

EMBASSY OF IRELAND NEWSLETTER

Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig oraibh go léir!

St. Patrick's Day Celebrations in the Czech Republic, 2014



Ambassador Alison Kelly and the Embassy of Ireland are delighted to wish you a very happy St. Patrick's Day and look forward to meeting with the Irish community and friends of Ireland and to celebrating our National Day. The Embassy's official reception is by invitation only.

GREENING

The Petřín Tower in Prague and the Ostrava City Hall will join Tourism Ireland's Global Greening initiative for the first time to mark St Patrick's Day. Both landmarks will turn green from Friday evening, 14 March until Tuesday morning, 18 March.

St. Patrick's Charity Gala Ball

The Czech Irish Business and Cultural Association (CIBCA) St. Patrick's Charity Gala Ball will take place on Saturday, 15 March at 7.30 p.m. at the Grand Hotel Bohemia in Prague. For more information, please visit the CIBCA website at www.cibca.cz.

Annual St. Patrick's Day Mass

The traditional St. Patrick's Day Mass will take place on Sunday, 16 March at 12.30 p.m. in St. Thomas Church, Josefská 8, Prague 1.



Courtesy of Ostrava Cultural Festival

Irish Cultural Festival in Ostrava

This year will see the tenth anniversary of the Irish Cultural Festival in Ostrava. The event, from 24 to 29 March, will feature live music on Stodolní Street, as well as Irish theatre, literature and film. This year's Gala Ball will take place in the Imperial Hotel on Friday, 28 March, and the festival will culminate in a free concert in the Bonver Arena on 29 March. Festival-goers can enjoy a Week of Irish Cuisine again this year, with traditional Irish food being served at the Hotel Brioni throughout the week. Further information on the programme is at www.irishculturalfestival.com.

Bernard's Celebrate St. Patrick's Day

Bernard's St. Patrick's Day Celebration will take place on Saturday, 15 March at KC Novodvorská. The programme features live Irish music from the band Poitín, traditional Irish dancing and prize competitions. More information at www.bernards.cz.

Other Places to Celebrate in Prague

To celebrate St. Patrick's Day in a traditional Irish environment, you can visit one of the Irish-style pubs in the city: Caffrey's (<http://caffreys.cz>), James Joyce (www.jamesjoyceprague.cz), J.J. Murphy's (www.jjmurphys.cz); The Dubliner (www.aulddubliner.cz); Rocky O'Reilly's (www.rockyoreillys.cz); Pub O'Brien (www.pubobrien.cz); Sherlock's Pub (www.sherlockspub.cz) and O'Che's (www.oches.com). Other Prague pubs and clubs are also hosting events to mark St. Patrick's Day.

Prague and Ostrava Join Global Greening

The Embassy is proud to announce that the Petřín Tower in Prague and the Ostrava City Hall will join Tourism Ireland's Global Greening initiative for the first time to mark St. Patrick's Day. This has been made possible by the generous support of Tourism Ireland, Žabka, and the Czech Irish Business and Cultural Association.

Ambassador Kelly has warmly welcomed the cooperation with the City of Prague and the City of Ostrava in greening the Petřín Tower and the Ostrava City Hall. "I am delighted that Prague and Ostrava have joined the Global Greening initiative. This is a tangible expression of the friendship between Ireland and the Czech Republic and an open invitation to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. I hope that it will further strengthen the links between Ireland and the Czech Republic."



Petřín Tower



Ostrava City Hall

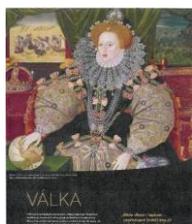
Prague Mayor Tomáš Hudeček commented that "the City of Prague is pleased to have joined other world-known cities that will go green on the occasion of St. Patrick's Day this year. By greening one of Prague landmarks, the Petřín Tower, we want to demonstrate the traditionally friendly ties between Ireland and the Czech Republic as well as wish everyone to enjoy the celebrations of this significant Irish holiday as much as possible."

The lights on the Petřín Tower will turn green on Friday evening 14 March at 19.30 at Novotného lávka in the presence of Prague City Mayor Tomáš Hudeček, Mayor of Prague 1, Oldřich Lomecký, and Irish Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Alison Kelly, who will mark the event with a traditional toast of Jameson Irish whiskey. The Embassy will be delighted to see you there.

The Petřín tower, the Sleeping Beauty's Castle at Disneyland® Paris, the Holmenkollen ski jump in Oslo and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Petra in Jordan are new additions to the many famous attractions and sites around the world which go green to mark St. Patrick's Day, including the Pyramids in Egypt, the 'Welcome' sign in Las Vegas, the Sydney Opera House, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the London Eye, Table Mountain in South Africa, Niagara Falls, the Empire State Building in New York, the Prince's Palace in Monaco, the Allianz Arena and Odeonsplatz in Munich, the Sky Tower in New Zealand and the Cibeles Palace and fountain in Madrid.

More information about the Greening, including photographs from last year, is available on Tourism Ireland's website (www.tourismireland.com/Home!/Our-Marketing-Overseas/The-Global-Greening-2013.aspx).

Upcoming Cultural Events



Strangers to Citizens

The travelling exhibition Strangers to Citizens introduces the story of the Irish who left for continental Europe between 1600 and 1800. The exhibition, in the Czech language, has been touring the country and will be on display at the Moravian Theatre in Olomouc from 26 March to 30 April. For more information on touring dates and locations, please consult the Embassy website.

Beckett Reading, National Gallery

The production company "Studio hrdinů", in cooperation with the National Gallery in Prague, is organising a series of video installations, commencing with a reading of NOT I by Samuel Beckett. The video installation will be shown on 15 March at 16.00, 16.30 and 17.00 during special "lecturer days" in the Veletržní Palace, National Gallery, Prague.

Irish Set Dance Weekend Seminars

The Prague Irish Set Dance Weekend will take place from 4 to 6 April. Seminars and a ceilí will be led by Kevin and Carol Monaghan (UK) and music for the ceilí will be performed by Deenagh Ceilí Band (IRL). More information available at www.bernards.cz, www.setdancing.cz.

21th Days of European Film Festival

The Days of European Film will take place in Prague in the Světozor and Lucerna cinemas from 10 to 17 April, and in the Scala cinema in Brno from 18 to 22 April. The Echoes of DEF will be held in the following towns: Plzeň, Boskovice, Jablonec nad Nisou, Havířov and Hradec Králové from 23 to 27 April. The festival will feature two Irish films this year – “The Sea” directed by Stephen Brown (12 April at 20.30 p.m., Světozor cinema and 17 April at 20.45 p.m., Lucerna cinema), courtesy of the Irish Film Institute and Culture Ireland and “Ballymun Lullaby,” a documentary directed by Frank Berry (15 April at 18.30 p.m., Světozor cinema). The festival is a joint initiative by the European Commission and Member State Embassies in Prague. For further information visit www.eurofilmfest.cz/en.



The Sea



10LET.EU – Open-air Festival on Střelecký ostrov

The Representation of the European Commission in the Czech Republic organises a series of events to mark the 10th anniversary of the accession of the Czech Republic to the EU. The main event celebrating the anniversary and Europe Day will be an open-air festival on 29-30 April on Střelecký ostrov. The programme will feature live music (Tata Bojs, Reptile Youth), public information stands, screenings, exhibitions and debates, as well as cinema tent and other activities for children. For more information and details, please see the festival’s website at www.10let.eu.



Irish May – Festival of Irish Culture in Prague

The Irish May festival will take place during the first weekend in May (2-4 May) in the Celetná Theatre in Prague (www.divadlovceletne.cz). The programme will comprise dance and theatre performances, a literary reading, a workshop and a concert by the popular young Celtic group, The Outside Track (www.theoutsidetrack.com). Information may be found at www.irsky-maj.cz/EN.

Prague Feis

The 6th Annual Delaney Academy Prague Feis will be held from 24 to 25 May at Tyršův dům in the Lesser Quarter (Malá Strana). The feis, which is run by the Rinceoirí Irish dance group, is an international competition open to all dancers from all regions. Over 400 dancers are expected to compete in both hard shoes and soft shoes dance competitions of different levels from beginners to Open Championships, which will be judged by three Irish/English adjudicators. Visitors are welcome between 8 a.m. and the evening on Saturday and from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Sunday. Visit www.praguefeis.cz for more details.



Courtesy of Prague Feis



© Markéta Utišilová

Bernard's Summer School 2014

The fourteenth annual summer school will take place in Prague from 16 to 22 August. The festival will offer dance and music lessons, a ceili evening, music sessions and Irish-themed films. Dancing and music lessons will be offered by Stephen Doherty and David Doocey, among others. For further information visit www.bernards.cz.

Enterprise Ireland News and Czech-Irish Business

Enterprise Ireland (EI) is the Irish government agency responsible for the development and internationalisation of Irish indigenous companies. In 2013, Enterprise Ireland focused on creating jobs in Ireland, growing exports of indigenous companies and stimulating innovation. Enterprise Ireland supported companies now, directly and indirectly, account for more than 300,000 jobs in the Irish economy (16% of total workforce).

Throughout the year, Irish exporting companies demonstrated perseverance, competitiveness and determination when facing difficult global economic conditions. According to the Irish Central Statistical Office, exports of goods to the Czech Republic increased by 37% to €458m in 2013, while imports increased by 11% to €331m. Irish companies continue to bolster their presence in Czech and Central European markets. In May 2013, over 40 companies that participated in Enterprise Ireland's trade mission led by Minister for Small Business John Perry to the Czech Republic and Poland secured new contracts with a potential value of €17m and agreed business alliances across a range of sectors. The success of the trade mission highlighted the growing opportunities for Irish companies in Central European markets.

The European Commission's Winter Economic Forecast puts Ireland's real GDP growth in 2014 at 1.8%, as economic recovery in key trading partners is expected to sustain positive export growth, particularly for services, while further improvements in the labour market and a rise in investment are expected to support domestic demand. Growth is forecast to rise further in 2015 to 2.9%.

The unemployment rate in Ireland dropped to 12.3% in January 2014, not too far from the EU average. The good news is that the number of people employed grew by 61,000, or 3.3%, in the year to the end of 2013. Besides a healthy inflow of foreign direct investments supported by Irish inward investment agency IDA, nearly two thousand jobs will be created over the next three years by 122 start-up companies backed by Enterprise Ireland.

In Forbes' eighth annual ranking of the Best Countries for Business, Ireland reached the top spot for the first time. Ireland scored well across the board and it is the only nation that ranks among the top 15% of countries in every one of the 11 metrics gauged by Forbes. Ireland ranks near the very top for low tax burden, investor protection and personal freedom. Dublin serves as the European headquarters for a number of technology firms including Google, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Twitter opened new Dublin offices in September 2013 with 100 people and plans to double in size over the next 12 months. Facebook established a presence in Dublin in 2009 and is opening new office space in the city that will make it the social media company's largest operation outside of its global headquarters in the US. Ireland's adjustment (including the 17% fall of nominal wages between 2008-11) to recent economic difficulties made it more attractive for investors. There are now more than 1,000 overseas companies with a presence in Ireland including five of the 50 companies on Fast Company's list of The World's Most Innovative Companies 2014.

Enterprise Ireland's office in Prague serves several markets in Central and Southeast Europe and provides customised market research and introductions to buyers in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and in the Balkan countries. Irish companies continue to be very active in these markets, particularly focusing on enterprise software, engineering, electronics and medical devices sectors.

News from the Centre for Irish Studies



The Centre for Irish Studies at Charles University is pleased to announce the publication of *Ireland and the Czech Lands: Contacts and Comparisons in History and Culture* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014). The volume was edited by Gerald Power and Ondřej Pilný, and is the first book-length study of the subject. It was launched in December in the presence of H.E. Alison Kelly. An updated history of the Irish Franciscan College in Prague by Jan Pařez and Hedvika Kuchařová will finally be forthcoming in English at the end of the year.

The Centre will host an international conference of the Irish Theatrical Diaspora project on 12-13 September. The event will be focused on the life of Irish theatre and drama in a broadly defined region of Central Europe, bringing together scholars, translators and theatre practitioners from across Europe to discuss this little known topic.

Information on the activities of the Centre past and present is available on http://ualk.ff.cuni.cz/irish_studies, which contains an extensive searchable bibliography of the cultural relations between Ireland and the Czech lands from the 17th century up till the present day, studies on Czech-Irish relations in the 20th century by Daniel Samek, and an online library catalogue. Courses of the Irish language are offered on three different levels, taught on the premises of both Charles University and Palacký University, Olomouc.

The Centre gratefully acknowledges the support by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, Ireland.



Our role in CIBCA and that of our predecessors, who served on CIBA committees over the years, is to add value to our members - corporates, families and individuals. Through the events we run and through your help, we are also able to contribute to society, here in the Czech Republic and in Ireland. Over the 19 years of the organisation's existence, the interest in Ireland continues to grow, albeit not only through CIBCA activities, but also because of a genuine interest in Irish culture. This enthusiasm hands us a huge opportunity, which we aim to make the most of, to extend our reach in both the business and social spheres in this country.

This year we see our membership increasing and are very happy to continue to work together with other chambers in putting on fun and interesting business mixers, as well as our own wholly CIBCA-run events.

We are very proud to introduce '*Jak vypadá tato zem?*' - a project aimed at children in Czech Primary Schools. Sowing the seed of what Ireland - the country and the culture - may mean to them. We hope this will nourish their interest and will develop into a long-term project. We are very grateful to the European Information Department and the Embassy of Ireland for their cooperation.

Over the last number of weeks, the CIBCA Committee have been busy preparing the CIBCA St. Patrick's Day Ball 2014. We look forward to welcoming you to an evening of pride and celebration of Ireland in the magnificent neo-Baroque Boccaccio ballroom on 15 March at Grand Hotel Bohemia.

We are, as always very grateful for the support H.E. Ambassador Alison Kelly, the staff at the Embassy of Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.

Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona daoibh!

For more details or to join CIBCA, please visit our website at www.cibca.cz.

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Please note that the Embassy has a new telephone number!

Citizens Registration

If you are an Irish citizen resident in the Czech Republic or visiting the country as a short stay tourist or on business you will wish to be aware that the Department recently launched a new citizens registration facility for Irish citizens travelling overseas.

We would be grateful if you could (re-)register your travel details in the new system at the following link <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/citizens-registration>. When you register with the Department, it means that we have a record of your details. The information will allow us to contact you and provide consular assistance, if necessary and possible, in the most effective and expedient manner.

New Passport/Visa/Consular Fees

Please note that the passport, visa and consular fees charged by Embassy Prague has been updated according to the current exchange rate starting 1 March 2014. For more information check the Embassy website.