

**45th Annual Meeting
of the International Clearinghouse
for Birth Defects Surveillance and Research (ICBDSR)**



**September 30 – October 4, 2018
Prague, Czech Republic**

**Organized by the ICBDSR and
the National Registry of Congenital Anomalies of the Czech Republic**

Meeting information



Welcome

Dear colleagues,

We are really happy to invite you to Prague for the 45th Annual Meeting of ICBDSR. Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic and it is the second time the Annual Meeting of ICBDSR will take place here.

Prague is also the place where the surveillance of congenital anomalies (in former Czechoslovak republic) started. The surveillance program started, thanks to late Dr. Jiří Kučera, in 1961 and in 1964 the registration of selected anomalies became official. The Czechoslovak registry was one of the founding members of ICBDSR (now ICBDSR) in 1974.

Prague is the seat of Charles University, the eldest university in the central Europe, which was founded by the Bohemian King and Holy Roman Empire emperor Charles the IVth in 1348. Today, Charles University has three different medical faculties only in Prague and Prague is the centre of clinical and academic medicine in the Czech Republic.

Prague is a famous historical city with a long history and visited by millions of tourists every year. While the city centre tends to be crowded, there are still many options to wander through the city freely and enjoy the original atmosphere of this great place.

Once more – we are really happy to welcome you to our city. We hope you will enjoy this year's Annual Meeting and will have time to enjoy the city itself as well.

Antonín and Antonín





Visa information:

Czech Republic is a European Union member and part of Schengen area. Therefore the rules for entrance do not differ significantly from other EU/Schengen area members. If you are not sure if you need a visa or not you can consult the website of the Czech Ministry of Foreign affairs at:

https://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/information_for_alien/general_visa_information/index.html

Currency:

Despite being EU-member, Czech Republic still does not use Euro as the currency.

Czech currency is the Czech crown (“Koruna česká”, CZK), 1 crown = 100 halers (“haléřů”).

Approximate rates: 1 EUR = 25.6 CZK; 1 USD = 22.0 CZK

Valid coins: 1 CZK, 2 CZK, 5 CZK, 10 CZK, 50 CZK

Valid banknotes: 100 CZK, 200 CZK, 500 CZK, 1000 CZK, 2000 CZK, 5000 CZK

You may refer to the website of Czech National Bank for the images:

Coins: http://www.cnb.cz/en/banknotes_coins/coins/

Banknotes: http://www.cnb.cz/en/banknotes_coins/banknotes/

In Prague the majority of shops, restaurants and services accept credit cards (VISA, Maestro, MasterCard for sure) so most of the payments can be done without the need for cash. However, it is recommended to have at least some amount of the Czech currency (including coins) since it can be needed for example for small tobacco shops, public transport tickets and public toilets.

The best place for changing Czech currency are the banks and cash machines (depending on your bank policy though). The small exchange offices (especially those in city centre are poorly regulated and often offer very disadvantageous rate or high fees) are not recommended.



Weather:

Czech Republic weather is mild and continental. In the first week of October the average temperature in Prague is about 12-13 degrees Celsius, but it can be as low as 5 or as high as 20. The autumn weather is generally very variable and you can expect anything from sunny to rainy/foggy weather.

Traveling:

How to get to the hotel:

- a) **From the airport:** Václav Havel international airport is located in the north-west corner of Prague and has quite good Public transport connection to the city centre.

Public transport buses have the stops just outside the airport (Terminal 1). If you are heading for Hotel Olšanka, you shall take bus line **119** to the **Nádraží Veleslavín** (terminus), where you switch to the underground **line A** (“green”) in the direction **Depo Hostivař** and leave at **Flora** stop. From Flora you can either walk down the hill to the hotel (5-10 minutes) or switch again – and go one stop by bus (**136 or 175 line**) or one stop by tram (**5 or 15 line**) to the **Olšanské náměstí** stop. Please note that the public transport is limited to special night lines during the night (0.00 to 5.00 a.m.).

There are always **taxi** available at the airport as well, the sad story is, that the companies that have the airport-parking exclusivity are one of the most expensive ones in Prague. Fair price from the airport to hotel Olšanka is in between 700 and 800,- CZK, it may be even less sometimes, but it shall not be more. There is not anything like “fixed price”. You may also order taxi from a different taxi provider, but you have to call them on your own.

More information can be found on the Airport website: <https://www.prg.aero/en#/>

- b) **From the Main Railway Station:** Should you be coming to Prague by train, you will probably leave the train at Prague – Main Railway Station (**Praha – Hlavní nádraží**). This station is very close to the Hotel Olšanka. You shall leave the main station through the main entrance in the basement. You will turn right and walk the pedestrian way through the park till you reach the tram station. Here you can take any tram (**lines 5, 9, 15, 26**) to the **Olšanské náměstí** stop (3rd stop).
- c) **By Car:** Depending on the direction you will drive, but you shall follow **Centrum** and/or **Žižkov** signs to reach the correct place. The exact street (square) you are looking for is **Olšanské náměstí**. The hotel has its own garage, but the number of stands is limited and it is recommended to contact hotel with the garage stand request in advance.



Public transport: Public transport in Prague includes underground (metro), tram and bus lines (and also few ferries and one funicular). All these lines are run by the Prague Public Transit Company.

You shall buy a ticket prior to boarding any public transport (only bus drivers are selling the tickets as well, but the tickets are more expensive and the drivers only accept coins in exact amount). As soon as you enter the bus or tram, you shall validate the ticket in the validator (the correct way how to insert ticket is marked by an arrow). After the ticket is validated – it will be valid for the particular amount of time. The basic ticket cost 32,- CZK and is valid for 90 minutes. The short-ride ticket costs 24,- CZK and is valid for 30 minutes. You can change different lines while the ticket is still valid, but after the time runs out – you have to validate a new ticket.

Where to buy tickets: <http://www.dpp.cz/en/ticket-sales/>

Fares: <http://www.dpp.cz/en/fares-in-prague/>

Transport lines: <http://www.dpp.cz/en/transport-around-prague/transit-schematics/>

Be ready to present your valid ticket in case of [transit inspection](#) (random controls, especially in underground).

You may be also be interested in “**Prague card**” offer – this tourist card combines the multiple days public transport ticket and admission pass to selected Prague museums. Card can be obtained also directly on the airport – <https://www.prague.eu/en/praguecard>

It is also possible to order **SMS ticket** through your cell phone, but this only works if you have the Czech SIM card!!

Security issues and other dangers:

Czech Republic is one of the safest countries in the world (7th overall in [GPI 2018](#)). Prague is the largest city and very common tourist destinations, which makes it a bit more risky place than the rest of the country. Still, Prague is a [very safe city](#) and the risk of any violent crime is very low. The most common crime affecting the tourist is the pickpocketing. Pickpockets usually work in the historical city centre and also in public transports. It is highly recommended to watch your belongings.

There is significant risk of different scams, mainly considering taxi drivers and exchange offices:

Taxi: Prague is very “famous” for its taxi drivers and for good reason. Although the prices are regulated, there is still high risk the driver will charge unreasonable high prices for a drive. It is highly recommended not to use taxi cabs from the city centre and use one that you call for your own. Always ask the taxi driver on advance for the estimated price and about the details of the payments (not all drivers accept credit cards for example).

AAA Taxi Prague is quite trusted Company I personally use when I need a taxi drive here in Prague:
<https://www.aaataxi.cz/en/>



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Also Liftago Company has very good references: <https://www.liftago.com/>

Uber is also available as a service on Prague. The legal status of this kind of service is discussed right now and the service will be possibly much more regulated you the future.

Exchange offices: Another tourist trap, the exchange offices on the city centre are the places you shall avoid. They are not ashamed to offer really bad rates (like 15 CZK for 1 EUR) or they can charge some unexpected fees. If you will need to exchange money in the city centre, the general advice is to ask how many crowns you will get for lets say 100 Euros first, prior you will handle your banknotes. If you will handle your banknotes and you will already receive the amount of Czech crowns, it is too late for cancelling the transaction and even the police officers will not be able to help you.

Street scams: You may encounter different people asking you for a donation for different reasons (deaf children, Buddhist monks etc.). While not 100% of them are scamming the tourists, it is generally not recommended to even talk to this person. Do not accept any kind of “presents” like flowers, books etc. since you will be very probably asked to pay for it some seconds later. Persons that will offer to sell you extra cheap watches or another devices will either sell you fakes or even stolen goods – so again, better do not talk to them at all.

You may also watch this video (or other videos of this channel) in order to learn more about tourist traps in Prague: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFhaee9SM7w>

Night time: Prague is very safe city also during the night. Walking the streets during the night time is not especially risky, especially outside the city centre in residential areas. Like in other tourist destinations - Prague city centre becomes a bit more risky after the midnight, you can encounter groups of drunken tourists who sometimes cause some trouble, but usually they are just noisy and not dangerous. Also the travelling with the night lines of the public transport may be a bit unpleasant, since there is usually only limited number of lines available and the buses and trams from the city centre tend to be crowded and full of drunken people. Very rarely you may encounter people who will try to sell you weed or any other drugs. Please note, that selling/buying/owning of these drugs is illegal in the Czech Republic.

Police: Shall you encounter any troubles, you may want to contact police officers. There are two types of police officers: City police (*Městská policie*) and National Police (*Policie České republiky*). City police are mostly dealing with minor offences and crimes, the National police mostly handles more severe and violent crimes. However you may contact any of them for the assistance.

Important telephone lines:

112: General emergency line

150: Fire brigade

155: Ambulance

156: City police

158: National Police



Useful information:

Alcohol: Alcohol drinks are legal from 18 years of age. Drinking alcohol in public is generally not forbidden in Czech Republic, however in Prague there are some places where the public drinking was banned by the local law, the map is available here:

http://www.praha.eu/jnp/cz/o_meste/zivot_v_praze/bezpecnost/mapa_kde_je_v_praze_zakazano_pit_alkohol.html

This law does not affect the drinking on outside seating of bars and restaurants.

Dressing code: Prague is extremely tolerant city and unless you are traveling the streets completely naked – no one will really care what you wear.

Electricity: see <https://www.adaptelec.com/Country-Specific-Answers/Electrical-Plug-Outlet-and-Voltage-Information-for-Czech-Republic>

GSM and Networks: In the Czech Republic we use GSM 900/1800 system and 2G/3G/4G networks are available. The international phone prefix for Czech Republic is +420.

Language: The official language in Czech Republic is Czech. Czech is Slavic language, similar to Slovak or Polish. While most of the official signs are only in Czech – especially in Prague you usually find the English signs as well (in Public transport and in many shopping centres and restaurants). Most of the people understand English nowadays (not mentioning the hotels and restaurant staff where the English language skill is a must have).

Basic Czech words/phrases can be found here: <https://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/czech.php>

Shopping: In Prague, most of the shops are opening between 8 and 9 am and close between 5 and 6 pm. This does not include the supermarkets which are usually opening between 6 and 7 am and closing between 8 and 10 pm. Also the shops and services in shopping centres are closing later, between 6 and 10 pm.

Smoking: Smoking is not allowed in most of the public buildings, including bars and restaurants (limitation does not include outside seating where the smoking is usually allowed). Also smoking is not allowed on public transport stops and in their proximity. Electronic cigarettes follow the same rules. Tobacco products can be sold to any person aged 18 years or over.

Tipping: Tipping is common in bars and restaurants, the normal amount is around 5-10% of the total sum.

Traffic rules: There is right-hand-traffic in the Czech Republic. Speed limit for personal car is 50 km/h in the towns/cities, 90 km/h outside cities and 130 km/h on a motorway. As a pedestrian in Prague, please note that the tram has always priority, even when you are on zebra crossing (does not apply to crossroads with traffic lights).



Tourist tips:

Prague castle: While the visiting the area of Prague castle (not including the entrance to the historical buildings) is free of charge, the whole area is now guarded and all visitors have to go through security check (which are otherwise very rare in Prague). During peak hours you may wait up to 2 hours in the lines, so it is really recommended to plan your Prague castle visit and come early, see <http://praguebehindthescenes.com/prague-castle-security-checks/>

Charles Bridge: The most famous and also most crowded bridge in Prague. If you want to enjoy the bridge and the beautiful views, try to visit the bridge between 6am and 7am.

Vyšehrad: While everyone wants to visit Prague castle (which is easy to understand), the second Prague castle – Vyšehrad – is also worth visiting, especially because of the lovely views on the city and the Vltava river. <http://www.praha-vysehrad.cz/?l=9>

The Aviation Museum Kbely: If you are interested in technical devices, you shall not miss the famous aircraft museum in Praha Kbely - <http://www.vhu.cz/english-summary/> this museum shows several unique pieces of aircrafts and the admission is free of charge.

100 years of the Republic: The current year (2018) is important for the Czech history, it is 50 years after Prague Spring and following Soviet occupation in 1968, 70 years after communistic party coup in 1948, 80 years after Munich agreement and following German occupation of Sudetenland in 1938 – and also 100 years after the founding of independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. During this year you can visit various unique exhibitions in Prague – see more information here <https://www.prague.eu/en/czechoslovakia>

Reconstructions: One of the major tourist attraction in Prague – Astronomical clock – are regrettably under reconstruction right now. There is slight chance it will be open again by the end of September 2018 though. Also the National Museum building is undergoing long-term reconstruction.

Traditional gifts from Prague: Czech glass and porcelain are very famous, also you may consider jewellery with typical garnets (*český granát*) or moldavites (*vltavín*). Wooden toys and Czech marionettes may be nice gifts for the children while classical herbal liquor *Becherovka* or beer cosmetics will be nice for adults.

Restaurants near the hotel:

You will find for yourself that this part of Prague is full of different bars/pubs/restaurants and cafeterias. Though you are more than welcome to explore on your own – here is the list of restaurants I visit from time to time and always have a good experience.

- U Tří prasátek <https://goo.gl/maps/6PNDpGSYiLD2>
- U Bohouše <https://goo.gl/maps/Ska7VCCyzqF2>



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- U Sadu <https://goo.gl/maps/f2Bk66UcUK52>
- Los v oslu <https://goo.gl/maps/ScNvrP8Sgem>
- Potrefená husa <https://goo.gl/maps/yYni4Jhtnfu>
- Vinohradský pivovar <https://goo.gl/maps/YVtbVT24uqk>
- Kredenc <https://goo.gl/maps/kZJq1W2LCKL2>

Shops near the hotel:

- Albert supermarket: <https://goo.gl/maps/edG6SEeWGzG2>
- Pe-Mi drugstore: <https://goo.gl/maps/i5rusQGNr3w>
- Kabát bakery: <https://goo.gl/maps/ujp4W8SfBbs>
- Flora - shopping centre - <https://goo.gl/maps/kGdtshsNGg82>

Useful links:

- <https://www.hotelolsanka.cz/en/> (Hotel Olšanka)
- <https://www.prague.eu/en> (Prague Official Tourist Website)
- <http://www.czechtourism.com> (Czech Tourism Official Website)
- <http://www.dpp.cz/en/> (Prague Public Transport Company)
- <https://www.prg.aero/en#/> (Václav Havel Airport Prague)