

EMBASSY OF IRELAND NEWSLETTER

Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig oraibh go léir!

St. Patrick's Day Celebrations in the Czech Republic, 2016



Ambassador Charles Sheehan and the Embassy of Ireland are delighted to wish you a very happy St. Patrick's Day and look forward to celebrating the National Day with the Irish community and friends of Ireland in the Czech Republic. For more news from the Embassy follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Embassy-of-Ireland-Prague-108849892809880/>) and Twitter (@IrlEmbPrague).

GREENING

The Petřín Tower in Prague and the Ostrava City Hall will join **Tourism Ireland's Global Greening initiative** again this year to mark St. Patrick's Day. A new addition to the Greening will be the Mahen Theatre in Brno, which will turn green for the first time in 2016. Details below.



St. Patrick's Day Ball

The Czech Irish Business and Cultural Association (CIBCA) 21st Annual St. Patrick's Day Ball will take place on Saturday, 12 March at 7.00 p.m. at the Grand Hotel Bohemia in Prague. The Ambassador and Mrs. Sheehan will attend the Ball and the Ambassador will give an address, including a message from President Higgins. For more information, please visit the CIBCA website at www.cibca.cz.

Please see below for more information about Irish business in the Czech Republic.

Annual St. Patrick's Day Mass

The traditional St. Patrick's Day Mass will take place on Sunday, 13 March at 12.30 p.m. in St. Thomas Church, Josefská 8, Prague 1, followed by light refreshments. All are welcome at this annual commemoration of our national saint.



Irish Cultural Festival in Ostrava

This year's Irish Cultural Festival in Ostrava, which takes place from 12 to 18 March, will feature live music on Stodolní Street, as well as other selected events.

Further information on the programme is at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Irish-Cultural-Festival-Ostrava/174335819269829>

Courtesy of Ostrava Cultural Festival

St. Patrick's Day Flash Mob

Rinceoirí Irish dance group plans to unite all Irish dance groups from Prague to organise the St. Patrick's Day flash mob. The event was very successful last year and therefore the group decided to repeat it this year, hoping it could become a tradition. It is a great opportunity to promote Irish dance and music in general and to forget the rivalry that can be seen among the groups at competitions. There will be Irish dancers performing at various places in Prague and the event will culminate at Náplavka (Rašínovo nábřeží) where all the groups meet in the afternoon to dance together. A big St. Patrick's Day celebration is going to follow in the evening at La Loca Club (<https://www.laloca.cz/en/home>).

Irish Walk in Prague

This traditional Irish dogs' walk starts on Saturday 12 March at 12.00 p.m. on Wenceslas Sq. and continues through the Old Town Sq. and across the Charles Bridge to Kampa and Malá Strana. Owners of Irish Setters and Greyhounds are welcomed. More information at <https://www.facebook.com/events/190122934683443/200075213688215/>

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: J.J. Murphy's (www.bestirishbarprague.com), Caffrey's (www.caffreys.cz), James Joyce (www.jamesjoyceprague.cz), The Irish Times (<http://www.irishtimesbar.cz>), The Dubliner (www.aulldubliner.cz), Rocky O'Reilly's (www.rockyoreillys.cz), Becketts Irish Pub (www.facebook.com/pages/Becketts-Irish-Pub-and-Restaurant/167573086953044), Pub O'Brien (www.pubobrien.cz) or O'Che's (www.oches.com). Other Prague pubs and clubs are also hosting events to mark St. Patrick's Day.

Brno Mahen Theatre will join traditional Greening sites – Petřín Tower and Ostrava City Hall

Brno Mahen Theatre will join the Petřín Tower in Prague and the Ostrava City Hall this year to celebrate Tourism Ireland's Global Greening initiative marking St. Patrick's Day, 17 March.



Mahen Theatre in Brno



Petřín Tower © Eltodo Citelum



Ostrava City Hall © City of Ostrava

St. Patrick's Day is a celebration for Irish people and those who love Ireland, all over the world. Over the last six years, Tourism Ireland's Global Greening campaign has seen world-famous icons and sites across continents light up green to celebrate our national day. The Empire State Building in New York, Niagara Falls in North America, the Sacré-Cœur Basilica in Paris, the Allianz Arena in Munich, the Colosseum in Rome, the Sky Tower in Auckland, the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio, the London Eye and the Great Wall of China – to mention a just a few of last year's 180 participating sites – see more at:

<https://www.tourismireland.com/GoGreen4PatricksDay#sthash.mrldTxhV.dpuf>

Passport Card

The Irish passport card was launched in October 2015. It can be used by Irish citizens to travel within EU/EEA and Switzerland. The card is available to all citizens who are over 18 years and hold a valid passport. The card is safer and more convenient to carry than the traditional passport booklet.

Applications can be submitted online (<https://passportcard.dfa.ie/>) or through the free app from anywhere in the world. The fee for a passport card is €35 plus €5 postage to the Czech Republic.



Upcoming Cultural Events

23rd Days of European Film Festival

The Days of European Film (DEF) will take place in Prague in the Světozor, Lucerna and Royal cinemas from 7 to 14 April, and in the Scala cinema in Brno from 14 to 18 April. The Echoes of DEF will be held in the following towns: Hradec Králové, Boskovice, Jablonec nad Nisou, Havířov and Semily from 18 to 24 April. The festival will feature one Irish film this year – “You’re Ugly Too” directed by Mark Noonan (8 April at 18.45 p.m., Lucerna cinema and 14 April at 18.15 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.



You're Ugly Too



Irish Film Institute

Irish May – Festival of Irish Culture in Prague

The Irish May festival will traditionally take place during the first weekend in May (6-8 May) in the Celetná Theatre in Prague (www.divadloceletne.cz). The programme will comprise of music, dance and theatre performances, a literary reading and a workshop. One of the highlights of the festival will be the Fleadh band from Germany and the ‘Under One Roof’ dance show. The special guest at the festival will again be Irish dancer Colin Dunne, best known for his dancing performance and choreographic art in shows Riverdance and Dancing on Dangerous Ground. Information may be found at <http://www.irsky-maj.cz/>.



Open-air Festival on Sřtelecký ostrov

The Irish Embassy will have a stand at the main event celebrating the Schuman Day.

As in previous years, the Representation of the European Commission in the Czech Republic organises a series of events commemorating Schuman Day (9 May) so called ‘European Days.’ The main event celebrating the Europe Day will be an open-air festival held on 5 May on Sřtelecký ostrov in Prague. It will feature a cultural programme including a concert of famous Czech bands and other artists, public information stands, debates and contests, as well as a supervised play area for children and other activities.

Night of Literature

The Embassy will this year again participate in the Night of Literature, an event organised by the Czech Centres in cooperation with EUNIC and Book World Festival in Prague. It aims at presenting contemporary European literature in new translation into Czech to the broad public. The event, which will include a reading of *The Thrill of it All* (in Czech translation) by Joseph O’Connor, will take place on 11 May, on the eve of Book World Festival in over 20 venues in the Prague 8 Karlín district. The venues are within walking distance and one reading (performed by a popular Czech actor/actress) takes about 30 mins. For further information visit <http://www.literaturnight.eu>.

Prague Feis

The feis, run by the Rinceoirí Irish dance group, is an international competition open to all dancers from all regions. Several hundred dancers are expected to compete in both hard shoes and soft shoes dance competitions of different levels from beginners to Open Championships.

There are some big changes about this year's Prague Feis. First of all, the venue has changed – the competition will be held from 28 to 29 May at ZŠ Kunratice, Prague 4. And second of all, Rinceoirí dance group has recently become part of McGahan Lees Academy, an Irish dance school based in London. Not only this, but the school agreed that Prague Feis is going to be held under its auspices but they are also going to invite some of their champions to compete in Prague. A great challenge for everyone! More details can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/Prague-Feis-102122943156464/?fref=ts>



Courtesy of Prague Feis

Irish Dance in the Czech Republic

Apart from the St. Patrick's Day Flash Mob and the Prague Feis, Rinceoirí organises various performances throughout the year, e.g. the final performance of its dance school Rinceoirí Irish Dance Academy (RIDA). This year the group plans to renew its own Irish dance show, an all-evening performance with a gripping story and a moral at the end. Some of Rinceoirí best dancers are also going to represent the group at the World Championship held in Glasgow.

The group also performs at smaller events. They will perform and teach Irish dance in Žižkovšiška on 16 March or at the Celtic Settlement Trosky on 30 March, not to mention the annual performance at the CIBCA St. Patrick's Day Ball meeting in Grand Hotel Bohemia. Other events that Rinceoirí cannot miss is the performance Under One Roof that is organised annually as part of the Irish May festival.

Rinceoirí also supports the talent of its youngest dancers – it performs together with the Rinceoirí Junior group, which achieves great results in various competitions. This spring they are going to defend their last year's victory in the Dance Group of the Year competition.

To spread Irish dance and music among children and teenagers, Rinceoirí is going to present its Irish dance school at Sportáček and Vitalsport – sports and leisure activities fairs. To attract more adults to the Irish culture Rinceoirí started to organise one-day seminars for beginners so that everyone can have a go at Irish dance.

Irish Business in the Czech Republic: Enterprise Ireland

Ireland's record GDP growth in 2015 (6.9% according to preliminary estimates of the European Commission), the fastest in Europe, followed by the Czech Republic, was broad-based and accompanied by strong job creation. Economic fundamentals are robust and point to sustainable but still strong GDP growth rates in 2016 and 2017. Government finances are improving as strong revenue growth more than offsets increases in expenditure. Job creation accelerated and brought the unemployment rate down to 8.8% in December 2015 (from 10.2% a year earlier).

Irish companies continued to expand their footprint in Czech and Central European markets. According to the Czech Statistical Office, **Irish exports of goods to the Czech Republic exceeded one billion Euros for the first time in history**. Irish exports increased by 46% to €1.097bn in 2015 while imports from the Czech Republic increased by 45% to €551m.

Enterprise Ireland (EI), the Irish government agency responsible for the development and internationalisation of Irish indigenous companies, stated that in 2015 EI client companies have created over 21000 new jobs and brought their total workforce to 192,000. A strategic priority for Enterprise Ireland is to help scale more indigenous companies into global businesses. In 2015, 240 Enterprise Ireland clients made investments of over €500,000 in their companies reflecting increasing confidence in their growth opportunities. Along the way, Enterprise Ireland is working to help clients find new customers, projects and export opportunities overseas, assist with commercialisation of research, attract new international start-ups to Ireland and overcome barriers such as access to finance and the challenge of finding talent, particularly in the technology sector.

Enterprise Ireland's office in Prague assists client companies in several markets in Central and Southeast Europe by providing tailor-made market research, business lead generation and introductions to buyers in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and countries in the Balkans. In May 2015, over 40 companies participated in the Trade Mission to Warsaw and Prague led by Minister Gerald Nash, TD and signed **contracts worth more than €30m**. Central Europe will continue to be a key market for Irish goods and services – exports of Enterprise Ireland client companies to this region increased by 25% in 2014 and the expectations in 2015 and 2016 are high.

2015 has also been full of good news regarding the foreign direct investment flows to Ireland. IDA Ireland reported that the number of investments secured during the year rose to 213 from 197 in 2014. The list of largest projects included a new datacentre of Facebook in Clonee, expansion of Apple in Athenry, new operation of Pramerica in Donegal and Alexion Pharmaceuticals expansion in Dublin.

News from the Centre for Irish Studies



As part of this year's Seachtain na Gaeilge, the **Centre for Irish Studies at Charles University** has launched a volume of short stories edited by Radvan Markus and translated from Irish into Czech by its graduates and students. Entitled *Muž, který vybuchl*, the book was launched on 2 March in Prague; the occasion was complemented by a performance of the Svaťa Kotas a (ne) přátelé band. Ambassador Sheehan gave a speech at the event.

The Centre is pleased to announce the publication of a thematic journal issue on Irish Theatre and Central Europe (*Litteraria Pragensia* vol. 25 no. 50). Edited by Ondřej Pilný, the issue explores the life of Irish plays from Poland to northern Italy; details of the volume are available at https://e-shop.ff.cuni.cz/journals/journals/litteraria_pragensia_50_irish_theater_central_europe-1291.

The Centre is delighted to invite members of the Irish community in the Czech Republic to a **guest lecture by scholar, broadcaster, music critic and journalist Richard Pine**. The author of books on Brian Friel, Oscar Wilde, The Gate Theatre, Irish post-colonial writing and, most recently, *Greece through Irish Eyes*, Richard Pine will speak on the subject of "Identity after History" in the Centre for Irish Studies, Faculty of Arts on Wednesday 4 May at 10.50 a.m. and Thursday 5 May at 14.10 p.m.

Information and updates on the activities of the Centre are available on its website (<http://ualk.ff.cuni.cz/centre-for-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.

CIBCA – 21 Years Bringing Ireland and the Czech Republic Closer

In its 21st year CIBCA continues to go from strength to strength bringing Ireland and the Czech Republic closer through shared business and cultural connections.

At our annual AGM on 15th October 2015 the new committee for 2015/2016 was elected to lead a diverse range of business, cultural and social events and initiatives. Building on the significant work of recent committees and inspired by the exceptionally successful 20th anniversary year, our new team looks forward to continue growing our membership base and expanding our business and cultural programmes.

Of course, the valuable work of CIBCA would not be possible without the outstanding dedication and generosity of members and friends for which we are especially grateful. It has been our pleasure to host the following events so far in 2015/2016:

- Summer in the City Member Mixer – Pallfy Palac, Prague – September
- Opening the Door to Central Europe – In market event together with i-Cham (Irish Chamber of Commerce in Central & Eastern Europe, Russia & CIS) in October, Krakow
- Member Mixer at Jurys inn Prague – November
- CIBCA Christmas Party, Café Pointa – December
- Day Trip to the Pilsner Urquell Brewery, Pilsen – January
- Annual Wine & Poetry Evening – Vinu u Aly, Prague - February

Included in the many planned events for the year ahead is our 21st Anniversary St. Patrick's Day Ball, which will take place in the sumptuous surroundings of the Grand Hotel Bohemia on Saturday 12th March, which this year is sponsored by Kingspan and Hertz Lease.

To stay up to date on the latest CIBCA news and for information of interest to the Irish community and friends of the Irish community in the Czech Republic, follow us on Facebook (Czech Irish Business & Cultural Association).

For membership enquiries, please email info@cibca.cz.

On behalf of the CIBCA 2015/2016 Committee - Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona daoibh!

Phillip Russell, President

Assumpta Griffin, Vice President

Denis McCarthy, Treasurer

Christine Logan, Communications Officer

Embassy of Ireland contact details

Tržiště 13

118 00 Prague 1

Tel: 257 011 280

Fax: 257 531 387

Email: *Contact Us*

www.dfa.ie/czech-republic

Enterprise Ireland contact details

Tržiště 13

118 00 Prague 1

Tel: 257 199 621

Fax: 257 532 224

www.enterprise-ireland.com