

APRIL 2021
Issue #2



EURAXESS

CZECH REPUBLIC

Newsletter

Dear Readers,

Here we come with our second edition of the EURAXESS newsletter. In this issue, we will introduce you to the EURAXESS Service Centre in Plzen at the University of West Bohemia and also some traditions related to this season. You can read about a "Journey to the Czech Republic" by Mehdi Hosseini from Institute of Physics. You can also try a traditional Czech recipe and join some events which are organized for you by the EURAXESS centres. If you want to share your experience, your feedback or your success story, do not hesitate to contact us or join at [EURAXESS Czech Republic Facebook page](#).

- Zuzana Maršálková

In This Issue:

(YOU CAN CLICK TO GO TO EACH SECTION)



EURAXESS BRANCH INTRODUCTION

MY JOURNEY TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

EARTH DAY & A ZERO WASTE LIFESTYLE

PÁLENÍ ČARODĚJNIC (CULTURAL TRADITION)

BRAMBORAČKA

RECIPE

MEETINGS & EVENTS

BRANCH INTRODUCTION



CONTACT POINT IN THE PILSEN REGION

Dear Readers,

Let me introduce myself. My name is Martina Bruščíková and I hold the post of the EURAXESS Contact Point in the Pilsen Region. I'm really honoured to be the first Contact Point having the opportunity to represent the region but at the same time, I feel the responsibility for it. So I hope I can rise to the occasion and you will enjoy my short narration at least a bit.

The Pilsner EURAXESS Contact Point came into existence in 2016 and resides at the University of West Bohemia (UWB). I myself joined the EURAXESS Czech Republic Network in spring 2019, about 10 months after commencement of my employment at the university.

I like my job not only in view of the fact that I can meet very interesting people from foreign countries and cultures but also because of its diversity. My "clients" are primarily researchers and academics coming to the Pilsen Region from abroad but also all the foreigners working at the UWB.

My tasks consist of assistance with all necessities before arrival of the foreigners (especially help with gaining a visa/residence permit for the third-country nationals), in the course of their stay here and before their departure, too. In particular, it means that I prepare paperwork so that the foreigners can be employed by the UWB, I also make needed appointments for the foreigners (e.g. appointments at the Mol office, at the UWB doctor's office, in a bank depending on their preferences etc.), help them with the accommodations, with orientation at the university and in Pilsen as well, with understanding the Czech health insurance system, with finding a school or kindergarten for their children, with applying for parental allowances, and many others. Also I try to inform the foreign employees about important matters happening in the Czech Republic and about interesting sociocultural courses and



MARTINA BRUŠČÍKOVÁ

events as well (although the amount of such activities unfortunately decreased rapidly due to the coronavirus). On top of that, I annually approach the Centre for Support of Integration of Foreigners (CPIC) asking them to hold a seminar on taxes for the UWB foreign employees. These seminars are free of charge and are always held by a tax advisor with the participation of an interpreter. (Herewith I would like to express my thanks to this Pilsner Centre for its support.) As the UWB consists of nine faculties and two independent institutes, it probably crosses your minds that I wouldn't be able to do all the work on my own. At this point, I would like to mention my colleague – Ms Lucie Šmuclerová. Lucie shares an office with me and together we do our best to support the internationalization at the University of West Bohemia.

So if you are an academic or researcher, don't hesitate any longer to come to Pilsen, the city famous for its delicious beer. We are here to make the move easier for you.

Where beer is made,
the research is great!



MY JOURNEY TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC



SEYEDMEHDI HOSSEINI

Czech Academy of Sciences -
Institute of Physics
(Fyzikální ústav AV ČR - FZÚ)



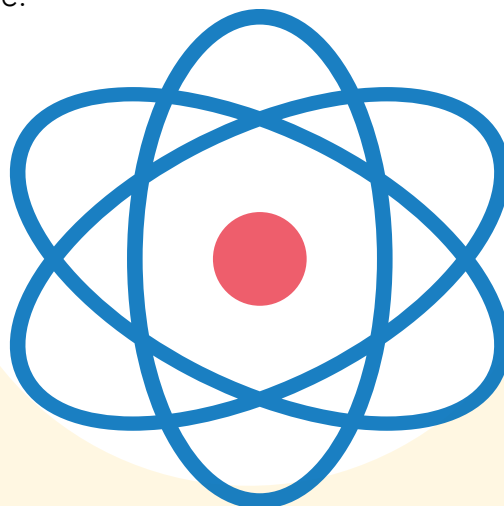
MEHDI, SIMIN AND SOPHIA IN PRAGUE

Nowadays, career progress depends on the right decision at the right time. A few months before the end of 2017, I saw an invitation on the internet to submit a proposal for 14 research fellow positions at the University of Chemistry and Technology in Prague (UCT) with a Marie Curie Actions Individual Fellowships concept under the name of ChemJets Projects. One of the topics was fairly close to my scientific background and knowledge. So, I started filling out the application form and writing the proposal for that position. Meanwhile, my wife and I passed cheerful days as we were waiting for our daughter's birth. Surprisingly, the interview was scheduled on the day our daughter was born, so I asked to postpone it for several days.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my boss, Dr. Pavel Novak, who has had a gentle personality from our first meeting during the interview to the last moment of

collaboration. Thanks to EURAXESS and our previous experience from a sabbatical leave in Prague, we were able to receive our visas three months after the interview. I should confess that I found the head of the department and my boss very welcoming from the first meeting and supportive throughout the two years of my stay as a research fellow at UCT.

Since the project was a mobility program, I had to look for a new position after my contract terminated. So, I started negotiations with several professors at the Czech Academy of Science (CAS) and received a new offer for a long-term collaboration with the department of functional materials. Three years working in the Czech academic atmosphere was valuable for me.





The 51st anniversary of **EARTH DAY** is celebrated on April 22nd and is a good time to make some lifestyle changes which are better and safer for our beloved planet earth. During the COVID-19 situation and restrictions, we can learn a lot about ourselves, as well as our habits. That includes how much waste we create, and what we choose to do with it.

WHAT IS A "ZERO WASTE" LIFESTYLE?

It's true that creating "no trash" is almost impossible but when you set zero as your goal, you pay more attention to how your consumer habits impact the environment. People often assume Zero Waste is one of the following: crazy time-consuming, crazy expensive or just plain nuts all-together. It doesn't have to be! In fact, going Zero Waste can make your life simpler, happier and much less expensive. Going Zero Waste will simplify your world in amazing ways!



FIVE PRINCIPLES OF ZERO-WASTE (5RS) :

1 - REFUSE

2 - REDUCE

3 - REUSE (AND REPAIR)

4 - RECYCLE

5 - ROT (COMPOST)



REFUSE

- Use your phone to take pictures of business cards and pamphlets instead of accepting the physical item.
- Stop accepting single-use plastic and disposables such as straws, cutlery and plastic grocery bags.
- Refuse printed store receipts; they are often made with a thermal paper that contains BPA!

REDUCE

- Reduce the amount of plastic products you purchase.
- Reduce the amount of clothes you buy and buy quality.
- Take leftovers to work for lunch instead of buying takeaway.
- Grow your own veggies and herbs.
- Join a local buy, swap, sell group (via Facebook buy/sell/trade groups or sbazar.cz).

Regrow your lettuce scraps

Reduce food waste, eat organic and save money!



1 Cut the bottom and place it in a small recipient with water

2 Three days later, growth will start from the center





What to do with unwanted clothing...



www.instagram.com/thezerowasteguide

REUSE (AND REPAIR)

- 'Big Six': reusable water bottle, reusable straw (or no straw), reusable coffee cup (KeepCup), reusable shopping bags, reusable produce bags, and reusable food wraps or pouches (like vegan or beeswax wraps).
- A menstrual cup and reusable pads reduce a significant amount of waste and plastic packaging.
- Reusable containers to pack your lunch, keep items together and to pick up takeaway.
- Choose rechargeable batteries over single use batteries to reduce waste.

RECYCLE

- **WHAT CAN YOU RECYCLE?** These color-coded bins are the basics of recycling. Although most of us are familiar with them, they are still often filled with items that do not belong there.



THE YELLOW PLASTIC BIN :

- Plastic bottles and bags, plastic containers from cosmetics and cleaning products, CD cases, polystyrene, plastic foil such as cling film, and other plastics.

THE BLUE PAPER BIN :

- Paper wrappers and packaging, newspapers and magazines, flyers, cardboard and cardboard boxes, books, and also office documents with staples and envelopes with plastic address windows.

THE GREEN AND WHITE GLASS BINS :

- The green container is for colored glass and the white container is for clear glass. The glass that can be thrown in the green bin are bottles, medicine containers, opaque glass, and the glass filling of doors and windows. You must never throw in ceramics, porcelain or china, any glass treated with metallic coating, glass from cars, laboratory glassware, and objects made of cooking glass.





THE ORANGE RECYCLING BIN :

- This bin is for beverage containers. You can dispose of wine boxes, dairy product boxes, juice boxes and other Tetra Pak containers.

THE GREY METAL BINS :

- Here you can recycle the metal lids from food and dairy products tinfoil, and tins. You can also recycle aerosol cans once they have been completely emptied.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is almost impossible to recycle these items



ROT (COMPOST)

- Composting your food scraps not only provides you with nutrient rich fertilizer for your garden, it also helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by landfill.
- Bokashi bucket is ideal to use as your kitchen food waste bin. Great for those who have limited or no outdoor space but still want to quickly decompose food waste. Scraps need to be buried in your garden or someone else's. The bokashi 'juice' can be diluted and used as a plant fertilizer or to keep drains unblocked.

Old Me New Me



WHAT SHOULD YOU COMPOST AT HOME?

YES

- Fruit/veggie scraps
- Coffee grounds
- Paper towels/napkins
- Shredded paper
- Stale bread/chips
- Wine corks

NO

- Pet waste
- Fish/meat scraps
- Gloss coated paper
- Stickers/adhesives
- Tea and coffee bags
- Onions



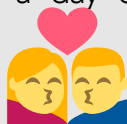
Palení čarodějnic

(BURNING OF
WITCHES)



Even if the name of this feast day sounds a bit frightening, a lot of Czechs are awaiting April 30th with a thrill. The aim is not to burn some old maids or strange grannies, but rather to celebrate the coming Spring, to meet friends, to grill some "špekáčky" or bread on huge bonfires and to have fun. The figure of a witch (Winter) is burnt on the top and the dark and dense smoke symbolizes a witch "flying away". Originally, the tradition dates back to pagan times.

After midnight, young people are looking for a blooming cherry tree, where the young women should be kissed, so that "they do not dry up". The 1st of May is celebrated then as a day of those in love.



In some European countries this feast is connected with Saint Walpurga, a Christian missionary, who lived in the 8th century in Germany and founded a monastery in Heidenheim. Saint Walpurga died in 777 and her tomb produces holy oil, which might heal sickness.



IN MAY AND JUNE, THERE ARE MANY OTHER FEASTS CELEBRATED IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC:

- 9th May – Mother's Day
- 15th May – Day of Families
- 1st June – Children's Day
- 20th June – Father's Day

BRAMBORAČKA

(MUSHROOM AND POTATO SOUP)

Serves: 4

Prep time: 10 min.

Cook time: 20 min.

INGREDIENTS:

2 Tbsp of olive oil (swap for vegetable oil, unsalted butter optional)

1 onion, shredded or chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

5 medium size potatoes, diced

1 cup (handful) of chopped re-hydrated dried mushrooms (keep the broth)

1 cup chopped fresh or frozen vegetables (carrot, 3 stalks of celery, parsley root)

4 cups (960 ml) water or vegetable stock

1 egg, optional

1 tsp salt or to taste

1 Tbsp marjoram

½ tsp caraway seeds (kmín), or to taste

¼ tsp ground black pepper, or to taste

Chopped parsley for garnish, optional



DIRECTIONS:

- Prepare all veggies.
- In a large pot on high heat, sauté the onion in oil, stirring frequently until the onion caramelizes, add a splash of water as needed to deglaze the pot.
- Once the onion is lightly caramelized, reduce the heat to medium-high, add garlic, a pinch of salt, and caraway seeds, and sauté until lightly golden.
- Add all remaining ingredients, and bring to boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, stirring occasionally and let cook until are soft and flavours are blended, for about 15 minutes.
- Can add the egg, if you are nonvegan, stirring well.
- At the last minute add marjoram and salt.
- Serve with desired garnish and enjoy!

Dobrou chuť!
(Enjoy your meal!)



A LITTLE BIT OF TRIVIA:

Mushroom hunting (houbaření) could be considered a national sport in the Czech Republic. On average, every Czech household picks about 7 kg of mushrooms per year. If you are wondering what drives the Czech passion for mushroom hunting, a photographer Jaroslav Malý, a member of the Czech Mycological Society, said of the nation's passion for fungi: "Czechs have always been close to fungi. During the war and in times of misery it nurtured us for generations and we have passed on those experiences and recipes. We just have it in the genes."

We love hunting for mushrooms not just because we love eating them but also because it's such a relaxing and rewarding hobby. Equipment could not be easier: any good mushroom picker (houbař) needs wicker baskets or mesh bags and a pocket knife will work as well. If you are thinking "When in Rome do as Romans do", do not go alone! Take a skilled Czech mushroom picker with you. They not only know the best spots to pick, but also know which mushroom to pick. A popular aphorism among mushroom hunters is, "You can eat any mushroom ... once." And finally, when we are out of the forest and finished with the cleaning (this process is usually a task for the whole family), the very best part of whole tradition happens: the eating part!

MEETINGS & EVENTS

BOOK THESE DATES:

APRIL

- 27th, 13:00 – 15:00 Let's Meet (online) with the "ice-breaker" topic "A cat or a dog?"
- 30th, 19:00 – 11:15 Communication skills - workshop for foreign employees of Charles University, more information [here](#) 🖱️

MAY

- 5th, 13:00 - 15:00 Webinar "How to apply for a job in the Czech Republic" – for spouses of researchers
- 20th, 15:00 – 16:00 Video Conversation Club – The Unbearable Lightness of Being (director Philip Kaufman, 1988; [review](#)) 🖱️
- 25th, 13:00 – 15:00 Let's Meet (online) with the "ice-breaker" topic "A favourite meal"
- Date/Time TBD 1st Adaptation and Integration Course (for researchers and family members)

JUNE

- 9th, 10:00 – 11:00 Career Webinar for spouses of researchers with cooperation with a career consultant from University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- 23rd, 10:00 – 11:30 Webinar "Hard life in the Czech Republic"
- 29th, 13:00 – 15:00 Let's meet (online) with the "ice-breaker" topic "My dream holiday"
- 29th, Time TBD Seminar "Work with Czech" for international employees and PhD students of University of Pardubice, more information [here](#) 🖱️
- Release date TBD 3rd edition of EURAXESS Newsletter

THANKS FOR READING!

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

