

Czech Republic

Capital:	Prague
Religion:	The population of Czech Republic is one of the least religious in the world. Roman Catholicism is the prevalent religion and is followed by over 10% of the inhabitants, while Protestants (includes Czech Brethren and Hussite) represent less than 1% of the population. The remaining fraction of the society is either atheist or agnostic.
Government:	Parliamentary Republic with a non-executive President. It is a pluralist, multi-party democracy, with the Prime Minister at the head of government. The Parliament is two-tier with the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.
Ethnic Groups:	The population of the country is made up of Czechs (63.7%), Moravians (4.95%) and Slovaks (1.4%). Nearly one third (29.9%) of the society is represented by other ethnic groups (minorities).
Language:	Czech is the country official language, spoken by 95.4% of its population. Officially recognized minority languages are: Slovak, Polish, Russian, German, Croatian, Bulgarian, Greek, Hungarian, Romani and others.
Currency:	The unit of currency is Czech Koruna (CZK).

- Czech Republic is situated in central Europe. The country shares borders with Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Poland.
- The beginnings of the country reach back to the 9th century, when a small state called Bohemia was created around Prague. After the Holy Roman Empire broke down, the Bohemian Kingdom became the part of the Austrian Empire. After its collapse in 1918, the Republic of [Czechoslovakia](#) was formed.
- In 1948, [Czechoslovakia](#) became the communist ruled country. The growing dissatisfaction with the communist regime led to the revolting events known as the Prague Spring of 1968, which resulted in Warsaw Pact countries sending its troops and occupying the country. The troops remained until the breakdown of the communist regime in 1989.
- In 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully dispersed into two states: the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In 2004, the Czech Republic joined European Union. The country is also a member of the Council of Europe, NATO and the OECD.



- The country has a developed, high-income economy and is one of the most prosperous post-communist states in Europe, with a GDP at 80% of the European Union average. Since the fall of the communist regime, most of the economy, including banks and the telecommunication industry, have been privatized.
- Czech Republic joined the Schengen area in 2004, opening completely its borders to other European Union states. The country planned to adopt the Euro in 2007, but this was eventually abandoned and the national currency is still in use.

Business and Social Etiquette

- Appointments are necessary and these should be made in advance. Business hours in Czech Republic are between 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. with a lunch break, but it may vary between the companies. When scheduling a meeting, avoid Friday afternoons as many business people leave early for their country homes.
- When the appointment is set up, remember to arrive on time. Punctuality is taken here very seriously.
- The first meeting is usually dedicated to get to know each other and establishing a mutual trust. Do not expect to complete negotiations and hammer out a deal after one meeting. Czech people conduct business in an unhurried manner and do not like to be put under pressure. Be patient.
- At the arrival you may be greeted with a handshake. Do not sit until invited. You may be pointed to a particular seat. When speaking keep direct eye contact with the meeting participants.
- Be prepared to participate in some informal chat before starting a strictly business conversation. Welcome topics are: weather, home country, hobbies, sport, or art. Topics to avoid are: politics, money, the Czech Republic old communist regime.
- Czech people are non-confrontational in business dealings and will look for a compromise.
- Business people dress in a conservative manner. Men should always wear a suit and tie and women a smart dress, preferably in black, grey, brown, beige and dark blue. Vivid colors are regarded as extravagant and should be avoided. Your Czech partner will take note if your clothing is clean and well pressed. Perfumes and after-shave should be used in moderation.
- In the meeting room do not take off your suit jacket before the highest-ranking Czech does so.
- When invited for a meal, unfold the napkin provided and put it on your lap. If the meal is informal, the napkin can be left folded next to the plate. Wait for your host/hostess to insist before accepting second helpings. These should be refused when offered first time.
- Important decisions are often taken outside the business environment, so do not to reject any invitations offered.



