

Czech Republic - OVERVIEW

Updated: February 13, 2014

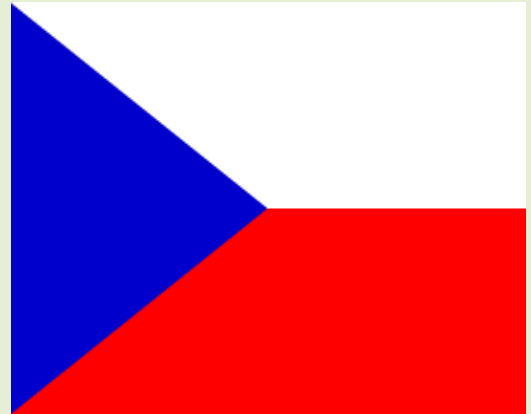


Country Name Long Form: Czech Republic

Government Type: Parliamentary Democracy

Languages Spoken: Czech, Slovak

National Flag



Czech Republic is a Tier III Country. Significant security measures are necessary.

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Czech Republic					
Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical					

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Political Violence is rated at LOW in Czech Republic

Civil disorder is rare, although strikes and demonstrations do occur. Public protests are usually non-violent and issue-centered. Demonstrations are usually small and peaceful. Most demonstrations number less than 50 but have been known to exceed 500 participants. There have been incidents of violence involving rowdy fans at sporting events. During these incidents and other demonstration, the police are generally well prepared and handle protestors in a professional and competent manner.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is assessed as LOW

The threat from terrorism in the Czech Republic is rated as low. There have been no recent significant incidents and no known domestic or international groups which pose a particular threat to the country.

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Nevertheless, the global risk of terrorism remains; this threat maybe somewhat heightened due to the country's association with and support for NATO and U.S. policy.

RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Czech Republic has a score of 48, indicating that the country has medium levels of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in the public sector, with the least corrupt receiving a maximum score of 100.

CRIME

Crime is assessed as LOW

Crime is rated as low throughout the country; however there is likely to be an elevated threat in major urban areas, particularly the capital. Most crimes are opportunistic in nature and include petty street crime such as pickpocketing, bag-snatching and theft of unattended items. Violent crimes are less common; however, there have been reports of muggings in the past. Highly professional petty criminals, often working together in small groups, are known to operate in popular tourist areas including Charles Bridge, Wenceslas Square and Old Town Square in the capital; these individuals are known to specifically target foreign visitors.

KIDNAPPING

The Czech Republic is generally considered to be a safe country by central/ eastern European standards. Reports of Westerners being kidnapped in the Czech Republic are exceedingly rare; however, a notable area of concern related to kidnapping in the country pertains to illegal sex trafficking. There have been several cases of eastern European females being abducted and forced into the sex trade. This is not a serious concern for most Western travelers, and there are no recent reports of Western female travelers falling victim to this type of crime.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Physical assault and other violent crimes are not particularly common in the Czech Republic. However, in recent years, the U.S. Embassy in Prague has received multiple reports of sexual assaults against Westerners in taxis. While most marked taxis in the country are safe, travelers should always hire a vetted taxi company to ensure a safe experience.

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NATURAL DISASTERS

During the winter months, weather conditions can be severe. Parts of the country experience extremely cold weather and heavy snowfall from November to mid-March.

Flooding is a regular occurrence in parts of the country, especially during spring months from March to May, when rivers tend to swell due to heavy rainfall and melting snow.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- English is spoken widely in business circles and more generally understood in tourist areas, although any attempts at speaking Spanish will be warmly welcomed.
- During the summer time, wear appropriate clothing, to limit exposure to the sun at the hottest times of the day, use ample sun lotion and drink plenty of liquids to prevent heat stroke and exhaustion.
- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.
- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking or driving in Czech Republic
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arranged through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and do not make any sudden movements. Victims have been killed when they resisted attack or refused to give up their money or other valuables.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your food, drinks or belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

Important Contact Details:

International Dialing Code: +420

International Dialing Prefix: 00

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Victims of crime in Czech Republic should contact the following phone numbers for assistance:

POLICE: The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in Czech Republic is 158

FIRE DEPARTMENT: 150

AMBULANCE: 155

EMERGENCY: 112

Note: Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- Travel to rural areas and poorer parts of Czech Republic should be avoided.
- The standard of infrastructure in Czech Republic is generally very high.
- The supply of basic amenities, such as power and water are reliable.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No rural travel after dark.
- No deviation from approved travel routes.
- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No photographs of any military installation, establishment or site of strategic importance are prohibited; this includes airports, ports and harbors.

HEALTH

Medical facilities are adequate countrywide. The best medical care is available in Prague, where there are numerous private medical clinics with English-speaking doctors. However, staff members at most Czech medical facilities, especially outside the main cities, do not speak English. Hence, some knowledge of Czech or German may help to facilitate communication. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for medical services. Pharmacies are available in all cities and towns, and basic medical supplies are readily available.

- Tap water in Czech Republic is safe to drink but we still recommend that travelers drink bottle water as a precaution.
- Unpasteurized dairy products should be avoided if possible; unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if travelling to Czech Republic:

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- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended for those at high risk of suffering animal bites)
- Tick-borne encephalitis (recommended for travelers visiting forested parts of the country)
- Typhoid (recommended)

SIGNIFICANT DISEASES

- **Tick-borne Encephalitis** – A viral infection of the central nervous system that is spread by ticks. It is a risk for travelers visiting forested areas between March and November. The number of infections has sharply raised since the late 1990s, with most cases reported around the cities of Ceske Budejovice, Plzen Olomouc.

It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for diseases including influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

HOSPITALS – Czech Republic

Central Military Hospital
U vonjenske nemocnice 1200
Prague
Tel: +420 97320 8333

Hospital Na Bulovce
Budinova 67/2
Prague
Tel: +420 26608 1111
<http://bulovka.cz/>

Fakultni nemocnice v Motole
V Uvalu 84, 150 06
Prague
Tel: +420 22443 1111
<http://www.fnmotol.cz/>

US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

The US Embassy in Czech Republic

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Trziste 15

Prague

Phone: +420 (0) 257 402 111

Fax: +420 (0) 257 022 809

Internet website: <http://prague.usembassy.gov/>

Email: consprague@state.gov

Emergency Telephone: +420 (0) 257 022 000

USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.