

## COMPENDIUM SHORT PROFILE: CZECH REPUBLIC

(Based on the comprehensive country profile of Pavla Petrová:  
<http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/czechia.php>)

### 1. Facts and figures

<b>Political system:</b>	Parliamentary republic with two-chamber parliament
<b>Year of membership to the Council of Europe:</b>	30 June 1993
<b>Year of membership to UNESCO:</b>	22 February 1993
<b>Population:</b>	10 553 843 (2016)
<b>Non-nationals of total population:</b>	4.4 % (2015)
<b>Official language(s):</b>	Czech
<b>Share of population using the Internet</b>	87.5% (2016)
<b>Public cultural expenditures per capita:</b>	90 EUR (2014)
<b>GDP in Billion EUR:</b>	165.4 (2015)
<b>Accession to Key Cultural Conventions:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>European Cultural Convention</i> (1955): 1 January 1993</li> <li>• <i>European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages</i> (1992): 1 March 2007</li> <li>• <i>UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions</i>: 12 August 2010</li> </ul>	

### 2. Historical perspective

#### General context

In 1993, the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic split into two independent states. The Czech Republic (CR) joined the European Union on 1 May 2004 following a referendum.

Until 1989, a dense network of ideologically controlled and state endowed cultural facilities existed. Early in the 1990s, former state institutions such as book publishers and music industries, film studios, circuses or art agencies were privatised, others with ideological burdens closed. State funds like the Czech Music Fund were transformed into foundations in conformity with the new *Act on Foundations*.

Denationalising cultural facilities has been a main step in the process of democratisation; it was closely connected with a territorial reform of public administration in the CR. The *Act on Municipalities* released local authorities from organisational subordination to the state and allowed them to establish cultural institutions or to integrate former state facilities – in particular theatres. A strategic *White Book*, elaborated in 1996 for the Ministry of Culture, clarified the relation of the state to culture, presented examples of cultural policies from other European countries and included a proposal for modernising the grant system of the Ministry.

The first government policy on culture in the history of the CR – *Strategy of Effective Cultural Support* – has been ratified in April 1999, followed by decrees on *Cultural Policy in the CR 2001-2005* (2001) and *National Cultural Policy 2009-2014* (2008). The latter, updated in 2013, sees culture as a discipline worth to invest time, energy as well as

human and financial resources. Provisions connected with the membership of the CR in the European Union and reforms of public administration ranked among the main topics of cultural policy.

Government Resolution No. 393 (2015) and the implementation plan of the Ministry of Culture outline the *State Cultural Policy for 2015-2020* (with a view to the year 2025).

### 3. Overall description of the system

#### ***Division of tasks and main players in cultural policy***

The central body of state administration for the field of culture is the **Ministry of Culture (MC)**, whose scope includes: art; cultural and educational activity; cultural monuments; matters relating to churches and religious societies; matters relating to the press and other information means; the preparation of legal regulations on radio and television; implementation of the *Copyright Act*; and production and trade in the area of culture.

The MC processes cultural policy, prepares drafts of acts and other legal provisions in the field of culture, and carries out tasks connected with the negotiation or implementation of international treaties and the membership in international organisations.

The MC supports the arts, cultural activities and the preservation of cultural heritage with grants and contributions from the state budget of the CR. It established and supports 30 state-managed organisations and is involved, together with the city of Prague, in one public benefit organisation, the International Music Festival Prague Spring.

Since January 2013, legislation on two funds operating at the state level of the CR came into force: the **State Cinematography Fund** and the **State Cultural Fund**. While the MC is responsible for the administration and financing of the State Cultural Fund, the State Cinematography Fund is an independent institution. However, the MC retains influence over it by exercising certain functions such as appointing its director, members of the Supervisory Board, and experts. The task of the State Cultural Fund of the CR is to support the creation, realisation and promotion of works of artistic value; editorial activities in the area of publications; the acquisition, restoration and preservation of cultural monuments and collections; the promotion of Czech culture abroad; the organisation of cultural festivals, exhibitions and other cultural activities; and cultural projects of ethnic minorities in the CR.

Among other state bodies pursuing culture-related activities, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) are particularly important.

**Regions and municipalities** play an essential role in cultural policies of the CR. On the basis of *Constitutional Act No. 347/1997 Coll.*, fourteen regions started operations on 1 January 2001, created from 76 former districts. Cities and regional authorities support libraries, museums and galleries, regional theatres, orchestras or institutes of archaeological preservation and are involved in the cultural development planning for

their region, working in conformity with concepts of the government of the CR and recommendations of the Ministry of Culture.

As well, cultural policies are influenced or shaped by civil society and many initiatives in this field, both on local and state levels. For example, their influence is evident in the changes of grant and other cultural support systems or in the establishment of advisory bodies.

### **Financing of culture**

- In 2011, State budgetary organisations experienced cuts of 15%, while expenditure on grants did not decrease from 2010. The MC and its organisations made savings by, inter alia, cutting staff, cancelling fixed-term employment contracts, and lowering wages. In 2012 grants were affected as well as state institutions. In 2013 cuts primarily impacted the area of grants and the independent sector, but state institutions also saw cuts, and this pattern continued in 2014 and 2015, while subsequent increases in the volume of funding always managed to be obtained in the course of the year.
- **Public culture expenditure** at all levels of government per capita in 2013 amounted to nearly 127 EUR, which corresponded to 0.89% of GDP.
- The share of culture out of total public budget expenditure was 1.62% in 2009, 1.66% in 2010, 1.70% in 2011, 2.2% in 2012, and 2.95% in 2013. Total public expenditure in 2013 was 1 173.13 billion CZK.

### **Public culture expenditure at all levels of government per capita, in EUR, 2000-2013**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Czech Rep.	102	137	134	130	127

### **Public cultural expenditure: by level of government, in thousand CZK, 2013**

Level of government	Total expenditure	% share of total
State	7 658 791	22.11
Territorial self-governing units (municipalities, voluntary associations of municipalities, regions)	26 985 636	77.89
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34 644 427</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Results of the Culture Account of the CR for 2013, ČSÚ, NIPOS, Prague.

## **4. Main cultural policies and priorities**

Government Resolution *The State Cultural Policy for 2015–2020* has 5 priority objectives:

- Supporting identity, cultural diversity, and intercultural dialogue.
- Developing creativity through support for cultural activities and the creation of cultural goods, the provision of cultural services, work with the public, support for access to culture, and advancing a participative culture to facilitate social integration.
- Preserving cultural heritage as an environment conducive to the development of creativity.

- The use of cultural heritages and cultural activities, services, and goods for the development of the economy and increases competitiveness and supports mobility.
- Creating a more effective environment for the support of cultural activities, the provision of public cultural services, the development of cultural goods and the conservation of cultural heritage.

The cultural policy is based on the objectives of the official Programme of the Government of the Czech Republic dated 12 February 2014, namely:

- The Government aims to move towards a level of expenditure of one percent of the public budget on culture as a public service, to directly link revenue from tourism to expenditure on the conservation and maintenance of the heritage stock, and make thorough use of EU funds and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the restoration of monuments.
- The Government intends to adopt an act on culture and an act on public institutions in culture in order to eliminate difficulties faced by semi-budgetary organisations, depoliticise them, and ensure stable funding for them, and the Government shall also adopt a new heritage act and amended versions of the copyright act and media legislation.
- The Government will introduce a new model for promoting the Czech Republic abroad based, among other things, on the export of Czech arts and culture.
- The Government will improve the ease of access to public cultural institutions, e.g. by introducing free admission days and family discounts, and will advance a more effective model to foster children's creativity through artistic activities and cultural experiences.
- The Government will provide support for amateur artistic activities, regional culture, and public cultural services provided by non-profit organisations.

**Latest developments:**

- A new *Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic* was prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2015.
- Cultural priorities of the government are to raise expenditure on culture to 1% of the state budget, to directly link revenue from tourism and expenditure on heritage, and to make consistent use of funds from the EU and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the restoration of monuments.
- A new *Concept of Support for the Arts* for 2015-2020 was adopted by the Government at the end of 2015.
- A new *Heritage Act* was submitted to the government in 2015, which was slow to process due to a number of very sensitive issues relating to the protection of heritage stock.
- There is a new *Concept for the Development of Museums in the Czech Republic* for 2015-2020
- In February 2015 a new *Concept of Roma Integration 2015-2020* was adopted.
- More than 45% of employees in the cultural sector work in branches where the wages are lower than the national average wage.
- Complex changes to procurement rules were introduced in a new act that came into effect on 1 January 2015.

- From 1 January 2015, a second lower VAT rate of 10% was introduced for books, including illustrated books for children and sheet music.
- The current government's agenda includes preparation of legislation on public institutions in the field of culture.
- Lottery industry says the banning of gambling machines will impact on funds for good causes including culture.
- A study on the Prague theatre network proposes solutions to the upcoming Civil Law which will introduce new legal forms of institutions.

## **5. International cooperation**

### ***General context and main actors***

In the field of foreign cultural cooperation at the central level, the Ministry of Culture (MC) traditionally closely cooperates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The Czech Centres, state-managed organisations of the MFA, are other important partners.

In connection with the Czech Republic's membership in the EU, relations with other European countries are a priority. There is important multilateral cooperation within the Visegrád group, the Central European Initiative, Francophonie, UNESCO and other international organisations.

The Czech Republic has above-standard and very active ties with the so-called Visegrád countries (Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland). Regular meetings of culture ministers from these countries are held and they serve as fora for sharing experiences in the sphere of cultural policy. A very important organisation in the field of culture is the International Visegrád Fund, which annually provides support for cultural projects.

A big shift occurred in general in 2004 when the CR joined the European Union because this widened the scope for various forms of cooperation between Czech and foreign partners and for more intense participation in Community programmes.

Cultural cooperation with foreign partners, undertaken as part of the CR's presentation abroad, is organised with a view to territorial priorities and aims at ensuring positive feedback for the future development of Czech culture, cultural industries, tourism, economics, investment, science, research and support for Czech studies in the world. Great emphasis is put on traditional cultural cooperation towards the fulfilment of bilateral or multilateral treaties. The MFA supervises the preparation and discussion of international cultural agreements; this can lead to short-term implementation plans for cooperation that process the aims of individual ministries such as the MC or MEYS.

The priorities of the Government's Programme Declaration of 2014 are to introduce a new model of promoting the Czech Republic abroad, which will be based among others on the export of Czech arts and Czech culture.

The Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and Czech Centres are the main actors in cultural cooperation and the promotion of Czech culture abroad. The *Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic* made it the aim of public diplomacy to present the Czech Republic as a country with a rich culture, as amidst increasing globalisation the importance of culture as a medium of individual expression and an affirmation of national identity is growing. In connection with this Concept,

Annual Reports on Public Relations have been published since 2011 (see [http://www.mzv.cz/file/974173/roценка2012\\_web.pdf](http://www.mzv.cz/file/974173/roценка2012_web.pdf)).

### **European cooperation**

Czechoslovakia was one of the foundation states of UNESCO and the Czech Republic (CR) has been a member since 1993. That same year it became a member of the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the Council of Europe. Since 1995, the CR has been a member of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property. It has been an EU member since 2004.

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for the Creative Europe programme for 2014-2020. It also covers a portion of the financial involvement of subjects that had successful projects in the Culture sub-programme. The programme also supported Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015 (<http://www.plzen2015.cz/>). The most important financial support for the culture sector flowing from the EU to the CR comes from the European Structural and Investment Funds (hereinafter just SF). Support from these programmes is always tied to strengthening economic growth and employment. In the 2007-2013 programme term the Czech Republic used SF primarily to support cultural heritage in conjunction with tourism (Integrated Operational Programme), but through other programmes, such as those supporting education, other projects related to culture and the arts were also co-financed. However, the use of SF in the culture sector is still low in the CR, compared with other EU Member States.

The EEA and Norway Grants have become an important source of funding. In October 2003 the Government of the Czech Republic signed the Agreement on the Participation of the Czech Republic in the European Economic Area (EEA). Under this agreement a new financing mechanism was introduced wherein the EFTA states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) in 2004-2009 contributed to countries just joining the EEA for projects in the expanded internal market. Norway also contributed through the bilateral "special Norwegian financing mechanism" (Norsk finansieringsordning). Through this financial mechanism, states of the EEA and Norway committed to contributing to the economically weaker states in the EEA in the form of grants for investment and development projects in priority areas, including the protection and renewal of cultural heritage.