



100 YEARS OF CZECH-SWEDISH BUSINESS RELATIONS

BEGINNINGS>

FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPRESENTATION IN STOCKHOLM



Maj. Louis Pavel, Czechoslovak
Trade Representative in Stockholm,
1919 (Czech MFA Archives)

Trade between Sweden and Czechia precedes the official relations between the two countries and dates back to Middle Ages. However, after the founding of independent Czechoslovakia in 1918, these relations were formalized.

On May 23, 1919, the Representation of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Trade and Industry was established in Stockholm. The Representation's head was Major Louis Pavel, an experienced diplomat and fluent Swedish speaker. He assisted Czechoslovak exporters to set up connections with Swedish partners.

INTERWAR PERIOD>

The Trade Representation assisted Czechoslovak exporters to deliver malt, household ironware, glassware, linen products, enamel products and music instruments. Other important products exported to Sweden in the interwar period included cars, military equipment (cannons, ammunition, etc), shoes, sugar and machinery.



The L & K type F cars were driven in Sweden since 1916
(ŠKODA AUTO Archive/ www.sverige.cz)



Envoy Vladimír Radimský, Czechoslovak
envoy in Stockholm, 1920-1927
(Institute of History of the Czech
Academy of Sciences)

He also saw the promotion of trade as one of his main duties. In 1921, his legation published an informative booklet in Swedish about Czechoslovak economy, reviewed by Sweden's Prime Minister and Nobel Peace laureate Hjalmar Branting.

On November 20, 1920, the first Czechoslovak envoy to Sweden Vladimír Radimský presented his credentials to King Gustaf V.



(Czech Embassy Stockholm)



Also Sweden's interest in the Czechoslovak market grew considerably. In 1919, the first Swedish company (SKF) opened its office and later also factory in Prague, followed by other enterprises. On May 5, 1921, the first Swedish envoy to Czechoslovakia Baron Gerhard Löwen presented his credentials to President Masaryk.



In 1928, a separate SKF building was built in Holešovice, Prague
[www.skf.com/ History of the Czech SKF](http://www.skf.com/History%20of%20the%20Czech%20SKF)

In 1924, Tjeckoslovakiska Informationsbyrån opened on Kungsholmen, to promote trade and tourism, while Tjeckoslovakiska Badortsbyrån advertised Czechoslovak spas from 1934. Since late 1920s, there was also a tourism and trade office attached to Svenska Dagbladet financed by the Czechoslovak Ministry of Trade. However, it was the Czechoslovak Trade Chamber at Jakobstorg in Stockholm created in 1936 that proved to be the most efficient promotion vehicle. Its advertisements were marked by aesthetic modernism. Prominent Swedish businessmen became its members. An exhibition organized to draw attention to the new office was attended by 600 people. In the first 6 months of its existence, the Chamber answered 1200 letters and established numerous business connections. The Chamber also arranged travels for groups of Swedish engineers and businessmen to Czechoslovakia.

By 1937, Czechoslovakia became Sweden's 11th most important trading partner (after Finland): import from Czechoslovakia amounted to 53 763 000 SEK, while export from Sweden was 35 592 000 SEK. The trade was probably substantially bigger, since official statistics of both countries tended to underestimate its volume by excluding goods traded through intermediaries in other countries.



48 tanks type Praga AH-IV-Sv produced by CKD in cooperation with Avesta and Volvo were delivered to Sweden after 1937
www.severskelisty.cz

In 1939-1945, Czech-Swedish business relations were disrupted by German Nazi occupation of Czechia and between 1948-1989, by the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia. The Velvet Revolution brought back democracy and free market economy to Czechoslovakia in 1989. In 1993, the country peacefully split into Czechia and Slovakia.



In 1938, the Czechoslovak entrepreneur Herbert Felix escaped Nazis and moved to Sweden. He helped to develop the Swedish food industry.
www.herbertfelixinstitutet.se

In 2018, Czech Republic was the 14th biggest importer to Sweden, and Czechia was Sweden's 22nd most important export market, with the volume of trade of 35,5 billion SEK and growing. 200 Swedish companies established branches in Czechia (SAAB, IKEA, Mölnlycke, SKF, Skanska, Scania, Volvo, Trelleborg Group, ASSA Abloy, HM, Sandvik, just to name a few), and additional 1000 companies are involved in Czech - Swedish trade.