

66.

LETNÍ ŠKOLA SLOVANSKÝCH STUDIÍ V PRAZE

Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy



Closing Speech of the 66th Summer School of Slavonic Studies

Dr. Svatava Škodová, director of the LŠSS

Your Magnificence, the Vice Rector,
Spectabilis, the Vice Dean,
Cives academici,
ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, dear colleagues.

Allow me to commence the closing ceremony, which will see the alumni of the 66th Summer School of Slavonic Studies at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague receive their certificate.

Esteemed Vice Rector, esteemed Vice Dean, the 66th Summer School of Slavonic Studies started on 20 July and will officially end tomorrow, on 17 August 2023. I would now like to give a brief overview of its proceedings.

This year's Summer School welcomed 139 students from 37 countries all over the world.

As with the previous years, a large number of this year's participants were beginners. It is our pleasure to say that forty-three participants were introduced to the Czech language this year. I believe it will not be the last time they have come into contact with the language and we will meet again in the following years, this time at the intermediate level. Much to my delight, we also welcomed numerous advanced students, who comprised the part of academia communicating exclusively in Czech.

This year's Summer School organised thirteen parallel Czech language courses. In addition to beginner courses, we also offered a wide selection of lectures and workshops which covered activities ranging from purely academic ones to leisure activities.

I am glad to say we were able to provide students with new study materials developed specifically for the Summer School. It is my hope that we prepared some more new study materials this year which will be used in a revised form next year.

The students were acquainted with the results of academic research in the field of linguistics, literature and history in a series of lectures conducted at the faculty and in the evening hours also at the dormitory. The linguistic seminars focused on corpus research, phonetics and Czech for foreigners. Regarding literature, the students could attend seminars on non-canonical Czech literature from the 1950s and 1960s, Czech surrealism, fantasy, and contemporary children's literature. As for Czech history and culture, we discussed the changes of the national and state symbols, and renowned personalities, including Josef Hlávka, for example. A lot of attention was also given to

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Czech music; the students were introduced to songs from a cross-section of Czech music from different periods, including Czech pop music and contemporary Roma rap and hip-hop.

Furthermore, an opportunity presented itself to attend several interesting author talks with distinguished literary and publishing personalities.

A significant advantage of the Summer School is its location, which allows many lectures to take place directly in the streets of Prague, as well as other places directly connected to the topics of individual lectures.

However, the programme of the Summer School was not limited to teaching the language and holding lectures; a large part of it also comprised cultural and social activities. Those activities were conceived to complement the curriculum and introduce students to both the phenomena which will in future be included in a so-called weekday history course, and the pivotal times in Czech history and culture. It was with this intention that the afternoon and evening programmes were organised.

The cultural programme also included weekend field trips. However, we, in no way, consider our students as tourists, which is why we generally avoid introducing Czech monuments, even the most touristically popular ones, in a superficial touristic manner.

On behalf of all you, I would now like to extend my gratitude to everyone who helped to prepare this event with such exceptional dedication. I would like to thank the team of organizers for dealing with the game of chess that was this Summer School as well as they did. I would also like to thank the lecturers for their expert work and the enthusiasm they displayed in their approach to teaching.

I am delighted that I can also extend my gratitude to the students of our faculty who joined us as lecturers, assistants, and interpreters, frequently helping to bridge the occasional gap between the students and the organisers.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the university and faculty administration for providing the facilities and support necessary for the organisation of the Summer School.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your participation and for creating a friendly atmosphere and a sense of togetherness, despite starting off as strangers both to the country and to one another. I believe it will in a sense outlast today's farewell.

I hope that you have gained not only new knowledge and skills, but also a feeling of life-long belonging in this family of Czech culture enthusiasts.

Furthermore, I hope we managed to interest you in Czech language, culture, and the Czech Republic, and that you will gladly return to Prague - and maybe even Charles University - in the future.

Esteemed Vice Rector, esteemed Vice Dean, I am convinced that the 66th Summer School of Slavonic Studies has reached its goal and honorably continued the tradition of summer schools in Prague. It has aimed to present and refine the best of what the Czech spiritual tradition and our university have to offer.