

# Czech Language News

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Dear Colleagues,

This issue marks the return to print of Czech Language News (CzLN) after a hiatus. As such, it includes material previously disseminated in our digital-only issue from Fall 2010, as well as some new content. Highlights include an article on the Czech studies program in South Korea and several pieces presenting unusual opportunities for study and travel in the Czech Republic.

The IATC business meeting at the AATSEEL conference in Pasadena on January 9, 2011 featured the election of a new executive board, which will serve for the term 2011-2013. Masako Fidler (Brown U.) will serve as Executive Officer and Editor-in-Chief of CzLN, Christopher Harwood (Columbia U.) and Susan Kresin (UCLA) as Co-Presidents, Lynne deBenedette (Brown) as Treasurer, and David Danaher (Wisconsin) as Vice President and Website Manager. We are fortunate to now have two Czech Liaison Vice Presidents, Eva Eckert (Charles U.) and Kateřina Vlasáková (ÚJOP, Charles U.). In addition, Ellen Langer (UC Berkeley) was elected to serve as Technical Editor for CzLN, while Susan Kresin and Mark Nuckols will be editing our book review section.

The new board identified several priorities for the organization's work in the next couple of years. One is to expand IATC membership, particularly among colleagues in the Czech Republic. ČR-based membership recruitment should be considerably simplified by the establishment of a new Prague-based IATC bank account for receiving membership dues in Czech currency. Another priority identified at the January meeting was the development of better alternatives for semester study abroad in the Czech Republic for students with intermediate to advanced proficiency in Czech.

The board also resolved to convene three panels at the 2012 annual meeting of AATSEEL in Seattle: one on linguistics; one on pedagogy; and one on literature and culture. We hope you will consider submitting a proposal to one of these panels (details at [http://www.aatseel.org/cfp\\_main](http://www.aatseel.org/cfp_main)), and as always we look forward to your contribution of an article, review, or event announcement for inclusion in the next issue of Czech Language News.

With best wishes for all of your ongoing Bohemistic endeavors,  
Chris Harwood (Columbia University) and Susan Kresin (UCLA)  
IATC Co-Presidents, 2011-2013

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## Language Certification Programs: What Might They Mean to Czech Language Programs in the USA?

Masako Fidler, Brown University, USA

Several US institutions have already set up or have been discussing the idea of a language certification program. The main thrust of such efforts is to prepare students for a world that increasingly requires international communication and inter-cultural competence. Different forms of language certification currently exist in schools such as Harvard U., the U. of Chicago, the U. of Pennsylvania, Princeton U. Yale U. is now considering offering a certificate for advanced language competence, and Brown U. has started discussions on this project as part of its efforts at internationalization in research and teaching.

Existing certification programs vary in their requirements. Some schools provide certification based on students' advanced language proficiency, while others require completion of courses in the target language and/or evidence of academic work in the language. In either case, the program includes recognition of accomplishment in advanced foreign language competence, which is entered in students' transcripts.

The impact of these programs to less commonly taught languages such as Czech remains to be seen. With certification in place, students may be less likely to drop the language after taking the introductory-level courses, which would help stabilize the number of students enrolled in courses above the first year. However, some students may be more motivated to continue with the language they studied in high school (Spanish, French) rather than venturing into exotic new territory such as Czech.

The difference between independent, internationally standardized language proficiency tests and university language certification programs appears to be that, whereas the former certify only communicative proficiency in the target language, the latter (at least some programs) attempt to recognize both linguistic and cultural competence based on courses, study abroad, or other projects. University-based language certification that is designed to include cultural components, however, leads to certain questions: what is the relationship between the language certification program and an undergraduate major in language and culture? In the event that the program requires less coursework or a different type of work, is it sufficient to demonstrate students' linguistic

University-based language certification that is designed to include cultural components, however, leads to certain questions: what is the relationship between the language certification program and an undergraduate major in language and culture?

and cultural literacy, rather than to graduate with a bachelor's degree in language-literature-culture? Would a certification program like this reinforce the misguided notion that study of language itself is not study of culture?

Our editorial office asked Kateřina Vlasáková to inform us about language proficiency examination in Czech that is already in place that is independent of academic institutions.

## Language Examinations in Czech: Meet the European Standards

Kateřina Vlasáková  
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in Prague, Czech Republic

During the past decades, multilingual Europe has witnessed many efforts to improve the recognition of language qualifications, to encourage cooperation among teachers, and generally to improve communication and cooperation in Europe. *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) has played a crucial role in these campaigns, and syllabi, curricula, textbooks, and, last but not least, examinations have been consistently linked to the CEFR.

The Czech Republic, having followed the lead of countries with extensive experience in language testing, now proudly offers a number of examinations in Czech linked to the CEFR. Some of these examinations, such as the A1 Czech Language Examination for Permanent Residence and the so-called language state exams, are recognized on a national basis. These examinations are usually offered at a certain proficiency level, and they may have a very specific use, as is the case with the examination for permanent residence.

Internationally recognised examinations include the Czech Language Certificate Exam (CCE), developed by the Institute for Language and Preparatory Studies at Charles University in Prague, and the ECL examinations offered at the Summer School of Slavonic Languages at Palacký University in Olomouc are now recognized internationally.

The quality of the CCE has been confirmed by an audit carried out by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). As a result, Charles University has become the exclusive Czech representative in this

organization, and thus is now recognized alongside such well-known European educational and testing institutions as the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, Alliance Française, Goethe-Institut, CITO, and Instituto Cervantes. Three indicators now point to the leading role the CCE has assumed in this area: ever greater numbers of candidates have been applying to take the CCE, despite the fact that Czech belongs to the less commonly taught languages; there is a growing demand to open more examination centres abroad; and the CCE is now recognized by most Czech and foreign employers and by some universities and colleges that require proof of applicants' level of Czech. Hence, it is no surprise that 42% of candidates claim to take the examination in connection with applying for further studies. Over 20% of candidates take the CCE for reasons relating to their professional career, and 36% mention personal interest.

At present, the CCE examination is offered at four of the six proficiency levels delineated by the CEFR, namely at levels A1, A2, B1 and B2, according to the CEFR. The CCE at level C1 is to be launched in June of this year. In addition, examinations for young learners are being developed. The CCE for young learners at A1 will be launched in May 2011.

The examinations at all levels are comprised of subtests in each of the language skills, i.e. reading, listening, writing and speaking. At levels B2 and C1, a Grammar/Lexical subtest is introduced. Sociocultural competence, including, e.g., knowledge of Czech history and geography, is not tested at any level. Currently, the CCE can be taken in the Czech Republic and in examination centres abroad, in Berlin, Jena, Kiev, London, Moscow, Munich and Warsaw.

Most candidates take the CCE at B2, since this is the level of communicative competence expected at most universities and colleges that require proof of applicants' proficiency in Czech. The CCE at this level is also often taken by non-native speakers who wish to teach subjects other than Czech language and literature at primary and secondary schools in the Czech Republic.

In my view, the CCE examinations, along with examinations in other countries, encourage students to learn languages, including less commonly taught languages; they provide all their users, be they university or job applicants, language teachers, universities or employers, with quality service and reliable results; and they provide a positive impact on language learning.

Negotiations are under way to start examination centres outside Europe.

For websites with information on CEFR levels and sample tests, please see text box on page 2.

For further information about CCE examinations, please contact:

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#### References:

The Czech Language Certificate Exam: <http://ujop.cuni.cz/cce>  
The Czech Language Certificate Exam for Young Learners: <http://ujop.cuni.cz/cce-mladez>  
The Common European Framework of Reference:

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE_EN.asp)

The Association of Language Testers in Europe:

<http://www.alte.org>

The ECL exam in Czech:

<http://lss.upol.cz/cz/czcertifikaty.html>

The state examinations in Czech:

<http://www.sjs.cz/exams/list>

A1 Czech Language Examination for Permanent Residence: <http://check-your-czech.com>

A description of CEFR levels A1 to C2 can be downloaded off the web:  
**self-assessment table**  
([www.linguanet-europa.org/pdfs/self-assessment-grid-en.pdf](http://www.linguanet-europa.org/pdfs/self-assessment-grid-en.pdf)),  
the Common European Framework of Reference for languages  
(English as a sample language)  
([www.britishcouncil.org/india-exams-ielts-global-descriptor.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/india-exams-ielts-global-descriptor.pdf))

## VÝVOJ A SOUČASNÝ STAV ČESKÝCH STUDIÍ V JIŽNÍ KOREJI

Inchon Kim  
Korejská univerzita cizích jazyků  
Jižní Korea  
(reprinted in part from CzLN 33)

**B**ohemistická studia se v Koreji institucionálně začala rozvíjet založením katedry češtiny na Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, tedy na Korejské univerzitě cizích jazyků, v roce 1988 a dodnes jsou v Jižní Koreji jediná. Prvním krokem k založení kat-

edry se stalo rozhodnutí korejské vlády podporovat studia týkající se zemí komunistického bloku. Ve školním roce 1978-1979 vybralo korejské ministerstvo školství 13 studentů, z nichž se každý měl věnovat studiu jednoho z východoevropských jazyků: češtiny, polštiny, maďarštiny, rumunštiny a srbochorvatštiny. Mezi nimi se dva studenti věnovali češtině, resp. české literatuře a studovali v Americe. Po skončení studia pak působili jako první generace absolventů českých studií v Jižní Koreji.

Hned v prvních letech po svém otevření, 1988 a 1989, přijala katedra češtiny ke studiu 30 studentů, od roku 1990 do roku 2005 přijímala po 40 studentech, dnes jich přijímá ročně 34. V současné době studuje na této katedře přibližně 125 studentů. Po roce 2003 vystoupily do popředí investice velkých korejských firem na Slovensku. Vedle Samsungu a Kia Motors tam přibylo několik desítek firem střední velikosti a vznikla velká poptávka po občanech Koreje mluvících slovensky. Abychom respektovali tento trend na naší katedře, změnili jsme její název na Katedru českých a slovenských studií a rozšířili jsme studijní program o další, volitelné slovenské předměty jakožto součást kurikula třetího a čtvrtého ročníku.

Historicky prvními badateli a učiteli češtiny a české literatury v Koreji se stali profesori Dže-Il Kwon a Kyu-džin Kim, kteří vzhledem k tomu, že Československo bylo tehdy komunistickou zemí, vystudovali bohemistiku ve Spojených státech. Později se k nim připojil první absolvent této katedry Inčchon Kim, jenž studoval na Univerzitě Karlově. Vysoké ocenění si zaslouhuje spolupráce a role, kterou již od počátku jako zahraniční pedagogové sehráli Antonín Bytel, který během svého více než desetiletého působení jako vysokoškolský pedagog vytvořil mnoho výukových materiálů, a Vladimír Pucek, jenž dlouhá léta působí na oddělení koreanistiky Ústavu Dálného Východu na filozofické fakultě Univerzity Karlovy v Praze a který s využitím svých dlouholetých pedagogických zkušeností pomohl navázat mezi oběma katedrami velmi těsné přátelské vztahy. Na katedře v současné době vyučují tři korejští profesori na plný úvazek (dva vyučují literaturu a jeden jazyk) a pět externistů. Pokud jde o zahraniční profesory, je zde jeden český a jeden slovenský lektor vyučující především českou a slovenskou konverzaci. Doposud na katedře působilo celkem 16 zahraničních lektorů. Na katedře probíhá ročně celkem 46 přednášek. Většina z nich se týká jazyka, literatury, historie, politiky, ekonomiky a kultury. Mezi nimi je 5 přednášek věnovaných výhradně slovakistice a 8 smíšených česko-slovenských.

*Hned v prvních letech po svém otevření, 1988 a 1989, přijala katedra češtiny ke studiu 30 studentů, od roku 1990 do roku 2005 přijímala po 40 studentech, dnes jich přijímá ročně 34. V současné době studuje na této katedře přibližně 125 studentů.*

Korejští studenti a profesori se zúčastnili letních jazykových kurzů a seminářů Ústavu jazykové a odborné přípravy Karlovy Univerzity (ÚJOP) poprvé v roce 1990. V dalších letech se studenti i profesori téměř každý rok zúčastňovali českých programů ÚJOPu, Ústavu bohemistických studií UK (ÚBS) a jazykových kurzů Masarykovy univerzity, dnes ale i programů slovenského ÚJOPu. Pokud chtějí naši studenti získat uznání kreditů ze zahraničí, musí studovat na univerzitách, s nimiž má HUFs uzavřenou smlouvu o spolupráci. Maximální počet kreditů, které naše katedra může uzнат ze zahraničního studia, je 36 (z celkového počtu 134 za celé studium). Tyto kredity můžou studenti získat na ÚBS v programu „Česká studia“ (15 za semestr) nebo na ÚJOPu (14 za semestr) resp. na Letní škole slovanských studií (6).

HUFs uzavřela smlouvu o spolupráci s Univerzitou Karlovou v roce 1990, s Masarykovou univerzitou v Brně v r. 2002, s Univerzitou Komenského v r. 2004, s Univerzitou Palackého v Olomouci v r. 2009 a se Zápa-dočeskou univerzitou v Plzni rovněž v r. 2009. V úzkém vztahu spolupráce jsme zejména s oborem koreanistiky při Ústavu Dálného Východu. Týká se to výměny učitelů, práce na česko-korejském slovníku atd. Naše katedra chce rozšířit reálnou spolupráci s jinými východoasijskými katedrami bohemistiky v Japonsku, Číně, Mongolsku, popř. i ve Vi-

etnamu (pořádání konferencí, výměna metodických zkušeností z výuky, reciproční neformální studentské návštěvy) Datum 9. října 2008 by se mohlo stát výrazným mezníkem v rozvoji korejské bohemistiky. Toho dne katedra českých a slovenských studií v Koreji uspořádala při příležitosti oslav 20. výročí svého založení mezinárodní vědeckou konferenci pod názvem „Studia českého a slovenského jazyka ve východní Asii“, na níž vystoupili vědci ze čtyř asijských a tří evropských zemí včetně České republiky. Byly předneseny příspěvky na 15 témat, jež byly publikovány ve sborníku. Účastníci ve svých příspěvcích podrobně představili vývoj, současnou situaci a perspektivu bohemistiky a slovakistiky ve své zemi a na své univerzitě. Poté se účastníci konference zapojili do debat na zajímavá témata. Při zahájení přednesli projevy český a slovenský velvyslanec, kteří se konference též zúčastnili. Její průběh zaznamenal jeden z novinářů deníku Právo. Tohoto setkání v Koreji si můžeme vysoce cenit jako významného historického okamžiku v rámci východní Asie. Ještě důležitější skutečností je, že na základě této události může v budoucnu dojít k navázání skutečné a efektivní spoluprá-

ce mezi jednotlivými zeměmi, ať už se týká spolupráce mezi vysokoškolskými pedagogy, studentské výměny či sdílení kurikul. Navíc lze očekávat realizaci společných vědeckých aktivit mezi akademickými institucemi a výzkumnými pracovišti jako např. společnou organizaci vědeckých konferencí. Jako výraz ocenění této události a pro dosažení vyššího uvedení cílů byla v poslední den, kdy skončily všechny akce, podepsána Meziuniverzitní dohoda o vzájemné spolupráci mezi východoasijskými bohemistickými a slovákistickými pracovišti v Korejské republice, Číně, Japonsku a Mongolsku. [...]

V závěru tohoto stručného představení korejské bohemistiky bych ještě rád zareagoval na případnou poznámku, že dvacet let vývoje korejské bohemistiky se může zdát příliš krátkou dobou – vždyť ve Vídni už má bohemistika tradici více než 230 let starou! – důležité však je, že v Koreji působí v případě češtiny ona stejná „Faszination der Vielfalt“ (fascinace mnohotvárnosti či rozličností), jak se o působení českého jazyka vyjádřili už před více lety právě rakouští češtináři.

Oficiální webová stránka naší katedry je k nalezení na [www.czech.or.kr](http://www.czech.or.kr)

Kurikula katedry českých a slovenských studií v Koreji (Březen 2010) (viz. CzLN Fall 2010 <http://www.czechlanguageassociation.org/iatic/newsletter.html>)

## ČESKÁ CESTA: PRAGUE ON THE GO Study Abroad Strategies of Language Teaching

Eva Eckert

Charles University in Prague  
(reprinted in part from CzLN 33)

Students study abroad today with the goal of “internationalizing their curriculum,” “gaining a global edge,” and “developing deep empathy for others” (see various issues of *International Educator*). In their minds, language has little to do with it, and they take it while abroad as a necessary evil. Can we turn the situation around and to our advantage, so that these phrases

For many students, studying abroad is the very first direct encounter with a foreign culture, locked in a language they don't understand, and not just its words, but also behavioral rituals, hand gestures, cultural narratives and humor.

become missionary goals of teaching language to our study abroad students?

For many students, studying abroad is the very first direct encounter with a foreign culture, locked in a language they don't understand, and not just its words, but also behavioral rituals, hand gestures, cultural narratives and humor. They witness language transferring information by operating brain rules entrenched in a culture and society that are, however, inaccessible. In guiding students through their international experience in Prague, we strive to relate one's general capacity for language to particular daily activities, social behaviors and mental processes, and to bring home the point that any language is the elemental requirement for functioning in a group. Studying a new one opens us up to unexpected options of organizing things, of being logical and solving problems; it renews us and expands our horizons.

Czech in CESTA is not about grammar drills and conversation routines, but about awakening and satiating students' curiosity about a new language and the path it paves to a new part of the world. Czech is taught with an objective of internalizing a new way of inhabiting a living space, enjoying esthetics of Czech sights and sounds, benefiting socially from speaking Czech, appreciating a different system of logic that underwrites a language, and learning a basic minimum to attain a level of comfort and confidence. The Czech course takes place in class and in the field. In class the students listen, repeat, study grammar patterns and sing, and in the street, tram, or cafe they gather living language data that build bridges into the other classes, thus enabling students to find individual connections among the courses and facilitate memory retention. To support establishment of new links and patterns, we use colors, play, space movement, and drawing.

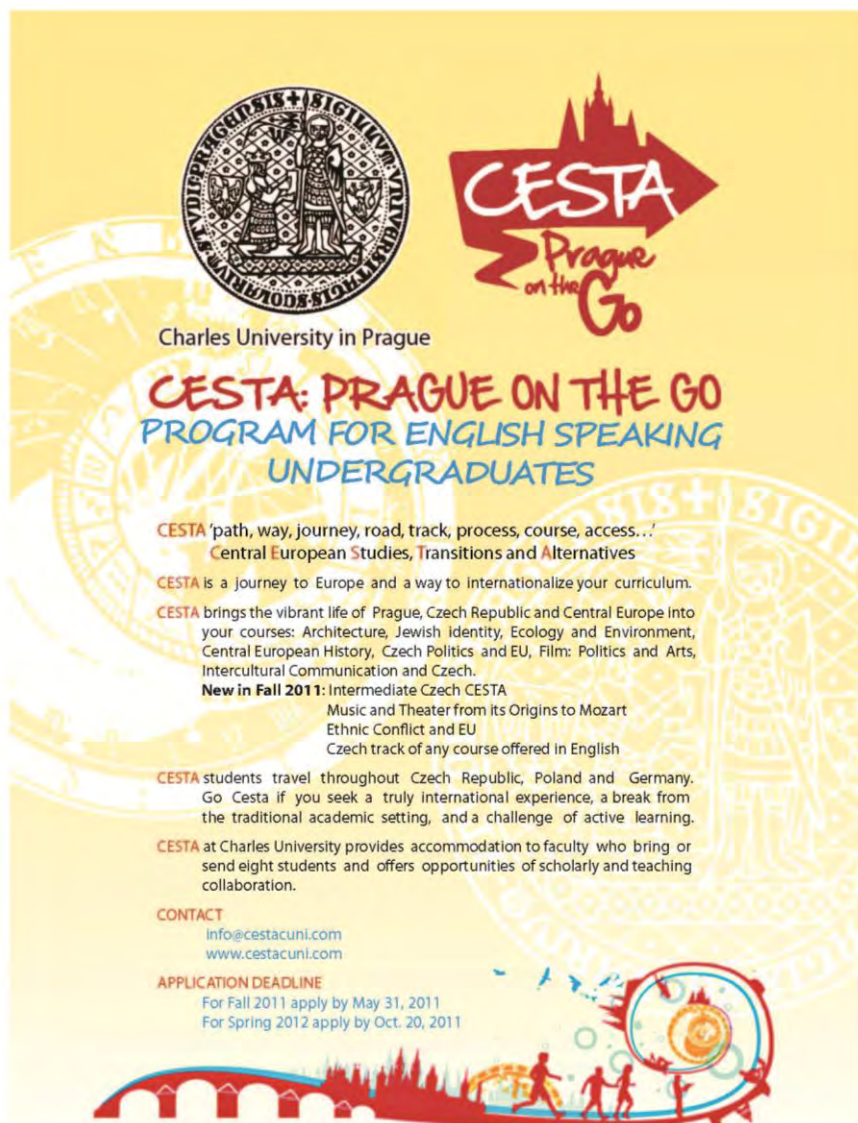
Česká CESTA starts with a four-day Orientation consisting of eight three-hour teaching blocks assigned to individual professors. At the beginning of the semester they brainstorm for concepts, phrases and behaviors considered critical to students' survival in Prague, construct their ideal teaching plans and an Orientation outline that is then filled with tasks, concepts, strategies, and Czech words and phrases by the main language teacher. The students learn Czech from the outset along with and from all their professors (who are trained in how to approach teaching language rudiments, which is not their expertise) rather than a special one. They get to know the town, basics of history (through various symbolic pointers and street signs) as well as each other through the medium of Czech. Students are not just taught about places and people in a classroom, but gather cultural manifestations of language and behaviors when walking, taking pictures of street signs, eating at restaurants,

shopping (away from department stores), or traveling by trams and the subway in the company of a Czech professor. The main language teacher coordinates everyone's activities and designs a careful plan of building basic social and language skills day by day through appropriate interactional strategies that make the students aware of occupying an unpredictably different socio-cultural space where confronted with diverse greeting patterns (such as who gets greeted first, and when), store and theater behaviors, various requests, etc. Fulfilling these activities along with diverse teachers makes them see Czech not as a separate subject and perhaps not as a subject at all for now, but rather a way of interlinking the classes. By design the boundaries separating school and town, teaching and learning, in and out, and the students and Czechs come to lose their significance.

During the semester every professor builds Czech into his or her course by acknowledging overtly the rituals of greeting, apologizing, paying compliments and thanking one another in the Czech way, with an effort to pronounce so that a native, too, could understand. Since the students experience study abroad in the Czech Republic, their classes should be recognizably Czech and conducted with active awareness of the immediate environment. For example, we do not discuss environmental policies in Czech, but greet each other in the Czech manner, perform Czech "small talk", and open or close the class in Czech to affirm the foreign experience the students came for. When students hear "prosím" in all sorts of situations we guide them to pay attention and realize that prosím fits into unpredictably diverse contexts where "please" would be inappropriate. We do not seek to teach students how to speak Czech and understand daily conversations, but to participate in the Czech space in an authentic fashion, comprehend the true impact of "Dobrý den", "Děkuju" or "Promiňte", and use the phrases with Czech contextual meanings. They learn to say "pardon" when knocking someone over with their backpack but to say nothing when accidentally touching someone in the subway. They learn not to ask "Jak se máte?" unless they expect to get an answer. Step by step, they begin to see American English as a particular rather than a universal set of rituals, and customs to think and behave. [...] We lead students away from the American habits of pronunciation, intonation, grammatical patterns and customs, and into the Czech ones, and discovering the social and cultural benefits that come with knowing even if only a

little bit of Czech. And this is the reason Czech cannot stop in front of the art history or Jewish studies classroom but must enter and surround the students.

As students move through the city, start inhabiting its space and participating actively in it under the guise of their professors, they adopt Czech norms and begin to confront them with native ones. They witness Czech propelling the city to motion, and lending voice to its institutions, streets and stores, and they get drawn in by reading Prague through its toponyms, patronymics, posters and advertisements, as well as tram and store behaviors. They become spies and detectives picking up clues, predicting meanings, learning to depend on intonation and the few words they know, striving to build hypotheses, and interpreting contexts. They are taught to tune in and become interested in what's going on all around them (rather than tuning out and seeking comfort in the company of the other American students) and thus "speak" Czech whenever sharing in the Czech space. Even if at first they cannot separate one word from another, they can be actively engaged in Czech by observing and predicting meanings. This sort of en-



The poster features a yellow background with a large, faint watermark of the Charles University seal. At the top left is the official seal of Charles University in Prague. To its right is the CESTA logo, which consists of a red arrow pointing right with the word "CESTA" in white, and "Prague on the Go" written in a red, stylized font below it. The main title "CESTA: PRAGUE ON THE GO" is in large, bold, red letters, with "PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING UNDERGRADUATES" in blue below it. The text is arranged in a list-like format with various details about the program, including contact information and application deadlines.

Charles University in Prague

**CESTA: PRAGUE ON THE GO**  
PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING UNDERGRADUATES

CESTA (path, way, journey, road, track, process, course, access...)  
Central European Studies, Transitions and Alternatives

CESTA is a journey to Europe and a way to internationalize your curriculum.

CESTA brings the vibrant life of Prague, Czech Republic and Central Europe into your courses: Architecture, Jewish Identity, Ecology and Environment, Central European History, Czech Politics and EU, Film: Politics and Arts, Intercultural Communication and Czech.

**New in Fall 2011:** Intermediate Czech CESTA  
Music and Theater from its Origins to Mozart  
Ethnic Conflict and EU  
Czech track of any course offered in English

CESTA students travel throughout Czech Republic, Poland and Germany. Go Cesta if you seek a truly international experience, a break from the traditional academic setting, and a challenge of active learning.

CESTA at Charles University provides accommodation to faculty who bring or send eight students and offers opportunities of scholarly and teaching collaboration.

**CONTACT**  
info@cestacuni.com  
www.cestacuni.com

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**  
For Fall 2011 apply by May 31, 2011  
For Spring 2012 apply by Oct. 20, 2011

agement, too, is learning a foreign language and gaining a new perspective on the maternal one.

Over the course of the semester, the professors coordinate what is covered in all courses week by week, refer to each others' topics in class, share vocabularies of the week and modify lesson plans according to the students' progress. In line with cultural immersion, the students record their experiences in a journal in both Czech and English, draw, document visual representations of behaviors from movies, TV or the subway, paste in photos, tickets, fliers, and other materials they collect and comment on in writing. The professors support their students by instilling in them the courage to repeat and the confidence of making sense. They monitor their journals and integrative projects throughout the semester. As they work on their projects, the students collect data and seek answers to questions such as,

- What do street advertisements tell you about Czech vernacular culture and speakers' views of themselves? Can you recognize any elements of yourself and your culture in them?
- Into what narratives and established historical patterns do speakers pack the events that affect their lives (such as economic crises or natural disasters)? Through what concepts do they retell them?
- How are the concepts of change in space, time and identity presented in the fiction of Kafka, Kundera, Hašek and other "Czech" writers?
- What are the key concepts of today's Czech culture, and are they different from the American ones? How do language users conceptualize their experience?
- What myths and rituals provide the patterns and formulas for the mind language of Czech and American speakers?
- In what respects is language different from communication? What is language in addition to being a means of communication? Do Czech speakers communicate differently without language than you do?
- Have you noticed any boundaries separating Czechs from the others? For instance, are there any particular behaviors differentiating Czechs and Romani, or Czechs and foreigners?
- In what sites can you find language (cemeteries, walls, street signs, posters, etc.) and what do their texts tell you about culture and history?
- What does the slang of politics teach us about social structures and hierarchies?

Living in a new language is a challenge and a physically exhausting task. Using language is not just about being systematic, rational and logical. Language is embodied, emotional and intuitive, as well. We react in given cultur-

al contexts by saying what belongs there according to the habits built by our maternal tongue. When learning a foreign one, we render literally the phrases that belong to our native frame of reference. We ask only about subject matters we are accustomed to see as appropriate and ignore all the other options. Our native usage is spontaneous. To put aside spontaneity in favor of reflection is an exhausting task. We'd rather choke on a sandwich than omit to say "Good day" to our superior or elder in Czech as s/he enters the room, and we'd go as far as interrupting a live radio show having spoken on air and about to put down the phone because our manners dictate not to neglect saying "good bye". As we learn the foreign language we build new and unpredictable behavioral patterns and question those in which we grew up. The new sounds, speakers' acts and gestures demand our concentration. Focusing on establishing contacts with others, and selecting how we act as we speak and strive not to breach cultural agreements that seem arbitrary and embedded in foreign cultural contexts may make us feel estranged from those we visit. CESTA provides a way of overcoming the estrangement and finding enjoyment in using the language of the study abroad experience.

## CZECH GREENWAYS

Zuzana Halsey

*New York University, Greenways, USA*  
(reprinted from CzLN 33)

Czech Greenways offers a way to supplement traditional trip destinations with trips to the Czech countryside, bringing students together with the local communities and thus offering them a special experience.

### Back Story

Shortly after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, a Czech-American, Lubomir Chmelar, living in New York City, contemplated how he could contribute to the improvement of his native country. He realized that the new market driven economy in post-communist Czechoslovakia could be of great danger to the local cultural and environmental heritage.

Inspired by the American Greenways concept of no-traffic routes or trails connecting urban areas with natural corridors, he envisioned a greenways network between Prague and Vienna to attract tourists to the rural areas between these two cities. Since much of the Prague-Vienna Greenways route stretches along the former Iron Curtain, where there was limited access and no development for 45 years, the countryside remained pristine. The main goal was to create a program to help the local grass-root initiatives preserve their culture and nature while also promoting sustainable economic development: create

and maintain new trails, revive traditional arts and crafts, restore historic monuments, plant new trees, and encourage local business communities to provide more and better services to visitors.

### The First Greenway in Central Europe

In 1990, Lubomir (Lu) Chmelar and his English wife Tíree started going to Czechoslovakia, and with the support of donors such as the Hickory Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, and the American Express Philanthropic Fund established together with a group of Czech enthusiasts the first Greenway in Central Europe: the Prague-Vienna Greenways ([www.PragueViennaGreenways.org](http://www.PragueViennaGreenways.org)). It composes a network of hiking and biking trails stretching for 250 miles between Prague and Vienna along the Vltava River Valley in Central and Southern Bohemia, and along the Dyje River in Southern Moravia. In Valtice it turns south towards Vienna through the Weinviertel region. It connects beautiful the countryside with cultural monuments, historic towns and villages with restored castles and churches, and several UNESCO Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves.

Later, under the umbrella of the largest Czech environmental foundation, Nadace Partnerství in Brno ([www.nadacepartnerstvi.cz](http://www.nadacepartnerstvi.cz)), the Greenways concept was successfully adopted and developed in other parts of what is now the Czech Republic and other countries in Central Europe. Today, the Central European Greenways system is expanding to the Balkan countries, and participating with Austria and Germany in EU funded programs. The long distance greenways include The Elbe River GW, Moravian Wine Trails, Krakow-Brno-Vienna GW, Lichtenstein Heritage GW, Budapest-Banska Stiavnica-Krakow GW and the latest addition, the Iron Curtain Trail.

### New Herb Garden in Valtice created by students

In 1995, the Chmelars created a non-profit New York based organization **Friends of Czech Greenways (FCG)** to promote the Czech Greenways and to facilitate special projects. One of the latest projects is the **Tíree Chmelar Herb Garden at the Valtice Chateau**, which opened in May 2010 (five years after Tíree Chmelar's tragic death in a car accident in upstate New York.) It is accessible from three major long distance greenways, and about one hour north from Vienna.

### The Back Story

Spending six months a year in the area with her husband, Tíree Chmelar observed that the town of Valtice, with its splendid Baroque chateau and park, was living in the shadow of the other, more popular **Lednice Chateau**. The chateaux are connected by a magnificent nineteenth-century manmade landscape, the largest in Europe, featuring follies, arches, sculptures, a minaret; lakes, forests, the largest collection of North American

trees outside North America (dating to the late 18th-century) and biking and hiking trails. Both chateaux are part of the **Lednice-Valtice Estates**, which belonged to the Lichtenstein Family from the 14th century to 1945. The entire area has been designated a UNESCO heritage landscape. Tíree Chmelar had the idea to restore the **Valtice Chateau's** historic herb garden, to showcase native culinary, aromatic, medicinal and decorative herbs, and to celebrate the 17th-century herbalists based in Valtice.

### Design

Tíree's idea was enthusiastically accepted by Dr. Premysl Krejcirik, professor at the **Mendel University's Horticultural School in Lednice**, who was already running a scholarship program for landscape architecture students sponsored by Friends of Czech Greenways. He organized a student design competition, and the three best designs were then combined into the final version that you can see today.

### Purpose

The Herb Garden was conceived with three main functions in mind. *First*, it will attract new and repeat visitors to the Valtice Château site, which will help revitalize the local economy. *Second*, it will serve the Mendel University's Horticultural School as an educational and hands-on site, and will be used as a research site by the Genobanka Institute of The Czech Academy of Science, which preserves historic seeds. *Third*, it will be a site for community-based projects and educational programs promoting public interest in historic herb gardens.

This project is also a unique example of the successful cooperation between governmental institutions and NGOs. Its main partners include: the Czech Ministry of Culture (Památkový ústav), the Mendel University's Horticultural School in Lednice, the Nadace Partnerství in Brno, and the Friends of Czech Greenways in New York City. For more information about the Herb Garden in Valtice, see the sites:

[www.pragueviennagreenways.org/garden/garden-en.php](http://www.pragueviennagreenways.org/garden/garden-en.php)

[www.bylinkovazahradavaltice.cz/o-zahrade/Default.aspx](http://www.bylinkovazahradavaltice.cz/o-zahrade/Default.aspx)

## J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT COMMISSION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Hana Ripková

*Fulbright Commission in Prague*

Czech Republic (reprinted from CzLN 33)

Since 1991, when the Fulbright Program in the Czech Republic joined Czech reformers in the work of transforming a political, economic, and social system emerging from 40 years of totalitarian control, the Fulbright exchange has brought more than 600

Czechs to the USA and almost 500 Americans to the Czech Republic.

Although the Board of the Fulbright Commission in the Czech Republic reviews its priorities every year, the overall emphasis has always been on building mutual understanding between the Czechs and Americans. On the Czech side, all of the public universities in the country have already hosted or co-hosted an American scholar either as a lecturer or a researcher, and many Czech universities, such as Charles University in Prague, Masaryk University in Brno, and Palacky University in Olomouc, have become common destinations for American students. The range of fields that Fulbright exchanges have covered over the last 20 years is very broad; it covers sciences, humanities, arts, and social sciences, among others. Students specializing in Czech language, Czech literature, and Czech history are typical recipients of the Fulbright Student Grants to the Czech Republic, but Czech universities have hosted students in many other fields as well. The Commission has been gratified to see that a number of alumni of the program have become respected scholars in Czech studies and history, some of them even returning on a scholar research grant after they have become established in their fields. For example, Cathleen Giustino of Auburn University and Benjamin Frommer of Northwestern spent the last academic year in Prague as Fulbright scholars researching archives for their projects; they both came to the Czech Republic in the early nineties as Fulbright students. In addition, American scholars who lecture at Czech universities contribute their expertise and introduce new methods. An example would be the Charles University appointment of David Danaher of the University of Wisconsin. As a Fulbright scholar, David taught Cognitive Linguistics in 2006, joining the Faculty of Arts of Charles University for a semester.

A new opportunity for American students that is gaining popularity is to spend a year working in the Czech Republic as English Teaching Assistants at secondary or post-secondary schools for 15 hours per week. At the same time, they study Czech and work on small projects of their own. Applications are welcome from graduating seniors interested in any of the following fields: TEFL/applied linguistics, Czech studies, American literature, American studies, the arts, political science, international relations, and/or graduate students interested in international education. Previous teaching experience is preferred but not essential.

The Czech Fulbright Program not only brings American grantees to the Czech Republic, it also selects and

sends Czechs to the United States. Aspects of Czech language and history are among the favorite topics on the American side; likewise, many of the Czechs receiving a Fulbright grant for their academic stay in the United States specialize in American studies. Here, too, the range of fields covered by previous Fulbright grants is broad, including Czech language, Czech culture, and Czech history. Those selected for lecturing Czech by the Fulbright Commission are not only “native speakers,” but usually experienced professors in their fields. In the past several years, Czech language and literature have been taught by David Skalický at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Jitka Ryndová at the University of Washington in Seattle, Ela Krejčová at Metropolitan State College of Denver, and Ilona Kořánová at UCLA, among others, and Daniel Vojtěch has taught Czech language and linguistics at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

The Czech Fulbright Program is supported by both governments, with about two thirds of the Fulbright budget coming from the United States government and one third from the Czech government. Both countries are equally represented on the Fulbright Board, so we may hope that the grantees selected by the Commission fulfill the Fulbright legacy and represent well this “modest program with an immodest aim,” both in the USA and the Czech Republic.

Interested in Fulbright in the Czech Republic? Contact us at [fulbright@fulbright.cz](mailto:fulbright@fulbright.cz)!

The range of fields that Fulbright exchanges have covered over the last 20 years is very broad; it covers sciences, humanities, arts, and social sciences, among others.

## BOOK REVIEW

Jiří Večerník: *Czech Society in the 2000s: A Report on Socio-Economic Policies and Structures.*

Prague, Academia, 2009. 286 p.  
ISBN 978-80-200-1750-5

Reviewed by Peter Steiner,  
University of Pennsylvania  
(available from: alibris (<http://www.alibris.com>)  
for \$37.95.)

In most of European countries social reports are published with awesome regularity. To wit: oldest among them, the British Social Trends will celebrate its 40th anniversary this year. Germany has its Datenreports, Spain Barómetro Social de España, and Hungary (since 1998)— Social Reports. Nothing comparable to these, however, exists in the Czech Republic. What comes closest to them is the extensive research by the country’s leading sociologist Jiří Večerník, whose *Markets and People: The Czech Reform Experience in a*

Comparative Perspective (Avebury) appeared in 1996 and the edited volume *Ten Years of Re-building Capitalism. Czech Society after 1989* (Academia) three years later.

Czech Society in the 2000s (henceforth CzS) is Večerník's third contribution to closing this embarrassing intellectual lacuna. The text is articulated into twelve chapters assembled in four sections—socio-economic policies, inequalities, structures, and values—and it offers a wealth of relevant data about contemporary Czech society. Its sequencing deliberately does not follow any accepted academic model. For, as the author emphasizes, the virtual infinity of mutual connections between dynamic social history and stratified social structure makes it futile to ascribe a privileged position to any among the welter of particular theoretical perspectives.

The book aims at providing a comprehensive portrait of Czech society substantiated by statistical and sociological surveys as well as by numerous other sources, and strives to pin down the systemic changes underlying quantitative fluctuations. It is required reading for anybody seeking information about the socio-economic development of Czech society over the last twenty years in terms of employment, social policies, economic inequalities, social structures (with special regard to the situation of the middle class, retirees, and the poor), and issues related to the value of work, consumption and welfare.

The first section of the book discusses social policies in three broad areas: the labor market, the welfare system and social inclusion, with a focus on the implementation of EU policies. Each chapter presents basic statistical and sociological data and concludes by sketching challenges in the offing—the problems of work commitment and stimuli to boost labor motivation, the feasibility of further reforms in welfare, and the importance of a functional framework—an inclusive middle-class society—for the successful social integration of marginalized groups.

Disparities in earnings, inequalities in household incomes and redistributive processes implemented by the state through taxes and social benefits are the subjects of the second section. It illustrates well how the system of work-reward has fundamentally changed since 1989 and it identifies the sources of this change. While in the Ancien Régime gender and seniority were decisive factors in determining one's income level, now education is the primary determinant. This section surveys in detail tax and benefits reform, calculating how the new system contrib-

utes to income inequality. And, finally, it also examines public opinion on taxes and benefits.

The book's third section turns to social structures and examines them from three perspectives. The optics of social stratification is applied to the middle class. A socio-political standpoint serves to elucidate the condition of retirees and the intricacies of pension reform. The latter is a particularly contentious issue not only because the Czech population is aging fast but also because of the obvious implausibility of sustaining a pay-as-you-go pension system while maintaining at least some equivalence between past earnings and current pension benefits. The section concludes with a chapter cast in terms of economic disparities that deals with the poor, the different ways of measuring poverty and some causes of this condition (unemployment, single parent family, number of children, etc).

The final section broaches the sphere of socio-economic values and examines it through a multiple cognitive lens. It describes how work values and job attitudes have evolved over the past decade, and portrays the rapid expansion of a consumer society together with the profound impact it is

exerting on the values and the behavior of individuals and groups. But the consumerism is not, the section suggests, the only force unraveling the fabric of local economic culture. Opening to the world beyond, the section culminates in canvassing "European values" and it ponders the potential consequences of their collision with the contemporary Czech economy and society.

As is to be expected in such a rich and complex work the individual chapters vary in their composi-

tions, each presenting different ratios of methodological reflections, empirical data, and their interpretations. Anybody familiar with Večerník's scholarly output might detect in some segments of his new book traces of previously published articles. The text is also not entirely proportional in balancing the author's critical attitude toward past developments with his forward outlook. But leaving these petty complaints aside, CzS is a signal contribution to our understanding of contemporary Czech society and a handy instrument for all foreign students and researchers who might face difficulties in accessing on their own the data Večerník's book presents. It is an indispensable volume for any library concerned with Czech studies.

The book [...] is required reading for anybody seeking information about the socio-economic development of Czech society over the last twenty years in terms of employment, social policies, economic inequalities, social structures (with special regard to the situation of the middle class, retirees, and the poor), and issues related to the value of work, consumption and welfare.

## The Thirteenth Annual Czech Studies Workshop

will be held at the

### University of Texas at Austin

April 27-28, 2012

The official call for papers will be posted in Fall 2011. Preliminary inquiries may be submitted to  
tatjana.lichtenstein@mail.utexas.edu

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The IATC has international members, including the Czech Republic, Korea, Norway, The United Kingdom, and the USA. Our organization is affiliated with the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL), and the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL).

Annual dues are \$8 for students and \$20 for non-students.

From within North America, membership dues (checks made out to **Brown University**) can be sent to:

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For specific information about joining from the Czech Republic, please contact Eva Eckert (eECK233@gmail.com).

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**Czech Language News**

Czech Language News is a newsletter published by the International Association of Teachers of Czech. The editorial office of this newsletter is currently at the Department of Slavic Languages, Brown University and serves the diverse Czech language community as a forum for information on research, teaching, and organization of Czech language instruction. The newsletter's mission is to contribute to the promotion of interdisciplinary and international cooperation as well as the integration of theoretical and applied aspects of language study.

CzLN is an open exchange of information and ideas and the editorial board welcome ideas and submissions for inclusion in the next issue.

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