

Feel The Change

Prague Congress Centre's Magazine | 2/2022



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Dear readers,

a lot has happened at the PCC in recent months. The Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU, which has returned to the PCC premises after 13 years, has brought us huge publicity in the world. I am very happy for the positive feedback we are getting. It proves that we provide professional services at the highest level. I would like to thank everyone who is involved in this great event. Not only those who are visible, but especially those who are not and without whose efforts these events would not take place. I am proud that we have such a great team at the PCC. Although in recent months we have heard mainly about the Czech Presidency in connection with the PCC, it is not the only event that has taken place here. The PCC has hosted large and small congresses, social events and cultural events such as ESGE Days, the ICOM Congress or the Mireille Mathieu concert. We are very happy that the PCC is alive again and that this stunning building can once again be used for what it is primarily intended for after two years of covid. In addition to hosting many events, renovations are underway. At the PCC, for example, we are currently modernising the offices, including the social and welfare facilities, and at the Holiday Inn Prague, we have begun an extensive redevelopment of the entire ground floor (including the lobby, reception, restaurant and bar), which will take the hotel to a completely different dimension. Are you looking forward to it? I certainly am; very excited! I wish you pleasant reading.

Lenka Žlebková
CEO

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Feel The Change

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➤ The Largest Charging Hub For Electric Vehicles in Prague Is at The PCC

ANOTHER PIECE TO THE PUZZLE FOR A GREEN PCC

Is the installation of charging hubs for electric vehicles. In the car park at the PCC, Pražská energetika has put into operation a system of eight public charging stations, which will allow up to 15 electric cars to be recharged at the same time. This is the largest charging point in the territory of the capital city of Prague. There is one Hypercharger Alpitronic station with a capacity of 75 kW and 7 other so-called AC stations with a capacity of 22 kW.

The hub was installed before the summer holidays so that it could be available during the EU Council Presidency, part of which was held at the PCC premises (you can read more about this event on the following pages of the magazine).

All chargers in the PREpoint network are supplied with 100% green energy from renewable sources.



Reconstruction of Offices

THE OFFICES IN THE PCC HAVE BEEN RENOVATED.

Each floor now has its own colour, and the furniture is colour-coordinated to match. The meeting rooms and toilets have not been forgotten. Now the third and fourth floors are being finished, then the last part - the ground floor - will be next. The internal meeting rooms have also been renovated.



➤ Shell Week at Holiday Inn Prague

DURING THE WEEK OF 26 SEPTEMBER - 2 OCTOBER

2022, guests at the Esprit restaurant had the unique opportunity to taste three types of dishes made from fresh mussels by chef Jan Wiesner and his team as part of the Prague Mussel Week festival. This festival is regularly repeated and invites you to taste mussels in various forms. And why eat mussels at all? They contain a lot of protein, vitamins and minerals and are almost fat-free. Mussels are a clean product, free of antibiotics and additives, and they leave a minimal carbon footprint. So come try them next year too!

➤ CZK 21,4 million

The PCC saved CZK 21.4 million annually in energy and water costs by upgrading its technological equipment, including heating, air conditioning and lighting. This is according to the latest report by ENESA, one of the most experienced energy service providers and energy construction contractors in the country. Before the upgrade, the annual energy consumption amounted to CZK 74 million. The amount the PCC saves annually is equal to the annual consumption of 3 800 households. Thanks to the modernisation, 7 258 tonnes of CO2 were also not emitted into the air.

➤ Modern Sculptures Revived Vyšehrad

THE PCC CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT of the Art District Vyšehrad platform, which aims to culturally enrich Vyšehrad and its surroundings. To this end, the PCC has joined the international Sculpture Line festival, which aims to bring artworks from galleries and museums into the public space and to bring contemporary art to those who would not otherwise come into contact with art. The festival takes place on 3 continents, in 10 countries and 32 cities. A total of 32 installations are on display in Prague. Right on the terrace of the PCC you can meet the work dubbed Dvaja a Nenažranec by Slovak sculptor Andrej Margoč. The spherical Virus - Quarantine by Michal Trpák also should also be admired. Two colourful armchairs by Alexandra Koláčková attract visitors to relax and take photos. All works will be on display until the end of this year.



➤ Videomapping on The Facade of The PCC

In October, 30 selected buildings completed in the Czech Republic in the past 30 years were projected on the facade of the PCC. This event was prepared by the Czech Chamber of Chartered Engineers and Technicians in Construction on the occasion of its 30th anniversary. The videomapping was part of the accompanying programme of the International Conference on the Politics of Architecture and Building Culture, which was held as part of the Czech EU Presidency.

➤ New backup

The PCC team has been enriched by Radek Neumann, the new Chief Operating Officer, and Drahomíra Menclová, HR Manager. Radek Neumann spent 21 years with the Czech Police as a bodyguard and 17 years as a bomb technician. In 2020, he gained further experience at the Central Bohemian Regional Authority as Head of the Internal and Cyber Security Department and was later appointed Head of the Security and Crisis Management Department. From there he moved to the PCC.

Drahomíra Menclová, who has many years of experience in international and Czech companies, became the new HR manager this year. She joins the PCC from a German automotive company that operates throughout Europe and supplies its products to many global automotive companies. In previous years she worked in services, but also in an e-commerce printing company that has sustainability as one of its main goals and provides its services "Just In Time".

Marie Filipová, HR manager, spent 38 years at the PCC and recently retired. She spent almost her entire professional life at the PCC. On behalf of the entire company, we extend our sincere thanks to Marie for her decades of positive energy, well-being and peace of mind at the PCC.



Radek Neumann



Drahomíra Menclová and Marie Filipová

➤ 38 years

Marie Filipová, HR manager, spent 38 years at the PCC and recently retired. She spent almost her entire professional life at the PCC. On behalf of the entire company, we extend our sincere thanks to Marie for her decades of positive energy, well-being and peace of mind at the PCC.

Highlights of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU in the PCC

The Prague Congress Centre is the venue for the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU from July to December 2022. This includes more than 50 events in total, and it is far from possible to cover everything that has taken place at the PCC during this period and will still be happening. We offer at least a list of interesting things related to this event.

Hosting the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU was also an opportunity for the PCC to further develop and innovate, which will benefit it in the future. Electric vehicle charging hubs, which you can read about on page 4, are not the only innovations that have emerged in connection with the Presidency in the PCC. There are also big challenges for the PCC AV team.

Cabling

New cabling is being used in the PCC during the Presidency to connect the auditoriums: up to 24 channels of video, audio and interpretation are being provided in the auditoriums using new fibre optic cabling. 4 K optical converters and the Dante protocol are used to distribute the interpretation.

Technology

The requirements for the provision of technology are quite strict and are based on the precise requirements of the Government. Since last year, the use of equipment according to the new ISO standard has been required, which has complicated the procurement of the necessary equipment.

Robotic cameras

The PCC has purchased new robotic cameras and software to provide an automated view of a delegate who has an activated

microphone. In practice, this means that when a delegate starts to speak, the camera automatically takes the delegate. This technology is not new but has not been used at the PCC before. In the future, the PCC will use these robotic cameras for other streams and hybrid events.

CCTV technology in the press centre

It is a summary of the distribution of video, audio and interpretation signal to the press centre so that journalists have up-to-date information about the arrival of delegates, the start of the press conference etc. CCTV is used to distribute the signal from Czech Television, which provides these services for the Government Office. If there is no live and up-to-date data from CT, the PCC AV team sends information to the CCTV about the programme or whatever the client wishes (e.g. videos). The press centre is equipped with screens that show this content by a separate interpreter signal. Journalists can also record both audio and interpretation as well as video at the locations concerned using a separate infrastructure.

Cabling and new cable infrastructure were built to distribute the CT signal with a connection point for the transmission truck. Which means that in the future any TV operator can use this distribution point and connect at various PCC locations, without having to pull and secure their own cabling.

Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU 2022 in the PCC in figures

51 lower category events

14 informal Councils

2400

delegates attending informal Councils

687

delegations participating in informal Councils

10

interpretation booths

3

radio booths

6 television booths

2045

journalists accredited for the informal Councils



European Digital Issues (Not Only) Were Addressed At The Highest Level In The PCC

One of the leading events addressed at the PCC during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU was a unique ministerial conference on digital issues. The event, part of which was also open to the general public, boasted the largest number of participants of any event held at the PCC in connection with the Czech EU Presidency.

The two-day conference began with a screening of Vít Klusák's film *V Síti* about online sexual predators. This was followed by an expert debate on How to protect children online in the light of the new "Better Internet for Kids" strategy.

The first day of the conference, which was closed to the public, also focused on safety. Top-level topics focused on ensuring the security of supply chains in light of cyber protection of the state and citizens.

On the second day, which was again open to the public, experts discussed the safe development of artificial intelligence and data handling in the European Union and beyond. They also debated how to make Europe more technologically self-sufficient, how to foster innovation and the threat of misinformation in the online environment.

The second day of the conference was entitled Towards a Secure and Innovative Ecosystem. The expert debate was attended by Czech and foreign government experts, EU leaders, representatives of universities, think tanks and business associations. The conference was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic, the





National Office for Cyber and Information Security and the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. 500 delegates attended the conference, making it the conference with the highest number of delegates of all the events held in connection with the Czech Presidency at the PCC. This only shows the importance of this conference, which was attended by political leaders such as Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

In today's world, cyber security is a particularly important topic. That is why this topic was one of the key issues addressed by the Czech Presidency. Petr Očko, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade for Digitalisation and Innovation, even mentioned during his speech that "in today's information-based economy, data is the new oil, the new gold". Misinformation was also a big topic at the conference.

The main event took place in the Forum Hall. The whole event took a year and a half to prepare. A highlight of the conference was, for example, the robot exhibition.

We Brought World Experts to Prague

The organizing team spent a year and a half preparing the conference focusing on digital topics. Included was also Jan Míča, Head of the European Digital Agenda Department. "It's definitely a great experience and the organising team is not going to be thrown off balance easily," he says.

The conference on digital issues is the event with the highest number of participants of all events held at the PCC during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU. What are the reasons for this? Why this particular event?

The digital agenda is currently one of the leading topics of the European Union, and therefore logically one of the priorities of our European Presidency. It is a bit of a tradition that the country currently holding the Presidency organises a big "digital event". It is a great opportunity to bring global experts from international institutions, academia and business to Prague and connect them with our Czech partners.

The conference has been described as one of the leading events of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. What makes this topic so interesting?

In the Czech Republic, we have a tradition of conferences on the topic of 5G network security, which have historically been organised by The Federal Office for Cyber and Information Security (NÚKIB). This year, the Government Office and a team from the Ministry of Industry and Trade joined our colleagues from NÚKIB. Well, and that has turned into this two-day conference. In addition, we set the whole event in the so-called Czech Digital Week, a week of events on the topic of digital transformation, which brought together the public, non-profit and private sectors and clearly showed that digital topics are not an afterthought in the Czech Republic.

What were the main topics discussed at the conference?

On the first day, crucial topics such as securing supply chains and critical infrastructure were on the table. The second day of the conference took a closer look at issues related to the digital transformation that is fundamentally changing the economy and our society. The relationship between artificial intelligence technologies, data and business approach was discussed. The fight against misinformation was also an important topic.

We heard repeatedly that global cooperation is important, especially with the United States of America.

Can you name any important participants, political representatives aside?

The two-day conference was attended personally and online by prominent representatives from academia, business and NGOs, and the European Commission was represented by experts from their Directorates General for IT and Business - Yvo Volman and Joanna Szychowska. The United States was represented by Ruth Berry from the US Department of State or Frances Burwell from the Atlantic Council think tank. From the business associations, there were present, for example, Ray Pinto from Digital Europe in Brussels or the Swedish representative Charlotte Andersdotter.

Which halls were used in the PCC?

We mainly used the Forum Hall, which allowed us to get a large number of participants in one place on both days. The Forum Hall was also used for the accompanying programme, where we turned the hall into a cinema and screened the documentary V Siti about the pitfalls of the Internet for children and young people.

In addition to the Social Hall, we used the halls on the north side of the PCC with a beautiful view of the Prague Castle and Prague. Here we held bilateral meetings of ministerial delegations and on the second day also the so-called breakout sessions, where we divided the participants into 4 groups and took part in simultaneous panels on artificial intelligence, data or disinformation.

Was there anything specific about this conference in terms of technology? What technology did you use?

There was probably nothing specific in terms of technology. Both days were held in a hybrid form via videoconferencing platforms and with the possibility of streaming (for the second day it was streaming on our conference website digitalconference2022.cz, where the recordings are available for viewing retrospectively).

What was specific was probably the interactive robot exhibition. During the conference, attendees were able to meet a mobile industrial robot that distributed refreshments to guests and speakers on stage. The robot was imported and programmed by a team of scientists from the Technical University of Ostrava. The team also presented various 3D printing products to the guests, such as a scooter or the smart factory concept. The musical background was provided by a robot playing the piano.

What was the most difficult thing to organise for this conference?

The most complicated was definitely the fact that it was organised by 3 state institutions together - so more heads, more opinions. But in the end, we covered everything in the wider organising team. The nuts and bolts and nerve-wracking part was definitely the hybrid design of the conference. Remote connections had to be arranged and tested (sometimes across the world) to make sure everything worked and we didn't embarrass ourselves when we were working on the digital agenda and the online connection failed.

The logistics of ministerial and VIP delegations were also challenging - it was not clear in advance who would arrive at the PCC and when, and whether they would all arrive at the correct entrance. In the end, everything worked out without any diplomatic missteps.

The second day of the conference was open to the public. Was the public interested? And was the organisation a bit more complicated from this point of view?

There was a much bigger wave of interest from the public on the open second day. A number of participants used the online stream on our website, but it was still necessary from an organisational point of view to provide more support for on-site accreditations.

How satisfied were you with the event? Was everything okay?

Personally, I was very satisfied with the event, and apart from some nerve-wracking situations, everything went well. Preparations for such a large conference took more than a year and a half of planning, which is several times longer than the duration of the event itself. It is definitely a great experience, and the organizing team is not going to be surprised by anything.

What did you appreciate most about the PCC?

It is the large variety of different spaces that can be adapted to the number of participants and the type of event - screenings, conferences, bilateral meetings, workshops. It's definitely the accessibility near the metro and the accommodation options in the area.

How satisfied were the participants? Do you have any feedback?

We already had feedback from the participants on the spot. Nothing pleases the organizing team more than being stopped by unknown participants with congratulations on a well-run event. But even now, a week after the event, we are getting thank you emails from VIP speakers and ministerial delegations thanking us for the service and smooth running of the conference.



Is the Czech EU Council Presidency Helping the Meetings Industry Restart?

Governmental meetings: a very specific type of meetings, characterized not only by their organizational complexity, e.g. in terms of interpreting services, compliance with protocol rules, but above all by the safety of individual participants requirements.

Meetings Prague is not a newcomer in this specific field. Two events at the turn of millennium could certainly be counted among some of the most significant international meetings ever held in the Czech capital. In September 2000, the 55th annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank was held here, opened on 26 September by the then-President of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel. A total of 182 ministers and governors of central banks of the member countries attended the meeting itself. Some 40 parallel seminars were held during the meeting and, in addition to the ministers already mentioned, some 18,000 official guests also attended.

Two years later, Prague welcomed another prestigious event, the Prague Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO for short), which took place from 21 to 22 November 2002. One of the highlights of the meeting agenda was the invitation of seven more countries to join NATO. The Prague NATO Summit, attended by almost 50 statesmen, was undoubtedly the biggest of global events ever hosted by the Czech Republic.

The tradition of holding government summits continues in 2022 by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Prague has already had the honour of hosting the Presidency once, in 2009. However, unlike the above-mentioned summits, this is a long-term event. The Presidency, which the Czech Republic took over from France, lasts six months and involves a great quantity of official and associated conferences and other side events.

The Presidency itself began in July with a gala opening ceremony in Litomyšl. Part of the official programme then moved to Prague, in particular to the Prague Congress Centre (PCC). In the first three months of the Presidency, more than 30 conferences of eight ministries out of the planned sixty were held at the PCC alone. Aleš Pejsar from C-IN, the company that organises official meetings during the Presidency, also comments on the difficulty of organising such a large number of events: "Imagine that to the 40 to 50 meetings that C-IN has planned for 2022, other 77 more events will be added suddenly during the Czech Presidency! Nine people from our company are working intensely on the events, which is a truly admirable performance for such a huge event."

The highlight of the Czech Presidency was undoubtedly the first ever meeting of the broader format of European countries, the so-called European Political Community, also known as the Prague Summit. It took place from 6 to 7 October in the representative premises of Prague Castle, with the second day devoted to an informal meeting of the 27 members of the European Council. The organisational preparations for both events took about a month and a half. In the end, the format of the Prague summit was so positively evaluated by the delegates that it will be held in the framework of the next presidencies in 2023.

For the first time in history, leaders from 43 countries met on 6 October to discuss key issues affecting the European continent. In addition to the 26 countries of the European Union, representatives from countries such as Britain, Turkey and Ukraine accepted



the invitation, with the President of Ukraine joining remotely. It was the hybrid format of some of the meetings, which required delegates and interpreters to be connected remotely, posing an additional challenge for the organisers and audiovisual service providers. The COSAC meeting at the O2 universe, which was interpreted into 24 world languages, was, among others, a stress test in this respect.

However, the Czech Presidency does not consist only of official governmental, ministerial, or municipal events. "According to the information available to us, around 150 events of conference type are expected to be organised during the Presidency in Prague alone. These are both smaller size events for 20 people and events for several hundred participants," comments Roman Muška, director of the Prague Convention Bureau, an organisation representing the Prague meetings industry. Such a large number of events, however, does not only entail costs, but also represents a significant financial gain and other benefits. „The summit alone was attended by a number of accompanying persons within delegations who used accommodation in at least 15 Prague hotels. The benefits for Prague must be seen not only in terms of immediate economic impact, but especially in terms of the extensive media coverage that such prestigious events bring. For example, the summit was attended by over 1,200 journalists, including 150 TV stations and 57 global agencies," says Roman Muška.

Holding events during the Presidency certainly helped meetings industry in Prague in the second half of the year. However, it is important to note that these events represent a smaller part of the total number of events that will take place in Prague in the second half of the year. "In our meetings calendar alone, we record 126 conference events in the second half of the year, and these are only publicly presented events. We see the positive impact of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU mainly in the media coverage that these events bring and the associated presentation of the Czech Republic and the City of Prague," concludes Roman Muška.

Thanks to the Presidency and the attention that has been focused on the Czech Republic and Prague, it has also been possible to communicate very effectively the modernisation that Prague has undergone in recent years and topics such as sustainability. In the context of the Presidency and its media image, Prague also launched a new website, international.praha.eu, which serves as a platform for presenting Prague as an important player in the field of international relations. The website will remain active after the Presidency and will continue to serve as a showcase of Prague as an innovative destination in many fields - from artificial intelligence to space technology to cultural and creative industries.

ICOM Congress Brought More Than 3000 Participants to The PCC

One of the most prestigious and biggest events of this year at the PCC was the General Conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which takes place every three years and is a huge event for every country and city.

This year was the 26th ICOM General Conference, but it was the first in the Czech Republic. "Although we had the desire for a long time," says Martina Lehmannová, Executive Director of the Czech ICOM Committee. The first time a candidacy was submitted was in 1962. Six years later, the Czech Republic came very close to winning the host city, but in the end Cologne and Munich won. "At least a post-conference excursion from there was possible, from 14-17 August 1968. Who knows what would have happened if it had been held a week later! And 21 August was fateful for us too, the date fell on the first day of this year's session and we symbolically included a panel on the protection of cultural heritage in war-tested Ukraine in the programme," explains Martina Lehmann.

Martina Lehmannová communicated the idea of organizing the ICOM conference in Prague to her colleagues in 2012. 5 years later, preparations for the candidacy began, but in 2018 Alexandria won by a few votes. Even though Alexandria eventually withdrew, the Czech side was already fully focused on hosting in 2022. "But we had no idea what awaited us - the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, inflation...", says Martina Lehmannová. Organising such a big event in the current times is not easy. "We have already done a lot of work in 2017 and 2018, when we were preparing our candidacy. The main work came in 2019. The hardest year was 2020, when we didn't know how the COVID-19 pandemic would develop and we thought about possible options, and one of them was a full online format. But the option of cancelling the congress was never on the table. In

fact, the museums reacted to the adverse situation with lightning speed and brought many of their activities into the virtual world. So it was never a question of if, but how," she explains.

In the end, more than 3 000 people came to Prague and hundreds more participated online. The total number of delegates reached 3705. "It's a great number," says Martina Lehmann. In 2016, 3,500 delegates came to the ICOM General Conference in Milan; in 2019, 4,500 delegates came to Kyoto, but the organizers sold 1,800 one-day passes, which were not available in Prague due to the hybrid format. "Colleagues who attended in person and those online praised the organisation and were very pleased with the friendly atmosphere and liked the graphics. We received hundreds of enthusiastic responses," adds Martina Lehmannová.

The PCC was a clear choice to hold the Congress at. Although even during ICOM delegates appreciated the pros such as the proximity to the centre, excellent transport accessibility, the number of hotels within walking distance, etc., museum staff in this case admired above all the visual experience that makes the PCC stand out above most of the world's congress centers. "The north wall, wide open towards the unique panorama of Prague, is a work of art in itself, a kind of living veduta (large scale painting) of the city. The interiors of the building are decorated with a number of arts and crafts objects, starting with tapestries, glass or metal sculptures, art prototypes. Many of the halls have retained their original wall coverings or furnishings. The real gems of interior design of the late 1970s and 1980s are

ICOM Congress in numbers:

- **3705** delegates
- **3050** on-site
- **655** on-line
- **124** countries
- **238** panels, workshops and excursions
- More than **700** lectures



➤ Modern Congress

the small southern lounges. The rooms of the congress centre were decorated in a uniform style, for which there is a very nice "Czech" term 'Gesamtkunstwerk'. The delegates at the ICOM conference appreciated this," says Martina Lehmannová.

The theme of the conference was The Power of Museums. According to Martina Lehmannová, this year's ICOM Prague 2022 will go down in museum history as the congress where, after many years of unsuccessful attempts, a consensus was found on a new ICOM definition of a museum that reflects the values that museums present in the 21st century. In addition to the traditional functions of collecting, caring for and exhibiting tangible and intangible heritage, these include openness, accessibility, inclusion, promoting a sustainable planet, ethical and professional conduct, collaboration with communities and knowledge sharing.



Almost 70 Events Will Take Place at The PCC as Part of The Czech Presidency

The Prague Congress Centre is hosting the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU for the second time. While 43 events took place at the PCC in 2009, more than twice as many will take place this year. "It is very demanding in terms of organisation. But it's great publicity for the PCC," says Hana Obrázková, Senior Key Account Manager - International Associations, who worked at the PCC in 2009 too.

What is the main specificity of the organisation of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU as opposed to the usual events held in the PCC?

Although the event is called the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU and at first glance it looks like one long-term event, in reality it is many separate events - each one is different and each one has different requirements in terms of hall rental, equipment and technology. Each individual event is usually organised by a different team on the client side. So in practice for us it is not one big event, but many "smaller" ones. And I mean "smaller" in quotation marks, because if the event is held in the Ballroom and several other halls, it is not really a small event.

So how many events are involved in total?

The Presidency will host 67 events at the PCC from July to December, but these are divided into 134 separate bookings. In a normal year we organise around 200 events, so almost 100 events in less than six months is a really big number. Just for comparison, in 2009, during the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, we held only 43 such events at the PCC. It's really challenging for the whole team at the PCC, but the team works well, helps each other, and the cooperation with people from the Government Office is great.

Will you be able to organise other events during the Czech EU Presidency?

Yes, we can. Thanks to the fact that the PCC is very well prepared for these situations. We have a total of 11 entrances. And even though the EU requirements for the number of entrances are demanding, we can cope. When, for example, three Presidency events are taking place at the same time, the requirement is that each must have three separate entrances. Because the entrances are wide, we can simply split one into two, thereby increasing the capacity of the entrances. It works very well.

A slight complication was that when it was decided that the Czech Presidency would be held at the PCC, we had already booked some events, including large congresses, as many of them book dates several years in advance. As the EU program-

me is clearly set and cannot change, we have had to deal with some clients changing their requirements, for example changing rooms. For one congress, for example, we had to set up the stands the night before the event because we did not have the space available earlier. However, every such unexpected event is a big challenge for us and I am glad that we managed to resolve everything to everyone's satisfaction.



I suppose this is a huge "advertisement" for the PCC...

That's right. It's one of the most prestigious events we've ever had at the PCC. Along with the 2009 Presidency, the IMF meeting and the NATO meeting. We renamed one of the lounges where the meeting was held, which Barack Obama attended, the Obama Room. It works well for prospective clients who view the PCC space for their events. They are thrilled to have their event in the same place where Barack Obama held his meeting. Prague meetings are often mentioned in the media, which is great. Unfortunately, there are still many members of the public who say that nothing is happening at the PCC. We do hold many congresses here, and we have top experts from many fields, including the best doctors, but this information does not usually reach the media. Then the public has the feeling that the PCC is empty and nothing happens there. The Presidency of the Council of the EU is really a great advertisement in this respect.

Have you had any feedback from individual delegations on how satisfied they are with the PCC?

Fortunately, only positive. They like it here. They especially appreciate the Panorama Hall and the beautiful view, which is irreplaceable. And the hall itself is also beautiful. The delegates also appreciate things that we take for granted, such as the fact that the AV technology, the internet and the catering are working perfectly. In the experience of organisers and delegates, this is not as obvious as we might think.

The Flawless Functioning of Audiovisual Interpretation Is Essential



event as the Czech Presidency of the Council of Ministers of everyone involved. One of the key persons involved is Lenka Šteplová, the Director of the Department for the

and take a selfie as a souvenir, while also looking with interest at the herb garden on the terrace. Delegations are offered the same panoramic views from the various meeting rooms, which only adds to the positive impressions of the various presidential events. Guests also appreciate the PCC's capacity to provide delegations with facilities and space for a range of bilateral meetings on the side-lines of plenary sessions. Our colleagues from the future presidency country, Sweden, have already made four visits to the PCC to gain know-how from us for their preparatory work and always appreciate the compactness of the space and its versatile use.



and a total of four informal Ministerial Councils were thus held in the second week of July, which was the first week of the Presidency. Then there were other ministerial events that followed immediately on each other and involved large delegations, for example the informal Councils of Foreign and Defence Ministers at the end of the summer. At the same time, these events had the greatest media coverage.

The Presidency of the Council of the EU requires the use of different technologies and techniques. How satisfied are you with this aspect?

For the smooth running of ministerial meetings in particular, it is crucial that the audiovisual and interpretation technology in the main meeting room is working flawlessly, which includes precise scanning of the speakers and also sound transmission between the interpretation booths and the guests. In the ministerial meetings, the challenge was to provide remote connection facilities for some ministerial delegations, which was always preceded by technical tests and connection tests. However, we have not experienced any outages and so far, everything has been running smoothly.

Have you had any feedback from EU delegations?

The feedback we have had from delegations has been very positive, both on the content of the meetings themselves and on the organisational and logistical arrangements. Participants are satisfied not only with the main meeting room, but also with the possibility to take part in coffee breaks in the large foyer, which is located in the immediate vicinity of the meeting room. At the same time, due to the favourable weather conditions so far, there is an opportunity to visit the terrace with a breath-taking view of the Prague skyline. Many delegates take the opportunity to enjoy the daylight, fresh air

Is there anything that has surprised you the most so far? Do you have a funny story from the preparations?

Probably the most amusing experience from behind the scenes of the organisation of presidency events was an unexpected water storm in the background of the Czech Government Office. During the course of one Ministerial Council during the summer months, a very strong storm broke out and flooded the roof of the Prague Congress Centre. This caused the water to flow through the entire building and into the back office of the Government Office, which is located on the ground floor of the Prague Congress Centre. Fortunately, the situation was saved by catching the water in the flowerpots used for presidential events, and no harm was done to colleagues or computer equipment.

How satisfied are you with the PCC team at your disposal?

The entire organisational team for the Czech Presidency from the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic assesses the cooperation with the PCC colleagues as very productive, professional and helpful. Not only at the time of planning events, but also during events, our colleagues from the PCC are a great support to us and we appreciate especially their flexibility and speed in solving situations or minor problems that arise. The PCC team can provide miracles on the spot together with the C-IN contractor without exaggeration, which we appreciate very much.

Menu For Refined Palates

Most of the conferences and social events within the framework of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union take place in the Prague Congress Center and all-day refreshments are provided by Zátíší Catering. Our meticulously crafted menu celebrates Czech cuisine.



The Czech Republic is presiding over the Council of the EU for the second time in its history, and Zátíší Catering is providing for the delegates for the second time. Diplomatic negotiations require precision, subtlety and a perfect attention to detail. A convivial environment, delicious food and a friendly staff improve the atmosphere and thus the results of the meeting. A perfectly prepared themed menu can play a big role in this.

An experienced partner

The Zátíší Group has been providing top gastronomy and exceptional dining experiences for 30 years. The Zátíší Catering division organizes social events here and across Europe. Since 2004, we have been a partner of the Prague Congress Center and have catered all events held here, including the International Monetary Fund summit and the Czech EU presidency in 2008 and this year.

A presentation of Czech culture

From July 1 to December 31, the Prague Congress Center will host 104 conference days full of meetings, negotiations and networking. The professional Zátíší Catering team, headed by Zuzana Zapletalová and Linda Gerold Reitingner, have been preparing these

events for almost half a year. The main concept is to present modern Czech cuisine with an emphasis on sustainability, which Zátíší Catering has in its DNA. Our individual dishes represent the jewels of Czech cuisine and are based on seasonal ingredients from local suppliers.

The Czech menu

For example, delegates can choose eggplant and mushroom terrine with truffle oil, Prague ham with apple and horseradish, chicken broth with noodles, kulajda with mushrooms, duck with cabbage and dumplings, zander with mashed potatoes and Riesling sauce, cupcakes with vanilla cream and fruit, leavened jam or cottage cheese strudel, filled pastries or traditional Czech mini-desserts. The most popular menu for ministerial gala lunches is a smoked poultry pate with plum chutney, beef with traditional sirloin sauce, Karlovy Vary dumplings and cranberry chutney, and for dessert fantastic crullers with pistachio cream and vanilla ice cream.

Special events

The 4,000 m² facility allows chefs to prepare meals in the shortest possible time so that everything is as fresh as possible and in the required quantities. This minimizes waste as well as the carbon footprint from transport. The consistent sorting of waste also reduces the impact on nature. Zátíší Catering has completely eliminated plastic waste. For example, we water the herbs from our garden, use homemade syrups and fresh fruit to flavor our lemonades... The most experienced Zátíší Catering team works at the Prague Congress Center. From the beginning of the Czech EU presidency, we have already provided for 1,500 delegates and 3,000 members of their entourages and we will continue to ensure the smooth functioning of some 300 events. That would not be possible without excellent quality, innovative ideas and perfect collaboration.





Family Painting

The interiors of the Prague Congress Centre were furnished with unique tapestries, art prototypes, glass or metal sculptures, wooden reliefs, in short, mainly arts and crafts objects. There were not nearly as many paintings. One of them was created by Karel Souček.

Karel Souček (1915 Kročehlavy-1982 Kladno) was an outstanding painter, member of the Communist Party, chairman of the Union of Czech Artists and also a national artist. He was therefore in the best position to participate in the work for the Palace of Culture. For Karel Souček, however, the left-wing orientation was not a ladder leading to status and power, but a natural part of his personality; he believed that it was necessary to achieve social justice in society. He came from a poor background, his father died early and only his mother took care of the family. Young Karel Souček had to learn something practical, so he became a painter and room decorator. When he was 20 years old, he entered an art school and two years later he entered the Academy of Fine Arts. But in 1939 the colleges were closed and Souček did not graduate until 1945.

During the war, he met young artists who, like him, sought inspiration in the themes they saw around them, in the streets, in arcades, in shops, fascinated by the simple everyday, mundane things, human work - we know this trend as civilism. They founded the very important "Group 42" with its main theoretician Jindřich Chaloupecký, whose name has been given to the prestigious award for young artists under 35 since 1990. Group 42 was dissolved after the communists came to power in 1948, and for Karel Souček this also meant the loss of his prestigious job as an assistant at the Academy of Fine Arts. He was once again supported by his profession as a painter. He devoted himself to art as a teacher at the school in Rakovník and painted "for his drawer" at home in Kročehlavy.

It was only in the second half of the 1950s that he managed to reassert himself. Thanks to his talent, he was invited to work

on the Czechoslovak Pavilion in Brussels in 1958 and won a gold medal. He returned to the Academy of Fine Arts, now as head of the special studio of figurative painting. Success followed success after success - a prize at the Biennial in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the National Prize of the Guggenheim Foundation in New York, and travels to Paris and London. Religious themes were added to the civilian ones, and the alternation of life's successes and failures probably also brought into Souček's work a fascination with the theme of Don Quixote. He even illustrated this book, although his illustrations were never published.

In the 1970s, Karel Souček created many works of art corresponding to the political demand of his time - Lidice, the triptych Liberation, and he designed the mosaic Kladno Scenery for the cultural house in Kladno. For the Palace of Culture, however, he painted a quite non-political work called "Family". It is one of his most extensive paintings. Compositionally, it is divided into three parts, as if it were another of the triptychs he created countless times. A man, the head of a family, reading a newspaper. He is in the centre of the composition, but somewhat overshadowed, the main actors in the story are women. One listens to the reading, another brings a plate of food to the table. The last woman, like the statues of the Madonnas, holds and shows us a small child symbolizing the future, and the attention naturally turns to her. The girl with the flower in her hair has her back to us, we can only guess what she is thinking about. Perhaps her story unfolds sideways, in the premises of a shopping arcade that could be the setting for a lover's tryst. Or the object of desire may be a new dress, purchased perhaps on the salary of an arranger. Simply an emancipated woman!



Hauser's First European Stop Will be in The PCC

A rock star with a cello is just one of the nicknames of the Croatian artist who goes by the name Hauser. The musician, who is followed by millions of people around the world, launched his first solo tour in the autumn. And his first European stop will be in Prague at the PCC!

Stjepan Hauser comes from Pula, Croatia. From an early age, he studied music at the Zagreb Conservatory, where he met his later colleague Luka Šulić. However, he completed his musical education abroad, studying at prestigious music schools in London, Manchester and the USA. His instrument of choice is the cello.

After graduating, he performed at many festivals and concerts and was also active in several musical groups. A crucial moment in his career is his collaboration with a former classmate from the Zagreb Conservatory. Stjepan Hauser and Luka Šulić together formed a duo called 2CELLOS. They were approached to record Michael Jackson's song Smooth Criminal for an episode of the successful TV series Glee. Their cover of the hit song became an internet sensation and within days they had amassed millions of followers.

Together, they have recorded six albums and have toured extensively, both as 2CELLOS and as part of Elton John's band. Their collaboration lasted 10 years, during which time they managed to sell more than a million tickets for their concerts. In addition to Elton John, they have performed with other greats of the music world such as Steven Tyler, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Andrea Bocelli.

In 2019, the pair decided to break off their collaboration for a while and pursue solo projects. One concert from the farewell tour took place this spring in Prague.



Now Stjepan Hauser returns to Prague again, already as a solo artist. His tour called HAUSER - REBEL WITH A CELLO TOUR will premiere in Prague at the PCC. The concert will take place on December 17 in the Congress Hall with a capacity of 2.766 people and is already sold out.



Hauser Loves Prague

We talked to Pavel Pešek from the Vanity Club agency about why Hauser chose Prague and the PCC for his concert premiere.

This is Hauser's first solo tour. How difficult was it to get Prague on the tour calendar? Moreover, as the first stop?

It wasn't difficult at all, Hauser himself chose Prague on purpose, he loves Prague and in his words there is nothing more beautiful than having a concert premiere in the heart of Europe.

Why did you choose the PCC to perform?

The PCC is ideal for the kind of concert Hauser is coming with, the intention was also a more intimate setting as opposed to a big sports arena.

Have you had any previous experience with the PCC?

Yes, we know the PCC very well, I would say we are "at home" here. In the past we have hosted for example the very successful show The Illusionists at the PCC.

Do you have any special requirements for technology, equipment, etc.?

Every artist and organizer always wants to come up with something new and interesting and based on that, the requirements are created, which may not be special, but they can always be more demanding.

Is the artist (in this case Hauser) involved in the decision of where to perform or is it purely a matter for the organizers?

It's not a rule, usually the venue is decided with the artist's management, but in our case Hauser was consulted.

Is there already a plan for Hauser to return to Prague again?

Yes, it has been decided, Hauser will continue his world tour in 2023 and Hauser will visit Prague again in October next year.

We Want To Be Exclusively a Czech Restaurant

The Holiday Inn Prague is currently undergoing an extensive renovation, which will include the restaurant and bar. Changes will also affect the hotel's kitchen, where the concept will be renewed. What will it look like? That's what we talked about with chef Jan Wiesner.



What changes will the restaurant undergo?

The most visible change will be visual, where we want to unify the design of the restaurant, the hotel and the garden, which we want to use more. It's an original space, but unfortunately no one looking in from the outside would think that this beautiful garden is even here, which is a shame. The interior will be dominated by green, with an emphasis on garden elements and flowers. The bistro will also get a new design and we will open up and connect the whole space.

We also want to focus on advertising so that people are not afraid to come in even if they are not staying at the hotel. We will also be using Czech Benedict porcelain, which has a long history and will be custom-made specifically for our hotel to fit in with the restaurant concept.

Will the kitchen undergo a change?

Yes. Although we currently offer Czech food, our cuisine is international. We want to change that and focus exclusively on Czech cuisine. We have the advantage of being able to use the space all year round thanks to the glass garden. In the warmer seasons we also want to organize evenings grilling meat in the garden.

What ingredients will you use?

We want to stick exclusively to Czech ingredients from local suppliers, which we are currently selecting. We already know that the cheese will come from the Tehovce area in Říčany, the meat from Kolín, and the poultry from a supplier in Písek. The fish on our menu will also be exclusively Czech - we will focus on pike and trout, which we will source from Dolní Chabry. I am an advocate of the fact that it is not good for goods to come from the other side of the world. If we have quality Czech yoghurt, it is unnecessary to import it from Germany, even if it is slightly more expensive. This is true of most raw materials. That is why we try to find suppliers from Prague or its surroundings. And if that's not possible, at least from the Czech Republic. We already have exclusively Czech dairy products from South Bohemia, Vysočina or Opočno in our breakfast menu.

We also would prefer the offerings of Czech winemakers. Everyone knows that we have good beer, but we believe that Czech wines will also be successful.

If you want to use Czech ingredients, I suppose you will have to take into account some seasonality...

We will have a fixed menu and a seasonal offer of ingredients such as asparagus, venison or mushrooms. We also want to focus on pickling and fermentation, and we are already trying to use some unusual ingredients and recipes, such as yellow or red beetroot, we have also pickled carrots or fennel. We are also making our own flavored oils, for example, from lovage, paprika, parsley or other ingredients. We also grow herbs in our garden and have an indoor growing room. It's a kind of cupboard in which we grow peas, mustard, lentils or anything else we can think of.

You have a famous pastry shop. Are you going to change its concept?

We have very skilled pastry chefs, we will definitely keep the pastry shop, but we will focus more on Czech desserts in a more modern concept. We will also use Czech ingredients in this case. Our popular e-shop will also remain.

➤ CHRISTMAS TAKE AWAY

Have a carefree Christmas and leave the Christmas menu and Christmas cookie preparations to us and order your Christmas Take Away online at

<https://eshop.holidayinn.cz/>

Chef Jan Wiesner and his team have prepared a variety of specialties for you and in addition, you will receive a gift with an order over 2000 Kč.

The bar menu will also change...

Yes, we want to strengthen the Czech offer here as well. It will be a Czech tapas bar or wine bar. We will offer quality Czech wines and Czech food will be served in special bowls, which will be custom-made for us by a porcelain supplier. And because the word tapas means "something under the lid", our bowls will be covered. For example, we are planning duck meatballs, brioche with pork, pickled cheese or beef tongue. Desserts available at the bar will also be Czech, such as laskonky, cream puffs (Czech větrník) or strudel. Our intention is for guests to spend a pleasant evening at our bar and not have to go into town for food or drinks. That's why we will open a tapas bar. It's a global concept and we are confident that it will appeal to our guests. Instead of the traditional bar stools, we will have stuffed chairs to make guests comfortable.

Are you still counting on the bistro?

Yes, even if some of the guests will still prefer takeaway food. We will also keep themed take away packages, such as Chris-

THREE THEMED BRUNCHES ➤

Three themed brunches will take place before the end of the year. All of them include a rich buffet of meat and fish specialties, sushi and sweet bar, unlimited consumption of selected wines, beers and soft drinks, a children's corner with a hostess, free parking and Wi-Fi and a raffle for attractive prizes.

27. 11.

Thanksgiving brunch with traditional dishes

(golden roasted turkey and other traditional specialties)

4. 12.

St. Nicholas brunch with a visit from St. Nicholas, the devil and an angel

11. 12.

Advent brunch with a Christmas-themed buffet

Reservations by phone (+420) 296 895 030 or e-mail: restaurant@holidayinn.cz.

mas and Easter. We are going to introduce new meat packages for the summer for home barbecues. People will order a package of meat with salsa and sauce, pick it up and just put it on the grill at home, they don't have to prepare anything.

Themed brunches are also popular...

We have themed brunches once a month and we want to keep them going. We have about 70 percent regulars now. So more than two-thirds of our guests are returning guests, and that forces us to come up with something new.

Pork cheeks in mustard sauce with pumpkin gnocchi and autumn vegetables



Duck stew with speck dumplings and marinated red onion



Apricot dumplings with sour cream



Calendar of events

➤ **28. 11. – 29. 11.**

EUROPEAN SPACE START-UP CONFERENCE AND COPERNICUS USER FORUM

A unique conference to kick off the Czech Space Week, addressing companies, start-ups, research institutions and other stakeholders looking for collaboration and market opportunities in the space sector.

➤ **7. 12. – 12. 12. DĚTI RÁJE**

Sagvan Tofi's Thalia Award-winning DĚTI RÁJE (children of paradise) is a musical set in the second half of the 1980s and then in the present day. The entire first half revolves around the disco euphoria that was at its peak at the time, dominated by the hits of Michal David, of which the entire HIT musical is composed.

➤ **7. 12. – 8. 12.**

ESPON EXPERT CONFERENCE

At the conference, researchers, academics and scientists from across Europe actively participate in the exchange of information, experiences and ideas, inspired by the results of analytical exploration projects and targeted analyses and data generated by ESPON tools.

➤ **17. 12. HAUSER**

A hardcore instrumentalist and founding member of 2Cellos, known simply as HAUSER, announces his first ever solo (and long-awaited) world tour, Rebel with a Cello. Armed with the energy and success of the last and final sold-out 2Cellos tour, this top cellist and visual artist brings the ultimate musical showcase - his distinctive show that will not lack for romantic and soulful sound, Hauser's inimitable playing style and pyrotechnics.

➤ **18. 12. TARJA TURUNEN**

The Finnish singer has prepared a brand new Christmas show, the Christmas Peace. The former member of the popular metal band Nightwish will perform with her entourage and offer the audience a Christmas concert.

➤ **27. 1. – 28. 1. C'EST LA MAGIE**

Elite magicians Luis de Matos, Darcy Oake, Yu Hojin, James Mores and Enzo Wayne present their new show full of accomplished and often deadly tricks. There will be no shortage of stage illusions, mind-reading and collaborative magic with the audience.

➤ **10. 2. TALKSHOW OBSESSED WITH THE DAKAR 2023**

Martin Macík and his team will once again share the best of Dakar with the audience. The popular talk show, which introduces the most famous rally race to the audience in an unconventional way, returns to the Prague Congress Centre on a regular basis.

➤ **11. 2. THE MAGICAL MUSIC OF HARRY POTTER**

The Magical Music of Harry Potter - Live in Concert with the Weasley Brothers. The best music from all the Harry Potter films

and a musical with symphony orchestra, The Harry Potter Films are one of the most successful franchises in cinema history. The music, which has won numerous awards in London and New York, comes to Europe for the first time in a unique concert evening with the Weasley brothers.

➤ **11. 2. THE WALL IN CONCERT**

This concert pays tribute to the greatest rock opera of all time and celebrates the 40th anniversary of Pink Floyd's legendary concert tour. The unique concert features musicians and singers from the original Pink Floyd and Roger Waters tours.

➤ **8. 3. – 12. 3. SHEN YUN**

Through breath taking dance and music, Shen Yun artists portray a time when celestial beings walked the earth, leaving behind a culture that has inspired countless generations. Their performance is a celebration of China's rich cultural heritage.

➤ **8. 3. ALL WOMEN FESTIVAL**

The festival is for all women, especially those in business. During the show, they will meet a variety of inspiring personalities, learn about mentoring, innovation and networking.

➤ **19. 3. PUPO – 40 ANNI... SU DI NOI**

The Italian singer POPO has been performing for 40 years. His new tour is above all a great show with live music and energy that will bring a lot of positive emotions and unforgettable impressions.

➤ **26. 3. – 28. 3. RADIODAYS EUROPE 2023**

The largest pan-European conference for professionals in the field of radio, podcasting and audio content production will take place in Prague on the occasion of the centenary of the official launch of radio broadcasting in the former Czechoslovakia.

➤ **27. 3. – 30. 3. RETAIL SUMMIT 2023**

The Retail Summit - a meeting of the key players of the Central European retail market - is returning to the Prague Congress Centre. The Summit is intended for all participants of the retail market who have the ambition to succeed, develop their business, improve themselves, their company and the market environment. It does not matter the size or form of ownership of the company or whether it operates in the "brick and mortar" or digital world.

➤ **7. 4. JOE SATRIANI**

This world-famous guitarist will present his new album at the Prague Congress Centre. On "The Shapeshifting Tour" Satriani will be accompanied by drummer Kenny Aronoff (John Fogerty), bassist Bryan Beller (Aristocrats) and keyboardist Rai Thistlethwayte (Thirsty Merc). The concert program will feature the guitarist's now-classic songs such as "Surfing With The Alien", "Cherry Blossoms", "Always With Me, Always With You" and "Flying In A Blue Dream" as well as several selections from his new studio album.



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You will see and hear our track across many theaters, congresses, multifunctional and sportshalls, administrative buildings, educational workplaces, or at the airport.

We Consult



Contacting the client even before the very beginning of the project itself is key for us because listening, discussing and finally understanding tells us what he needs beforehand.

We Suggest



Presenting a solution that corresponds to current trends and is adjustable as well as easily expandable is expected from us. Therefore, we emphasize a global approach to the clients' local needs.

We Project



Processing the documentation is always provided by us in accordance with the Public Procurement Act, including BIM modeling.

We Implement



Making the installation of the entire system as much user-friendly as possible is a must for us, however, we provide training for technology operators in addition, if needed.

We Measure



Not only performing all kinds of authorized noise measurements, but also scanning objects for further processing of their digital twins is what we offer.

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Prima TV

Cutting edge theater technologies in Janáček Theater

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