

# Community

## Religion in Prague

On the face of it, the Czech Republic may not seem the best place to start looking for religious activity as it is one of the most secular states in Europe. This is partly a result of almost 50 years of religious suppression during communist rule, which is ironic considering the splendor of many of the well-preserved churches in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, if you know where to look, you will find a host of religious groups based in and around Prague.

### Christian

The **Prague Fellowship** is an independent Czech church officially founded in 1990. They meet at the Evangelical Methodist Church at Ječná 19 (at the back of the courtyard), Prague 2. The group forms the English-speaking community of the larger Czech organization *Křesťanské společenství* and consists of people from many different backgrounds and denominations.

The **New Beginnings Christian Center** also offers services in English, including a Sunday Service in English on Sunday morning and a Czech-English Sunday Service in the afternoon. Other classes and services in English are offered throughout the week. The Center is located at the **Vysočanská Life Center**, near the **Vysočanská** metro station in Prague 9.

St Clement's Anglican Episcopal Church (Klimentská 5) celebrates the Eucharist every Sunday at 11:00.

For Catholics, the **Augustinian parish of Saint Thomas** has an English-speaking Catholic Community. Mass in English is held at the Church of Saint Thomas on Josefská 8 in Malá Strana Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings. The Parish also offers classes and other religious services throughout the week.

For Baptists, the **Baptist Union of the Czech Republic** can provide some general information. There is also the **International Baptist Church of Prague** – even if this is not what you're looking for, that's no reason to stop you putting your head round the door.

Their website states they also welcome, "agnostics, unbelievers, seekers, the curious, sinners, doubters, strugglers, the spiritually wounded, the lonely, the broken hearted, the disillusioned." That seems to cover just about everybody.

There is also the **International Pentecostal Fellowship**, a branch of the United Pentecostal Church International. They meet in Old Town Square just behind Týn Church. The church offers its own Bible school along with an assortment of ministries, including ladies' meetings, men's meetings and orphanage outreach program.

You can read more about Christianity in the Czech Republic at the **Prague Christian Library**.

### Jewish

Pick up any guide to the city and you'll see Prague has been hugely influenced by Judaism. The Jewish Quarter remains hugely popular (especially among tourists) – and rightly so, due to its wealth of history, culture, and beautiful synagogues. Likewise, there is a flourishing Jewish community here, too. For more information have a look at the **Chabad Centre, Prague**.

### Islamic

Muslims are also well catered for in the Czech Republic. The **Islamic Foundation** has two centers, one in Prague and one in

Brno. The Prague branch is in Prague 9 and holds various meetings and courses on Islam.

### Buddhism

Although a pint of beer and fried cheese might seem as far away as you can get from the Orient, religion from the Far East is very popular in the Czech Republic. The **Karma Kagyu** branch of Buddhism boasts 35 centers across the country. The Prague branch is in Prague 10 and you can visit any day at 8pm to speak to teachers. They also offer lectures, a library, and meditation sessions.

If you feel you need to meditate away from the city, you could visit the beautiful **Samadhi Buddhist Meditation Center** for a retreat. Based in the village of Tupadly, about 40km north of Prague near Mělník, the 30 acre site is surrounded by forest and offers an ideal place to relax the mind. They also offer a selection of Buddhist study programs for foreign students. For more information on Buddhism in the Czech Republic, have a look at the websites of Buddhism ([www.buddhismus.cz](http://www.buddhismus.cz)) and Lotus Centre in Prague.

### Hindu

Prague also has an active Hindu association. **Hinduismus** organizes many events but is mainly aimed at Czech speakers. The **Hare Krishna** movement has a large following in Prague as well, and they operate a temple in Zličín along with a few restaurants in the city.

### Bahá'í

The **Bahá'í Faith** has branches in Prague, Brno, Liberec, Ostrava, České Budějovice, and Hluboká nad Vltavou.

## Religious Services



### Christian

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|---|--|------------------|
| <b>Anglican Episcopal</b><br>Klimentská 5, Prague 1                       | <a href="http://www.anglican.cz">www.anglican.cz</a>                         | +420 233 310 266 |
| <b>Augustinian Parish of Saint Thomas</b><br>Josefská 8, Prague 1         | <a href="http://www.augustiniani.cz">www.augustiniani.cz</a>                 | +420 257 532 675 |
| <b>Baptist Union of the Czech Republic</b><br>Na Topolce 14, Prague 4     | <a href="http://www.baptist.cz">www.baptist.cz</a>                           | +420 241 434 256 |
| <b>International Baptist Church of Prague</b><br>Vinohradská 68, Prague 3 | <a href="http://www.ibcp.cz">www.ibcp.cz</a>                                 | +420 731 778 735 |
| <b>International Pentecostal Fellowship</b><br>Týnská 7, Prague 1         | <a href="http://www.volny.cz/letnici-cirkev">www.volny.cz/letnici-cirkev</a> | +420 602 334 523 |
| <b>New Beginnings Christian Center</b><br>Vysočanská Metro, Prague 9      | <a href="http://www.novezacatky.cz">www.novezacatky.cz</a>                   | +420 774 080 856 |
| <b>Prague Christian Fellowship</b><br>Eliášova 15, Prague 6               | <a href="http://www.praguefellowship.cz">www.praguefellowship.cz</a>         | +420 222 505 020 |
| <b>Prague Christian Library</b><br>Baranova 32, Prague 3                  | <a href="http://www.christianlibrary.cz">www.christianlibrary.cz</a>         | +420 222 724 856 |

### Jewish

|  |  |                  |
|--|--|------------------|
| <b>Chabad Centre, Prague</b><br>Pařížská 3, Prague 1                 | <a href="http://www.chabadprague.cz">www.chabadprague.cz</a> | +420 222 320 200 |
| <b>Jewish Community of Karlovy Vary</b><br>Bezručova 8, Karlovy Vary | <a href="http://www.chabadprague.cz">www.chabadprague.cz</a> | +420 353 230 658 |

### Islamic

|   |  |                  |
|---|--|------------------|
| <b>Islamic Foundation In Brno</b><br>Václavská 38a, Brno              | <a href="http://www.brno.muslim.cz">www.brno.muslim.cz</a>   | +420 543 243 352 |
| <b>Islamic Foundation In Prague</b><br>Blatská 1491, Prague 9         | <a href="http://www.praha.muslim.cz">www.praha.muslim.cz</a> | +420 281 918 876 |
| <b>Mosque in Prague City Center</b><br>Politických vězňů 14, Prague 1 | n/a  | +420 732 111 611 |

### Buddhist

|   |  |                  |
|---|--|------------------|
| <b>Diamond Way Buddhist Center</b><br>Hradešská 52, Prague 10 | <a href="http://www.bdc.cz">www.bdc.cz</a>                   | +420 608 866 454 |
| <b>Lotus Center Prague</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.centrumlotus.cz">www.centrumlotus.cz</a> |                  |

Dlouhá 2, Prague 1 ..... ☎ +420 224 814 734  
**Samadhi Buddhist Center** ..... 🌐 [www.samadhi.cz](http://www.samadhi.cz)  
 Tupadly, near Mělník..... ☎ +420 315 697 429

## Hindu

**Hinduismus** ..... 🌐 [www.hinduismus.cz](http://www.hinduismus.cz)  
 Zámecká 202, Střílky..... n/a  
**ISKCON Prague (Hare Krishna)** ..... 🌐 [www.harekrشنا.cz](http://www.harekrشنا.cz)  
 Jilová 290, Prague 5..... ☎ +420 603 205 991

## Bahá'í

**Bahá'í Věra** ..... 🌐 [www.bahai.cz](http://www.bahai.cz)  
 Lucemburská 33, Prague 3..... ☎ +420 222 713 496

# Charities in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, people have had a tendency to be a little wary of philanthropic organizations, fearing that a culture of 'feathering one's nest' pervades, and that their donation may not go to those who need it. Even large organizations are sometimes viewed with a level of suspicion, and although people respond to calls for massive fund raising drives, disaster relief and children in need, there hasn't been a pervading tradition of donating to charitable causes. This attitude may be changing, however, due to the popularity of the **Donors Message Service (DMS - Dárcovská SMS)**, a unique method of donation invented in the Czech Republic which lets people use their mobile phone credit to text a donation to a particular charity or cause. Over 13 million CZK were donated last year over DMS, not just to disaster relief but also basic social needs. The ease and relative transparency of the process, as well as the fact that the charities involved are 'certified', means that more young people and those who would not usually donate have started to do so. The donation numbers and causes can often be found on TV, radio, and billboards across town.

Deciding who should be the beneficiary of your donations can be difficult. There are many charities and funds operating in the Czech Republic, and it's hard to know which ones are worth supporting. If you're looking to give to a very specific cause, a local charity, or a smaller group, it's worth doing a bit of research - look on the internet, visit their office if you can, even volunteer for a while if you have time. On the other hand, if you want a large, established charity, or a general cause, there are a few well established organizations here that are generally reliable. **UNICEF, Amnesty International, Greenpeace** and the **Red Cross** all operate in the Czech Republic, and contribute to local and international causes. In terms of specifically Czech-based charities, there are also quite a few options.

**People in Need (Člověk v Tísni)** is a humanitarian organization that was established by conflict journalists and dissidents involved in the Velvet Revolution. It concentrates on human rights, alleviation of poverty and the reduction of national prejudices and xenophobia - within the Czech Republic, it runs education and social integration programs, provides support and legal aid to the disadvantaged, and raises money for development, human rights, and aid in other countries. The Catholic charity **Caritas Czech Republic** is the largest charitable provider in the country for social and health care, providing accommodation, health services, integration projects, and general help for the aged, disabled, migrants, prisoners, women with children, and the poor. **ADRA** is another major charity that has a wide ranging scope, helping with disaster relief in other countries and social and humanitarian problems here and abroad.

If you're interested in supporting environmental organizations, the major ones are **The Czech Union for Nature Protection (CSOP)** operating throughout the country and dealing with education and environmental conservation, and **Děti Země and Hnutí Duha** (Friends of the Earth Czech Republic), which are education and campaign groups. Other charities that might be of interest are **Sjednocená organizace nevidomých a slabozrakých ČR** (Czech Blind United), **Česko proti chudobě** (Czechia against poverty), **Nadace Terezy Maxové** (Tereza Maxová Foundation), for the support of abandoned

children, the **Slovak-Czech Women's Fund**, and **Miláčkové.net**, a charity and internet rescue for abandoned dogs and cats.

# Homelessness

As in most major European cities, you are likely to see a fair share of impoverished individuals on the streets of Prague. Though the issue is seldom addressed either by politicians or in the media, the rate of Czech homelessness is an increasing concern.

**Situation and Statistics:** Precise statistics for homelessness are difficult to obtain; some estimates put the national number at around 35,000 (0.35% of the general population). Most homeless live in the larger metropolitan areas, having moved from smaller towns to Prague or Brno in the hope of finding work. According to a 2004 official census, Prague has a homeless population of 5,000 or 6,000, though other counts have found this number to be greater. It has been acknowledged that there are hundreds of "uncountable" homeless people who live completely isolated from society in sewers, ventilating shafts, and underground tunnel systems. 86% of the homeless population is estimated to be male. This number is explained by the fact that women are more likely to be drawn into prostitution or to find male partners who will support them. Most of the homeless seem to be between 20 and 50 years of age, but an increasing number of destitute teenagers has been reported.

Some homeless are able to find temporary work, but lack the more permanent jobs needed to pay rent. Though state unemployment benefits exist, it is difficult or impossible to obtain these without a stable address. Most homeless spend the coldest nights in train stations, parked train cars, or night trams. In previous years, beggars (the most desperate fraction of the homeless population) were usually visible only at train stations and other travel hubs. Today, they are present in most areas frequented by tourists and in metro stations.

**History:** Homelessness is a relatively recent phenomenon among the former Eastern Bloc countries. During Communism, being unemployed was virtually impossible, since the duty to work was imposed by law. For those workers without flats of their own, the Soviet system provided *ubytovny*, or special worker hostels, for them to live in. The fall of Communism brought about a massive program of privatization and restitution, leading to a huge deficiency in low-rent housing. Even today, many of the homeless lament the loss of the governmental support system available during Soviet rule. It has been estimated that the Czech Republic's homeless population has doubled in the past ten years.

**Political and Public Attitudes:** The problem of homelessness is generally considered to be a marginal one, with the public often viewing the homeless as people who live voluntarily on the fringes of society. Czech law does not define homelessness, and rarely is the problem addressed in political spheres as a state of social exclusion. In fact, the Czech word for homeless person (*bezdomevec*) means both "homeless" and "stateless," illustrating the country's rather vague stance towards the issue. The Czech constitution does not explicitly guarantee the right to housing, though according to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms constitutional act, "Everybody that suffers from material need is entitled to such assistance as is essential for securing his or her basic living conditions." The precise nature of these "basic living conditions," however, is not defined. The government rarely involves itself in the construction of low-rent housing. This is in part due to the fact that much of the Czech middle class already lives in what would be considered "low-rent" housing in other countries. It is almost unthinkable, therefore, for the government to build new (and, presumably, better) living facilities for those lowest on the social scale. But with no available social housing, the integration of the homeless is virtually impossible.

**Charitable Efforts:** There are several non-governmental organizations that provide assistance to the homeless. One of these is **Naděje**, a charity network that has been in operation since 1990. Others include **Charitas** and the **Salvation Army**. So far, there are only 580 beds available in shelters - far fewer than is necessary to shut out Prague's bitterly cold winters. Last year, in response to record low temperatures, the government constructed a temporary tent city in

Letná Park, but the total capacity of the shelter was only 700 people. Another organization providing hope for the homeless is **Nový Prostor**, which, among other projects, publishes a monthly general interest "street paper" which features articles on social themes, the arts, and current events. The magazine is sold on the streets and in the metro by homeless and disadvantaged people, giving them an opportunity to have social contact, gain self-confidence, and earn a small living. Even if you don't speak Czech, buying this 30 CZK publication every month is a great way to support those who need our help most.

## Charities



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>ADRA</b><br>Klikatá 46, Prague 5   | <a href="http://www.adra.cz">www.adra.cz</a><br>☎ +420 257 090 648   |
| <b>Amnesty International</b><br>Provoznická 3, Prague 1                             | <a href="http://www.amnesty.cz">www.amnesty.cz</a><br>☎ +420 224 243 600   |
| <b>Caritas Czech Republic</b><br>Vladislavova 12, Prague 1                          | <a href="http://www.charita.cz">www.charita.cz</a><br>☎ +420 296 243 330   |
| <b>Czech Union for Nature Protection</b><br>Uruguayská 7, Prague 2                  | <a href="http://www.csop.cz">www.csop.cz</a><br>☎ +420 222 516 115   |
| <b>Česko proti chudobě</b><br>Děti Země   | <a href="http://www.ceskoprotichudobe.cz">www.ceskoprotichudobe.cz</a><br><a href="http://www.detizeme.cz">www.detizeme.cz</a> |
| Barrandova 16, Plzeň  | ☎ +420 377 240 772   |
| <b>Donors Message Service</b><br>Štěpánská 61, Prague 1                             | <a href="http://www.darcovskasms.cz">www.darcovskasms.cz</a><br>☎ +420 296 325 335   |
| <b>Greenpeace</b><br>1. pluku 12, Prague 8  | <a href="http://www.greenpeace.cz">www.greenpeace.cz</a><br>☎ +420 224 319 667   |
| <b>Hestia</b><br>Na Pořčic 12, Prague 1   | <a href="http://hestia.ecn.cz">hestia.ecn.cz</a><br>☎ +420 224 872 075   |
| <b>Hnutí Duha</b><br>Bratislavská 31, Brno  | <a href="http://www.hnutiduha.cz">www.hnutiduha.cz</a><br>☎ +420 545 214 431   |
| <b>Miláckové.net</b><br>Nadace Terezy Maxové  | <a href="http://www.milackove.net">www.milackove.net</a><br><a href="http://www.nadacetm.cz">www.nadacetm.cz</a>               |
| Klimencek 1246/1, Prague 1  | ☎ +420 226 222 050   |
| <b>Nadace Charty 77</b><br>Melantrichova 5, Prague 1                                | <a href="http://www.bariery.cz">www.bariery.cz</a><br>☎ +420 224 214 452   |
| <b>Naděje</b><br>K Brance 11, Prague 5  | <a href="http://www.nadeje.cz">www.nadeje.cz</a><br>☎ +420 222 521 110   |
| <b>Naše Dítě</b><br>Ústavní 91/95, Prague 8   | <a href="http://www.nasedite.cz">www.nasedite.cz</a><br>☎ +420 266 727 999   |
| <b>Nový Prostor</b><br>Vyšehradská 27, Prague 2                                     | <a href="http://www.novyprostor.cz">www.novyprostor.cz</a><br>☎ +420 220 199 302   |
| <b>Red Cross</b><br>Thunovská 18, Prague 1  | <a href="http://www.cck-cr.cz">www.cck-cr.cz</a><br>☎ +420 251 104 111   |
| <b>People in Need</b><br>Sokolská 18, Prague 2                                      | <a href="http://www.clovekvitsini.cz">www.clovekvitsini.cz</a><br>☎ +420 226 200 400   |
| <b>Salvation Army</b><br>Biskupcova 36, Prague 3                                    | <a href="http://www.armadaspasy.cz">www.armadaspasy.cz</a><br>☎ +420 271 773 529   |
| <b>Sjednocená organizace nevidomých a slabozrakých ČR</b><br>Kraťovská 21, Prague 1 | <a href="http://www.sons.cz">www.sons.cz</a><br>☎ +420 221 462 462   |
| <b>Slovak-Czech Women's Fund</b><br>Bořivojova 105, Prague 3                        | <a href="http://www.womensfund.cz">www.womensfund.cz</a><br>☎ +420 222 716 823   |
| <b>Sue Ryder Home</b><br>Michelská 1, Prague 4                                      | <a href="http://www.sue-ryder.cz">www.sue-ryder.cz</a><br>☎ +420 244 029 148   |
| <b>UNICEF</b><br>Elišky Peškové 17, Prague 1  | <a href="http://www.unicef.cz">www.unicef.cz</a><br>☎ +420 257 320 244   |
| <b>Via Foundation</b><br>Jelení 195/9, Prague 1                                     | <a href="http://www.nadacevia.cz">www.nadacevia.cz</a><br>☎ +420 233 113 370   |

## Social & Arts Organizations

When you feel like expanding your social circle or you find yourself twiddling your thumbs on a Saturday afternoon, it might just be time to think about joining one of Prague's many social clubs, offering everything from lectures, art activities, cooking and sport, to just a nice cup of tea, a dinner and a good chat. All the clubs listed below have an English speaking or English friendly atmosphere, and welcome expats and locals alike.

**The International Women's Association of Prague** is one of the best and most comprehensive social organizations around, offering support and entertainment for women living in Prague, and running courses and clubs in pretty much anything you could possibly imagine; tennis, bridge, art, cooking, sewing, exercise, mah jong, beading, languages and conversation, golf, and networking are just a few of the options available, and you can start your own club if your interest isn't already catered for. Also, there's a good range of activities and support for mothers with children, with play groups, outings and information on child friendly activities and areas around Prague. Obviously, IWAP is mostly only for women, but some activities allow spouses of members to participate. For more information, visit [www.volny.cz/iwap](http://www.volny.cz/iwap).

If you're of an arty inclination, **Muddum** and **Školská 28** are tailor made to fill that beret shaped hole in your life. **Muddum** is a Community Arts space in Letná, Prague 7, which runs art workshops for adults and children, art therapy, film nights and poetry readings, and has a gallery and café attached with lots of interesting books to browse through. It runs courses on skills like ceramics, book binding, and mosaic among others, at impressively cheap prices, and you can book your kids in to learn about things like collage, pottery, and even film animation, as well as holding their birthday party there. Their teachers speak Spanish, English, Czech, Swedish and French, and they aim to provide support and a community atmosphere for artists and art lovers in the area.

Originally an old metal galvanizing workshop, **Školská 28** ([www.skolska28.cz](http://www.skolska28.cz)) is a gallery and arts centre in the middle of town that holds great exhibitions of contemporary work, with an emphasis on film, photography, sculpture and sound, and runs classes and cultural events such as tai chi and spontaneous dance – these are done in Czech but only a very basic knowledge of the language is required to be able to participate fully, so you'll be able to move and sway with the best of them. The tea room is a gem, where you can have a chat with other artists or art appreciators, help yourself to one of the many types of tea on offer, and peruse the latest in contemporary art in the magazines and catalogues they supply.

There are quite a few other clubs that run in Prague – it's just a matter of deciding what you're interested in and looking for them. Here are a few selected clubs that might take your fancy, or inspire you to investigate further. The **Czech Sokol Organization** is one of the biggest and longest running in the Czech Republic – it's nation wide, and, although it's mostly concerned with sporting activities, there are also some social groups and courses on themes like marionettes and national costume.

If you hail from down-under or thereabouts, there's **CANZA**, the Czech, Australian and New Zealand Association. It organizes activities aimed at bringing together Australian and New Zealand communities living in Prague, as well as others who are interested in these cultures and they hold sporting activities, balls, and drinks nights, as well as fund raising events for Czech charities.

And lastly, for those of us who like to keep our heads out of the clouds and our eyes peeled for the hint of a scam, the **Czech Skeptics Society**, **Sisyfos**, is just the ticket. Aimed at exposing and delegitimizing irrational, pseudoscientific, occultist ideas, it holds lectures, debates and meetings, and has already successfully helped to debunk several healers and imposters on TV. So whatever your penchant, whether it be for interpretive dance or myth-busting, Prague might just have the club for you.

## Social Organizations



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|---|--|
| <b>AARO Prague</b><br>Salmovská 11, Prague 2                  | <a href="http://www.aaro.org/praguen">www.aaro.org/praguen</a><br>☎ +420 251 551 017 |
| <b>CANZA</b><br>Šmeralova 8, Prague 7                         | <a href="http://www.canza.cz">www.canza.cz</a><br>☎ +420 731 624 246                 |
| <b>Czech Sokol Organization</b><br>Újezd 450, 118 01 Prague 1 | <a href="http://www.sokol-cos.cz">www.sokol-cos.cz</a><br>☎ +420 257 007 111         |

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>IWAP</b>                         | <a href="http://www.iwa-prague.com">www.iwa-prague.com</a>   |
| Třebízského 9, Prague 2             | +420 222 252 220   |
| <b>Lions Club</b>                   | <a href="http://www.lions-club.cz">www.lions-club.cz</a>     |
| nábřeží Závodu míru 2737, Pardubice | n/a  |
| <b>Little Clown Face Painting</b>   | <a href="http://www.littleclown.com">www.littleclown.com</a> |
| n/a                                 | +420 739 544 581   |
| <b>Nadace Fond Prague Post</b>      | <a href="http://www.ppef.cz">www.ppef.cz</a>                 |
| Štěpánská 20, Prague 1              | +420 296 334 465   |
| <b>Muddum</b>                       | <a href="http://www.muddum.cz">www.muddum.cz</a>             |
| Kostelní 24, Prague 7               | +420 777 876 541   |
| <b>Rotary Club</b>                  | <a href="http://www.rotary.cz">www.rotary.cz</a>             |
| PO Box 374, Prague 1                | +420 737 287 420   |
| <b>Sisyfos</b>                      | <a href="http://www.sisyfos.cz">www.sisyfos.cz</a>           |
| Radlická 112, Prague 5              | +420 737 584 683   |
| <b>Školská 28</b>                   | <a href="http://www.skolska28.cz">www.skolska28.cz</a>       |
| Školská 28, Prague 1                | +420 296 325 066   |

## Smoking in the Czech Republic

It's fairly safe to say that smoking (*kouření*) is still a popular activity in the Czech Republic. If you're a smoker then you'll find the Czech Republic a more tolerant country than many of its European counterparts; if you're not, you'll probably be rather shocked at how acceptable smoking still is here.

It must be said that there has been a gradual shift in thinking in favor of the non-smoker in recent years, with a greater awareness of the need for clean air environments and non-smoking areas in restaurants becoming more common. You'll also see smokers huddled outside of workplaces, as more firms move towards smoke-free environments. But many argue that the words No Smoking (*Kouření zakázáno*) aren't seen enough in the Czech Republic and that the country lags behind other European nations in anti-smoking measures.

Recent legislation has made smoking illegal in public places, including schools, cinemas and theatres, concert halls, exhibition venues, sports halls and centers, and places where work meetings are held. Smoking is also banned in public administration offices. The exception to this is in cases where there are special, "structurally separate sections reserved for smokers", designated as "Space Reserved for Smoking" (*Prostor vyhrazený pro kouření*). Smoking has long been banned on public transport in towns, and is now not permitted at bus or tram stops, either. The metro system is also smoke-free.

Smoking is prevalent at restaurants and cafés, but there are some ways to avoid cigarette smoke if going for a meal. If you just want a simple pub lunch you should be prepared to put up with some inconvenience, because in the simple pub (*hospoda*) a smoke-free environment is wishful thinking. But in more up market restaurants you'll find it easier to find a non-smoking area, even if it's just partitioned off by a screen, and some restaurants have a total smoking ban. See our overview of non-smoking restaurants on page 123, or visit the website [www.dokurte.cz](http://www.dokurte.cz), run by the Czech Anti-Tobacco Coalition, which has a list of cafés, restaurants, and hotels where a no-smoking policy applies.

On trains there are special compartments (*Kuřácké oddělení*) for smokers, and there are smoking permitted/not permitted signs on the sides of carriages. When buying a ticket you can specify whether you want a smoking compartment or a non-smoking compartment (*nekuřácké oddělení*) although local trains don't have a provision for smokers. Smoking is now banned in station waiting rooms and on platforms, and is not permitted on buses (local or long-distance) either.

## Waste & Recycling

### Waste

A bin for large waste (old couches, etc.) is occasionally placed in certain areas of all Prague districts – randomly and where applicable (usually around construction zones). Alternatively, here are a few

destinations for special kinds of waste – most districts have their own dump:

### Oversized waste:

Sběrný dvůr hl.m.Prahy (Pražské služby, a.s.) Prague 5, Puchmajerova  
Sběrný dvůr hl.m.Prahy (Pražské služby, a.s.) Prague 6, Proboštská 1

### Hazardous waste:

Areál společnosti KOMWAG, a.s., Prague 2, Perucká 10  
Areál společnosti Pražské služby, a.s., Prague 3, Vlkova 35

### Recycling

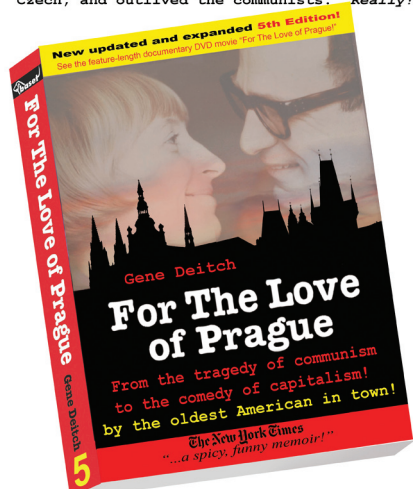
The city of Prague makes an effort to encourage recycling. Different color-coded bins for recycling are scattered around the city, and can be found at major intersections and residential parking areas. Blue is for paper, yellow for plastic, and green for glass.

More information: [www.expats.cz/waste](http://www.expats.cz/waste)

## Environmental Organizations

We've all seen them on our street corners – and hopefully we all use them: The blue, yellow and green containers to sort our paper, plastic and glass waste. **EKO-KOM** is the company who picks it all up, and as recently reported in **Aktuálně**, Czechs recycle about 50 kilos of waste per person per year. In 2007, the country recycled 52% of PET plastic bottles and other plastic products; 68% of glass and a whopping 95% of paper waste. While all that looks, and is, good, there is a bigger problem when it comes to recycling household waste (vegetable waste) and electrical appliance recycling (old computers, cell phones, etc.) Currently, the country is recycling only about 20% of these waste products. Our air isn't much better. Statistics from Auto-Mat (see below) reveal Prague has the worst air pollution in the country, and 70% of it can be attributed to cars plus two-thirds of the city's residents are subjected to excessive noise caused primarily by automobiles.

The highly unlikely but perfectly true story of the American who came to communist Prague in 1959, won a Hollywood Oscar, a bouncing Czech, and outlived the communists. Really!



At all decent Czech bookshops Check it out at [www.fortheloveofprague.com](http://www.fortheloveofprague.com) and [genedeitch.com](http://genedeitch.com)

The **Nadace Partnerství** (Czech Environmental Partnership, [www.nadacepartnerstvi.cz](http://www.nadacepartnerstvi.cz)) promotes and supports sustainable development projects throughout the country. It has supported 2,100 projects since its founding in 1991. They focus on supporting NGO's, cities and schools in their environmental efforts, encourage inter-sector cooperation and the participation of citizens in public affairs. They tackle seven major projects: **Tree of Life**, which helps communities plant trees; **Greenways**, recreational trails for hiking and biking throughout the country; **Public Spaces** assist municipalities in creating aesthetically pleasing public spaces; **Sustainable Transport Programme** focuses on sustainable means of transportation (i.e. not cars.); **Schools for Sustainable Development** involves school kids in initiatives such as local culture and nature preservation; **Partnership for the Kolín Region** focuses on sustainable development in this area and finally, the **Energy Alternatives** program looks at nuclear energy.

**Zelený Kruh** (Green Circle, [www.zelenykruh.cz](http://www.zelenykruh.cz)) is an association of nearly 30 environmental organizations. Their main goal is to keep its members informed as to what's happening in the environmental world, and lobby the government. They hope to strengthen the cooperation and communication between the various NGO's as well as stay involved in environmental policy making and implementation.

There's a local branch of the worldwide organization **Greenpeace** in the Czech Republic ([www.greenpeace.cz](http://www.greenpeace.cz)). The non-profit's mission is to protect and conserve the environment through a variety of actions in the fields of energy, the oceans, forests and sustainable agriculture, among other things. The Czech branch has recently been quite active in protesting against the proposed US radar base in the country. The local website is only in Czech, but if you want to get more involved in their global efforts, check the main site at [www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org).

**Friends of the Earth (Hutní DUHA, [www.hutniduha.cz](http://www.hutniduha.cz))** is one of the largest and most influential NGO's in the country. They regularly campaign for such issues as climate change, nature conservation,

ecological agriculture, etc. as well as attempt to keep the public informed and involved in environmental policy issues.

Dedicated to environmental pollution, **Arnika** ([www.arnika.org](http://www.arnika.org)) works on marsh and river protection and preventing toxic pollution, not only within the Czech Republic but with the country's European neighbors as well. They have a volunteer sign-up form on their website – tasks range from helping out in their office to translating to something as easy as posting notices in your workplace or distributing other materials.

If you want to get involved, but on a more recreational level – check out **Auto-Mat** ([www.auto-mat.cz](http://www.auto-mat.cz)). They focus on improving cities through the reduction of car traffic and promoting sustainable public transport, especially bikes. They arrange a variety of educational and artistic events focused on this theme. Animal lovers should check out **Společnost pro zvířata** or the **Society for Animals** ([www.spolecnost-prozvirata.cz](http://www.spolecnost-prozvirata.cz)). They work in the area of finding alternative means of animal experimentation in schools, as well as the conditions for farm animals in the Czech Republic.

So how can you go green? Recycle everything you can; bring your own re-usable bag to the shops and purchase locally grown and produced food products. Recycle your printer cartridges, and probably save some money by using **Ink-Station** ([www.inkstation.cz](http://www.inkstation.cz)), a refill service for cartridges and laser toners. If you are looking to improve the environmental standards of your place of business; look into the **Czech Environment Management Center** ([www.cemc.cz](http://www.cemc.cz)). They are a non-profit organization that, among other things, organizes trainings in the fields of eco-efficiency, pollution prevention and sustainable development. **Tree Hugger** ([www.treehugger.com](http://www.treehugger.com)) gives excellent tips on all sorts of green living in their "How to green your..." guides. Learn how to environmentally improve your kitchen, your electricity, your wardrobe – and even your sex life and funeral.

For general information about environmental groups, laws and other green happenings, visit [www.ekolist.cz](http://www.ekolist.cz) or [www.ecn.cz](http://www.ecn.cz).

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