

Czech National Day 2021

Jiří Brodský

Ministers, distinguished members of parliament, governors,

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

It is a great pleasure for me and my wife Hana to welcome you at the traditional reception we are hosting on the occasion of the **Czech National Day**. This is the fifth time we are opening this reception and, as our mission to Mongolia will be completed in mid-December, it is also an occasion for us to say goodbye and express our thanks to all of you.

We have spent four happy years in Mongolia and we will always cherish the **memories and friendships** we have gathered. The close relations between our two countries have been strengthened by numerous high-level visits, business missions, mutual support at international fora, cultural events and also development projects, both bilateral and multilateral, on the basis of the Czech membership in the European Union and the United Nations, and thanks to the presence of Czech NGOs People in Need and Caritas.

Bilateral trade this year has increased by 32% so far, as compared to the pre-covid year 2019, with Czech Finep remaining the main Czech investor, building 1650 eurostandard flats in the City of Erdenet and interested in extending its investment to other cities, including Ulaanbaatar. We have initiated many business projects that will be launched in the coming months and years. Representations of Jawa Motorcycles and Škoda Auto are just two examples of Czech prominent brands returning to Mongolia. Both countries have identified strong potential for cooperation in infrastructure development, including civil aviation and Shark Aero has found a competent local partner present here tonight.

Prague Zoo has continued bringing Przewalski horses back to Gobi B and extended its cooperation with the Ministry of environment to protecting other endangered species and supporting the rangers in Strictly protected areas of Gobi B and A. We have exchanged experts in public finance, auditing, in agriculture, ichthyology, forestry and energy saving.

The Czech Republic has become home to **the biggest Mongolian community in Europe**, which gives good prospects to direct flight route between our countries, implementation of Social Welfare and Readmission agreements, as well as closer cooperation in consular and police matters.

Hana and I have travelled around Mongolia, to meet the governors of 19 aimags and mayors of many soums. Every corner of your country is immensely beautiful and everywhere we have experienced Mongolian hospitality, exceptionally talented musicians, singers, contortionists, wrestlers, jockeys, archers, craftsmen and also religious personalities and shamans, the good ones.

Czech embassy has been **promoting Czech culture**: classical music, jazz, painting, photography, film, street art, Prague sights as ice-sculptures. We have worked very closely with different vocational training centres. We have promoted study opportunities at Czech universities and the number of Mongolian students in Czechia is currently almost 100. Kafka, Hrabal, Čapek or Poucha have been translated into Mongolian, a new book about the Czech history was authored by Professor Enkhjargal, a new conversation book was published and a new private school of Czech language established in Ulaanbaatar.

My **special thanks belong to the embassy team**. We have been smiling at each other most of the time and I believe it makes a difference. The consular section has made an impressive transition in the past four years and I am convinced that we have improved the service for the visa applicants and consular clients, both in terms of registration system and in terms of their comfort and safety in the new reception premises.

You know that one of the initiatives Hana and I supported privately was establishment of the **Fat Cat Jazz Club** in Ulaanbaatar and I feel certain our names will stay there for many years to come thanks to the excellent, talented musicians who are behind this project and thanks to their manager and singer, Jojo Clio. I am thankful to Jojo that she has accepted our invitation to perform here tonight.

Lastly, let me thank Delicatessen café and Altan Taria for their excellent food and for providing Pilsner Urquell today for our guests, and let me also thank Ms Solongo, who represents three traditional Bohemia crystal glassmakers in Mongolia and is presenting them here.

Thank you and please do not forget to take the card with our contact details at the door. I am returning from Asia to Asia department, so we are going to stay in touch.