovo21@centrum.cz)  
Website: <http://www.slovo21.cz>

➤ **Evropská kontaktní skupina v ČR (European Contact Group in the Czech Republic)**

**Contact**

Address: Žitná 45, 110 00 Prague 1  
Telephone: 222 211 799, 774 454 560  
e-mail: [kavkova@ecgnet.cz](mailto:kavkova@ecgnet.cz)  
Website: <http://www.ekscr.cz>

➤ **Multikulturní centrum Prague (Prague Multicultural Centre)**

**Contact**

Address: Vodičkova 36, 116 02 Prague 1  
Telephone: 269 325 345  
e-mail: [infocentrum@mkc.cz](mailto:infocentrum@mkc.cz)  
Website: <http://www.mkc.cz>

➤ **Most pro lidská práva (Human Rights Bridge)**

**Contact**

Address: 17. listopadu 216, 530 02 Pardubice  
Telephone: 467 771 170  
e-mail: [info@mostlp.org](mailto:info@mostlp.org)  
Website: <http://www.mostlp.org>

➤ **Meta o.s. – Sdružení pro příležitosti mladých migrantů (Young Migrants Opportunities Association)**

**Contact**

Address: Rumunská 29, 120 00 Prague 2  
Telephone: 222 521 446  
e-mail: [info@meta-os.cz](mailto:info@meta-os.cz)  
Website: <http://www.meta-os.cz>

➤ **OBERIG o.s.**

**Contact**

Informační a vzdělávací středisko pro cizince „Slovanský dům“ (Information and Education Centre for Foreigners - Slavonic House)

Address: Horova 8, 400 01 Ústí nad Labem

Telephone: 475 205 721, 774 909 018, 773 909 018

email: [oberig@email.cz](mailto:oberig@email.cz)

Website: <http://www.oberig.cz>



## **17. LIST OF CONTACTS - ALIEN POLICE DEPARTMENTS, LABOUR OFFICES, REGIONAL AUTHORITIES AND REGIONAL BRANCH OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ASYLUM AND MIGRATION POLICY OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR**

### **17. 1. Alien Police**

The Alien Police is a separate division of the Police of the Czech Republic and its competencies include the issuance of permits for the entry and stay of foreign nationals in the Czech Republic.

#### **➤ Alien Police Service Headquarters**

Address: Olšanská 2, 130 00 Prague 3

Telephone: 974 841 219

Information line: 974 841 356, 974 841 357

Website: <http://www.policie.cz> (► Departments of the Police of the Czech Republic ► Nation-wide departments ► Alien Police Service)

#### **➤ Regional Headquarters of the Alien Police Service in Prague**

The following local departments come within these regional headquarters of the Alien Police: Prague, Benešov, Beroun, Kladno, Kolín, Kutná Hora, Mělník, Mladá Boleslav, Nymburk, Prague-východ (Prague-east), Prague-západ (Prague-west), Příbram, Rakovník..

##### **Contact**

Address: Olšanská 2, 130 00 Prague 3

Telephone: 974 820 229

#### **➤ Alien Police Service Regional Headquarters in Hradec Králové**

The following local departments come within these regional headquarters of the Alien Police: Havlíčkův Brod, Hradec Králové, Chrudim, Jičín, Náchod, Pardubice, Kostelec nad Orlicí, Semily, Svitavy, Trutnov, Ústí nad Orlicí.

##### **Kontakt**

Address: Bidlova 477, 501 01 Hradec Králové

Telephone: 974 520 225

#### **➤ Alien Police Service Regional Headquarters in Ústí nad Labem**

The following local departments come within these regional headquarters of the Alien Police: Česká Lípa, Děčín, Chomutov, Jablonec nad Nisou, Liberec, Litoměřice, Louny, Most, Teplice, Ústí nad Labem.

##### **Contact**

Address: Masarykova 27, 400 02 Ústí nad Labem

Telephone: 974 420 340-5

#### **➤ Alien Police Service Regional Headquarters in České Budějovice**

The following local departments come within these regional headquarters of the Alien Police: České Budějovice, Český Krumlov, Jindřichův Hradec, Pelhřimov, Písek, Prachatice, Strakonice, Tábor.

##### **Contact**

Address: Pražská 558, 370 74 České Budějovice

Telephone: 974 220 229, 387 428 506, 387 424 731

➤ **Alien Police Service Regional Headquarters in Plzeň**

The following local departments come within these regional headquarters of the Alien Police: Domažlice, Cheb, Karlovy Vary, Klatovy, Plzeň-jih (Plzeň-south), Plzeň-město (the city of Plzeň), Plzeň-sever (Plzeň-north), Rokycany, Sokolov, Tachov.

**Contact**

Address: Slovanská alej 26, 307 51 Plzeň

Telephone: 974 320 229

➤ **Alien Police Service Regional Headquarters in Brno**

The following local departments come within these regional headquarters of the Alien Police: Brno-město (the city of Brno), Brno-venkov (the surroundings of Brno), Blansko, Břeclav, Hodonín, Jihlava, Kroměříž, Třebíč, Uherské Hradiště, Vyškov, Vsetín, Zlín, Znojmo, Žďár nad Sázavou.

**Contact**

Address: Kopečná 3, 602 00 Brno

Telephone: 974 620 229

➤ **Alien Police Service Regional Headquarters in Ostrava**

The following local departments come within these regional headquarters of the Alien Police: Bruntál, Frýdek Místek, Jeseník, Karviná, Nový Jičín, Olomouc, Opava, Ostrava, Prostějov, Přerov, Vyšní Lhoty, Šumperk.

**Contact**

Address: Milíčova 20, 728 51 Ostrava

Telephone: 974 720 229

Contact information on the Alien Police inspectorates in Prague and Brno are listed below for your reference:

The *Regional Headquarters of the Alien Police* operates dispersed sites within the territory of the Czech Republic, so-called "*Alien Police Inspectorates*". These departments deal with a significant portion of the routine work connected with the stay of foreign nationals in the Czech Republic. For the exact definition of matters decided by the respective sites, refer to Act No. 326/1999 Sb., Coll., on the stay of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic, as amended. The competencies of the Regional Headquarters and the Alien Police Inspectorates are stipulated in Article 164, paragraphs 1-2 and Article 164, paragraph 3, respectively.

**Alien Police Inspectorate in Prague** (regional competency: the Capital City of Prague - except of Prague 4 and Prague 10).

Address: Koněvova 188/32, 130 51 Prague 3

Telephone: 974 820 400-2, 974 820 409

Fax: 974 820 421

e-mail: ocpraha@mvcr.cz

Business hours:

Monday - Thursday 7:30-18:00

Closed on Fridays

**Local office in Prague 4** (regional competency: only Prague 4 and Prague 10)

Address: Sdružení 1, 140 00 Prague 4-Pankrác

Telephone: 974 820 817

Fax: 974 820 827

E-mail: ocpraha@mvcr.cz

Business hours:

Monday and Wednesday 7:30-17:00

Tuesday and Thursday 7:00-15:00

Closed on Fridays

**Local office in Prague 3** (routine work: tourists registration, confirmation of legal stay for the purpose of concluding marriage, verification of invitations to visit the Czech Republic)

Address: Olšanská 2, 130 52 Prague 3

Telephone: 974 820 409

Fax: 974 820 063

E-mail: ocpraha@mvcr.cz

Business hours:

Monday and Wednesday 7:30-17:00

Tuesday and Thursday 7:00-15:00

Closed on Fridays

**Alien Police Inspectorate Praha-venkov** (Prague surroundings) - local competency: District of Prague-West

Address: Zborovská 1505, 150 00 Prague 5-Smíchov

Telephone: 974 882 690-1

Fax: 974 882 689

e-mail: [ocppz@mvcz.cz](mailto:ocppz@mvcz.cz)

Business hours:

Monday and Wednesday 8:00-17:00

**Local office in Zdíby** (regional competence: District of Prague-East)

Address: Pražská 180, 250 66 Zdíby

Telephone: 974 820 951-8

Fax: 284 890 925

e-mail: [ocpzdíby@mvcz.cz](mailto:ocpzdíby@mvcz.cz)

Business hours:

Monday and Wednesday 8:00-17:00

**Alien Police Inspectorate Brno** - local competency: Districts of Brno-město (the city of Brno) and Brno-venkov (surroundings of the city of Brno)

**Local office**

- *For third-country nationals (non-EU) and family members of EU nationals*

Address: Kopečná 3, 602 00 Brno

Telephone: 974 620 271

Fax: 974 620 274

e-mail: [oppbm@mvcz.cz](mailto:oppbm@mvcz.cz)

- *for EU nationals*

Address: Cejl 62b, 602 00 Brno

Telephone: 974 628 131

Fax: 974 628 140

e-mail: [oppbm@mvcz.cz](mailto:oppbm@mvcz.cz)

Business hours:

Monday and Wednesday 8:00-17:00

Friday 8.00 – 12.00

Business hours:

Monday and Wednesday 8:00-17:00

Friday 8:00 – 12:00



Contact information on the respective Alien Police Inspectorates can be found at the website of the Police of the Czech Republic at <http://www.policie.cz> ► Departments of the Police of the Czech Republic ► Nation-wide departments ► alien Police service ► Contacts).

## 17. 2. Labour Offices

Labour Offices are in charge of granting permits to foreign nationals for the purpose of their work in the Czech Republic.



Contact information of all Labour Offices can be found on the integrated labour portal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at <http://portal.mpsv.cz> (► Employment ► Information from Labour Offices).

### 17.3 Regional Authorities

The Regional Authority is one of the regional bodies responsible for the general development of the given region and for the provision of assistance to the people living in the region; the responsibilities of the regional authority include namely: creation of conditions for social care development, responding to the needs related to the protection and promotion of healthy living conditions, transportation and accessibility, availability of information, training and education, cultural development and protection of public order.



See for contact information on the Regional Authorities <http://portal.gov.cz> (► Directory ► Regions).

### 17.4 Regional Offices of the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior

Effective as of 1 January 2009, the Department of Asylum and Migration Policy of the Ministry of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as DAMP MI CR) is the appropriate administration body authorized to handle all types of applications for permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic. For this purpose, the respective regional branch offices of the DAMP MI CR have been established, enabling foreign nationals to lodge their applications for permanent residence permits and enabling foreign nationals who have already been granted permanent residence permits to comply with their obligation to report changes pursuant to the Aliens Act. For more detailed information on the respective regional branch offices of the DAMP MI CR, particularly their business hours, visit the website of the Ministry of the Interior at <http://www.mvcr.cz> (► Services for the public ► Information for foreign nationals ► Permanent residence in the territory of the Czech Republic ► Contacts).

#### ► Regional Centre for Prague and Central Bohemia

##### Office Prague-Bohdalec

Address: Nad Vršovskou Horou 88/4  
101 00 Prague 10  
Tel.: 974 847 715  
974 847 701

Office Prague-Letná - accepts only applications for permanent residence permits for reasons of special consideration and humanitarian reasons, as well as applications lodged pursuant to Article 67 of the Aliens Act.

Address: Nad Štolou 3  
170 34 Prague 7  
Tel.: 974 833 142

#### ► Regional Centre for the Region of Ústí nad Labem

Address: Ladova 38  
400 11 Ústí nad Labem  
Tel.: 974 420 780  
475 621 511  
475 621 699

#### ► Regional Centre for the Region of Liberec

Address: Rýnovická 46  
466 01 Jablonec nad Nisou  
Tel.: 974 474 801  
483 302 789

➤ **Regional Centre for the Region of Karlovy Vary**

Address: Krymská 47  
360 01 Karlovy Vary  
Tel.: 353 226 683

➤ **Regional Centre for the Region of Plzeň**

Address: Americká 3  
301 00 Plzeň  
Tel.: 731 670 553

➤ **Regional Centre for the Region of South Bohemia**

Address: Pražská 23  
370 74 České Budějovice  
Tel.: 974 220 390  
974 220 391

➤ **Regional Centre for the Regions of Hradec Králové and Pardubice**

Address: Ulrichovo náměstí 810  
500 02 Hradec Králové  
Tel.: 974 520 781  
974 520 782

➤ **Regional Centre for the Region of Vysočina**

Address: Vrchlického 46  
586 04 Jihlava  
Tel.: 974 266 830  
974 266 831

➤ **Regional Centre for the Region of Southern Moravia**

Address: Hněvkovského 30/65  
617 00 Brno  
Tel.: 543 213 313

➤ **Regional Centre for the Region of Zlín**

Address: náměstí T.G.Masaryka 3218  
760 01 Zlín  
Tel.: 974 662 821

➤ **Regional Centre for the Region of Olomouc**

Address: U Výstaviště 3183/18  
750 02 Přerov  
Tel.: 974 760 390  
974 760 399

➤ **Regional Centre for the Region of Moravia-Silesia**

Address: Českobratrská 7  
702 00 Ostrava  
Tel.: 974 720 399  
595 135 901

## **18. OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS**

### **Internet search engines**

When searching for information on the internet – especially in situations when you don't know the exact website on which certain information is located, it is suitable to use internet search engines, i.e. websites where you can enter the keywords that you are searching for, and the search engine will look for and display a list of links to the results of the search. Once on the search engine page, enter the key word or phrase (e.g. "employment of foreigners") into the empty search box and click on the button labelled SEARCH (in Czech: "HLEDEJ" or "HLEDAT" or "VYHLEDAT").



The following are examples of internet search engines:

- [www.google.cz](http://www.google.cz)
- [www.seznam.cz](http://www.seznam.cz)
- [www.centrum.cz](http://www.centrum.cz)

### **Zlaté stránky (Yellow Pages)**

The Yellow Pages telephone directory is a practical tool which can help you to find all types of services – plumbers, specialty stores, doctors, attorneys, as well as addresses and contact information on state authorities and local or special self-administration bodies. The yellow pages can be found at most telephone booths and they are distributed for free to every subscriber to a landline phone once a year. An online version of the yellow pages (including an English version) is available at <http://www.zlatestranky.cz>.



### **Postal Services**

The Czech Post (*Česká pošta*) is the major provider of postal services in the Czech Republic; its branch offices can be found all over the country. Its services include inland and international posting, transport and delivery of letters, parcels and money. It also provides express and courier services, sells postage stamps and highway toll coupons, and mediates the payment of pensions.



Detailed information on postal services offered by the Czech Post can be obtained at your local post office or on the following website <http://www.cpost.cz>.

### **Bank services**

The services offered by the some banks are commonly available to foreigners. Provided that it is allowed by the bank's by-laws, foreign nationals can open their own accounts, obtain ATM cards, apply for a loan or credit, use electronic banking services etc. Detailed information on the respective services available can be obtained from the individual banks.



A complete list of banks and branches of foreign banks operating in the territory of the Czech Republic is maintained by the Czech National Bank. The list is available at [www.cnb.cz](http://www.cnb.cz) (► Financial market supervision ► Banking supervision ► Banking sector).

## NOTES

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