



THE TEMPLATE

CZECH REPUBLIC



I. GENERAL PART

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- 3. COUNTRY POLICY
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1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COUNTRY

√ GEOGRAPHY

The Czech Republic is an inland state lying in Central Europe and neighboring Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Austria. Its area is 78 560 km2, the population is 10.5 million. It is situated on the territory of three historical areas - Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, the highest point is Sněžka - 1 602 m.

The capital city is Prague with 1 280 500 inhabitants.



From the geomorphological point of view, the Czech Republic lies on the intersection of two mountain systems. West and the central part is filled with the Czech Highlands, (Šumava, Krušné hory, Krkonoše, Jeseníky and others). The Western Carpathians (Javorníky, Moravskoslezské Beskydy,

etc.) hit the eastern part of the country. Of the total area of the Czech Republic lies 67% at an altitude of up to 500 m.

The Czech territory is undergoing the main European divide separating the North Sea, Baltic and Black Sea seas.

The Czech Republic is divided into 14 self-governing regions and more than 6200 self-governing municipalities. Municipalities and regions are managed by elected councils. The heads of the regions are governors, heads of statutory cities mayors and heads of other towns and municipalities mayors as well.

✓ STATE AND TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

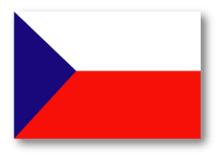
The Czech Republic has six national symbols: a large national emblem, a small national emblem, a national flag, a flag of the President of the Republic, a state seal and a national anthem Where My Home is. The official language is Czech.



A large national emblem



A small national emblem



A national flag



A flag of the President of the Czech republic



A state seal

A national anthem "Where My Home Is"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e12rGRO4JuA

In the past Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk was the first president after the birth of Czechoslovakia. In modern history it was, for example, Václav Havel and is currently

Milos Zeman.



Vaclav Havel



The President of the Czech republic Milos Zeman

✓ TIME AND CLIMATE ZONES

Climate is moderate in the Czech Republic, intermediate between the continental and oceanic types. Typical is the alternation of the four seasons, with a significant influence on the climate's altitude and relief.

The Czech Republic is in the time zone along with other major cities of Berlin, Vienna - +1 hour. At the time of so called summer time (31.3.-31.10.), it is 2 hours.

Resources:

1/ MARADA, Miroslav, Martin HANUS a Tereza KOCOVÁ. *Zeměpis 9: pro základní školy a víceletá gymnázia*. Plzeň: Fraus, 2017.

2/ NOVÁK, Svatopluk, Vladimír ŠTEFL, Josef TRNA a Martin WEINHÖFER. *Zeměpis: učebnice*. 5. aktualizované vydání. Ilustroval Hana BERKOVÁ. Brno: Nová škola, 2017. Duhová řada.

2. HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY

The first documented state body in the territory of today's Czech Republic was the trible union of the Sam's empire. In the 9th century., the Great Moravian Empire was formed, later the Czech Kingdom. Since the time of Charles IV. it was the country of the Crown of Bohemia. Gradual integration into the Habsburg monarchy followed.

After the expiration of Austria - Hungary in 1918, Czechoslovakia was established as a unitary state with a republican system. In 1939 the territory of the present Czech Republic was occupied by the German army and the puppet protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was established.

Czechoslovakia as a democratic state was restored in 1945. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was federalized in 1969 under the communist rule. The resistance to totalization and normalization gradually increased and culminated in the so-called Velvet Revolution of November 17, 1989, which overthrew the Communist regime, enabled the restoration of democracy and free enterprise.

At the end of 1992, the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic disappeared as a country of two nations, and two new states were created instead: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

Resources:

1/ Dějepis 9: pro základní školy a víceletá gymnázia. 2., upravené vydání. Plzeň: Fraus, 2017-.

2/ Dějepis: 6.-9. ročník. 4. vydání. Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1976. Učební osnovy základní devítileté školy.

3/ HLAVAČKA, Milan a Petr ČORNEJ. *Dějepis pro gymnázia a střední školy*. Druhé vydání. Praha: SPN - pedagogické nakladatelství, akciová společnost, 2017.

3. COUNTRY POLICY

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary republic with a system of pluralist democracy. Legislative power is implemented through elected representatives in Parliament, which has 2 chambers: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The executive power in the Czech Republic is divided between the president and the government. The President is elected for a period of 5 years, for a maximum of two consecutive periods. The President represents the state externally, is the supreme commander of the armed forces, appoints government, judges, members of the Bank Board and some other agents. The President can be a citizen with a voting right over the age of forty years. Currently, direct, two-round election by citizens is realized, with only two candidates with the highest number of votes cast in the second round.

✓ POLITICAL SITUATION

The range of political parties in the Czech Republic is made up of left-wing and right-wing thinking. The nature of left-wing thinking can be defined in ideas or movements such as socialism, liberalism, humanism, and multi-culturalism, gender equality and the emphasis on environmental protection. - Representatives: the KSČM (Communist Party) and the Social Democratic Party (CSSD).

The characteristics of the right are based on the defense of property rights - an institution of private ownership, loyalty to western civilization and value conservatism - representatives of the ODS (Civil Democratic Party) and TOP 09 (the Democratic Party).

Currently, a coalition of three political parties: CSSD, KDU-CSL, and ANO is ending. It was slightly successful among the governments. GDP grew, unemployment dropped - wages grew, the state was among the safest, conditions improved for business and the existence of young families as well.

At the end of October 2017 elections were held in the Chamber of Deputies, and voters made their dissatisfaction clear. The winner of the elections in all regions and districts was the movement ANO of chairman Andrej Babis.

The survey results among Czech citizens indicate that the right is 35.4%, to the left 26.9%, and rather to the center by 27.4% of the respondents.

Resources:

1/ Political situation in CZE. Available from : https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politick%C3%BD_syst%C3%A9m_%C4%8Ceska (2018-02-14)

2/ Political system in CZE. Available from : http://www.czech.cz/cz/Objevte-CR/Fakta-o-CR/Politika/Politicky-system-Ceske-republiky (2018-02-14)

3/ Political situation in CZE. Available from : https://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/politici-volicum/VYSLEDKY-VOLEB-DO-POSLANECKE-SNEMOVNY-CR-2017-509113 (2018-02-14)

4. ECONOMY

The economy of the Czech lands traditionally belongs to the most developed in Europe. Gross domestic product reaches the developed countries of the world. The Czech economy is the 16th most powerful in the EU, ahead of Portugal, Greece and reaches the level of Italy and Spain. The Czech Republic is among 22 the most developed countries in the world. In March 2016, the Czech Republic achieved the lowest unemployment rate across the EU.

✓ CURRENCY

The currency used in the Czech Republic is the Czech crown (CZK). It is issued by the Czech National Bank and the exchange rate of the currency is floating.



Current exchange rate of the crown (20.11.2017):

- 1EUR = 25,57 CZK
- 1\$ = 21,70 CZK

✓ WAGES, SALARY RATIOS

The minimum wage in the EU is usually set at half the average wage, or is roughly 2 times the minimum subsistence level. In the Czech Republic this was not always the case, in 2007 a minimum wage was CZK 8 000 (EUR 316). It was gradually increased by the Government's regulations until the present to CZK 12 200 (EUR 481).

Salary ratios are gradually improving in the Czech Republic. As GDP grows and unemployment is rising, wages are also rising. In the second quarter of 2017, the average gross monthly wage was CZK 29 346 (EUR 1158), which is more than CZK

2 000 more than in the same period of 2016. Nevertheless, the average wage is less than 2/3. However, real wage growth is hampering rising inflation.

Average wage of a Secondary school teacher: 25 735 CZK (EUR 1007)

Average wage of a doctor: 58 000 Kč (EUR 2269)

Average wage of a nurse: 22 478 Kč (EUR 879)

✓ SOCIAL SUPPORT, RETIREMENT

The Czech Republic distinguishes amoning four types of pensions: old-age, disabled, widow's (widower's) and orphan's.

The basic condition for receiving a retirement pension is 65 years of age, and 35 years of work, ie contributing to the pension fund. If these conditions are not met, the calculation of the amount of the pension is appropriately reduced.

In September 2016, the average old-age pension amounted to CZK 11 441 (EUR 436), men had on average CZK 12 643 (EUR 499) and women CZK 10 383 (EUR 410) - about 2,400,000 pensioners were paid. However, this figure was more than just over a third of all retirees.

Invalidity pension is granted in three degrees of disability according to the percentage of decline in working capacity.

Widow's pension is granted on the basis of the death of one of the partners.

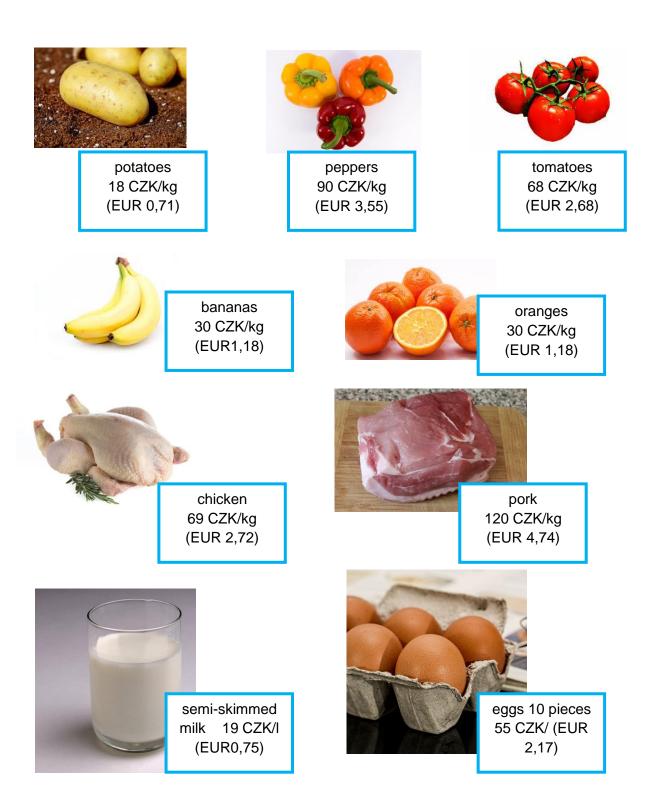
Orphan's pension is granted to offspring under the age of 18, or to students aged under 26, who have lost one or both parents.

✓ AVERAGE COUNTRY PRICES

Comparing prices of goods, energy, services, healthcare and others is very tricky. It is necessary to take into account the wages in the Czech Republic and abroad in euro. Some food and consumer goods are cheaper than in neighboring countries,

which is used by border residents to make frequent purchases. However, many prices are comparable. The Czech Republic is cheaper, for example, beer, cigarettes, petrol, rent, medical care and medicines.

Fuel prices in the Czech Republic are still changing, while the current liter of diesel costs 29,30 CZK (EUR 1,15) and one liter of gasoline 30,30 CZK (EUR 1,19).



✓ TYPICAL PRODUCTS OF THE COUNTRY

The most famous products of the Czech Republic include glass, whose production has been developed since the 13th century. It is lead crystal and cut glass. The Moser brand is the best of Czech glass.

In the world are also known porcelain with onion pattern and porcelain from Thun from Karlovy Vary, as well as products made of Czech garnet shaped by highly qualified work of grinders and goldsmiths - up to 3 500 models. The women of the whole world are also decorated with Czech jewelery.

The most famous and most popular products are Czech beer, especially **Pilsner Urquell** and **Budweiser Budvar**.

Famous beverages include Carlsbad

Becherovka - a liqueur called the

13th spring of the Karlovy

Vary Spa and also Mattoni mineral

water.





Delicacy is **Olomouc cheese** that has been produced for over 500 years.



For engineering products, we have to mention Škoda cars with more than a

hundred-year tradition of Škoda Holding a.s., which is a successor of the traditional name of Škoda Plzeň engineering factories. It manufactures a wide range of means of transport, e.g. the **Škoda**



Ineken 10T tram rides in many large cities in the world.



From the point of view of export products, we must not forget the largest European piano producer – Petrof, and Bata shoe giant - 50 production plants in 68 countries.





Resources:

1/ Typical czech products. Available from: www.czech.cz (2018-02-14)

5. RELIGIONS, ETHNICS, MINORITIES

On the territory of the Czech Republic 5.1% of foreigners live in the total population, ie about half a million people from 161 countries. The largest group is the population of Slovakia, followed by Ukraine, Hungary, Germany, and Russia.

Some Czechs consider foreigners to be a security risk. This attitude has been on the rise in recent years, in the context of the migration crisis. Despite this, however, there is no ethnically tense situation in the Czech Republic. Czechs expect foreigners to assimilate them with the Czech environment. They think that foreigners should adapt as much as possible to our habits, they should be able to speak Czech and work in the territory of the Czech Republic. The Czechs have the greatest sympathy for the Slovaks (it is given by their longstanding cohabitation, common history, similarity of language, etc).

An important community in the Czech Republic is the Vietnamese. They are the third largest community, due to the migration that began in the 1950s. The presence of Vietnamese people is currently not as bad as it was in the past, but their popularity is on the rise. Vietnamese are a very closed community that does not allow you to look into their privacy, sticking to the observance of their traditions and customs. The change takes place in the young generation, which is very successful in incorporating into the Czech society and eliminating the linguistic and cultural barriers. This still remains with the older generation.

The most numerous ethnic minority in the Czech Republic are Roma. According to estimates from the year 2003, there are about 300 000 of them in our country. Roma have their native language, their customs and mentality are different from the majority society. They have lived in the territory of the Czech Republic since the 14th century and are currently the group most affected by social exclusion. As a result, there is a low level of education, high crime rates and unemployment. The cause of unemployment is also the inadequately set social system, which leads to the fact that for some people it is better to receive social benefits than to work. A large part of the Czech population is anti-Romani, which is caused, among other things, by problematic neighborly relations, noise and disorder, a completely different way of life of Roma people.

The Czech Republic is the most secularized within Europe and has the second lowest share of citizens reporting to any religion. In their history, Czech lands have experienced complex relationships with the Church. One of the most complicated periods was the second half of the 20th century, when the existing and functioning religion was suppressed by the Communist regime. After the fall of the regime in 1989, there was a rebirth, and religion once again became part of public life. But most of the population had great expectations about the new position of the Church in the life of society. However, since these expectations were not used by the churches, for example, in order to resolve restitution claims, internal cleansing from times of co-operation with the Communist regime, etc., a part of society has evaded from the church, and public significance of religion has fallen.

Under Act No. 308/91 Coll. a citizen of the Czech Republic can confess, practice and promote any religion. No one should be forced to profess any religion or be without religion.

At present, most citizens do not want church interventions in the political and economic life of the country. The work of the Church is seen in the charity. Most citizens are of the opinion that the churches should be financially separate and only a tiny fraction of the citizens believe that the churches should be financed by the state.

✓ CENSUS DATA IN 2011

0	Catholic faith	1 150 000 (about 11 % of the
		population)
0	Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren	50 000
0	The Church of the Czechoslovak Hussites	39 000
0	Orthodox Church	27 000
0	Jehovah's Witnesses	13 000
0	The Brotherhood of the Church	10 000
0	Christian communities	10 000

0	Judaism	15 000
0	Persons proclaiming Islam	3 500
0	People proclaiming Buddhism	6 000

Compared with previous years, the number of believers in the Czech Republic is the same today, but the number of people who identify with the great ecclesiastical institutions is declining. There is growing interest in small and alternative groups.

✓ CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is the largest population in the Czech Republic. Geographically, most believers are in South Moravia, then in the South Bohemian region and in the southern part of Vysočina. The least believers are in the north of Bohemia. The largest percentage of believers is in small municipalities with up to 200 inhabitants. Fewer people report faith in cities with 50 000 to 100 000 inhabitants. There is a greater percentage of women among believers than men, and older people are predominant. Most female and male believers are in the 60-70 + age category. In the 40-year age category, the number of believers is 20%. In terms of education, most faithful people have a secondary vocational education, and the least faith is among university educated people.

About half a million people regularly visit services. However, most believers visit churches only on the occasion of a holiday (Easter, Christmas) or important life events (birth, marriage, death). Only 37% of couples are married in the church.

Churches are located in every village. Entry into these spaces is not only possible for believers, but can also be attended by non-believers and people of other faiths. Unbelievers are most often seeking churches during Christmas holidays and then in the context of tourism, when the churches are percieved as part of the Czech Republic's historical and cultural heritage. When entering the churches, discrete clothing is required, ie. long trousers, covered shoulders, and men take off the hats or caps. However, in summer hot weather, more casual wear is tolerated, ie short pants.

The most commonly used symbol of Christian faith is the cross that is usually worn as a necklace. This symbol, however, is worn in the Czech Republic not only by believers, but also by some non-believers, and this condition is tolerated by society. In state institutions and state schools, the symbol of a cross is not used, as any other Christian symbols.

✓ JUDAISM

Jews in the Czech Republic belong to the Ashkenazi Jewish population. The first Jews settled in the territory of today's Czech Republic in the 10th century. Still, they were under pressure, which grew several times in the pogrom or the expulsion of the Jews. The situation has improved only in the time of the Enlightenment. A major turning point occurred during the Second World War, when 80 000 Czech Jews did not survive the holocaust. As a result of the Communist regime, the number of Jews was still decreasing. At present, around 15-20 000 Jews live in the Czech Republic. There are 10



Jewish communities in the Czech Republic, and worship is held in several synagogues deployed throughout the Czech Republic. (Prague has 4 synagogues)

✓ ISLAM

Islam is not very much represented in the Czech Republic and it is mostly confessed to immigrants. Conversists account for only a small proportion of the total number of Muslims. Functioning mosques are in Prague and Brno.



✓ BUDDHISM

The Vietnamese minority, which follows the Mahayana direction of Buddhism, is reported to this religion. In the Czech Republic there is a Buddhist temple in Varnsdorf and three Korean Buddhist temples. (Prague, Brno). Czech Buddhists are mostly followers of Vajraya, ie Tibetan Buddhism.

✓ RELIGION AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Czech education is secular. In some schools (religious), religion is taught as an optional subject, but accurate records of the number of pupils are not performed. Children can go to catechism to the rectory. The higher presence of the spiritual and religious aspect of life is practiced in the Czech Waldorf schools.

Resources:

1/ Religions in Czech. Available from: https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/N%C3%A1bo%C5%BEenstv%C3%AD_v_%C4%8Cesku (2018-02-14)

2/ Religions in Czech. Available from: https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/nabozenska-vira-obyvatel-podle-vysledku-scitani-lidu-2011-61wegp46fl (2018-02-14)

3/ Religions in Czech. Available from: https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/nabozenske_vyznani_obyvatelstva_ceske_republiky_2 3_12_04 (2018-02-14)

5/ Ethnics and minorities in Czech. Available from: http://www.statistikaamy.cz/2016/02/vyvoj-poctu-cizincu-v-cr/ (2018-02-14)

6. HOLIDAYS AND TRADITIONS OF THE COUNTRY

There are 12 officially recognized holidays in the Czech Republic:

New Year (1.1.)

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Labor Day (1.5.)

Victory Day (8.5.)

The Day of Slavic Intelligence Cyril and Methodius (5.7.)

Day of burning of master Jan Hus (6.7.)

Czech Statehood Day (28.9.)

Independent Czechoslovak State Day (28.10.)

Day of Fight for Freedom and Democracy (17.11.)

Christmas Eve (24.12.)

First Christmas Day (25.12.)

These days there is a working day off, pupils and school students are out of work, and the sales hours of large stores is reduced, or some are closed. Most of the inhabitants of the Czech Republic celebrate these holidays either as a tradition (Christmas, Easter, see the following chapters) or perceive them as a day off. They mostly spend time with families and friends. During public holidays various concerts and special exhibitions are organized on a theme day. A number of cultural and historical monuments have modified opening hours during these days. The public television channel broadcasts films and documents that illustrate and explain the significance and, above all, the history connected with the holiday. On the occasion of certain holidays, state honors are awarded to persons who represent the Czech Republic – people from all spheres of life, ie scientists, athletes, artists and others.

Some Christian holidays are celebrated by most of the population of the Czech Republic, regardless of their religion. The first big holiday is Christmas and the second most important holiday is Easter, but for Christians, Easter is the most important holiday of the year.

✓ ADVENT TIME, NEW YEAR

In the period of Advent, a number of traditions are respected. In most households, several types of **Christmas cookies** are baked.

Houses are also decorated with advent wreaths. **Christmas**





decoration is also on houses and squares. In many cities there are **Christmas markets**, concerts, Christmas trees are lit up.

Classic Czech carols, as well as Christmas songs of popular Czech and foreign music are sung. In the pre-Christmas period and then during Christmas people send cards or,



nowadays, they send wishes through mobiles or social networks.

Clasic Czech Carols:

- " Vánoce, Vánoce přicházejí" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Upx_hdmtkA
- "Půjdem spolu do Betléma" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moFy1FvYHf4
- " Veselé vánoční hody" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQS9fXlqEB4&list=PLsn74HU4tcpmTR88MrEKAR4-NEvRvBDLJ
- " Narodil se Kristus Pán" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGQR2VRvW_8&list=PLsn74HU4tcpmTR88MrEKAR4-NevRvBDLJ&index=10
- " Nesem Vám noviny" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPxJSLld7ik&index=9&list=PLsn74HU4tcpmTR88MrEKAR4-NevRvBDLJ
- " Tichá noc" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiLL1NwEX8U&list=PLsn74HU4tcpmTR88MrEKAR4-NEvRvBDLJ&index=3

Still unforgettable tradition is December 4, on **St. Barbora**, a twig of cherry is placed in the water.

The twig has to serve both for decoration, but it is also believed to have magic powers. If it is blooming on Christmas Eve, it means early marriages.



A specific tradition for the Czech Republic is December 5 - the so-called Mikuláš, when children are visited by Nicholas, the devil and the angel. Children are afraid, but at the same time they expect a lot of sweets, fruits and small toys. Nicholas asks children whether they have behaved well during the year. If so, the children will



and a long crutch.

receive the expected presents. If not, they are protected by Nicholas with the angel before the devil and his hell. Of these three characters is the most typical and most popular Nicholas, who wears the typical clothes: the episcopal gown – a long white gown, a red gold coat, a bishop's pointed hat (mitra),

Christmas holidays are perceived as the most important Christian, but also a civic feast associated with the end of the year. These days are the official national holiday in the Czech Republic. Most people at this time adhere to traditional Christmas

customs. Many traditions are of a Christian character, but some come from pre-Christian times and are related to the celebration of the Solstice. At present, Christmas original religious significance diminishes. In the Czech Republic, the peak of the Christmas holidays is December 24 - Christmas Eve. On this day most people decorate the Christmas tree and arrange nativity scenes. People give and receive presents that are placed under the tree. Children believe that gifts are brought by Baby Jesus.



People have **Christmas Eve dinner**, which consists of fish soup, potato salad and fish. Most often it is fried carp. Since Christmas Eve is a holiday designed mostly for

children, in most households it is associated with watching fairy tales on TV. Czechs prefer classical Czech fairy tales. There are many traditional customs, for example, the habit of putting a fish scale or coin under a plate during a Christmas dinner, because it can bring in or keep money in



the home. Children put their candles on walnut shells, throw a shoe after dinner, while the tip of the shoe shows the direction of the person next year. An apple is cut and a star is searched, whose findings predict good health in the following year. Many families also go to nearby churches at the Midnight Mass. Modern customs include strolling before dinner, visiting relatives or taking the purchased carp back into the water. A modern tradition is also the Bethlehem light, which is brought by Austrian scouts to Scouts from Brno and distributed throughout the Czech Republic. The light is then available in churches, squares, and so on.

New Year's Eve (31 December) is a working day, but a large number of citizens are taking a holiday this day. All day is considered as a merry celebration of the end of

the old year and the beginning of the new year. People review and evaluate the past year. Celebrations are different – from joint big events to sitting in a family circle. Sometimes people go on trips to the surrounding hills and mountains. This is where meetings are held by local people.



New Year's Eve celebrations include a menu consisting of **various delicacies** such as sandwiches, appetizers, cheeses, various chips etc. New Year's Eve is celebrated with toasts and fireworks. Many cities organize midnight or more often New Year's fireworks.

New traditions are linked to the **New Year (1.1.)**, but most have been forgotten and

are not respected. One of them is the saying: "the way you are on New Year's day – that is the way you tend to be all the rest of the year long". In some families **lentils is served for lunch** (to bring economic certainty).



✓ EASTER

Easter is celebrated in the Christian spirit, but at the same time i tis perceived as a spring holiday celebrating the awakening of nature. Easter (Friday and Monday) are recognized as public holidays. Easter is preceded by 4 days, which have their names – Ash Wednesday, Green Thursday, Good Friday, White Saturday. According to the Christian traditions, after the Green Thursday, the church bells are silenced all over the country, and again, they rise to the Easter Sunday.

The celebration of Easter is connected with many customs, which are, as in the case of Christmas, respected according to family or regional customs. Most of the Easter

traditions are maintained in the countryside and in Moravia, which is associated with a greater number of believers in these areas.

Traditional Czech Easter dishes include Easter lamb cake and a cross bun. It is also lamb meat and egg dishes.



Christian celebrations take place until Sunday. Easter Monday is the day when more pagan customs are observed. The men and boys are weaving the so-called "pomlázka" from the young willow rods, which then run out of girls and women. This

will bring women health, beauty, diligence and joy throughout the year. Girls and women then give boys and men the painted eggs, which are the symbol of fertility and life force. Currently, chocolate eggs or other sweets are also available.

Egg painting is a great fun, there are a lot of techniques and ways of painting.







Resources:

- 1/ Traditions in Czech. Available from: https://www.ceske-tradice.cz/tradice/zima/vanoce (2018-02-14)
- 2/ Traditions in Czech. Available from: http://ekomarket.cz/content/73--vanoce-v-cesku-a-ve-svete-171212 (2018-02-14)
- 3/ Traditions in Czech. Available from: https://www.ceske-tradice.cz/tradice/jaro/velikonoce (2018-02-14)
- 4/ Traditions in Czech. Available from: http://www.czech.cz/cz/Objevte-CR/Zivotnistyl-v-CR/Tradice/Jak-se-slavi-Velikonoce-v-Cesku (2018-02-14)
- 5/ Traditions in Czech. Available from:

https://search.seznam.cz/?sld=O18_YKMgATC6MEU9N0ET&sourceid=top&q=tradic e++v%C3%A1noce+a+zima&sgld=hVaokJIU_j1-0bfeLeP-ROwoknZvzGLbTn-aYGRvk7%3D%3D&oq=tradice++v%C3%A1noce+a+zima&aq=-1&su=b (2018-02-14)

7. FAMILY

✓ TRADITIONAL FAMILY, GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The basic, complete family in the Czech Republic is a man, a woman and their children. The extended family in the Czech Republic also includes other relatives - grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. In the traditional Czech family, both partners are usually given public or church marriages, but more and more pairs of unmarried couples have grown in recent years. Especially in the younger generation, families of unmarried couples are promoting partnerships without commitment. In the Czech Republic we can also meet the concept of an incomplete family, where one of the parents is missing.

Economically weaker families fall into the state support system, which consists of: social allowances for low-income parents, housing allowance, child allowance.

The Czech state is trying to support birth rates, which have been decreasing in recent years also by the social contribution paid for childbirth. Its amount is set at CZK 13000, for a multiple birth at CZK 19 500. The Czech pro-family system is also unique in Europe and the world in the economic support of a single parent (mostly mothers but also fathers) with a child home after birthing up to four years of age. The state pays the so-called maternity benefit and parental allowance.

- 1 / Maternity benefit is paid to the mother for a total of 28 weeks (for two or more simultaneous births for a total of 37 weeks), starting from six to eight weeks before the expected date of delivery. The amount of maternity benefit is directly proportional to previous earnings, but this is reduced and the maximum amount of the benefit is also limited. The child's father can start maternity leave at the earliest from the 7th week of the child's age. The average amount is approximately CZK 15 000 (EUR 592).
- 2 / Parental allowance a parent who takes care of a child up to 4 years of age is entitled to it up to a maximum of CZK 220 000 (EUR 8 686).

✓ MARRIAGE, REGISTERED RELATIONSHIP

Marriage on the territory of the Czech Republic can have a form of civil or religious marriage. Non-religious marriages are more common and are a public and

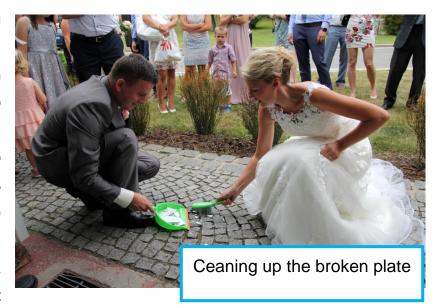
ceremonial ceremony, usually closed at the town hall in the of presence two witnesses. In recent years, marriages unofficial places - in nature, on board, in aircraft, etc. have been growing and more more.



However, the presence of an authorized official and witnesses is a condition. The number of **wedding guests** in the Czech Republic is usually about 30, but their number may vary considerably. Especially in smaller towns or villages, weddings with 100 guests are not the exception. Bridal guests include parents of brides, brothers and sisters with partners and children, witnesses with partners and children, uncles and aunts, cousins with partners and children, friends, colleagues from work, neighbours.

Tradition at the wedding: the bride would wear something new on this festive day (new beginning), old (preservation of family tradition), borrowed (to take care of others) and blue (the colour of fidelity). A popular tradition is baking wedding cakes several days before the wedding, which serves as a personal invitation for guests. The bridegroom should not see the bride in the wedding dress before the wedding because it can bring bad luck.

Before the wedding feast. the bridegroom and bride both can clean up the broken plate to show that they can also cooperate, and because the shards bring happiness. The wedding reception always starts with a wedding toast, most



often pronounced by a bride's father or witness.

When the newlyweds sit down at a wedding table, the staff tie around their neck with a large white cloth. They get one spoon and **feed each other with soup**. It is the

feeding each other with soup

In the Czech Republic, it is possible to close a **registered partnership** of two same-sex

traditional symbol of a common life that needs to be shared equally.

Another of the many traditions at the Czech wedding is the slicing of the wedding cake. Wedding cake is a symbol of fertility. And to keep the marriage, the bride and groom must taste the cake. Another tradition is the first dance. Traditional dance for this occasion was a waltz, but in recent years it is a favourite song for newlyweds. **The guests create a circle** and gradually engage in the dance.



The wedding circle

adults (two women or two men), at least one of whom has a Czech nationality. Then partners have right to health information, they have common property, they can inherit in succession ... However, they do not have the right to adopt a child or take the child into foster care.

other wedding traditionals



The Wedding Sweets

✓ DIVORCE

In the Czech Republic, marriage is not a guarantee of a sacred relationship. Divorce is perceived almost as a norm. In the Czech Republic, over 31 000 couples break out each year, which is about every other marriage. The most common causes of divorce are "difference in nature, opinions, interests" - more than 40%, infidelity is reported in 10%.

Extramarital relationships tend to be frequent and tolerated by society.

✓ CARE FOR AN UNAUTHORIZED CHILD

Adoption of the child - (adoption) is guaranteed by the Czech state. By adoption, the family relationship between the child and his / her original family ceases. Adoption must always meet legal requirements and must lead to the benefit of the child. The condition is the consent of biological parents or legal guardian with adoption.

Adoption is a relatively lengthy process in the Czech Republic. Parents who have applied for the adoption of a child are first subjected to a variety of testing and interviewing, and are also prepared in the form of courses for adoption of the child. They can also express their wishes about the child, such as gender, age, whether they are able to educate a child with disability, another ethnicity, a chronic illness.

Foster care is a form of alternative family care defined by the law on the social and legal protection of children where an individual, spouses or partners have taken into their care and education a child who cannot grow up with their parents. Unlike adoption, however, foster parents are not legal representatives, do not change the birth certificate of a child, do not have parental rights or maintenance obligations, and after completing foster care they are legally strangers. The aim of foster care is mainly to provide family care to a child who would otherwise grow up in a children's home.

Resources:

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- 2/ Care about children. Available from: www.adopce.com (2018-02-14)
- 3/ Government support. Available from: www.duchod.cz (2018-02-14)
- 4/ Government support. Available from: www.cssz.cz (2018-02-14)
- 5/ Family. Available from: www.svatba.cz (2018-02-14)

8. LIFESTYLE OF THE COUNTRY

✓ GENERAL

The lifestyle of the average Czech is based on individual needs. The choice of lifestyle is influenced by the family, their traditions, but also the financial level. New trends and modernity play a significant role for young people. Parents are usually tolerant of choosing the style of their offspring.

Among the factors most damaging to the health of Czechs are smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, poor nutrition, low physical activity, drug abuse and excessive psychological stress.

According to the data of the State Health Institute, the Czech population in Europe is at the forefront of these risk factors for the emergence of chronic diseases - smoking is in third place, drinking alcohol first and obesity in second to fourth place. As a result, the average Czech citizen's expectancy according to the CZSO is 78.9 years.

Data on morbidity show an increase in heart and blood vessel diseases or cancer. Mortality decreases only at the expense of the huge costs of treatment that is high in the Czech Republic.

The reason is that the population born in the second half of the 20th century was affected by the tremendous technical progress that fundamentally changed their lifestyle. A lot of housework has been replaced by technologies, the number of jobs in

offices with PCs has increased. After the revolution, people have had great opportunities in all areas of social life, traveling, business, education, food availability, new goods of all kinds, etc. Throughout society, the era of consumption has started, and continues to these days.

The style of today's times has become comfortable on one side, but on the other, it brings acceleration of pace, stress, limitation of original life assurance, e.g. employment. Long-term stress is one of the most serious factors that threaten health. The very frequent consequences of long-term stress are burnout syndrome.

The Czech Republic does not passively promote healthy lifestyles. New preventative programs, smoking ban in restaurants and public spaces were approved. Throughout the school system, healthy lifestyle is included in the curriculum.

There is not even a particularly negative atmosphere to alternative lifestyles - ways of living different from traditional ones. They have different opinions on health, fashion, music, worldview, housing, etc. (vegetarians, macrobiotics, alternative medicine followers...).

✓ EDUCATION

The education system in the Czech Republic is primarily based on the Education Act and the Higher Education Act.

Education is provided by public schools (formerly the state, now established by the county), which are the majority, and are free for pupils and students. The smaller share of schools is ecclesiastical and private, they set charges of 3-10 thousand crowns a month per pupil or student. Their numbers are showing an increasing tendency and are regulated by the Ministry of Education.

In colleges, students can undergo free studies for up to 26 years of age, then they have to pay health insurance, which was previously paid by the state, and tuition fees (not high in the Czech Republic).

Individual levels of education in the Czech Republic:

Pre-primary education is implemented in children from the age of 6 months to the beginning of schooling. It is provided by state, private and ecclesiastical institutions, the payment is around CZK 1000 (40 E) per month. It includes all-day food and child care. The children up to 3 years of age visit a crèche. From the two years of the child's age until the child is admitted to primary school, it is possible to place the child in a kindergarten. Pre-primary education is voluntary, except in the last year before the start of compulsory schooling when the parent is obliged to register a child in pre-school education.

In the Czech Republic there is a lack of facilities that provide pre-school education, often the parent cannot take up employment because they have not been able to place their child in pre-school facilities.

Primary education is provided by a network of elementary schools for children between the ages of 6 and 15. The basic nine-year attendance is compulsory in CR.

Secondary education is for the age group 15-18 years. It usually lasts three or four years.

Secondary education is provided in the Czech Republic as a vocational education, after which the graduates are ready for the work process in the given field. Graduates may continue to study.

The lower level of such education - apprenticeship courses are completed by a certificate (most often in the fields of gastronomy, hotel industry, engineering and construction).

The upper secondary schools are graduated with "maturita" exam, which entitles them to further education at tertiary level (economics, electronics, telecommunication and computer technology, engineering and health).

Another option is to choose general secondary education (gymnasium – grammar school, lyceum), which aims to prepare students for studying at colleges and universities. The study is completed by "maturita" exam. The specific is the "eight-year gymnasium" - a type of grammar school, which can be taken up during elementary school (after 5th or 7th grade of elementary education). They are considered the most demanding.

Tertiary education enables graduates to further increase their qualifications in a variety of specializations by studying at conservatories, higher vocational schools or universities.

Higher education is implemented in three levels: bachelor, master and doctoral study programs.

At present, the most popular branches of study at colleges and universities are business, administration and law, medicine, engineering, construction, non-medical health care (pharmacy, nursing, midwifery).

Secondary and tertiary education is possible in most fields, apart from a daily form, in a distance form, which combines consultations, e-learning and self-study.

✓ PEOPLES' APPEARANCE

Europeans, including Czechs, belong to Europoid race. Physically, its features are bright skin colour; a narrow, often protruding nose; a narrow or medium-wide face with relatively narrow lips; well-developed hair, which includes slightly wavy hair of various shades, able to grow to a considerable length. Men can have a beard.

The men grow on an average height of 180cm. The type of figure is varied and very dependent on age, lifestyle and type of sports activities they run. This is true for women as well. The average women's height is 167cm.

The Czech Republic belongs to countries with more obese people, ie. 19.3% of adults, compared to the EU average of 15.9%.

People's appearance depends on fashion, lifestyle, value system, economic possibilities, and personality.

In general, men tend to have hair and beards cut short, while women may prefer longer haircuts. These are their pride, they do not cover them. Women tend to hide grey hair in colouring. More and more emphasis is placed in hygiene, cosmetics, nail care, antiperspirants, and treatment of hairy parts of the body. Make-up is a matter of

course for most Czech women. Both men and women like to be decorated with tattoos which become a great fashion.

Jewellery is also used to decorate the body, sometimes gold, silver or steel. Almost half of Czechs wear glasses that are perceived as the decoration too.

Even with Czechs, the popularity of plastic operations of all kinds increases.

✓ SPECIFICS OF COMMUNICATION

For the Czechs there is a typical communication with a high share of non-verbal messages, the importance of which the partner has to draw from the context. It is assumed that the interaction participant knows the overall context and takes them into account. It is necessary to understand the meaning of communication.

In non-verbal communication, the Czechs prefer a more reserved approach, and not too impulsive gesture. It is publicly unfair to point at someone by finger, spit on the floor, rip or pull the sleeve of someone we want to talk with. It is also not appropriate to interrupt someone. Czechs are not a contact culture, so touching during a social conversation is not common here. The average personal area is one meter. The unwelcome elements in communication are: chewing gum (cigarette) in the mouth, hands in pockets, or scrupulous behaviour. Czechs prefer a positive atmosphere and a non-conflictual environment. They are not proficient in communicating negative information, so they may avoid confrontation. They do not like to be late for meetings - minor delays occur normally, but a delay of more than 15 minutes is considered to be rude. Generally, they do not show their self-confidence.

The basis of verbal communication is Czech language. It belongs among Slavic languages and comes from Old Slavic. It began during the 9th century. In the 19th century at the time of the national revival, it has been transformed into modern language. It is characterized by a richly developed flexion. One word exists in a variety of other forms (due to suffixes) depending on what grammatical or syntactic function they express. For foreigners it is one of the most difficult languages in Europe to learn.

As for the ability of Czechs to communicate with other languages, the situation is worse than in other Western European countries. Almost one third of Czechs do not speak any foreign language. Most people speak Slovak. 27% of people can communicate in English, 15% German and 13% Russian. Simple written texts in a foreign language can be understood by almost three quarters of Czechs. But when it comes to active communication, the situation is noticeably worse. They are afraid of making mistakes, or they are ashamed of the poor pronunciation that is often underestimated in teaching, especially in the school system. The problem is also poor vocabulary, especially in the field of professional language, as well as a lack of grammar.

✓ ETIQUETTE

In the Czech Republic, behavior and communication are the basis of society.

To understand the rules, it is needed to clarify who is a socially significant person, who has the right to determine the development of the social relationship. Among people of the same sex, it is the older person (with no difference in ten years). A woman is a more significant person than a man (not even a thirty years difference means that a man will get the advantage). In a work environment, it is a superior person, regardless of age or gender.

So, for a summary, a significant person is a woman, an elderly person, and a senior person in the working environment.

In greetings, less significant person greets socially more significant person. There is a rule in the Czech Republic: "Greeting is grace, but answer is duty." Besides verbal greetings, people can shake right hands or kiss each other on cheeks. The hands are not crossed and everything is accompanied by a slight bow of the head forward. Eye contact should be straightforward. People use formal "good morning / afternoon / evening", or informal "hello"...

For Czech language, two forms of addressing are typical: "tykání" - 2nd person of singular in an informal surroundings (children, friends, relatives), and "vykání" - 2nd person of plural in a formal surroundings.

Introducing people has similar rules. We introduce a person socially less significant to a socially more significant person, ie. a man to a woman, younger person to older one.

We also introduce the person with an academic title or function. If we introduce ourselves, it is good to use this formula: "Good evening ... let me introduce myself, my name is ..."

Clothes is important too. Dress code is generally accepted. There are some rules that determine what can be worn at work, at the office, at business meetings or social events. Women can wear both skirts and trousers to work. Most companies and banks, however, do not allow wearing jeans at work. Since the nineties, the skirts of almost all lengths are worn. The correct length of the skirt depends more on the social occasion. We choose bright, pastel colours for normal, daytime wear, and darker (blue, black) for the evening. Women use the so-called little black, evening dress with the length below the knees. The long evening gown is suited for balls and important social events.

Men in the office, for business meetings or lunch with a client wear a suit, and any colour of shirts with a tie. For evening or more festive events, a dark suit with black shoes and black socks are worn. Sometimes it will work with a vest. For the most glamorous occasions is a white shirt with a bowtie. Less formal is a suit without a tie.

There are some rules at a dining table. If there are more courses, the cutlery is taken gradually towards the plate. At the table, we sit upright, hands are leaning against the edge of the table above the wrist. We never put a knife to mouth, we only use it to slicing. We do not sip, we do not talk with our mouths full. We put a cloth napkin on our lap. Before drinking, we wipe our mouth with a paper napkin. We put the paper napkin on the plate after finishing the meal (the cloth napkin is placed on the right of the plate). At the end of the meal, we put the cutlery on the plate parallely. Sitting places back to the wall with a view into the area belong to more significant persons. A prominent person is sitting on the right.

In the cinema and in the theater we turn off the cell phones. We go to the cinema and the theater in time so we do not bother other audiences. If we sit in the middle, we always come to the front of the seat. If we eat food in the cinema, we do so quietly. At

the end of the theater performance, we applaud. In the cinema we wait until the final headlines finish. A woman usually sits on the right hand of a man.

If we take a bus, a train, a tram or a trolleybus, we keep some rules too. At first people get off, after they get on. We do not stay at the entrance to prevent other passengers from entering. If we use food in the means of transport, we do not choose one that has a distinct smell. We do not throw away the waste from the windows. We take the luggage carefully so we do not hit anyone. If a bus is crowded, we provide a sitting place to older people, sick, women, pregnant women or young children. If we want to open the window, the first we ask passengers. On the train when entering the coupe, we greet and ask if there is a vacancy. When entering the car, the man opens the door to the woman.

The biggest weaknesses of Czechs:

They sometimes do not behave well at the table - compared to other peoples who have dining as a social event and like to eat slowly, Czechs prefer to eat fast. Some of them even use a laptop or a mobile during the meal.

Mobile arrogance – Czechs do not turn off their phones in places where they should do that: in a cinema and theater, at a table, in a shop, at school, or even in the means of transport.

The rules of a man behavior towards a woman - the younger generation is able to meet and communicate on the Internet, but has a considerable margin of behavior in the company. Some young men often do not know how to behave in a good restaurant or at a meeting (they should open the door to a woman, should help with a heavy bag, should help with putting her coat on...).

✓ FOOD

The Czech Republic is an inland country with a cooler climate, so also the basis of its gastronomy was always the local food, especially grain, potatoes and meat.

Nowadays, thanks to globalization, other kinds of food is imported.

The Czech menu usually consists of two or more courses - the first is traditionally a soup. Typical Czech soups are beef with noodles or liver dumplings, sour cream soup with mushrooms, potato, goulash or cabbage soup.

The main course usually consists of some meat with side dishes. The most commonly used meat is pork, beef, chicken, sometimes fish or rabbit.

Czechs eat freshwater fish (traditional carp at Christmas) or sea fish but only 6.2 kg per person a year, that means 2x less than other Europeans.

The consumption of fruit, which Czechs eat about 90 kilograms per person a year, is growing. They like apples, oranges, bananas and other southern fruits.

Traditional dishes are **pork schnitzel** (fried pork fillet wrapped in flour, eggs and breadcrumbs), pork with dumplings and cabbage, roast pork, **goulash** or fried carp.



Pork schnitzel



Goulash



Pork with dumplings and cabbage

Specialities of Czech cuisine include sauces and **dumplings**. Sauces usually contain vegetable base, cream, butter and flour. There are many kinds of dumplings, e.g. bread, potato or fruit. Many types of cakes and pastries that are popular in Central Europe come from Czech cuisine.







Fruit dumplings



Dumplings stuffed with smoked meat and cabbage

From the delicatessen we can mention sandwiches, various salads, ripened cheese (Olomouc cheese) or Prague ham.

Czech beer is world-famous and has a long tradition. The Czechs consider it a national drink. The most famous are Pilsner Urquell and Budweiser Budvar. The Czechs are the world's largest beer drinkers = 151 liters of beer per person a year.

In the Czech Republic are also many vineyards, especially in South Moravia. Czech winemakers produce about 550 000 hectolitres of wine a year. The quality of Moravian white wines is at the top of the world, as evidenced by a number of significant international awards. An interesting area of this region are the small villages of wine cellars.

The favourite Czech souvenir is, in addition to wine, the bittersweet herbal liqueur Becherovka, which comes from the spa town of Karlovy Vary.

Diet, its quality and balance are also an essential part of lifestyle.

Positive for the Czech Republic is the trend in reducing the consumption of fats, pork and beef meat and eggs. However, there is still a great popularity of fried meals and sweet drinks. There is smaller share of fruit and vegetables in the diet compared to other Europeans. The younger generation, in particular, like to eat in fast food restaurants.

There are some connections, for example the higher education, the healthier diet people have. Also, the lack of funding for socially disadvantaged groups leads in some cases to consuming a cheaper but less quality diet.

✓ PEOPLE'S MENTALITY

The Czech temperament is very diverse, but it is possible to summarize the basic character features. Czechs always were a small nation. Except for a few short periods, the Czech nation was always part of larger units that were ruled by someone else. The liberation came 17.11.1989 (Velvet Revolution - national holiday). With the beginning of democracy and freedom, however, there is also greater responsibility for themselves. All historical events have had a significant influence of the development of the character of the Czechs.

Czechs are considered to be typical Central Europeans. They are proud to be members of the nation and Czech history. In addition, they are also proud of Czech personalities from the field of art, literature, sports, science and technology.

Flexibility, ingenuity, adaptability, are the qualities that the Czechs are proud of. For Czechs, there is a typical mistrust of almost everything they do not know.

The Czechs are able to do a lot of things in parallel and change the ranking of priorities according to the current importance and with confidence in their improvisation skills.

Czechs often tend not to keep general rules, it is common to think about how to bypass the law.

The friendship is important for the Czechs, they place emphasis on specific human relationships, as well as on the good feeling that results from them.

The Czechs are characterized as a nation for which direct confrontation and talking about their own problems is unpleasant. They prefer to avoid conflicts. Even if there is a situation where there may be a conflict, they will rather not solve it. When the conflict is inevitable, it can take place in silence, or it can be loud and can lead to the

end of the relationship. There are very few Czechs who have reasonable selfconfidence.

✓ SPORT, LEISURE

Working hours in the Czech Republic are set at 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. As for free time, Czechs have about 6.5 hours a day, the most at the weekends.

The most popular activities that Czechs spend on average 2 hours per day include watching TV, using PCs and other media, following various sports activities and reading. About one hour a day is spent with family or friends, strolling and walking dogs. 90% of Czechs are devoted to individual hobbies. The younger generation has recently returned to spending leisure time in more traditional ways like growing crops or creative activities.

Younger people under the age of thirty often listen to music, watch various videos on the internet, go to concerts, cinemas and restaurants. They do sports or spend more time by increasing their professional and language skills.

There is still the popularity of shopping and spending time in shopping centres.

Women more often than men read magazines and books, go to theatres, exhibitions and public libraries or attend classical music concerts. On the contrary, men spend more time on hobbies and sports.

About 60% of Czechs do not travel abroad on summer holidays for financial and security reasons. Very popular in the summer is cycling and hiking. Outside of the republic are popular stays at the sea (mostly Croatia, Italy, Bulgaria, Egypt, Turkey) for which families do not want to spend more than about 1000 euros. In winter, they like skiing holiday, but only richer families can afford it, thanks to the high cost of ski equipment, ski passes and accommodation.

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