



# Czechia

**Economic State:** Czechia's economic freedom score is 73.7, making its economy the 23rd freest in the 2019 Index. Its overall score has decreased by 0.5 point, with lower scores for judicial effectiveness and monetary freedom overwhelming modest improvements in government spending and property rights. Czechia is ranked 13th among 44 countries in the Europe region, and its overall score is above the regional and world averages. Amid rising populism and political polarization, the government has been pulled slightly to the left by its Communist and other left-leaning coalition partners but is expected to continue pro-EU, pro-business, and fiscally prudent policies. Implementation of critical reforms by previous administrations streamlined business start-up procedures, embedded a relatively efficient tax regime to facilitate entrepreneurial growth, and institutionalized an openness to global trade and investment. Contributing to overall stability and competitiveness, a relatively sound legal framework sustains judicial effectiveness and government integrity.

**Security State:** Constitutional Act No. 110/1998 on the Security of Czechia, as amended, stipulates that it is the State's basic duty to ensure Czechia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the protection of its democratic foundations, and the protection of lives, health and property. This Act stipulates that the security of Czechia is to be ensured by its armed forces, the armed security corps, rescue corps and emergency services. State authorities, bodies of the self-governing territorial units, and natural and legal persons are obliged to participate in safeguarding Czechia's security. Intelligence services play an important and irreplaceable role in the security system of Czechia by acquiring, collecting and evaluating information essential for the security of Czechia, and by promptly identifying security threats and risks. Legal provisions providing for the status of the individual intelligence services differ, e.g. regarding the way directors are appointed or dismissed. Nevertheless, Czech intelligence services are equal partners as far the fulfillment of their tasks and other duties is concerned. The Government assigns tasks to all of the intelligence services, co-ordinates their activities and supervises the fulfillment of their tasks. The Security Strategy of Czechia is an essential conceptual document of the State's security policy. The Security Strategy of Czechia defines vital, strategic and other important interests of Czechia, general security risks, long-term plans and measures aimed at ensuring good conditions for the development and prosperity of Czechia and at the security of its citizens.

**Ethnic Groups:** Czech 81.2 %, Moravian and Silesian 13.7 %, Slovak 3.1 %, Polish 0.6 %, German

0.5 %, Roma 0.3 %, other: 0.3 % (1991 census)

**Head of State:** President Vaclav Klaus (since February,2003). The President is elected at a joint session of both chambers of Parliament for a term of five years and may serve a maximum of two successive terms in office. Presidential powers are limited: the most important is the right to veto any bill which has already been passed by Parliament, except for constitutional bills. The President appoints the Prime Minister and other members of the Government and accepts their resignation, and has the right to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies. The President is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

**Europe Agreement:** Signed on 4 October 1993 (earlier signed with the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic on 16 December 1991) and entered into force in February 1995.

**Public Healthcare:** Many doctors in public hospitals are Western-trained and able to speak English, though this is not always the case. Some expats using the public sector have also complained of doctors being short-tempered or unsympathetic, but this is largely due to the high turnover of patients and short consultation times and shouldn't be taken personally.

**Private Healthcare:** Czech private medical care is excellent and the staff at private hospitals are highly qualified. Although private healthcare tends to be more expensive than public healthcare in Czechia, many private hospitals are better equipped to cater to expat patients. This is because private medical centers have a higher proportion of English-speaking staff and because private clinics have a more service-oriented approach to providing medical care. A further advantage is that patients often do not have to wait as long to receive treatment as they might at public hospitals.

**Health Insurance:** Czechia provides free medical care to Czech citizens through compulsory contributions to an approved Czech health insurance company. The largest health insurance company is the state-owned Vseobecna Zdravotni Pojistovna (VZP). Czech citizens, registered foreign residents and employees of companies based in the country must make regular contributions to this fund. It is mandatory for employers to pay a portion of the monthly fee with the employee contributing the remainder of the fee. Under this scheme, expats are also usually required to pay a small stipend for treatment received.

Czechia has reciprocal healthcare agreements with other countries. In particular, EU citizens have access to free medical care in Czechia through their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Expats in Czechia without an EHIC, who do not have permanent residency and are not employed by a Czech company are not entitled to free medical care. However, it is still compulsory to have health insurance and expats staying in the country for over 90 days will be required to show proof that they are covered under a private healthcare scheme. In such a case, it is imperative to arrange for private insurance in advance. Those staying in the country

for less than 90 days will need to show proof of travel health insurance.

**General Affairs:** The regular meeting of the General Affairs Council took place on 30 September 2013 in Brussels. Czechia was in this session represented by the State Secretary for European Affairs Vojtech Belling. Ministers and State Secretaries for European Affairs discussed the Council position for still open issues of the Cohesion Policy legislative package and the draft annotated agenda of the European Council on 24-25 October 2013. Among substantive issues planned for the discussion at the October European Council, the digital agenda is one of the key drivers supporting growth of the European economy.

#### Bibliography

<http://www.expatarrivals.com/europe/czech-republic/healthcare-czech-republic>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17220018>

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement\\_new/applicants/pdf/czech\\_profile\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement_new/applicants/pdf/czech_profile_en.pdf)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>