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Issue #8

EURAXESS CZECH REPUBLIC Newsletter

Dear friends,

Summer is here and sunny days destroy our work ethic. We would rather lie somewhere by a river or pond and our productivity equals almost zero. I believe that the new edition of our newsletter can be a pleasant companion during your free time.

This time we introduce two EURAXESS Service Centres based in České Budějovice – one at the University of South Bohemia and the second at the Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Both of them, have a long tradition and many satisfied clients. Let Tereza Kastnerová (USB) and Marie Pagunadisová (BC CAS) introduce their daily work.

Subarna and her husband Dep Pratim Mukhopadhyay shared their long and interesting journey to the Czech Republic. Subarna is our current EURAXESS volunteer. You can meet her personally during our regular "Let's Meet" meetings (every last Tuesday of the month at 13:00).

Also, I am happy to share some photos from our family events – Guided Tour of Prague Gardens (May) and Strawberry Picking (June)! We had a nice time together. I wish you a very nice summer with some refreshing drinks!

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The University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice

was founded in 1991. Over the years, the university has grown and currently students can study more than 360 fields of study at eight faculties - from language studies, through science or teaching to economics and IT. Around 1,000 foreign students, academics and researchers come every year. We meet most scientists in fields such as natural sciences, fisheries, biology, ecology, but also in theology and archeology. Although the University of South Bohemia has its headquarters in České Budějovice, we can also find research institutes in Vodňany and Nové Hradky. At our university, scientists can use top laboratories and thus expand their knowledge and experience in an international environment. We are very happy to welcome scientists from both neighbouring countries and more exotic ones, such as Papua New Guinea, ie from all over the world.

I started working at the Foreign Relations Department at the university in February this year. I started moving in an international environment at the beginning of my university studies and I am glad that I can continue to do so now. I enjoy working with foreigners, I like to get to know new cultures and their traditions and customs. I especially like the idea that I can help someone to live their dream here in the Czech Republic.

euraxess
CZECH REPUBLIC



2 CONTACT POINTS: ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE

Our help at the university consists mainly of arrival and residence issues or extension of stay. We can deal with issues related to health insurance, help with the integration of family and children and, last but not least, find your way around the city and the surrounding area. If necessary, we can pass on contact to organizations dealing with the integration of foreigners in the city (Center for Support of Integration of Foreigners or counselling centre for foreigners and migrants "Diecézní charita České Budějovice").



TEREZA
KASTNEROVÁ

Young beginning researchers who are still studying for their doctoral studies can use all the services and activities that USB offers to all students, such as trips, student meetings, sports and cultural activities organized by student associations - [ESN USB / The USB Student Union](#). Due to the cultural diversity on our campus, we organize an annual Orientation Course for Foreign Students and Doctoral Students from the nonprofit organization Slovo 21. USB offers all employees, including foreign researchers, other useful services such as Psychological Counseling or children's group Kvítek.

České Budějovice lies in a region that will surprise every visitor with its beauty, we could call it a tourist paradise. Here you will find countless cultural and historical monuments, ancient cities full of life and culture, Renaissance castles, and monuments of folk architecture. South Bohemia offers many interesting natural phenomena, it is known as a region of ponds, forests, large peat bogs and protected areas. This picturesque landscape, enclosed by the arms of the Šumava and Novohradské hory, is definitely worth a visit.

BRANCH INTRODUCTIONS



MARIE
PAGUNADISOVÁ

The Biology Centre, CAS is a public research institution established in 2006 by the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. The main focus of the Biology Centre is research in biological and biological-ecological fields, especially in entomology, hydrobiology, molecular plant biology, parasitology and soil biology. The Biology Centre also issues opinions, statements, and recommendations in all its fields of activity, organises scientific meetings, and strives to apply the results of scientific research in practise, including the development of technologies.

Currently, the Biology Centre with its more than 800 employees (including 240 foreign employees) is the largest institution of the Czech Academy of Sciences outside Prague. At the same time, it is one of the largest ecologically oriented research institutions in Europe.

An integral part of the activities of the Biology Centre is the education of students at all levels of study, training of scientific staff, communication with the public in the Czech Republic and abroad, cooperation with national and international partners to meet important challenges and reflect the current and future needs and values of society. The researchers of the Biology Centre were involved in the foundation of the University of South Bohemia, contributed significantly to its profile and continue to work closely with it in science and research, in student education and in the development of the joint campus. In the laboratories of the Biology Centre, almost a hundred doctoral students of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the University of South Bohemia receive scientific training.

I have been working in the Biology Centre since 2017 as a HR specialist (contact information can be found [here](#)). Since 2019, the Biology Centre has been part of the network of Euraxess Czech Republic as a contact point. My role is to support current and future foreign staff. I am one of the first points of contact for prospective foreign employees of the Biology Centre, providing them with information about employment and everything to do before and after their arrival. I also support their families during their stay in the Czech Republic.

Various information for our current or potential employees can be found in [GUIDE FOR EXPATS](#). 🖱️



The official communication platform is Facebook [BC Expat Lounge](#). 🖱️



OUR JOURNEY TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

It was mid-October 2020. People everywhere were frustrated, and the whole world was struggling. The only thing people were discussing was COVID. We were in Würzburg and our German residence permit was about to expire in December. We had no idea what to do next, how to get back to India.

Then we got the good news: my husband Deb Pratim got an offer for a 2-year postdoctoral position at the J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry in Prague, Czech Republic. Our minds were deeply saddened before leaving Würzburg, a beautiful town of Germany where we spent about 2 and a half years. At the same time we were very excited, because Prague is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, where we once planned to visit but unfortunately canceled due to COVID.

Moving from Würzburg to Prague was not easy at all, particularly during a time of a global pandemic when the administrative procedures were greatly affected due to the lock down and ever-changing rules of entry. Each country was imposing its own measure and restrictions to tackle the spreading of the virus, and we were running out of time. The information provided in the official website was not easy to follow at that time due to restrictions. This was the first time we were introduced to Euraxess. After the very first e-mail conversations they figured out a "war plan" based on our situation by consulting the HR department of the institute that offered Deb Pratim his position. They not only guided us through all the steps, but sometimes they took full responsibility to make our move possible.

Euraxess had figured out that, since Deb Pratim's German residence permit was "Researcher type", the Czech Republic could provide him an instant entry visa for 120 days by showing that I could apply for a "Family visa", which was the quickest possibility to get my visa. The main challenge, however, was to get this instant visa. He needed to travel to Prague and apply to the Ministry of Interior before 1 pm and return on the same day, as at that time there was a rule that, if anyone stayed more than 24 hours in the Czech Republic, then he or she needed to be quarantined.

It was November 24, 2020, a very cold and snowy morning. After a long overnight train journey from Würzburg to Prague Deb Pratim finally met an Euraxess member, Ms. Zuzana Maršáľková, who was waiting for



Subarna & Deb Pratim Mukhopadhyay

him at the entrance of Ministry of Interior. Ms Maršáľková helped him finish all the official work and get the entry visa in 30 minutes. At the same time, another problem arose, this time for my own application, which needed to be submitted at the Czech embassy in Berlin. There was no appointment slot available before January, however, and my residence permit was due to expire in December. Again it was Euraxess who helped me get an appointment on December 1 and submitted our necessary documents directly to the Ministry of Interior in Prague to speed up the process. Ms. Zuzana Tuřáľková from Euraxess even shared her phone number with us and answered all of our e-mail queries. Sometimes we emailed her more than ten times in one day!

It was only because of the excellent service and expertise of Euraxess that we were able to move to Prague together. Otherwise, I might have been forced to return to India alone and needed to apply for the visa from there, which was not so easy process at that time. We are very much grateful to the whole Czech Euraxess team. We finally got the chance to thank Ms. Maršáľková personally at the integration course on July 1, 2021, a mandatory course for the Czech residence permit holder, again organized by Euraxess to help make our stay in the Czech Republic a smooth one.

After all these good experiences I feel really great to work now with the Euraxess team in a volunteer job position. I hope they will continue with their service in the same or better way with great success in the future to make us (foreigners) feel comfortable and welcome in a new country and culture.

MOJITO

RECIPE:

- 4 cl white rum
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- 2 teaspoons superfine cane sugar
- 6 to 8 fresh mint leaves
- soda water and ice to taste

DIRECTIONS:



Place the lime, mint and sugar into a highball glass and mash with the end of a clean rolling pin, to bruise the mint and release the lime juice. Add the ice and pour over the rum. Add soda water to taste and stir well. Garnish with mint leaves and serve!



MEETINGS & EVENTS

BOOK THESE DATES:

AUGUST

- 30th, 13:00 – 15:00 Let's meet! – regular meeting for spouses of researchers, personally in the EURAXESS meeting room (Prague); limited capacity; contact [here](#). 
- 30th, 13:30 Summer meet-up – informal meeting for researchers organized by Czexpats in Science in Vila Lanna (Prague); lecture of Jakub Abramson from Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, and panel discussion on the topic „New Beginnings“, more information available soon [here](#). 

SEPTEMBER

- 15th, 9:00 – 13:00 Adaptation and Integration Course for researchers and their family members (Prague), **registration already closed**.
- 27th, 13:00 – 15:00 Let's meet! – regular meeting for spouses of researchers, personally in the EURAXESS meeting room (Prague); limited capacity; contact [here](#). 
- 2nd, 15:00 – 17:00 Boat trip (Prague) – event for researchers and their family members; capacity limited, registration [here](#). 

FAMILY EVENT
PHOTOS



Guided Tour of Prague
Gardens in May



Strawberry Picking
in June

THANKS FOR READING!

Feel free to send any comments, suggestions or questions to volunteer@lib.cas.cz.