



**STAFF
WELCOME
CENTRE**
CHARLES UNIVERSITY

**EVALUATION REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE STAFF
WELCOME CENTRE
IN THE PERIOD 1.1. 2020-30.6. 2023**

Prepared by: Staff Welcome Centre, UK Point, Charles University

Published: June 2023



EVROPSKÁ UNIE
Evropské strukturální a investiční fondy
Operační program Výzkum, vývoj a vzdělávání



MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Contents:

1. Report on activities in the period 2020-2023	2
1.1. Services for international employees of CU	2
1.1.1.Help with legal formalities both before and after entry to the Czech Republic	2
1.1.2.Help with finding accommodation	2
1.1.3.Czech language courses	2
1.1.4.Help with access to medical care and health insurance	3
1.1.5.Help with finding nursery or primary schools for children	3
1.1.6.Various life and work situations while living in the Czech Republic	3
1.1.7.Events for international employees	3
1.2. Services for CU employees who deal with matters concerning the employment of foreigners	4
1.2.1.Consultation and centralised representation of CU in countries outside the CZ	4
1.2.2.Educational seminars on issues concerning the employment of foreigners	4
1.2.3.English language courses for CU employees	4
1.2.4. Consultation and methodological support for the employment of foreigners	5
1.3. Other SWC activities	5
1.3.1.SWC website	5
1.3.2.Sharepoint SWC	5
1.3.3.Translation of documents	5
1.3.4.Advertising of job vacancies	6
1.4. Financing	6
1.5. Vision for the development of the SWC in the near future	6
2. Statistics 2020-2022	8

1. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN THE PERIOD 2020-2023

From the start of its existence, the services provided by the [Charles University Staff Welcome Centre](#) (SWC) have been aimed at academic and research staff from abroad who come to Charles University (CU) for a period of longer than three months. The goal of its activities is to minimise the bureaucratic burden associated with arrival in the Czech Republic and support international employees during the entirety of their stay in the country. The SWC's activities then have an impact on existing academic and administrative staff of CU (international office, team leaders, project department, HR employees and so on) who come into contact with international employees, and for whom the SWC serves as a central location for consultation and support to ensure that the admission process for international staff to CU goes as smoothly as possible.

SWC is part of the Office for Employees and Graduates of the UK Point department of the Rectorate. It officially came into being on 1 January 2020 as part of the realisation of the OP RDE "Development of for research and development capacities II (DRD II)" project, reg. no. CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/18_054/0015222.

The SWC team gradually took shape according to the activities realised over the years and now consists of three full-time employees, one member on a contract to perform work and one field employee on an agreement to complete a job.

The Centre's activities can be divided according to their two intended target groups:

- Services for international employees of CU
- Services for CU employees who deal with matters concerning the employment of foreigners

1.1. Services for international employees of CU

1.1.1. Help with legal formalities both before and after entry to the Czech Republic

The SWC starts assisting international employees several months ahead of the start of their work at CU, providing them with comprehensive information and a list of documents about applying for a visa in their country of origin (varies), registering with the Czech Interior Ministry following their arrival in the Czech Republic, accompanying them when reporting changes to the Ministry, obtaining a personal number, driving licence, permanent residency, etc.

1.1.2. Help with finding accommodation

Due to the insufficient number of family rooms at university dormitories, the Centre further negotiates and cooperates with other institutions at CU and Hotel Krystal (CU) and offers these as alternatives for long-term accommodation. Should an international scholar/academic be interested in commercial accommodation, the SWC helps them to find a flat in Prague, Hradec Králové or Pilsen and, if required, communicates with estate agencies and other organisations. It also helps international employees to fulfil their obligation to report any changes of accommodation to the Czech Interior Ministry.

1.1.3. Czech language courses

The SWC organises Czech language courses for international employees, in which it cooperates with the Institute for language and Preparatory Studies of CU. Every year three courses for approx. 45 participants are organised for levels ranging from beginner to intermediate. Lessons are in-person and

there is also natural integration and meetings between international scholars/academics across all faculties of CU. Demand for courses usually exceeds capacity.

1.1.4. Help with access to medical care and health insurance

The SWC provides contacts for English-speaking doctors and specialists and, prior to arrival, helps employees obtain travel and health insurance and health insurance for family members. If required, it offers direct assistance with language barrier issues.

1.1.5. Help with finding nursery or primary schools for children

The Centre provides international scholars and academics with general information on the education system so that they can better orient themselves before the start of their stay and then provides up-to-date contacts and placement in university nursery schools in Prague and Hradec Králové, as well as contacts for international nursery and primary schools in their place of residence.

1.1.6. Various life and work situations while living in the Czech Republic

The SWC offers assistance with a variety of situations and practical issues involved in moving to a foreign country (opening a bank account, telephone operators, basic tax consultancy, public transport, driving licences, obtaining parking permits, etc.) and also offers assistance when starting work at CU (library and system access, etc.).

1.1.7. Events for international employees

In its first two years of existence, SWC services also included the building of a community of international scholars at CU and supporting inter-faculty meetings (English-language educational seminars, soft skills seminars, joint meetings in Prague, etc.). While these meetings were popular, they were unable to attract new international employees and were attended by more or less the same people, meaning that they failed to fully fulfil their function of building a community at the University. In 2022 the Centre therefore decided to concentrate on other activities focused on methodological support in the employment of foreigners at CU.

Through its other centres and the Lifelong Learning Department, Charles University organises many educational seminars and activities for international employees. For this reason, this area of activity has been left to other bodies.

Events held during the three-year period included:

- Communication Skills
- Guided Tour- The Story of Prague
- Train the trainer: Capture their attention during your presentation
- Czech Cuisine Tour
- Management of Science
- Work/life Balance
- Czech Tax System Guidelines

1.2. Services for CU employees who deal with matters concerning the employment of foreigners

1.2.1. Consultation and centralised representation of CU outside the Czech Republic

During the three-year period the SWC's portfolio of other services was progressively modified and expanded according to the needs of the faculties and units of CU. In 2021 it added a very broad range of activities to the scope of its operations beyond its planned activities: advisory and consultation activities and centralised representation of CU outside the Czech Republic, including the mandatory registration of CU abroad, the facilitation of statutory payments abroad and the assisting of Czech CU employees for the outgoing/incoming mobility of CU employees abroad/to the Czech Republic.

Due to the fact that these activities were not supported within RDE II, in June 2020 the management of CU allocated funds and subsequently contacted faculties for specification of their requirements. In cooperation with the Public Procurement Department (PPD), a selection procedure to find an external consultation company. From January 2021 this service was realised by the SWC in cooperation with two external entities, with a framework agreement concluded.

However, the Centre's experience with smaller selection procedures, known as mini-tenders, was not very positive, nor was its experience with two contractual partners, one of which did not even respond to the mini-tender announced.

In 2022 the SWC, in cooperation with the PPD, prepared a tender for a new consultation company. During 2022 the Centre carried out a market survey at Czech universities, its own survey at faculties of CU, and official preliminary market consultations were held. Based on the findings from the above, it was decided that, for the purposes of concluding a new framework agreement, the selection procedure would be divided into two parts.

1.2.2. Educational seminars on issues concerning the employment of foreigners in the Czech Republic

At the University there is a high demand for the seminars that we have undertaken to organise, and which regularly take place. They focus primarily on the HR departments of faculties and units of CU. During the three-year period the following seminars have taken place:

- E-mail communication in English
- Work/life balance
- Employment of international staff
- E-mail communication in English – Prague
- E-mail communication in English – Pilsen
- E-mail communication in English – Hradec Králové
- How to communicate with colleagues abroad – focus on the academic sphere
- Matters concerning the employment of foreigners

1.2.3. English language courses for CU employees

A further integral part of the internationalisation process are the language skills of employees in all parts of CU. English language courses provide not only administrative, but also research and academic staff with regular, continuous language training, expanding the University's bilingual environment.

Since the start of its existence the SWC has organised, in cooperation with the Language centre of the Faculty of Arts of CU, three courses in English, for which demand exceeds course capacity. When these courses started, the SWC also purchased teaching materials through the OP RDE project for loaning to participants. Total numbers of participants in language courses (to show that support is not trivial):

Numbers of employees to complete English language courses			
	2020	2021	2022
Spring semester	32	56	58
Winter semester	47	60	57

1.2.4. Consultation and methodological support for the employment of foreigners at CU

During the three-year period the SWC has strongly established itself as a centre for methodological support and helped answer nearly 3,500 queries received from colleagues at CU (see statistics).

We are most frequently contacted with queries concerning the legislation of the specific country an employee comes from, how to proceed if a scholar arrives with their family, which type of visa or residence an employee should choose, what a visiting agreement looks like and who is must be signed by, where there is free accommodation capacity at CU, as well as specific queries about two employees working concurrently and in which country CU must pay fees, etc.

1.3. Other SWC activities

1.3.1. SWC website

In the first year of its existence the SWC created the [Staff Welcome Centre](#) website (bilingual), which helps and answers many queries that international employees may have. It contains up-to-date information for pre-arrival, post-arrival, during one's visit, about life in the Czech Republic, useful contacts, news about legislation concerning the employment of foreigners, events for international staff members, up-to-date information about the war in Ukraine and the pandemic, and other information.

A new section has also been created for international staff members at CU – the monthly UK Point Newsletter.

1.3.2. Sharepoint SWC

The Centre has also set up an internal space for the sharing of information on the internationalisation process at CU: best practice, news in legislation, translations of documents concerning labour law (approx. 90 members throughout the University). In the future this will become part of the Charles University intranet.

1.3.3. Translation of documents

Translations of relevant documents into English and, from April 2022, into Ukrainian and Russian too, have become an integral factor in increasing the level of internationalisation at the University. These are most frequently translations of University/faculty measures, regulations, website texts, translations of faculty websites, working documents and contracts, instructions for the use of apps, etc.

Within the SWC a sum of money has been allocated for a staff member (employee of the Rector's Office) to oversee and coordinate translations, have texts sent to translators, billing, etc.

Quantity of translation and proofreading provided	
Year	Number of standard pages
2020	273.5
2021	448.8
2022	1,569.87

As can be seen above, there is a rising tendency in demand as employees of the University think more internationally and make an effort to ensure that all texts, both internal and external, that are relevant to both Czech and international staff members are available in both languages.

1.3.4. Advertising of job vacancies

The Centre offers the placing of advertisements for job vacancies at CU in science and research on the Euraxess portal, where the placing of advertisements is free of charge and the SWC has access rights on behalf of CU.

1.4. Financing

By the end of 2022 (and 30/06/2023 due to extension of the project), the SWC's primary source of financing was from the OP RDE "Development of research and development capacities II" project, reg. no. CZ.02.2.69/0.0/0.0/18_054/0015222. It is planned for its activities to be financed from the University's resources from the Support Programme for the Strategic Management of Universities from 01/07/2023.

1.5. Vision for the development of the SWC in the near future

Thanks to its three years of experience with relocation, SWC has dealt with many issues for resolution and improvement and how to better configure processes to avoid placing an administrative burden on both incoming employees and CU employees who handle them.

During 2022 the SWC, in cooperation with the PPD, prepared a selection procedure for a new consultation company. During 2022 the Centre carried out a market survey at Czech universities, its own survey at faculties of CU, and official preliminary market consultations were held. Based on the findings from the above, it was decided that, for the purposes of concluding a new framework agreement, the selection procedure would be divided into two parts.

In the first selection procedure, a contractor was chosen for consultation in the most frequently requested countries at CU, which were identified from data collection (Australia, Bulgaria, Israel, Canada, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Austria, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom). The winner of this first selection procedure, which was completed at the end of 2022, was the company PROXY, a.s., and on 16/01/2023 a new framework agreement on the **provision of consultation and consular services related to the fulfilment of CU's responsibilities in relation to incoming and outgoing employees** was signed for a period of three years.

The Dynamic Procurement System was chosen for the second selection procedure (covering the remaining countries in the world). The public contract was announced in March 2023. Four consultation companies have currently registered their interest within the system.

Currently, SWC (UK Point) resources are used for the central funding of both the registration of employees abroad and monthly payroll and mandatory fees, which in previous years were paid by the faculties themselves.

The SWC also oversees the **submission of applications for form A1** (certificate concerning the social security legislation which applies to the holder) for business trips abroad by employees of the Rectorate. It also prepared a methodology on the submission of applications for form A1 for both the

Rectorate and for all faculties and units, which has already been approved by the management of CU and is attached to this document. The Rector's Measure on business trips abroad by employees, which is currently in preparation and which will apply from 01/01/2024, will also refer to the A1 methodology.

Currently, the RDE II project finances one full-time employee to cover the aforementioned, very comprehensive operational areas.

In addition to the completed methodological material on the A1 form, the SWC is currently preparing a **methodology on the employment of international employees at CU**, which is intended to standardise procedures for the acceptance of those employees for not only HR staff, but also to set basic rules and certain restrictions, chiefly for projects leaders, who are the first to propose employing international academics and scholars.

The methodology will contain many subsidiary steps of a more specialised, technical nature, e.g. notification in HR systems to highlight the end of validity of residence permits of international employees, improvements in onboarding and the holding of regular welcome days, the optimisation of short-term employment and work from abroad, etc.

Due to the complexities of cross-border taxation, there is the possibility of cooperation with an internal/external tax or legal consultant to provide scholars with consultation on tax returns, social security, etc.

During their **trips abroad, SWC employees gained inspiration from practice** at a number of European universities, which can be a point for further discussion at CU. This includes, for example, the use of senior citizen volunteers when organising events, as occurs at German universities. Senior citizens (who are also alumni) want to be active and speaking English, leading to the mutual enrichment of the experience for all participants.

The SWC will continue the **education of CU employees** in areas touched on by current topics in HR, tax, professional development, development of language skills and communication skills in English, and intercultural communication.

As a result of the **inadequate accommodation capacity** at CU dormitories (single and double/family rooms), the SWC has started negotiations and cooperation with external entities and, in connection with the issue, the University management is engaged in long-term discussions about the expansion of accommodation capacities through investment.

The SWC is further preparing a **new concept for language training for employees** based on the need to professionalise and diversify the teaching of language courses (chiefly of English). In accordance with CU's Strategic Plan for 2021-2025, the internationalisation of the university environment must be further deepened. This should be aided by an effective system of professional language training that facilitates the development of the language competencies of employees in all positions at the University.

To be included in courses, employees will have to sit a streaming test so that they can be allocated more effectively to classes. Two specialised semester courses will further be open to administrative/academic and research staff. These will focus on everyday work situations. The topics of these courses include e.g.: Business Meetings, Formal Correspondence, Business Phone Calls, Presentation Skills, Debating etc.

2. Statistics 2020-2022

Total number of inquiries	7179
Foreign language queries	3681
Czech queries	3498

Number of international CU employees who have used SWC services (2020-22)	936
--	------------

Type of inquiries	Number of inquiries
Residence agenda	2623
A1 form	763
Accommodation	742
SWC seminars for employees	596
Czech language courses	563
Social contributions, taxes	525
Employment queries	498
Translations of documents	197
Health insurance + Doctors	186
SWC - info about services	92
Postdocs - internal group	45
Job advertisements	36
SWC - operational questions	30
School facilities	28
Bank, libraries, etc.	25
Nostrification	13
Sports venues	6
Other	211

Number of inquiries by faculties / units		
	Total number	In Czech
Faculty of Science	1408	280
Faculty of Mathematics and Physics	1397	262
Non-university queries	972	801
Rectorate	949	912
Faculty of Arts	352	163
Faculty of Social Sciences	265	130
First Faculty of Medicine	225	93

Institute for Language and Preparatory Studies	191	169
Second Faculty of Medicine	191	74
Faculty of Education	183	60
Dormitories and Refectories	167	167
Not specified	123	42
Faculty of Law	123	68
Faculty of Medicine in Plzeň	123	72
Faculty of Pharmacy in Hradec Králové	116	62
CERGE	86	22
Third Faculty of Medicine	58	12
Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové	56	18
Faculty of Humanities	48	22
Bulk query from CU	48	15
Faculty of Physical Education and Sport	26	14
Center for Theoretical Study	25	8
Protestant Theological Faculty	20	10
Environment Centre	11	11
BIOCEV	7	2
Hussite Theological Faculty	5	5
Catholic Theological Faculty	3	3
Centre for Transfer of Knowledge and Technology	1	1

Number of inquiries by country of origin	
Czech Republic	3483 ¹
India	784
Not specified	432
Iran	312

Ukraine	257
Brazil	210
USA	166
Turkey	100
Russia	93
Mexico	90
Italy	89

¹ These are questions from the staff of the Charles University who deal with the agenda of employment of foreigners (i.e.

primarily HR professionals and project managers) and to whom the SWC provides labor-legal counselling.

Great Britain	83
Argentina	74
China	67
Colombia	67
Spain	63
Pakistan	61
Tunisia	51
Sri Lanka	41
Taiwan	41
North Macedonia	40
Bosnia & Herzegovina	38
Japan	38
Serbia	38
Nepal	35
Vietnam	35
Poland	28
Canada	27
Morocco	25
Germany	24
Greece	19
Austria	18
Kyrgyzstan	17
Georgia	15
Ireland	15
Hungary	15
Portugal	14
Azerbaijan	11
Egypt	11
France	11
Israel	11
Slovakia	11
Lebanon	10
Australia	8
Estonia	8
Kazakhstan	8
Croatia	7
Belarus	6
Uganda	6
Algeria	4
Armenia	4
Bulgaria	4
Ghana	4
Norway	4
Iraq	3
Yemen	3
South Korea	3

Cyprus	3
Libya	3
Netherlands	3
Ecuador	2
Romania	2
Sweden	2
Albania	1
Denmark	1
Ethiopia	1
Fiji	1
Lithuania	1
Syria	1
Uzbekistan	1

Country of origin	Number of CU employees from the given country
Czech Republic	874 ²
Not specified	342
India	110
Ukraine	72
Iran	39
USA	31
Brazil	23
Russia	23
Italy	21
Turkey	21
Poland	17
China	15
Pakistan	14
Great Britain	14
Mexico	13
Spain	13
Colombia	12
Taiwan	10
Germany	9
Bosnia & Herzegovina	8
Argentina	7
Serbia	7
Greece	6
France	5
Canada	5
Portugal	5
Austria	5
Tunisia	5
Japan	4
Kazakhstan	4
Lebanon	4
Slovakia	4
Australia	3
Azerbaijan	3

Belarus	3
Bulgaria	3
Israel	3
Morocco	3
Nepal	3
Algeria	2
Egypt	2
Ecuador	2
Croatia	2
Iraq	2
Yemen	2
South Korea	2
Cyprus	2
Kyrgyzstan	2
Hungary	2
Netherlands	2
Norway	2
Romania	2
Sri Lanka	2
Sweden	2
Vietnam	2
Albania	1
Armenia	1
Denmark	1
Estonia	1
Ethiopia	1
Fiji	1
Ghana	1
Georgia	1
Ireland	1
Libya	1
Lithuania	1
North Macedonia	1
Syria	1
Uganda	1
Uzbekistan	1

² These are questions from the staff of the Charles University who deal with the agenda of employment of foreigners (i.e.

primarily HR professionals and project managers) and to whom the SWC provides labor-legal counselling.