

PRESS REPORT

Town of Český Krumlov

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Český Krumlov – proudly bearing the UNESCO symbol for twenty years

When Český Krumlov was inscribed on the UNESCO List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage twenty years ago, there was no doubt that this was a milestone in the town's modern history. It was its complex of undisturbed historical buildings that put Český Krumlov, together with Prague and Telč, under this organization's protective wing. The act of inscribing the town on the UNESCO List itself was an important signal to the entire global cultural community that there is a unique heritage jewel to be discovered in South Bohemia.

"This was a new and bold impulse for Český Krumlov. It initiated activities from both the town's more creative inhabitants as well as a great number of political, professional, social, and cultural figures from other areas to form the town in a new image. Within a short time, an obscure, nostalgic, and neglected town transformed into an extraordinarily attractive tourist destination," explains Pavel Slavko, Český Krumlov Castle Director. The complete castle complex was accepted twenty years ago, together with the historical old town, into UNESCO's prestigious ranks.

"Back then, though, Krumlov was in a state of collapse and we were faced with an enormous task – rescuing this valuable monument. The work continues even now, even though it might look like we're finished. This, though, is far from the truth," Jitka Zikmundová, Vice Mayor of Český Krumlov, remembers. She came to the town twenty years ago to work in tourism. The town's leadership at the time knew that they were holding a gold nugget in their hands, but it was just a question of how they would deal with it. Should they open the town to gold-diggers who would flood the town with money at first, leaving behind them just a dead and empty pit? Or should they choose a slower, careful, and long-term approach involving renovation, preservation, care and cultivation?

"When the Czech Republic entered into mutual cooperation with UNESCO, it undertook the obligation to take the best possible care of its listed monuments. It must be understood, though, that throughout the entire period of negotiation on the UNESCO inscription, there was never talk of UNESCO granting us financial support following the inscription. This is a myth I would always hear from my colleagues from other towns during the 1990's, and to some extent it continues even now," remembers Jan Vondrouš, the first democratically elected mayor to Český Krumlov.

Today's Vice Mayor Jitka Zikmundová adds, "We decided on a course of rescue and maintenance, but we're still constantly learning how to utilize this salvaged heritage in a meaningful way. How to fill the town and its buildings with actual life, so that Krumlov doesn't simply become an attractive package for an empty box."

Over the past twenty years, the state, municipality, and private owners have invested roughly three billion Czech crowns into renovating the monuments, rebuilding the infrastructure, improving conditions for living and doing business, transforming public areas, and the like. This is another reason

why Český Krumlov is becoming even more sought after as a destination; international tourists are especially sensitive to Český Krumlov as a living and pulsing organism.

And the UNESCO designation? This is a guarantee of quality. There are an increasing number of people who seek out destinations based on this criterion. Based on research done by STEM/MARK from 2009, 74 percent of foreign and 54 percent of Czech visitors based their decision to visit Český Krumlov on its UNESCO designation. These visitors alone spent around 2.3 billion crowns during their visits to the town that year. Statistics show that this small South Bohemian town attracts about a million visitors every year.

"As for how tourism benefits a town of thirteen thousand inhabitants, these numbers speak for themselves. And even though many locals are bothered by tourism, they should keep in mind that it brings the town about three thousand jobs. I can remember twenty years ago, for example, when our list of accommodation facilities and their capacities was written on a typewriter on a single sheet of paper. Today the town has 4,634 beds," illustrates Zikmundová.

The town's biggest attraction, and doubtlessly the most visited, is the state castle; it received 320 thousand visitors last year. And in comparison to 2010, this is an increase of about 10 percent, which the National Heritage Institute attributes to the newly opened annual exhibition, the Castle Museum.

These twenty years on the prestigious World Heritage List have been a lot of work, but they've passed like water under the bridge. All the same, Český Krumlov wishes to remain in this elite club for many more decades to come. The task at hand is clear – by February of next year, the Czech state must submit a report to the UNESCO Committee regarding the future of the revolving auditorium.

The mayor of Český Krumlov today, Dalibor Carda, adds, "Work on such an important property is never finished. We have bold plans on how to open other important areas of the historical old town to the public. The year 2013 will see the opening of the reconstructed synagogue and the studio of the painter Egon Schiele. The following year, we'd like to complete the difficult job of revitalizing the monastery and convent, which will add a meaningful element to another important monument in the heart of the old town. We want to pass this town to the next generation in a very decent condition, with the prestigious symbol still attached."

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Partners of event:

General partners: Budějovický Budvar s.p., Fronius Česká republika, s.r.o.

Partners: Schwan Cosmetics CR, s.r.o., Kaufland Česká republika, v.o.s., Linde Pohony s.r.o., Růže Hotel Český Krumlov

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Events for general public held at the occasion of anniversary

December 4, 2012

14,00 **EXHIBITION: MACHU PICCHU REDISCOVERED**, Municipal Theatre of Český Krumlov
Festive opening of a photographic exhibition of one author reminding that 100 years since the rediscovery of Peruvian national gem elapsed in the last year. The monument was included into the UNESCO list in 1983.

18,00; 18,30; 19,00 **LIGHT UP UNESCO! 2012**, Yard of Eggenberg brewery

A unique video-mapping show at the occasion of 20 years of UNESCO in the Czech Republic. The projection will take place in the yard of Eggenberg brewery – entry through the street of Nové město/New Town (around Pivovarská zahrada/Brewery Garden). A part of the associated program will be a special author project – the multi-medial cube 3 x 3 x 3m produced specially for this purpose.

December 6, 2012, Municipal Theatre of Český Krumlov

17,30 **UNES-KNOWLEDGE COMPETITION**, Report of winners of the project for young generation on the journey into UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Pupils of elementary school in Český Krumlov

18,00hod **MACHU PICCHU REDISCOVERED**. The presentation of Mr. and Mrs. Wrights (USA), experts studying the locality of Peruvian Machu Picchu. The presentation will be interpreted into the Czech language. Entrance free.

December 8, 2012 **TRIP BY „UNESCO“ STEAM TRAIN**

Route: České Budějovice - Český Krumlov and back.

Departure from České Budějovice at 10:31, arrival to Český Krumlov at 12:24. Departure back to České Budějovice at 17.25.

Tip! By buying the ticket for this steam train, you acquire two Český Krumlov Cards for the price of one card, i.e. for 200 CZK. You acquire with this card free entrance into the Castle Museum and Castle Tower, Regional Museum, Museum Fotoatelier Seidel and into Egon Schiele Art Centre.

Basic fare: CZK 200, reduced fare: CZK 100 and family fare: CZK 500. It is necessary to reserve the places for the reason of the limited number of places in the train (telephone: 972 544 691, e-mail: jiznicechy@cd.cz).