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# Recovery of Academic Life at CU

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On this page you will find continuously updated information concerning the restoration of academic life at Charles University after the tragedy of 21 December 2023 at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University.

*Please note most of the external links and articles are only available in Czech.*

Recovery of Academic Life at the Faculty of Arts

**The website of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University** provides regularly updated information on teaching, studying, psychosocial support, security, memorial sites, etc.

[More information can be found here.](#)

Safety at the university

The Central Crisis Staff of Charles University has been working on improving safety strategy and specific measures.

[Find more information in English here.](#)

Psychological and spiritual support

Professional psychological and spiritual help and support in connection with the tragic events at the Faculty of Arts for students and employees was provided from the first hours and days after the tragedy. Professional help was offered by the relevant units of the IRS, the Charles University counselling centres, individual faculty departments and spiritual guidance was also offered by the Centre for Mental Health Care.

Already in the first week after the tragedy, more than 190 psychologists and interventionists provided help at the Faculty of Arts. In the first eight weeks after the tragedy alone, more than 4,000 people sought some form of help, and more than 6,500 psychological and crisis interventions were treated by experts.

From the first hours after the tragedy until the end of January 2024, the Charles University Psychological Support Chat for students and employees was also operational, where anyone could contact and seek support. A dedicated email address was also available for students and employees to contact. Key information was also available in sign language.

Charles University was also immediately supported by the professional community. Crisis assistance was offered by a number of organisations such as the National Institute of Mental Health, the Czech Red Cross, the White Circle of Safety, the Czech Institute for Psychotraumatology and EMDR, the Probation and Mediation Service, and organisations such as Remedium, Inlustitia, Dlouhá cesta and Vigvam.

The student initiatives that emerged after the December events were also a great help. The Peerko student association, founded by psychology students, has been providing short support meetings for the last six months to share feelings, provide basic psychological help and pass on useful resources and contacts. The members of the society have been actively providing support right in the corridors of the Faculty of Arts. The students of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport also set up a charity initiative, Hrzejte me movement, which raised funds through sport activities specifically for the functioning of the Peerko association.

Students also engaged in volunteer activities directly at their faculties or through the Charles University Volunteer Centre. In the first days, the Volunteer Centre of Charles University asked for volunteers through a simple form. Dozens of individuals willing to help volunteered immediately. Their help was needed in preparing the EMDR groups (navigation, room setup, etc.), which started in the following days and is still ongoing. The UK Volunteer Centre also facilitated the help of volunteers for activities organized by, for example, the Student Council of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana.

[All forms of psychological and social support and counseling available in English can be found on the FoA website, in the section "Psychosocial counselling".](#)

Information safety

Charles University actively and regularly informed students and employees about current events and available sources of assistance. It immediately launched a website with complete and up-to-date information, set up a Crisis Staff line the very next day after the tragedy, and set up an extraordinary toll-free information line for students, employees and the public to offer their help. It also strengthened the provision of standard communication channels (Charles University Information

Line, Charles University Information Email) and provided psychological chat support. Key information continued to be communicated through regular newsletters sent by the University to Czech and international students and staff. It also actively communicated on the University's social media.

Events to support coping with the tragedy, where information was shared and therefore needed to be well communicated, played a major role, such as community events for international students staying in Prague over the Christmas holidays (and not only for them), "Month for Faculty" events, lectures, workshops and open groups. The University also provided spaces for meeting opportunities only without a specific goal.

Communication with the injured and survivors was also an important and special informational aspect, which was undertaken by the management of Charles University.

Financial support from the CU Endowment Fund

The CU Endowment Fund has so far collected 86 million Czech crowns to help those affected by the tragedy at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University (as of 27 May 2024). The Board of Trustees of the CU Endowment Fund has approved an allocation of 37 million for the families of the survivors until that date. As of 27 May 2024, 18 million had been transferred to the surviving families. For the remaining amount, the specification of terms and conditions and the conclusion of contracts with the families are in progress. It is expected that the approval of the next grant will be made to the surviving families in the third phase. 2.25 million has been distributed among the injured under the first rapid financial support, while the second phase of financial support is provided according to the individual needs of the injured.

Financial assistance has been provided to all 14 families of the shooting victims and a total of 20 families of the injured at this time, but the university is actively communicating with all 24 families. Cooperation continues.

How to cope with the tragedy? Experiences from abroad

Representatives of Charles University and Charles University Faculty of Arts gained experience in working with the aftermath of the tragedy during a meeting with representatives of the [Norwegian Center for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies](#) in April. The Norwegian Centre was represented by Synne ?ien Stensland and Grete Anita Dyb.

Remembrance site

**We will never forget...**

Fourteen lives were tragically cut short on December 21, 2023, in the mass shooting at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. Such a senseless and brutal act is incomprehensible and shocked both the university and the country to the core. We will never forget. We want to remember the students and teachers as they were and their closest family members kindly shared some of their most cherished memories.

[Profiles of the victims of the shooting at the Faculty of Arts of CU \(only in Czech\)](#)

**Quiet Place**

A Quiet Place has been established on the 4th floor of the main building of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. This temporary site of remembrance provides a quiet space for all those who wish to commemorate those who died in this tragic event.

[More information can be found here.](#)

**Memorial site on Jan Palach Square**

Half a year after the tragic event at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, a temporary memorial site dedicated to the victims of the December attack will be raised at Jan Palach Square. Its focal point will be a three-metre high stone object. "We do not want to commemorate the act that hit us six months ago, we are remembering those we lost then. Their passing affected our faculty, our colleagues at Charles University and other institutions, and a large part of the public. We want to offer them and ourselves a place where we can pay tribute to the victims," says Eva Lehečková, Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. With this public place of remembrance, FF UK is responding to a fundamental need that is now being expressed by the families of the victims and others affected.

[More information can be found here \(only in Czech\)](#)

**Other memorial sites and processing of memorial items**

*Please note most of the external links and articles are only available in Czech.*

- Memorial flame | On January 4 2024, a memorial flame was lit on Jan Palach Square, and remained lit for the whole month of January.
- Artistic processing of memorial objects | On the morning of January 5, the removal of candles and objects left behind from the existing memorial sites began. The material will be stored at CU and the plan is to use it to create a memorial object. This plan will be consulted by CU with the academic community and the concept will be developed as part of the Month for Faculty activities.

**Memorial events**

- Charles University and the Faculty of Arts of Charles University thanked for the cohesion and support | On 23 May, in the Great Hall of the Carolinum, thanks were given to all the people from Charles University who are trying to improve the atmosphere in the university community after the tragic event. [Read more in the article here.](#)

- Thanking volunteers for the restoration of the Faculty of Arts | On the evening of May 2, 2024, a thank you ceremony was held in the premises of the Hybernská Campus for the volunteers who were involved in the restoration of the Faculty of Arts after the tragic event last year. [More in the article here.](#)
- German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier paid tribute to the victims of the shooting at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University | [More in the article here.](#)
- Thanks to the Charles University Foundation we are not alone | Thanks to the donors and contributors of the Charles University Foundation. [More in the article here.](#)
- Zuzana Čaputová paid tribute to the memory of the victims of the December shooting | The President stopped by the Charles University Faculty of Arts on 18 March. [More in the article here.](#)
- President Macron paid tribute to the victims of the shooting at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University | A bouquet with the French tricolour was placed in front of the main building of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University by Emmanuel Macron. During his visit to Prague on Tuesday, 5 March, the French President paid tribute to the victims of the tragedy that took place at the Faculty last December. [More in the article here.](#)
- On 14 February 2024, accompanied by the Rector Milena Králíčková, two prominent politicians, Roberta Metsolaová, President of the European Parliament, and Markéta Pekarová Adamová, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, headed to the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University to pay their respects by laying flowers at the Jan Palach memorial plaque. [More in the article here.](#)
- President Petr Pavel visited the facilities of the students of the Faculty of Arts of CU | As part of the Month for the Faculty event, President Petr Pavel visited with students present at Jan Palach Square on Monday 29 January 2024. [More in the article here.](#)
- Month for Faculty | As the main building of the Faculty of Arts was closed for the whole of January, a meeting place for the whole university community and the public was created. The return of academic life and the reestablishment of Jan Palach Square as a safe space is a necessary part of the process of coming to terms with a tragic event that changed the life of the entire community in a brief moment. The [Month for Faculty](#) included various events. The first event was a memorial procession and embrace of the main Faculty of Arts building on January 4, 2024.
- „Opening“ of the Faculty of Arts on January 21, 2024 | As part of the Month for the Faculty initiative, a commemoration of the first month since the tragic events of 21 December 2023 will take place. [More information](#)
- The symbolic transfer of light | Month for the Faculty began on January 4 2024 as a spontaneous activity of students and student associations, not only from the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. The initiative was launched on January 4 with a memorial procession from the Carolinum memorial towards Jan Palach Square, where participants symbolically embraced the building.
- The Ecumenical Council of Churches dedicated a New Year's ecumenical service to the memory of the victims of the attack at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University and their loved ones. The service was held on Monday evening, January 1, 2024, at the Huss Church of the Czechoslovak Church in Vinohrady.
- On Saturday, December 23, 2023, at 11 a.m., many people attended a requiem for the victims of the shooting at St. Vitus cathedral at Prague Castle. The event was organised by the Prague Archbishopric and Prague Castle. The rector of Charles University, Milena Králíčková, also gave a speech in honour of the victims of the shooting. [Download the full text of the speech here.](#)
- On Saturday, December 23, 2023, at 3 p.m., an ecumenical prayer took place in the church of St. Martin in the Wall (Martinská 8, Prague) and a moment of silence was held for the victims of the shooting at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University.
- Friday, December 22, 2023, at 7.30 p.m., saw an ecumenical service led by Msgr. prof. Tomáš Halík for the victims of the shooting at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University take place in the Church of the Holy Salvator (Křížovnická 4) in Prague.
- A memorial service for the victims of the shooting at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University was held at Charles University on Friday morning, December 22, in front of the main entrance to the Carolinum building. The university administration, headed by Rector Milena Králíčková, was joined by representatives of the Czech Rectors' Conference

The Academic Community is Hurt, But Not Broken

The Academic Community is Hurt, But Not Broken lecture was held on March 5, 2024, in the Blue Auditorium for all members of the academic community. Together, the speakers and the audience explored the theme of supporting and coping with the December event at the Faculty of Arts.

[Recording of the lecture 5. 3. 2024 \(only in Czech\)](#)

Student activities

**Peerko | Student psychological help**

Peerko, a group of psychology students from Charles University, was founded in response to the tragic events of 21 December 2023. It targets its help primarily at fellow students, lecturers and other university staff, but also at everyone affected by the event. Mutual help, support, building resilience and creating a welcoming atmosphere are the cornerstones for getting the Faculty of Arts up and running again and returning to as normal a life as possible.

[More information can be found here.](#)

## **Volunteering**

Volunteers have played and continue to play a major role in the renewal of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. To find out more about volunteering at the University and how to get involved, visit the Volunteering Centre website.

[Volunteering Centre at CU](#)