

EXPAT'S HANDBOOK

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Need-to-see links:

<https://www.euraxess.cz/>

<https://www.expats.cz/>

<https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/>

I. About the Institution

Inner structure

The Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Science (BC CAS or BC) is one of the largest public research institutions in the EU specialized in biology and ecology related topics. It gathers 5 formerly separate research institutes one service unit supporting the research groups. Thus, there are 6 organisational components of the BC CAS: Institute of Entomology (IE), Institute of Hydrobiology (HBI), Institute of Parasitology (IP), Institute of Plant Molecular Biology (IPMB), Institute of Soil Biology and Biogeochemistry (ISBB), and Technical and Administrative Service (TAS).

Each organisational component is headed by its Director/Head (who answers to the Director of the BC) and is autonomous to certain extent. Every institute has several departments and laboratories and manages its own website with detailed information. Find more about our structure and institutes: <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/about-us/>

Benefits for employees

Employees from abroad have an opportunity to attend free **Czech language courses** right at the BC. All employees can take part in **mentoring programmes** (as mentors or mentees). They may have **subsidized lunches** at the BC's canteen, meaning that part of the lunch price is covered by the **Social Fund** which offers also other benefits. Czech Labour Code guarantees a minimum of 4 weeks of vacation per year, but at the BC employees are entitled to another one week, i.e. **5 weeks of paid holiday** in total for 1 FTE. BC employees have an opportunity to take advantage of **concessionary mobile tariff** at our contractual operator and **concessionary banking services** at our contractual bank. The BC also has its **own Nursery school** "Butterfly" for its employees' children from 1 year.

II. Immigration Necessities

First, please visit the website of Euraxess Czech Republic at <https://www.euraxess.cz/czech-republic/information-assistance>. It gives you a general knowledge of fundamental topics related to living and working in the Czech Republic.

Immigration support

The BC CAS holds the HR Award and provides its foreign employees with **welcome service**. Once you successfully get through a selection procedure for the respective position, you will be in touch with our HR specialist. The specialist will help you to arrange all the documents needed for your smooth mobility and employment relationship engagement.

The immigration formalities differ depending on your nationality (EEA+ or non-EEA+). For more about visa, work and residence permit in the Czech Republic, please see <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/going-to-work-at-bc/before-arrival/>.

Contact

International Cooperation Office (ico@bc.cas.cz), HR Department (hr@bc.cas.cz)

III. Work Conditions

Employment

Czech legal system is being brought into accord with the EU jurisdiction and the rights and duties of employees and employers are specified by the Labour Code (<https://www.mpsv.cz/web/en/labour-law>). Most organisations, including the BC, also have their own additional directives and regulations. However, these must not collide with the Labour Code.

As an employee in general, you are obliged to pay health and social security insurance and income tax, which are deducted from your wage by your employer. In case of the BC, the deductions are done by the TAS Personnel department (each organisational component has its designated payroll clerk). More at <https://www.euraxess.cz/czech-republic/information-assistance#Working-Czech> and <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/working-at-bc-living-in-cr/work/>.

Being a researcher

The Czech Republic has a high-quality science research and is internationally well recognised. All research activities abide by EU Ethical principles. The BC, as one of the CAS institutes, follows also the Code of Ethics for Researchers of the Czech Academy of Sciences (<http://www.avcr.cz/en/about-us/legal-regulations/code-of-ethics-for-researchers-of-the-czech-academy-of-sciences/>). More about research ethics in the Czech Republic at <https://www.euraxess.cz/czech-republic/research-ethics>.

Research funding

The research activities can be financed from both public and private providers. Public sources include Czech funds, EU funding programmes and other international programmes. List of the largest programmes here: <https://www.euraxess.cz/czech-republic/jobs-funding/czech-funding-research-and-study>.

The BC obtains most of its grants via Czech public providers' calls – the Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR) and the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA ČR). At the BC, the TAS Project department provides BC's researchers with comprehensive grant support, from the search for grant opportunities to consultations and administrative management of successful grants.

IV. Onboarding

On the first days at our institution, you are given an **Onboarding manual** with information on topics explaining day-to-day operations of the BC and important contacts to service unit departments. (What happens before the start of your employment relationship, is specified here: <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/employees/onboarding/>.) You also receive other manuals for newcomers which are, unlike the onboarding manual, related to the specific lab or department you are joining. Your direct supervisor acquaints you with specific workplace regulations and introduces you to the team members.

Your colleagues will surely be happy to help you with daily work and life issues – from orientating in the building to assistance at administrative offices. The BC does not provide new-coming foreigners with a personal assistant, nor does it assign an interpreter to them. However, there is a number of

possibilities you can take advantage of, see <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/working-at-bc-living-in-cr/living-in-cr-cb/czech-courses-translations/>.

V. Czech Landscape, Mentality, Habits etc.

Weather

The country lies in a temperate zone with Central-European moderate and transitional climate. The course of the year is characterized by alternating of four seasons. Summers are mild and sunny with shorter hotter spells and winters are cold, murky and dry. There have been recorded temperatures of 35 °C in summer and -20 °C in winter, but these extremes are rather rare. The average figures of daytime air temperature are 20 to 25 °C for summer and 0 °C for winter.

Hot weather with occasional heat waves, sudden showers and thunderstorms occurs mostly in July and August. The coldest months with temperatures below zero, snow and ice are January and February. Rain is more frequent in spring and fall. More precipitations and lower temperatures are always expected in mountains because the weather differs according to the location and elevation causing significant temperature variances.

Language and people

Czechs are viewed as rather cold and unapproachable at first (they are not “American-style friendly” or “South-European-style passionate”), but as they get to know you, they turn into very amiable and helping people. You can start a conversation with a Czech greeting, it will be a pleasant surprise for them. It is known that Czech language is difficult and not popular, so it does not really matter how good your Czech language is, we simply appreciate even a slightest effort. Czechs are expected to speak German because of our country's history and the vicinity of two German speaking countries, hence the fact that someone else tries to speak their language for a change is very refreshing.

The language barrier is strong particularly with older people. English language came here at the end of 20th century, so the millennials are very likely to speak it and they are also more open to people of different nationalities. Older people's suspicion of strangers is probably caused mainly by our history – we had always been under someone's domination. In connection with that, we have authority issues and always try to get around any rules.

The elderly persons often understand Russian, but rarely can or want to speak it. In South Bohemia, there is a high chance of encountering German speakers, as both neighbouring countries are German speaking. You seldom can meet Spanish speaking persons, especially among the younger ones.

Czech people tend to be sarcastic and they seem to be always unsatisfied, even though they are in fact well. They like to complain about many things without trying to change them. And in a pub after eight p.m., all of a sudden everyone is the most educated and sophisticated politician, doctor or businessman who ever walked the earth. But the reservedness and humour also give us an ability to stay on top of things and to not make a big deal of everything.

Greeting & polite words

Czech formal language greeting at the beginning of a conversation is “**dobrý den**” (“hello”) and “**na shledanou**” (“goodbye”) at the end. You are expected to use it with people you do not know or do not have professional relationship with. “**Ahoj**” (suitable for both start and end of a conversation) is also a

form of greeting, but you use it only in informal and casual conversations with your family, friends and other close ones or small children. Which means, we differentiate between “vykání” (impersonal and formal variations of expressions) and “tykáni” (intimate or friendly variations of expressions). This inner division is typical of many other languages. Our usual gesture greeting is a right-hand **handshake**.

“**Děkuji**” means “thank you” and “**prosím**” is “please” or “after you” if said when letting someone first in the door. “Nemáte (nemáš) zač” means “you are welcome”.

Social customs

The Czech Republic counts among West-European countries and is a representative democracy. Women are considered to be independent of men and to have the same rights and duties. They may visit public places alone and without any permission and wear anything they like. In addition, they enjoy – as well as elderly people – certain priority in the terms of social etiquette (you should hold the door for them and let them first, vacate the seat for them to sit etc.).

Young people become legally adults at 18 years of age. At the age of 15 they obtain only partial legal responsibility (they get their own ID, may drive certain types of motor vehicles etc.). It is not unusual that they stay with their parents during whole studies, in countryside this dependence lasts even after getting a job and starting their own family. Matrimony is not considered as a necessity anymore and young couples in towns often live together and have kids without being married.

Currently, there is a problem with low pensions, as the population average age grows, and older people frequently are forced to search for discounts and live with no financial backup.

Czech love for beer is internationally well-known. There is a long historical tradition of brewing in Czech lands and we surely know how to make a good beer, also nicknamed as “liquid bread”. Among the most popular brands belong Pilsner Urquell, Budweiser Budvar (in the USA sold as Czechvar, not Budweiser, because of a wrangle over the trademark), Kozel and others.

Religion

The state is independent of any religion or specific ideology, as anchored in the Czech constitution, which means that the Czech Republic is a secular country. In the European scope, the Czech Republic holds second place on the list of most non-believing countries (after Estonia). In general, the Czech Republic is regarded as one of the most atheistic countries in the world. Truth is that many people are not atheistic (i.e. utterly denying any god-like entity) but agnostic (i.e. not sure if there is or is not anything like that). They often believe in “some sort of power” or have some spiritual experience, but do not identify themselves with any large church. It is no wonder after all, for religion had been historically a tool of oppression and the traditional churches are rather fossilised.

Numbers from the 2005 Eurobarometer poll, studying view on religion of 25 EU countries' citizens, have shown that 19 % of Czech respondents “believe that there is a god” (second lowest score), 50 % “believe that there is some sort of spirit or life force” (third highest) and 30 % “do not believe that there is something like god, spirit or life force.”

2001 census has shown that 59 % of Czech people are without any religion, whereas 32,2 % are believers. Among organized churches, Roman Catholic is the largest with 26,8 % of all believers. In general, more religious people are in the countryside. There is also difference between Czech areas; Moravia has more believers than Bohemia. Fact is, however, that in every town and village, small or big, is a historic church building to be found – from big important churches to smaller chapels to wayside shrines.

VI. Living in České Budějovice

Everything you need to know (including details on the topics below) as an expat planning to work or already working at the BC, may be found in our extensive **online integration guide for expats**: <https://bc.cas.cz/en/employees/>

Essentials

České Budějovice is the largest town and the political and commercial capital of the South Bohemian Region, with about 94 thousand inhabitants. As well as in the rest of the Czech Republic, the town is abundant in beautiful architecture buildings from gothic, renaissance, baroque and other periods. As the town landmark is considered the square shaped Ottokar II Square, surrounded by enchanting old town area near the Vltava river. Besides rich culture, the town may also offer nightlife, sport and leisure opportunities.

Safety

According to the 2019 Global Peace Index, the Czech Republic is the tenth safest country in the world and sixth in the Europe. České Budějovice is safe to move in and there are no specific threads you should be afraid of. As everywhere, just watch your belongings, especially in crowded places like public transport or malls and do not let them unguarded.

In case of emergency, call an **emergency line valid in all EU member states: 112**. You can dial this number even when the phone is locked, has no SIM, credit or your operator's signal is missing. The line operators speak English, German and other world languages.

There are also national emergency numbers to reach one of the specialized bodies of the Integrated Rescue System:

- **158 State Police** ("Policie ČR")
- **156 Municipal Police** ("Městská policie")
- **155 Ambulance** ("Záchranná služba")
- **150 Fire brigade** ("Hasiči")

More about important contacts here: <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/important-contacts/>

Cost of living

The cost of living in the Czech Republic is much lower than in the old EU member states and you will be able to live quite comfortably without spending large sums. Expenses in České Budějovice are noticeably lower than in Prague; on the other hand, prices are in accord with usual income, which is also lower. To get a picture, see <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Ceske-Budejovice>.

Accommodation

The BC operates its own hostel and may provide you with a room for a starting period after your arrival. If you need it, this option must be talked over already during the arrangement of your mobility and employment documents. In case your employment contract at the BC is connected to doctoral

programme study at the University of South Bohemia, you may be accommodated in the USB dormitories.

If you want to rent/buy an apartment, there is a couple of good real estate companies. Visit <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/working-at-bc-living-in-cr/living-in-cr-cb/accommodation/>. Rents are not utterly expensive as in the capital (Prague), but the price obviously depends on disposition, location, equipment, parking spot included etc. Check current prices at e.g. <https://en.cebras.cz/> or <https://global.remax.com/>.

Transport

The town has quite well-functioning, comfortable and cheap public bus transport and the connection intervals are relatively short. You may also go by a bike because of the rather flat landscape of the town, which is not demanding and is suitable even for casual bikers.

If you hold a valid driving licence issued by the member state of the EU/EEA or Switzerland, you may drive in the Czech Republic for the period of validity of your licence. In other cases (driving licence issued by a non-EEA+ country), you must proceed differently. You also may bring a car with you if you own one. If it is not registered in one of the EEA+ countries, the car must undergo an import technical inspection and will be registered in the Czech Republic.

For detailed info on all these topics, see <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/working-at-bc-living-in-cr/living-in-cr-cb/transport-in-cr/>.

Banking & Shopping

If you hold an internationally recognized credit card (Visa, Mastercard), you should have no problem with using it in shops and banks. The Czech Republic in general has dense network of ATMs and most shops (even small ones), restaurants and other various services are equipped with a payment terminal.

In large banks' branches, the communication in English is a matter of course, so you should be fine opening a bank account. Although, it is better to make an appointment with English speaking consultant in advance. Take a look here: <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/going-to-work-at-bc/after-arrival/to-arrange/>

Shops and services are mostly open from Mon to Fri from 8 or 9 a.m. to 5 or 6 p.m. Large shopping centres are open all week from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., food store chains often open already at 7 or 8 a.m.

Medical care

Medical services are on relatively high level in the Czech Republic and majority of them is fully covered or at least partially subsidised by the health insurance paid from your wage. The health insurance is mandatory but relatively cheap and gives you certainty that you will not end up with expensive bill in case of urgent hospitalisation.

The BC has its contractual GMP, but he is designated to carry out occupational medical examinations (initial, periodical and final), which are connected to your employment contract and are demanded by the law. You need to find your GMP and medical specialist (gynaecologist, dentist etc.) by yourself and you can do it simply by entering a search in your map app or website. Then you call the doctor and ask if they have any space for new patients. We recommend asking someone Czech speaking to make the call for you and then accompany you to the doctor. Most of the doctors still do not speak English and you need to communicate in Czech. But we have called some of them for you and made a list of English-speaking contacts which includes also local medical services able and willing to communicate in English

– scroll down to see the table. See also <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/working-at-bc-living-in-cr/living-in-cr-cb/medical-services/> for more on the topic.

Education system

Education in the Czech Republic is divided into elementary (i.e. primary and lower secondary), secondary and tertiary level. The elementary education (age 6 to 15) is compulsory. The school year lasts from September to August, where the last two months (July and August) are main school summer holidays. The Czech Republic is a secular country and so is the national curriculum. See <https://www.euraxess.cz/czech-republic/information-assistance/rodina/pēce-o-dēti-předškolního-věku/education-system>.

Unlike Prague or Brno, there is currently only a few schools teaching in English in České Budějovice. Nevertheless, local schools are reflecting the increasing need of enrolment of non-Czech speaking children lately. This trend is gradually showing especially in the pre-primary education (kindergartens and pre-schools). Visit <https://www.bc.cas.cz/en/employees/guide-for-expats/working-at-bc-living-in-cr/living-in-cr-cb/education-system/> for more info and tips to currently available English speaking facilities.

Database of English-Speaking Contacts

MEDICAL SERVICES

Type of service	Name	Phone (+420 ...)	Website	Note
GMP	Mr Mirko Jakovljevič	387 965 222	medprax.cz	
GMP	Mr Miroslav Pavlásek	387 411 287	admed.cz	
GMP	Mr Ivo Faflík	386 354 647	faf-medic.cz	
GMP	Mr Radek Frnka	604 210 743	rafmed.cz	
Stomatology	Dental Emergency	731 559 636	zubnipohotovost.cz	
Stomatology	Mr Karel Závodský	608 533 317	kzdent.cz	
Stomatology	Mr Pavel Vachulka	777 867 545	zubnipecceb.cz	
Stomatology	Mr Martin Štěrba	387 312 617	poliklinikasever.cz	

Stomatology	Ms Veronika Brunová	387 730 236	oskcb.cz	
Stomatology	Ms Martina Straková	774 303 771	map	
Gynaecology	Ms Iveta Haouiová	385 510 027	haouiova.cz	
Paediatrics	Ms Alexandra Matoušová (Sanare s.r.o.)	387 204 323	sanare.cz	
Paediatrics	Ms Petra Brossaud	601 504 514	brossaud.cz	accepts newborns only
Paediatrics	Ms Lucie Pechočová	389 109 461	euc.cz	
Paediatrics	Ms Barbora Sýkorová	387 730 218	navstevalekare.cz	
Allergology	Ms Jana Poloniová	387 730 274/275	euc.cz	
Ophthalmology	Ms Kim Štěpánková	736 234 277	ok-medical.cz	
Ophthalmology	Mr Michal Matuška	386 352 263	ocnicb.cz	
Psychotherapy	Ms Zdeňka Bajgarová	607 912 170	soukromypsycholog.cz	
Psychotherapy	Mr Filip Abramčuk	777 562 267	psychoterapie-budejovice.cz	
Psychotherapy	Samaritans (online crisis intervention 24/7)	116 123 / online chat	samaritans.org	
Orthopaedics	Mr Lukáš Nevšimal	387 420 139	poliklinikasever.cz	
Veterinary	Veterinary at Zlatá Stoka	725 444 182	veterinarniosetrovna.cz	
Veterinary	CB-vet	385 310 797	cb-vet.cz	
Veterinary	BUDvet	735 172 517 (U Trojice) 775 662 484 (Rožnov)	budvet.cz	

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Type of service	Name	Phone (+420 ...)	Website	Note
Nursery	Dětská skupina Motýl	387 775 504	Nursery school Butterfly	Biology Centre's children group
Nursery	Children's group Montessori Kampus	777 296 380	montessorikampus.cz	
Nursery	Jesle K. Štěcha (Centrum Filia)	602 719 532	centrum-filia.cz	
Nursery	MŠ Sovička	731 141 677	sovickams.cz	
Nursery	DC Mlád'átka	602 474 744	dcmladatka.cz	
Children's Courses	Dětská akademie Madlenka	606 560 267	centrum-madlenka.cz	
Preschool	Abacus English Preschool	776 247 034	abacuscb.cz	fully English kindergarten
Preschool	Doma v lese - Lesní mateřská školka	739 340 137	domavlese.cz	staff speaks English and German & has experience with foreign children's integration
Preschool	MŠ Montessori Kampus	777 296 380	montessorikampus.cz	
Primary School	DC Mlád'átka	602 474 744	dcmladatka.cz	
Primary School	Doma v lese - Svobodná základní škola	721 165 824	domavlese.cz	
Primary School	ZŠ Matice školské	386 356 364	zsmatice.cz	
Primary School	ZŠ Montessori Kampus	777 296 380	montessorikampus.cz	
Preschool, Primary and Secondary School	Townshend International School	387 688 113	townshend.cz	

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES

Type of service	Name	Phone (+420 ...)	Website	Note
Bike Repair Shop	Bike Shop Kanovnická	386 354 172	bikeshop.cz	also selling new bikes; check in advance when the English speaking employee will be available
Bike Repair Shop	Cykloextra	385 344 247	cykloextra.cz	also selling new bikes; check in advance when the English speaking employee will be available
Bike Repair Shop	Dajsport	387 200 200	dajsport.cz	also selling new bikes and skis; check in advance when the English speaking employee will be available
Bike Repair Shop	Žižkolárna	776 722 255	zizkolarna.cz	specialized on repairs and assembling of bikes
Car Repair Shop	DM Servis CB	605 230 852 734 259 452	dmserviscb.cz	repairs & service; Spanish and English
Car Repair Shop	Autocentrum Dan a syn	776 688 006	danasyn.cz	sale, service, insurance, ownership transfer, car equipment, consulting etc.; fluent in English, German, Serbian, advanced in Spanish and French, basic in Arabic
Car Repair Shop	CB Auto	depends on your car's brand (check the website)	cb-auto.cz	sale of new and used cars, renting, service; English and German
Car Shop	AAA Auto	800 110 800	aaaauto.cz	sale & buyout of used cars; fluent in English and German
Car Shop	Auto ESA	800 555 555	autoesa.cz	sale, buyout

Driving Licence	Petr Sim International Driving School	724 087 862	petrsim.cz	
Driving Licence	DPMCB Driving School	387 719 114	dpmcb.cz	
Vehicle Registration	Vehicle registration service for foreigners	773 663 331	registr-vozidel.cz	
Real Estate Company	Cebras	800 855 558	cebras.cz	speaks also German, French and Italian & are very open to foreign clients; provide mortgage consulting as well
Real Estate Company	Re-Max	725 910 910	remax-czech.cz	provide also mortgage consulting
Real Estate Company	M&M Reality	777 938 280	mmreality.cz	speaks also German
Real Estate Company	RK Stejskal	776 062 831	rkstejskal.cz	contact: Ms Eva Dolejšová
Renting or Selling without a Real Estate Company	BezRealitky	226 227 522	bezrealitky.com	
Moving Service	Stěhuju.cz	777 275 672	stehuju.cz	
Handyman / Moving Service / Excavation etc.	Váš služebníček	777 826 234	vassluzebnicek.cz	handymen in CB typically do not speak English; we recommend you to ask Czech speaking mentor or colleague for assistance at least with phone arrangement of the repairman's visit

Locksmithery	Emergency Key Service for South Bohemia Region	776 445 654	otevrenizamku-cb.cz	
Interpreting and Translations	Center for Support of Integration of Foreigners	387 202 508	integracnicentra.cz	professional social and legal consulting, interpreting, Czech language and sociocultural courses and education events
Interpreting and Translations	Vyza Translations	602 410 000	vyzatrans.cz	
Interpreting and Translations	Skrivanek	603 171 139	skrivanek.cz	
Interpreting and Translations	Aslan	733 184 170	aslan.cz	
Tax return advisor	BENE CB	385 310 171	beneb.cz	contact: Mr Lukáš Hejkrlík
Tax return advisor	Ms Romana Kaiserová	777 151 768	ucetnictvirk.cz	
Tax return advisor	Mr Jiří Doskočil	728 157 196	danoveporadenstvi-ceskebudejovice.cz	
Tax return advisor	BEST daňová a účetní spol.	386 350 037	best-cb.cz	
Banking	Raiffeisenbank	386 707 439 603 808 074	rb.cz	RB has a special offer for BC employees; if interested, contact Mr Jiří Babka at the phone no. on the left
Mobile Operator / Internet	Vodafone	387 775 048 778 412 404	vodafone.cz	Vodafone has <u>special offer</u> for BC employees; if interested, first contact <u>Mr. Truszyk</u> at the phone no. on the left
Hairdresser	Kateřina Ryšánková (Kadeřnictví MaK)	777 560 300	Kadeřnictví MaK	



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