



# CHARLES UNIVERSITY

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## **A WORD FROM THE RECTOR OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 2022/2023 ACADEMIC YEAR**

*Prague, 30 September 2022*

Dear students,  
dear colleagues,

Allow me to extend a warm welcome to you at the beginning of the new academic year on behalf of the entire management of Charles University. I wish you all success and inspirational encounters during your studies and work at Charles University.

I would like to start by thanking the entire academic community for its work and enthusiasm during the difficult times we have experienced in the last few years, be it because of the pandemic or the war in Ukraine. With such enthusiastic and determined people, I am sure that the University will be able to face all the challenges that lie ahead. Together with the entire management team of Charles University, I will, of course, try to harness this enthusiasm and turn it into real results.

I am fully aware of the many crises in present day, some of which are behind us, but many of which are ahead of us, be they energy, security or economic problems. In the coming academic year both Charles University and society as a whole will be affected by events caused by the Russian aggression in Ukraine; however, the universities are here, among other things, to help find a way out, to teach humanism, and to condemn injustice. In these efforts we should never stop trying to find interdisciplinary solutions, because only then can they be sufficiently effective and efficient. Of course, solutions are never easy in this complex world, especially in times when we face several crises at once; but that does not mean that we should give up.

Education, science and research, as well as the third role of universities, are key tools for society to support not only democracy, but also the attitudes and education of future generations. And it is you, the students who, in 10 to 20 years' time, will determine the kind of country we will all live in, and it is you, the academics who lead these young people to knowledge and experience and give them only the best of yourselves. These are topics which anyone can support. It is therefore not surprising that politicians, in particular, like to promote these values as priorities in their manifestoes. However, now is the time when it's important to realize that actions speak louder than words! All the more so at a time when there is a real risk of a shortage of funds. Not only the management and faculty management of not Charles University and its faculties, but also, I firmly believe, of other universities

will do their utmost to ensure that austerity measures are as effective as possible while having only a minimal impact on face-to-face teaching and normal operations. Following a deeper analysis across Charles University, it is more than obvious that, without the help of the state and extraordinary financial assistance, we will no longer be able to fulfil our missions as before. In the absence of an increase in university budgets, and despite all austerity measures, this would mean that universities and colleges would have to lay off staff or, at least, limit the scope of their activities. This would then naturally have an impact on the quality of education itself. However, as the rector of the largest and most famous university in the Czech Republic, I cannot allow that to happen. I have no doubt that the Czech Republic has the potential to be a prosperous country with an efficient economy and a strong service and trade sector. But in order to be able to reap the rewards in the future, we must first “sow”, and also regularly “water”! It is no exaggeration to state that I do believe in our young people and I can see great potential in them. However, without effective measures to support education, research and training, we will lose many talented students and, by extension, a considerable amount of potential future capacity.

Of course, Charles University is not only about study and research, but also about the community that we all shape together and are part of. We are, in my view, a community in which we help each other, and it is extremely important that you, the new students, feel that way, too. I wish you strength as you set out on the new, winding paths that extend before you in the university environment. You should also know that you never have to feel alone and that you will always have someone to turn to, whether they are other students, student associations, academics, or the management of departments, faculties or the University. In this context, I would like to emphasise that Charles University, under its current leadership, places and will place great emphasis on prevention and a safe environment for all, and that it does not accept any form of sexual or gender-based harassment, or even violence.

I should also mention here that Charles University also offers [advisory services](#) in the event that you find yourself in a psychologically challenging situation. You are one of our priorities and we encourage all feedback and assessment of tuition, which is also one of the strategic tasks of the University. In this context, I would also like to mention our new podcast, [Stop-time \(sorry, it is in czech language only but you can listen to Forum radio – CU podcast with host Jan Velinger\)](#), which is produced by Radio Forum, and will feature regular guest appearances by representatives of University management. The podcast will appear every two weeks and will focus on current topics across the University. This is another step in the right direction to an open approach towards our colleagues and students.

I believe that, whatever challenges we face during this academic year, we will face them together and with the same, if not greater, determination than in previous years.

The carefree days of the Indian summer have allowed all of us to recharge our batteries, and I wish for all of us to make effective use of this energy as we face the tasks ahead, of which there will be many. While it will not always be plain sailing, difficult tasks will often put us in the right place.

I am very much looking forward to fulfilling meetings with all of you at the University.



prof. MUDr. Milena Králíčková, Ph.D.

Rector of Charles University