

CZECH the NEWS

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

25 Years of Freedom and Democracy

On November 17, 1989, the Velvet Revolution began with a peaceful student march and led to a remarkable transformation from communism to the re-establishment of democracy. The courageous dissident, prisoner of conscience, and talented playwright Václav Havel became the tenth and last President of Czechoslovakia and later the first President of the Czech Republic. Twenty-five years later, Washington celebrated to honor President Havel's inspirational legacy, commemorating the significant anniversary dear to both Czech and American hearts.

US Capitol Unveils Havel's Bust

Special Edition | February 2015



Former First Lady of the Czech Republic, Dagmar Havlová, Speaker Jan Hamáček, Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka, US House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, US Congressman Ed Royce (R-CA) applauded the unveiling of Havel's bust at the US Capitol.

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Achiseled bust of President Václav Havel now sits in the United States Capitol, the home as well as ultimate symbol of democracy in America and abroad. His likeness serves as a constant reminder of his lifetime commitment to the advocacy of universal human rights and democratic principles, even in the darkest hours, and offers inspiration for others to follow in his footsteps.

The congressional ceremony commemorating the dedication of a bust of Václav Havel was hosted by the Speaker of the House, John Boehner, and joined by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and highest Czech representatives in the Capitol's Statutory Hall on November 19, 2014. Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech



ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons rocks his personal tribute to Havel.

Republic, Jan Hamáček, and the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Sobotka, spoke about Václav Havel's legacy and the momentous 25th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. Former First Lady of the Czech Republic, Dagmar Havlová, was present. True to Havel's personality, ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons rocked out a few tunes in his memory.

The bust was sculpted by

Czech-American artist Lubomir Janecka, who wished to "capture Havel's clear and open nature, the unwavering firmness of his convictions, and his kindness." The official symbols of the Czech Republic, the coat of arms and the two tailed Czech lion, are symbolically found on the pedestal.

Three small stones from the Czech Republic have also

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Photo courtesy of Almoszár Mrika

Photo courtesy of Almoszár Mrika



Ambassador's Message



Ambassador
Gandalovič

The weeklong commemorations celebrating freedom and saluting the legacy of President Václav Havel were, for all Czech people and me personally, unforgettable. To mark 25 years of democracy with three thousand people at the Washington National Cathedral to the sounds of the greatest Czech classical masterpieces played by the Czech Philharmonic and then to have a bust of Václav Havel placed in the United States Capitol before the US House leadership and highest Czech representatives was unquestionably historic. Czech and Americans came together in unity to celebrate their strong belief in the same democratic value system.

Petr Gandalovič



Czech Delegation Visits Washington



Ambassador Petr Gandalovič hosts a meeting with high-ranking Czech and US representatives at his residence in Washington, DC.



US Vice President Joe Biden meets with Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Jan Hamáček, and the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Sobotka.



Speaker Jan Hamáček talks with the US Speaker of the House, John Boehner



Speaker Jan Hamáček meets with US House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

Havel's Bust Unveiled at US Capitol

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been embedded into the granite. The semiprecious stone Agate, which comes from the region of Český ráj (Czech Paradise), was used to decorate the walls of the Chapel of Saint Wenceslas in the Saint Vitus Cathedral at the Prague Castle, the seat of the Czech presidency. Vltavin or moldavite is a gemstone that can be found almost exclusively in the watershed of the Vltava River. Václav Havel resided in a house on its bank in Prague. The third small stone is an ordinary rock from the garden of Václav Havel's summer house in the village of Hrádeček. He spent a lot of time in this modest house throughout his life and died there as well.

American Friends of the Czech Republic and the Václav Havel Library Foundation financed the creation.

This was a historic honor as President Havel is only the

fourth foreign leader to be represented in the United States Capitol building. The distinction was unanimously approved by the House of Representatives (H. Res. 506) in the spring of 2014.

The resolution itself reflects upon the legendary address that Vaclav Havel delivered on February 21, 1990, before a Joint Session of Congress and his legacy that "inspires those that advocate and work for freedom from tyranny."

Through the resolution Václav Havel is remembered as "one of the world's great democratic leaders ... (who) was awarded many international prizes recognizing his commitment to peace and democratic principles," including the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush for being "one of liberty's great heroes."



Photo courtesy of Ales Petráška

Washington National Cathedral



Photo courtesy of Ales Petráška

Czech Philharmonic Attracts Thousands for Memorable Concert

On November 17, 2014, the world renowned Czech Philharmonic, under the direction of Maestro Jiří Bělohlávek, performed an extraordinary concert at the Washington National Cathedral before 3,000 people, coming from all corners of the United States and the Czech Republic.

The orchestra beautifully rendered Bedřich Smetana's *Vltava (The Moldau)*, from the symphonic poem *Má vlast (My Country)*, and Antonín Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9 in E minor, Op. 95, "From the New World."*

Opening remarks were presented by: Jan Hamáček, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic; Bohuslav Sobotka,

Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State; Pavol Demeš, former Slovak Minister of International Relations; US Congressman Ed Royce, and Pavel Fischer, Chairman of the Board of the Prague Freedom Foundation.

High ranking dignitaries, including former First Lady of the Czech Republic, Dagmar Havlová, came together at the concert to remember and celebrate that momentous date of 1989, when the streets in Prague were filled with an atmosphere of conviction and hope. The courageous students had then seized the moment and dissident and visionary Václav Havel led the velvet transformation of the Czechoslovak society and political system.



Photo courtesy of František Cebir

Speaker Jan Hamáček



Photo courtesy of František Cebir

Former US Secretary Madeleine Albright



Photo courtesy of František Cebir

Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka



Photo courtesy of František Cebir

Speaker Jan Hamáček and former US Ambassador Norman Eisen



Photo courtesy of František Cebir

Prime Minister Sobotka, Secretary Madeleine Albright, and Speaker Jan Hamáček

Gala Dinner Honors Havel's Global Impact

The Václav Havel Library Foundation, in collaboration with the American Friends of the Czech Republic, hosted a gala dinner to honor and extend Václav Havel's global legacy of human rights and civil society at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC.

Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright moderated an elaborate program before 400 guests, who included US Senators and Congressmen as well as Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Jan Hamáček, and Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Sobotka.



Photo courtesy of Ales Petráška

Ambassador Gandalovič and his wife Pavlína Gandalovičová

Dramatic readings of works by Václav Havel were read by: Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the Court of St. James's, Michael Žantovský; former Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the US and current President of the Václav Havel Library, Martin Palouš; late Václav Havel's brother Ivan Havel; Miss World 2006, Taťána Kuchařová; Antonieta Lopez and Lilian Tintoriov (the mother and wife of Venezuela politician Leopoldo Lopez who was arrested for organizing protests against the government in Caracas); Azar Nafisi (the author of the book *Reading Lolita in Tehran*); and Rosa Maria Payá (Cuban political activist Oswaldo Payá's daughter, who continues in her father's fight for freedom).





Photo courtesy of František Gebr

Former US Ambassador William Cabaniss, former US Ambassador Richard Graber, former Czech Ambassador Petr Kolář, former US Ambassador William Luers, current US Ambassador Andrew Schapiro, former US Ambassador Craig Stapleton, former Czech Ambassador Alexandr Vondra

Lion and Eagle Symposium

Former and current Czech and US statesmen sat down for a frank discussion about the unfinished business of transformation in Central Europe and beyond, the current state of Czech-American relations, as well as the reiteration of the principles which transatlantic security and cooperation have been built upon, on November 18, 2014.

This Lion and Eagle Symposium: *Geopolitical and Economic Challenges through the Eyes of Czech and American Envoys* was held at the Atlantic

Council in cooperation with the Embassy of the Czech Republic. Jan Hamáček, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, delivered the keynote address.

As a sequel to Prague's 2011 Lion and Eagle Symposium, two panels offered unique perspectives, coinciding with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, and the fifteenth anniversary of the Czech Republic's accession into NATO. The first panel on Strategic Security Challenges

Facing Central and Eastern Europe Today was moderated by the President of the American Council on Germany, William Drozdiak, and joined by Ambassadors William J. Cabaniss, Richard W. Graber, Petr Kolář, William Luers, Andrew H. Schapiro, Craig Roberts Stapleton, and Alexandr Vondra.

The second panel on the Future of the Transatlantic Bond and Czech-American Relations was moderated by



Speaker Jan Hamáček

Photo courtesy of František Gebr

former President of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Kevin Klose, and joined by Ambassadors Adrian A. Basora, Norman L. Eisen, Martin Palouš, John Shattuck, Jenonne R. Walker, and Michael Žantovský. 

NGOs Discuss Human Rights Initiatives

The National Endowment for Democracy, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Czech Republic, held a discussion on the *Twenty-five Years of Freedom: The Continuing Struggle for Europe Whole and Free* on November 20, 2014.

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Karel Schwarzenberg, offered his remarks on

the situation in Ukraine and the power of the powerless, a conversation also joined by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Distinguished panelists, including representatives from People in Need, Forum 2000, and the Václav Havel Library, further discussed the common commitment to the future of democracy in Europe and the role of NGOs in aiding democracy across borders.



Photo courtesy of NED

Jacques Rupnik, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques; Jackson Diehl, The Washington Post; Moderator: Christopher Walker, International Forum for Democratic Studies; Leon Wieseltier, The New Republic; Nadia Diuk, National Endowment for Democracy; Martin Palouš, Václav Havel Library

Cuban human rights activist Rosa María Payá also participated in the event, presenting her view on Cuba.

View the discussion online at: <http://www.ned.org/events/25-years-after-the-velvet-revolution-the-continuing-struggle-for-a-europe-whole-and-free> 

Conference Addresses Havel's Political Importance and Legacy

Senator John McCain, former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, non-profits and universities participated in the conference *Václav Havel's Legacy Today* hosted by The John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress on November 19, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Czech Republic and Florida International University (FIU). The conference focused on the changing political dynamics in Europe and beyond, and the lasting impact of Havel's legacy in modern times.

Over 400 attendees filtered into the Coolidge Auditorium on the crisp autumn morning, including former Czech and US Ambassadors, diplomats, scholars, and students. A collection of Dvořák's infamous music played as guests made their way to their seats and reminisced over black and white photographs of Václav Havel as a dissident, president and citizen by Oldřich Škácha, projected onto a large screen.

Director Jan McAuliffe of the Kluge Center opened the conference, followed by a short video montage reflecting on the life of Václav Havel, directed by Czech documentary film-



Ambassador Michael Žantovský, Secretary Albright, and Senator McCain answer questions from the audience.

"President Havel maintained that politics is about values, starting with moral values. The primary guardians of these values are not states or political organizations but free individuals endowed with a sense of responsibility."
~ Michael Žantovský

maker Petr Jančárek. Guests were also treated to a video message from former US President George W. Bush, where he offered congratulatory remarks for the 25th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. President Bush called Havel a friend and stated: "As democracy pushes forward into every corner of the world, it does so on the back of Václav Havel's strong example of intellectual integrity and his refusal to be intimidated by tyranny."

Czech Minister of Culture, Daniel Herman, and the late Czech president's brother, Ivan Havel, spoke briefly at the event offering their own insight into the life of the extraordinary statesman.

Czech Ambassador to the Court of Saint James's, Michael Žantovský, moderated the first panel centering on the political importance of Václav Havel, featuring distinguished panelists Madeleine Albright and John McCain. The dynamic discussion between the two powerful political leaders strayed to the current situation in the Ukraine, as well as the



NED President Carl Gershman, former Czech Ambassador Martin Palouš, FIU President Mark Rosenberg, Columbia University Professor Jan Švejnar, Professor Jacques Rupnik, and VHL Chairman Jan Macháček

US' growing concerns over Russia. Secretary Albright also spoke of the continuing need for Radio Free Europe and asked Senator McCain to help support it. Between panels, a video excerpt from Václav Havel's Speech, "The Emperor Has No Clothes" (May 24, 2005) was shown.

Former Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States, Martin Palouš, moderated the second panel focused on researching, revisiting, and reaffirming Václav Havel's legacy. Panelists included Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy; Jan Macháček, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Václav Havel Library; Mark Rosenberg, President of Florida International University; Jacques Rupnik, Professor at Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques; Jan Švejnar, Professor of International Relations and Public Affairs at



Ivan Havel
Brother of the late Czech President

Columbia University.

The conference concluded with a short film *Havel Forever* (Oct. 12, 2014), which featured a flash mob in support of prisoners of conscience.

In connection to the conference, the European Division at the Library of Congress organized a display of works from its collection on former President of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel. The display included photographs, letters, plays, books, autobiographies and biographies.

The event was a prelude to the afternoon dedication of Václav Havel's bust at the U.S. Capitol.



Jane McAuliffe
Director of the Kluge Center



Daniel Herman
Minister of Culture



Georgetown Celebrates International Students' Day

On November 17, 1989, students in Prague marched to commemorate International Student's Day. The day marked events from 1939 during which a funeral procession for a fatally wounded student turned into an anti-Nazi protest in occupied Prague.

Remembering those events fifty years later, student leaders in 1989 organized a mass student gathering. After the police brutally attacked them, hundreds of thousands from all corners of Czechoslovakia joined to protest the ruling communist regime in what is known as the Velvet Revolution.

In recognition of the milestone anniversaries, Georgetown University professors Maya Roth and

Shiloh Krupar announced Christina Ling as the winner of the essay competition *Dreaming of a Better World: Inspirations from Prague* on November 17, 2014, during a ceremony in commemoration of International Students' Day.



"Globalization as a whole has led to many conflicts in recent times, but I believe that the pathway to solving these conflicts is educating people worldwide about the importance of embracing culture and individuality."
~ Christina Ling

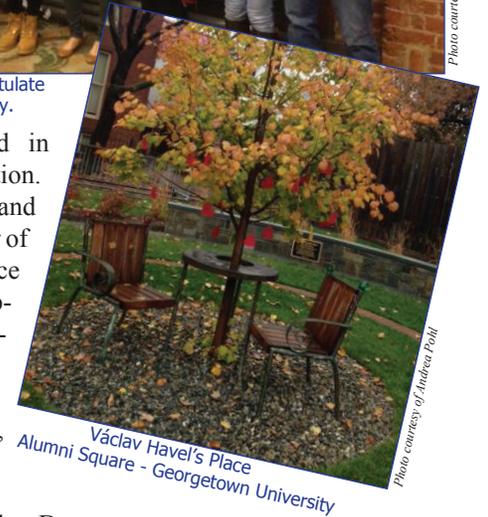
The essay competition was organized in collaboration with the Embassy of the Czech Republic.

The event was initially scheduled to take place at Václav Havel's Place in the Alumni Square, where 25 keys hung from the branches of the linden tree along with 25 hearts featuring 25 phrases from stu-



Georgetown students congratulate Christina Ling on her essay.

Photo courtesy of Andrea Pohl



Václav Havel's Place Alumni Square - Georgetown University

Photo courtesy of Andrea Pohl

dents who participated in the essay competition. Georgetown students and Professor Roth, Director of Theatre and Performance Studies, tied a large ribbon at the site in remembrance.

As rain gently fell, they distributed daisies, a symbol of peace, in front of Hearst Hall and led the way to the Davis Performing Arts Center, where the award ceremony took place. Czech flags and phrases from students participating in the essay competition adorned the walls. In the background, a recording of *Marta's Prayer*, a tribute to the Velvet Revolution sung by Marta Kubišová, played.

Keys jingled from the hands of Georgetown students as they said, "Už je tady," (It is here) to signal the start of the ceremony. That same phrase was used during the Velvet Revolution, where thousands

rang their keys in solidarity. During the ceremony, students recited passages from Havel's work.

Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Karel Schwarzenberg, reflected on his own experience during the Velvet Revolution and under totalitarian regimes. He presented Christina Ling with a free trip to Prague, compliments of the Czech Embassy, Czech Tourism, and Fusion Hotel Prague.



The Year of Miracles

In 1989, courageous citizens across Central and Eastern Europe pushed to end communist rule, taking Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms further than he ever planned. Poland's Solidarity brought the opposition to power while a reformist government in Hungary opened its border with Austria. As peaceful citizens took to the streets in East Germany, the Berlin Wall fell, and in Czechoslovakia a transition to democracy saw the dissident Václav Havel elected president.

To remember the events twenty five years later on November 17, 2014, the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at George Washington University held a panel discussion on *Who Tore Down the Iron Curtain and Why?*, moderated by Hope M. Harrison, Associate Professor of History and International Affairs among former dissidents and eyewitnesses.

The panelists, Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic Daniel Herman, German diplomat Toralf Pilz, Hungarian Ambassador Gyorgy Szapáry, civil activist and former Slovak Minister of International Relations Pavol Demeš, and Polish activist of the Fighting Solidarity movement Maria Koziebrodzka, discussed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain.



Excerpts from Essay Competition

"One of the principles of democracy is the understanding that every person contains a precious, individual will that ought to be respected despite any outward differences."
~ Elizabeth Biener

"...if we view the enemy only as perpetrators of unfounded violence, then how could we ever find a peaceful resolution?"
~ Rebecca Kuang

"To affect change usually requires both individual and collective action."
~ Zoey Krulick

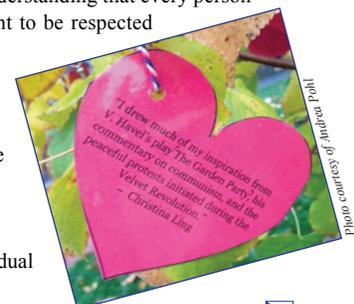


Photo courtesy of Andrea Pohl



Hundreds Gather for Freedom Celebration

On November 19, 2014, over 600 guests gathered at the Embassy of the Czech Republic to remember and celebrate the Velvet Revolution and the events that led up to it twenty-five years ago.

Many of the guests had the privilege to be present at the unveiling of the bust of Václav Havel in the United States Capitol just hours earlier and, hence, shared the exhilaration of the extremely significant ceremony with others. The sounds of the Czech and US national anthems sent shivers up visitors' spines as they all stood proud for the brave men and women who fought for the same causes, freedom and democracy.

Ambassador of the Czech Republic Petr Gandalovič



Speaker Jan Hamáček, AFoCR Fred Malek, former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Ambassador Petr Gandalovič, and Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka

welcomed his guests and gave the floor to Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Jan Hamáček, and Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Sobotka, for inspirational addresses.

Former US Secretary Madeleine Albright and Chairman of the American Friends of the Czech Republic Fred Malek offered their memories and input for the future as well.

Lastly, the embassy thanked all sponsors for their generous support. For the rest of the evening, the crowd

enjoyed a performance by Czech-American musician and director of the Bohemian Jazz Festival Rudy Linka as well as Czech “pub” style dishes, a favorite of President Václav Havel.

Guests had the opportunity to view the exhibition *The Wall* by Petr Šis, which featured the author's original drawings and photographs, as well as authentic items from the 1950s to 80s. Additionally, black and white photographs by Oldřich Škácha provided more context on the life of Václav Havel. 🇨🇪



Ambassador Petr Gandalovič



AFoCR Chairman Fred Malek



Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka



Former US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright



Speaker Jan Hamáček

BOOKSIGNING

Havel: A Life

Politics and Prose Bookstore packed a full house to share an evening with Czech Ambassador to the Court to Saint James's, Michael Žantovský, talking about his new book *Havel: A Life* in conversation with former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on November 21, 2014.

The book is a definitive biography of Václav Havel—writer, dissident and Czech president—mapping his journeys from being a playwright to becoming a national leader and world proponent of democracy, recounted by his former press secretary and lifelong friend. With unprecedented access to private correspondence, documents, and interviews, author Michael Žantovský presents a powerful, engaging, and revelatory account of a giant among men.

For the complete conversation that took place at Politics and Prose, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OD8ZLzrXR1M>. 🇨🇪



Former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Ambassador Michael Žantovský



The Václav Havel Bust

Artist Statement - Lubomir Janecka

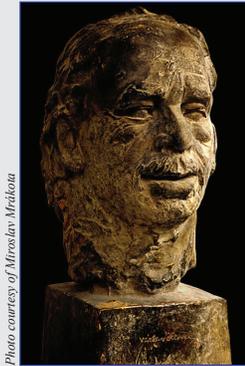


Photo courtesy of Miroslav Mráková

I started working on the portrait of Václav Havel in the summer 2012. As I was reading his books and plays and going through hundreds of his photographs, I became interested in him not only as a politician but as a human being. I searched how to best express his personality, and in that process, I created several portraits, each from a different stage of his life. I covered the years of his youth spent in dissent, the time when he was repeatedly imprisoned, the Velvet Revolution, his presidency, as well as the last years of his life when he was fighting a serious illness.

I ended up with nine sketches in clay and plaster. All of them had the potential to be fully developed and become legitimate portraits of this extraordinary man, but I had to pick one. I chose the portrait from the time shortly after the Velvet Revolution. While working on its version for the Capitol, I realized that this was also the time when Václav Havel came to Washington, DC, to give a speech to the U.S. Congress. I called the portrait Václav Havel Victorious, and I hope that this is how the American people remember him: full of life and full of hope – for his country and for the world.

Modeling of Havel's bust is expressive. My goal was to capture his clear and open nature, the unwavering firmness of his convictions, and his kindness to people. The bust is cast in bronze and gilded with gold. I finished it with some patina applied over the gold. The whole bust should evoke an image of a nugget of gold.

The pedestal is made of magpie granite from Canada. When I was working on it, I used very little polishing. My approach to the carving of the pedestal needed to correspond with my approach to the modeling of the portrait. On the surface of the pedestal, I did not suppress the chisel marks completely because I wanted to preserve a certain drama of the stone's surface. The bust and pedestal together form a monolithic object. My goal was to create a sculpture that gives an impression of a living (not a static) artifact.

The bronze and the gold of the letters, Czech lion, and Czech coat of arms echo the bronze and the gold of the bust. The Czech lion on the left side of the pedestal refers to the history of the Czech statehood. The double – tailed lion appears as a symbol of the Czech ruling dynasty already in the 13th century.

The coat of arms on the front of the pedestal is the current official symbol of the Czech Republic, which displays the Czech lion, Moravian Eagle, and Silesian eagle—symbols of the three historical regions of Czech lands.



The Václav Havel Bust in the Freedom Foyer of the US Capitol

The coat of arms on the front of the pedestal is the current official symbol of the Czech Republic, which displays the Czech lion, Moravian Eagle, and Silesian eagle—symbols of the three historical regions of Czech lands. 

CZECH the NEWS

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

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