

## **MINISTER LIPAVSKÝ APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE CZECH CENTRES**

*Press release, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023, Czech Centres*

**Jitka Pánek Jurková has been appointed the new Director General of the Czech Centres. She takes on the role of managing the network of the Czech cultural institutes after six years of directing one of them, the Czech Centre Brussels. Jan Lipavský, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, appointed Pánek Jurková on the 1st December 2023, based on the results of the selection process. The Czech Centres operate as a contributory organisation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**

*"The Czech Centres are indeed a powerful tool of our foreign policy. The new Director General has extensive experience in public and cultural diplomacy, both academically and practically. She previously managed the Czech Centre Brussels during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU, and Brussels was literally the capital of presenting Czech culture," stated **the Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Lipavský.***

This year the Czech Centres celebrate their 30th anniversary, with 28 branches currently operating on four continents. Earlier this year, the Office of the General Commissioner of the Czech participation at the General World Exposition EXPO became a part of the Czech Centres.

*"Czech culture is among the most significant sources of our credit abroad. It is essential to be a good partner for it – it has the ability to capture the attention of international audiences and promote important values in international debates," said Pánek Jurková. In her role, she will focus on coordinating the strategy with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strengthen Czech public diplomacy worldwide. "The development of the Czech Centres' network into non-European territories will grant us access to new audiences, where there is significant, untapped potential. The Czech Centres will help build the image of Czechia as a country with a rich culture that actively participates in the international community," she added.*

Jitka Pánek Jurková was the Director of the Czech Centre Brussels from 2017 to 2023. She was responsible for conceptualizing and implementing a significant portion of the cultural programme during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU. Pánek Jurková has been involved in cultural diplomacy both in practice and in her work as an author and lecturer. She is the co-author of the book "Ambassadors of Bohemia: Contemporary Czech Cultural Diplomacy and Its Dilemmas" (with Eliška Tomalová) and the podcast "Jazzman versus Spies: Art as a Secret Weapon of International Politics."

**Jitka Pánek Jurková's bio and photos are available here:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/cu1bkavku4g9df4hziioye/h?rlkey=f4q6794hfw3m5xe1wie6ujem7&dl=0>

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**Information for media and publicists**

The Czech Centres, a contributory organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, serve as a crucial tool in the public diplomacy of the Czech foreign policy and foster cultural relations between countries. As a cultural institute, they are a member of the network of foreign European cultural institutes, EUNIC. They present our country across a wide range of cultural and social domains, from art and creative industries to promoting the successes of Czech science and innovation. They are involved in teaching the Czech language abroad, engage in international projects, and serve as a platform for the development of international cultural dialogue. Currently, there are 28 branches operating abroad on four continents. In addition to the Czech Centres, they also manage the Czech Houses in Belgrade, Bratislava, and Jerusalem.

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