

NEWS SUMMARY DECEMBER 1 – DECEMBER 6 ATTACHMENT

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ECONOMY & FINANCE

SELECTION OF MAIN ECONOMIC EVENTS IN 2017 – 4.12.

A selection of the most important economic events in the CR in 2017:

JANUARY

2 - Supreme Administrative Court (NSS) confirms Kc23.89m fine for German company RWWE Zentralfinanz, which operates, for example, Billa supermarkets. The company failed to keep pledges from 2008 that antimonopoly office UOHS set as a condition for its merger with Plus Discount firm.

4 - Bird flu case is confirmed in CR after almost ten years. Vets gradually confirm a total of 39 epicentres in birds bred on CR's territory, the virus is also confirmed in 52 wild birds in 13 regions. Due to the disease, 98,000 birds kept on farms are culled.

10 - Chamber of Deputies outvotes presidential veto on amendment to law on VAT which moves newspapers and magazines to 10% VAT rate.

13 - Chamber of Deputies approves government's tax package which, among other things, raises tax reliefs for second, third and every other child. In the amendment, deputies turn down reliefs from electronic registration of sales (EET), proposed by Finance Minister Andrej Babis (ANO) and Christian Democrats (KDU-CSL). The deputies also turn down the opposition's proposal to abolish the law on EET. Senate returns the tax package to the Chamber of Deputies which approves it again in April.

- CR files a lawsuit in the EU's Court of Justice over changes in rules for alcohol denaturing procedures, Finance Ministry claims that these changes may lead to tax evasion.

16 - Czech National Bank (CNB) former governor Miroslav Singer is named institutional relations director and chief economist of Generali CEE Holding. As of Feb 1, he is also chairman of the supervisory board of insurer Ceska pojistovna, a member of Generali group.

- CPI PG group ofbnair Radovan Vitek buys 11 large shopping centres in CR, Hungary, Poland and Romania. It does not disclose the price but Forbes magazine says it moves around EUR650m (Kc17.5bn).

25 - Entrepreneur Ivan Zach becomes majority owner of Prima television. Together with Vladimir Komar, he bought 50% in Prima Group from Sweden's Modern Times Group (MTG). Prima Group evaluated the deal at EUR237.4m (around Kc6.4bn).

30 - CEZ company says more than 700 flats that it owns in Prague-Pisnice district will be sold to Kennial company which belongs to Arca Capital Bohemia of financier Pavol Krupa. Kennial offered Kc1.305bn but it later withdrew from the deal and CIB Rent Pisnice, which placed second in the tender, acquires the flats.

31 - President Milos Zeman names Oldrich Dedek, 53, and Marek Mora, 45, new members of Czech National Bank

(CNB) Bank Board. They replace Pavel Rezabek and Lubomir Lizal on the board.

FEBRUARY

1 - Office for Government Representation in Property Affairs (UZSVM) sells historic building in Prague centre for Kc355.1m, I.J.O. Prague Investments is new owner. This is the second biggest real estate deal in UZSVM's history.

2 - CNB in its new forecast worsens GDP growth estimate for this year and next year to 2.8%.

3 - Vodafone says Jiri Baca, hitherto vice-president for customer services and sales of mobile operator Vodafone, will be its new CEO in CR, replacing Balesh Sharma who retains the post of chairman of the board of directors.

- Finance Minister Andrej Babis announces that he has deposited the shares of his companies Agrofert and SynBiol to trust funds due to law on conflict of interest.

13 - EC data show that CR's economic growth should accelerate to 2.6% this year and reach 2.7% next year.

15 - Transport unions declare nationwide strike alert due to wages of bus drivers.

16 - Regional Court in Brno confirms Kc40m fine for energy company RWE Supply & Trading CZ, imposed by antimonopoly office UOHS for abuse of dominant market position. The fine is confirmed by Supreme Administrative Court in June. The case has dragged for more than ten years.

- Hyundai Mobis company starts trial operation in a plant for car headlights in industrial zone Mosnov, North Moravia.

20 - Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka says Jan Mladek (Social Democrats, CSSD) will leave the post of Industry and Trade Minister as of end-February. He describes Mladek's steps in concerning mobile data prices as the main reason.

22 - Car maker Skoda Auto starts sale of new car SUV Kodiaq.

23 - Finance Ministry succeeds in arbitration suit with British company WNC Factoring, which demanded Kc2bn from the state for CR's faults in privatisation of Skodaexport company and subsequent non-granting of loan from Czech Export Bank (CEB).

24 - Entrepreneur Daniel Kretinsky becomes majority owner of Energeticky a prumyslovy holding (EPH). Entrepreneur Patrik Tkac and investors linked with J&T group leave the company. Investment fund of Australian bank Macquarie gains 31% in EP Infrastructure (EPIF), EPH's key subsidiary. EPH keeps 69%, plus managerial control, in EPIF.

MARCH

1 - Second stage of EET begins, it applies to entrepreneurs doing business in wholesale and retail.

7 - EC approves Czech regime of support for combined electricity and heat production, put in practice from Jan 2016 to Dec 2020. Total budget of support to the cogeneration units is over Kc11.3bn.

9 - Telecommunication firm Ceska telekomunikacni infrastruktura (CETIN) signs agreement with Central Group on sale of its seat in Prague-Zizkov. It does not disclose the

price but estimated price at Kc800m earlier appeared in media.

10 - Skoda Auto announces that together with India's car maker Tata Motors it will probably develop platform for new car for Indian market. Skoda Auto ends talks with Tata Motors in August. The companies agreed they cannot implement the technical and economic synergies to the required extent.

13 - Finance Ministry says CR succeeded in two arbitrations in which British citizens Ivan Peter Busta and Jan Peter Busta and Anglia Auto Accessories company demanded some Kc200m. The arbitration concerned compensation for damage for failed investment in production of car roof racks near Hodonin, south Moravia.

16 - Zdenek Jandejsek, director of Rabbit Trhovy Stepanov company, is elected Agrarian Chamber's new president, replacing Miroslav Toman who did not vie for the position again.

27 - Japanese company HI-LEX says it will build a plant for door systems for automobiles near Most, north Bohemia, and invest Kc1.26bn in the project.

31 - Japanese group Asahi takes over Plzensky Prazdroj, it bought the biggest beer producer in CR with four other European breweries for almost Kc200bn.

- Black coal mining ends in mine Paskov, north Moravia. Mining in Paskov of OKD company, in insolvency, stopped paying off. The mine had 1,030 employees.

APRIL

4 - Jiri Havlicek is appointed Industry and Trade Minister, replacing Jan Mladek dismissed at end-Feb.

- Regional Development Ministry says CR drew 96.4% of money from European funds allocated in 2007-2013 programming period, receiving EUR25.8bn (Kc697bn).

5 - Chamber of Deputies approves amendment to construction law aimed at making procedure of construction project permits simpler. Senate returns amendment to lower house proposing changes, getting outvoted by Chamber of Deputies approving its version in June.

6 - CNB Bank Board ends its foreign exchange intervention regime which was launched at start of Nov 2013 out of fear of deflation aiming to weaken and keep crown's exchange rate near Kc27/EUR. CNB made interventions worth over Kc2,000bn during commitment period.

- OKD signs contract with state-run company Prisko, controlled by Finance Ministry, on Prisko acquiring all shares of OKD's subsidiary, established for this transaction, and becoming owner of OKD mines.

11 - Employees of Mitas tyre producer's Zlin plant join two-hour warning strike over pay rise. Prague and Zlin plant unionists sign collective agreement including pay rise in May.

26 - Czech News Agency (CTK) Council re-elects Jiri Majstr as director general for another six years.

- Czech Television (CT) Council re-elects Petr Dvorak head for another six years.

27 - Prague Stock Exchange headline PX index firms above 1,000 points for 1st time since Sept 2015, hitting 1,002.12 points.

- Uranium mining ends in Rozna, last operating mine in CR.

MAY

1 - Petr Dvorak, 41, becomes new head of last state-owned brewery Budejovicky Budvar, replacing Jiri Bocek.

2 - Winemakers estimate vineyard damage caused by end-April spring frosts at about Kc500mn.

- General meeting of Vitkovice, a.s., approves sale of engineering company Vitkovice Machinery Group's (VMG) subsidiary Hutni montaze to E-Invest company of Martin Ulcak for Kc466m.

3 - Cetelem consumer loan provider says it changes business model and enters online banking segment as Hello Bank! by Cetelem.

4 - CNB improves estimate of Czech economic growth in 2017 from 2.8% to 2.9%, maintaining its 2018 estimate at 2.8%.

5 - UOHS okays change in ownership structure of J&T Finance Group (JTFG) which will be controlled by Chinese company CEFC along with entrepreneurs Jozef Tkac and Ivan Jakabovic. CEFC originally owned 10% in JTFG, but both companies agreed in March 2016 for CEFC to have 50%.

12 - OKD's insolvency administrator Lee Louda files suit against OKD's former owner New World Resources (NWR), companies BXR Group Limited and CERCL Mining B. V., and their owners, entrepreneurs Zdenek Bakala and Peter Kadas, as he wants them to return to OKD more than Kc12bn they paid to themselves in dividend in 2011-2012.

15 - Hyundai launches mass production of third generation i30 model in Nosovice plant, northern Moravia.

16 - Delegates of Chamber of Commerce re-elect Vladimir Dlouhy as president for another three-year term.

18 - CEZ's supervisory board fails to approve sale of Pocerady brown coal-fired power plant to Vrsanska uhelna company of Czech Coal group owned by financier Pavel Tykac, with Vrsanska uhelna offering Kc10bn for Pocerady plant. Deal was criticised by Babis and environmentalists.

- CEZ creates new nuclear energy division as of June 1 headed by Temelin nuclear power plant director Bohdan Zronek becoming also CEZ board of directors member. Jan Kruml replaces Zronek as Temelin head as of Sept 1.

- Chinese phone maker Huawei says it plans to invest \$360m (Kc8.64bn) in CR within five years, creating indirectly over 4,000 jobs, which gets confirmed by Huawei head Guo Ping at his meeting with Zeman.

19 - Fruit growers report damage caused by spring frosts estimated at Kc478mn and about quarter of harvest.

24 - Zeman dismisses Babis and appoints Ivan Pilny as new finance minister. Sobotka said on May 2 he would hand his cabinet's resignation to Zeman due to controversial business activities of Babis; later he changed his mind, proposing to Zeman that he sack Babis.

- Chamber of Deputies approves government-sponsored amendment to electronic communications law concerning transition to DVB-T2 standard of digital television broadcasting expected in 2021.

30 - Brno Regional Court cancels record-high Kc1.66bn fine imposed by UOHS upon construction companies for alleged cartel agreement forming in 2006-2008.

JUNE

8 - Baxter international company says it will shut down its Gambro medical equipment production plant in Prerov,

north Moravia, in Oct, with production being halted from mid-May.

- Kofola non-alcoholic drink maker says that newly established company AETOS is to become its majority owner as of end-July, acquiring 68% in Kofola. AETOS belongs to the Samaras family and other founders of Kofola.

13 - CNB stress tests confirm banks' resilience to even very strong recession and growing loan losses.

- CNB raises countercyclical buffer rate for banks, credit unions and securities dealers from 0.5% to 1%.

- HP Tronic says that Datart electronics retail chain is to merge with HP Tronic, operating Euronics chain and Kasa.cz and Slovak Hej.sk e-shops, to create chain with annual turnover of over Kc15bn and 130 electronics shops in CR and Slovakia.

15 - Transport Ministry calls tender for new toll system operator, planning to spend Kc29bn on system's operation over 10 years. Tender registers four bidders - current operator Kapsch, Slovak toll system operator SkyToll with CzechToll of PPF group of entrepreneur Petr Kellner, German T-Systems International, and Hungary's toll system operator National Toll Payment Services with i-Cell Mobilsoft and Eltodo company.

16 - Jaroslav Soucek gets re-elected chairman of Kovo, biggest Czech trade union association.

19 - Siemens says it will invest more than Kc7bn in extension and modernisation of its plants in CR, and new electric motor development centre in Ostrava, northern Moravia, over next seven years, creating more than 1,800 jobs.

21 - EPH says it will buy two steam-gas power plants in Britain for Kc9.5bn via its subsidiary EP UK Investments.

- CNB governor Jiri Rusnok says CR is prepared for euro adoption, while there is still big gap between CR and euro area in aspects of prices and wages.

- Government approves members of newly created five-member board of Energy Regulatory Office (ERU) to replace chairwoman Alena Vitaskova as of Aug, with Vladimir Outrata to be board chairman.

- Government decides to raise funds to improve public infrastructure near Kvasiny, eastern Bohemia, to Kc3bn, with total investment amounting to Kc6bn.

26 - Creditors of CKD Praha DIZ engineering company decide for company to go bankrupt.

27 - CR records its first case of African swine fever (ASF), likely being brought into CR by wild boar crossing border. State Veterinary Administration finds 150 dead animals testing positive for ASF as of end-Nov, with situation calling for number of veterinary and safety measures.

28 - State Office for Nuclear Safety (SUJB) issues permit for further operation of Dukovany nuclear power plant's unit 2.

JULY

11 - Czech Telecommunication Office (CTU) says auction of frequencies in 3.7 GHz band for mobile network brought in Kc1.015bn, seven times the starting price. Mobile operators O2 and Vodafone succeeded in the tender, as did further bidders, Nordic Telecom and PODA. T-Mobile withdrew from the tender due to high price.

12 - Employment Office says unemployment in CR dropped to 4% in June from May's 4.1%. There were 297,439 job applicants, the lowest number since June 1998.

20 - Czech crown breaks through the level of Kc26/EUR for first time since the end to CNB's forex interventions.

26 - Skoda Auto launches production of new SUV Karoq in its plant of Kvasiny, it has replaced model Yeti.

AUGUST

1 - Vitkovice Power Engineering (VPE), a unit of Vitkovice Machinery Group, files for bankruptcy.

2 - It is announced that Oliver Stefani, head of exterior design for VW brand, will replace Jozef Kaban as chief designer of Skoda Auto.

- Court declares engineering company Kralovopolska RIA insolvent. Kralovopolska RIA applies for permission of reorganisation.

3 - CNB Bank Board raises interest rates for the first time since February 2008. The benchmark interest rate increases by 0.2%age points to 0.25%.

- CNB improves its estimate of this year's Czech economic growth to 3.6% from 2.9% estimated in May. For next year it upgrades its estimate from 2.8% to 3.2%.

10 - Skoda Auto says it terminated talks with Indian company Tata Motors on strategic partnership regarding potential joint production of vehicles. Skoda, representing the entire VW group, has been in talks with Tata Motors since March.

21 - 2.5-km-long section of D11 motorway near Hradec Kralove is opened.

24 - OKD creditors approve reorganisation plan under which OKD's mines and operating assets are to be put into new company, OKD Nastupnicka, which is to be fully owned by state-run company Prisko.

SEPTEMBER

1 - Betting company Fortuna announces it bought four Romanian betting firms for EUR47m (Kc1.22bn) from Fortbet. Fortuna entered Romanian market in April, when it bought Hattric Sports. Through the acquisition it also entered Croatia and Spain.

7 - Chinese company CEFC completes its departure from ownership structure of publishing house Empresa Media and media group Medea, returning its stake to its original owner Jaromir Soukup.

9 - Planned shutdown of unit 4 of Dukovany nuclear power plant ends after 120 days. Dukovany's entire output has been reduced by half since July 14, as unit 3 has been offline since the same date. Unit 3 is put back into operation at the end of October.

13 - Luxembourg-based fund Wood Textiles Holding announces that it will sell its stake of about 30% in Czech textile company Pegas Nonwovens to Czech investment firm R2G Rohan.

14 - Agriculture Ministry temporarily bans all forest owners from logging trees since consequences of wind and bark beetle calamities need to be processed first. Ministry lifts the ban in November.

15 - Hyundai launches mass production of sports model Hyundai i30 N in Nosovice plant.

19 - EPH says it is buying German company Kraftwerk Mehrum, the owner of coal-fired power plant Mehrum, from Enercity and BS Energy.

20 - UOHS cancels result of tender to modernise Prague's rail hub for Kc3.5bn saying that SZDC rail infrastructure management company breached law on public procurement.

- Office for Government Representation in Property Affairs (UZSVM) wins lawsuit with German company Aircraftleasing Meier und Fischer (AMF), majority owned by entrepreneur Vaclav Fischer, over Kc2.45bn that Aircraftleasing demanded for two Boeing 737 planes seized 11 years ago during bankruptcy proceedings against Fischer's assets.

- All four lanes of D8 motorway leading from Prague to Saxony via Central Bohemian Uplands mountain range are opened as of this day. D8 has been under construction since 1984.

25 - Government approves state budget for 2018 with Kc50bn deficit and decides that up to Kc2bn will be distributed to farmers in compensation for this year's drought.

27 - Court decides that historic Fanta building at Prague's main train station belongs to SZDC rail track management company, which bought it from Ceske drahy national rail operator last year. Court dismisses complaint of Italian firm Grandi Stazioni with which SZDC ended cooperation after acquiring the train station.

OCTOBER

1 - Finance Ministry launches bill lottery linked with EET.

2 - Havlicek and European Metals Holdings Ltd. sign memorandum of understanding concerning future lithium mining near Cinovec.

- Prague taxi drivers stage protest against Uber services. Protests continue in following days.

5 - Skoda Auto board chairman Bernhard Maier says in letter to employees that CR is and will remain home of Skoda Auto. He thus neither confirms nor refutes speculation that some of Skoda's production may be moved to Germany.

6 - Czech Television reports that air carrier Travel Service will take control over 98% of Czech Airlines (CSA) following agreement with Korean Airlines and the state on buying their shares in CSA.

9 - Road and Motorway Directorate (RSD) starts removing illegal billboards placed along motorways. Their removal is required under amended law on roads.

11 - Kyrgyzstan withdraws unilaterally from contract with Czech firm Liglass Trading regarding construction of sequence of hydroelectric power plants on Naryn river. Liglass took over the project estimated at Kc12bn from Russia's RusGidro in July.

12 - Arbitration court in Geneva rules that CR does not have to pay Kc0.5bn to three German investors and JSW Solar in damages and lost profits because of introduction of solar tax. Ministry expects another six similar lawsuits over more than Kc3.5bn in damages to have the same outcome.

- Senate vetoes draft amendment to law on Chamber of Commerce and Agrarian Chamber, introducing register of obligations, as anti-constitutional. Lower house fails to outvote Senate's veto.

24 - Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting grants television broadcasting licence to Internet company Seznam.cz.

25 - BCPP shows best result in almost 5 years, its PX index reaching 1,064.10 points. Previous record of about 1,066 points was recorded in January 2013.

29 - Windstorm destroys about 1mn m³ of wood in forests owned by state-run forest management company Lesy CR.

31 - CEZ says it will sell coal-fired power plant Varna to Bulgarian company SIGDA OOD. Final price is to be set as of the date of sale.

NOVEMBER

2 - CNB governing board raises interest rates for the second time this year. Benchmark interest rate grows by 0.25%age points to 0.5%.

- CNB in its new forecast improves Czech GDP growth outlook for this year to 4.5% from previous 3.6%. For next year, it envisages growth of 3.4% against previous estimate of 3.2%.

4 - Shutdown of unit three ends at nuclear power plant Dukovany, with all four units in operation after outages lasting for several months. Unit four has unscheduled shutdown for 15 days in November due to defect.

6 - US investment group CBRE Global Investors buys two logistics parks near Plzen, western Bohemia. JLL, a property consulting company that represents the seller, Stage Capital of Britain, says it is the largest logistics deal in CR this year. According to CTK's information, the price exceeded Kc2.6bn.

8 - Data from Employment Office show Czech jobless rate falls to 3.6% in Oct, with job seekers at around 271,000, the lowest figure in nearly 20 years.

- CTU rejects Ceska posta postal service provider's application for postal service licence for another five years from 2018, the reason being the fact Ceska posta fails to provide info on cost orientation of its prices.

- Vitkovice board chairman and CEO Libor Witassek quits both posts unexpectedly. Martin Zak, until now Vitkovice Doprava and Vitkovice Heavy Machinery board chairman, is new chairman of board of directors at Vitkovice.

9 - CSU says consumer prices in Oct add 2.9% annually, which is the highest yr/yr inflation rate since Oct 2012. Foodstuffs are driver of the price hike.

13 - CEZ says it applies for EIA (environmental impact assessment) study for planned new units at nuclear power plant Dukovany. Project financing stays unclear.

15 - Hyundai starts producing i30 fastback model.

17 - Skoda Auto says it will make electric cars in Mlada Boleslav, central Bohemia, as of 2020, with production of electric components for plug-in hybrid cars to begin in Mlada Boleslav in 2019. First Skoda electric car to be released to the market in 2019.

22 - Czech crown breaks through Kc25.50/EUR for the first time since end of central bank's forex interventions in April this year. Unit firms by Kc1.50 versus single currency during this period.

23 - Investment company LaSalle buys Palac Andel building in Prague-Smichov district via its fund LaSalle E-Regi for nearly Kc1.5bn.

- Last train with Czech diesel oil departs from storage facility in Krailling, Germany, where it was blocked after Viktoriagruppe company was declared bankrupt.
25 - PPF signs contract for purchase of 100% of shares of Skoda Transportation engineering group. Price of the deal which is yet to be okayed by UOHS is not disclosed.

DECEMBER

1 - Creditors approve reorganisation of Kralovopolská RIA, in insolvency proceedings from August.



NEWS SUMMARY 2017 (POLITICAL)

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POLITICS

CFR REVIEW OF MAJOR POLITICAL EVENTS IN THE CR IN 2017 – 4.12.

JANUARY

2. - Former Presidential Office Protocol Department head Jindrich Forejt terminates his employment with the Foreign Ministry. Forejt left the Presidential Office in December 2016 shortly after the media wrote about a compromising video allegedly featuring him.

4. - A case of bird flu is confirmed after nearly ten years. Bird flu epicentres were reported in a number of locations soon afterwards.

- Prague High Court upholds the acquittal of three officials from the section for the Czech EU presidency in 2009. It also confirmed that all the seven convicted entrepreneurs would go to prison.

10. - Court imposes suspended sentences on former prime minister's office head Jana Necasova (Nagyova), lobbyist Ivo Rittig and his lawyer David Michal for leaking a classified BIS counter-intelligence report. An appeals court cancelled the sentences on September 14.

11. - The Chamber of Deputies again passes an amendment to the law on conflict of interest, dubbed Lex Babis, under which the firms of finance minister Andrej Babis (ANO) are not allowed to apply for state subsidies and compete in public tenders. The MPs overrode the presidential veto. President Milos Zeman filed a constitutional complaint against the amendment on February 14.

- Radek Vondracek replaces Jaroslava Pokorna Jermanova (both ANO) in the post of Chamber of Deputies chairman. Jermanova left the post since she was elected Central Bohemia Region's governor.

18. - Pavel Telicka (ANO) is elected Vice President of the European Parliament.

19. - The Senate passes the anti-smoking bill without changes. Zeman signed the bill into law on February 14. As of the end of May, smoking is banned in restaurants, bars, theatres and cinemas.

20. - Chamber of Deputies passes amendment to copyright law, under which the maximum possible increase in copyright fees is on the level copying inflation. The Senate passed the amendment on March 9.

24. - Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka (Social Democrats, CSSD) refuses to countersign President Zeman's decision to name Karel Srp a member of the ethical commission to honour anti-communist resistance fighters. Sobotka said he did so due to Srp's contacts with the communist secret police StB before 1989.

27. - A court dismisses a Somali female student's demand that a Prague secondary medical school apologise to her and financially compensate her for having banned the wearing of hijab.

FEBRUARY

2. - Justice Minister Robert Pelikan (ANO) challenges the Prague High Court verdict acquitting former regional governor David Rath and his ten accomplices charged with manipulating public orders.

- A lower house commission of investigation concludes that a 2016 police reshuffle did not aim to remove former anti-mafia police chief Robert Slachta, reduce activities of police units and prevent some sensitive cases from being investigated.

3. - Babis announces that he will transfer the shares of his companies Agrofert and SynBiol into trust funds to meet the law on conflict of interest.

6. - Babis hails the decision of the Slovak Supreme Court that rejected the Nation's Memory Institute's petition for an appellate review of the previous verdict by lower courts ruling that he was wrongly registered as an agent of the former StB communist secret police.

20. - Finance Minister Babis proposes that taxation is imposed on one-crown bonds that owners bought from their firms. The measure will apply to Babis himself. He bought one-crown bonds of his Agrofert concern for nearly 1.5 billion crowns in 2013.

24. - Chamber of Deputies passes a bill introducing a one-week paid holiday for fathers after the birth of their child. Senate passed the bill on April 19.

- Plzen Regional Court sentences Jan Silovsky to 40 months in prison for his intention to join the Islamic State militant group. Silovsky, 22, has been the first Czech punished for this. The appeals court toughened his sentence to six years. The Supreme Court turned down his petition for an appellate review in September.

25. - Babis is re-elected chairman of the ANO movement, Jaroslav Faltyněk keeps the post of ANO's first deputy chairman. Central Bohemia Region Governor Jaroslava Pokorna Jermanova and Brno Mayor Petr Vokral defended their posts of regular deputy chairpersons. Environment Minister Richard Brabec and Defence Minister Martin Stropnický were also elected deputy chairmen.

26. - Czech Petr Jasek, a Christian humanitarian activist who was sentenced to 20 years in prison in Sudan in January, returns to his homeland together with Foreign Minister Lubomir Zaoralek who negotiated about his release in Khartoum. Sudanese President Omar Bashir granted pardon to Jasek, who was charged with espionage, and ordered his immediate release.

28. - President Zeman dismisses Industry and Trade Minister Jan Mladek (CSSD). Jiri Havlicek (CSSD) was appointed new minister on April 4.

MARCH

1. - Czech Presidential Office foreign affairs section head Hynek Kmonicek receives the U.S. agreement for his becoming the next Czech ambassador to Washington. Kmonicek handed his credentials to U.S. President Donald Trump on April 24.

3. - Tomas Prouza (CSSD) resigns from the post of secretary of European affairs. He left the Government Office on March 31.
7. - The Defence Ministry signs purchase contract on ammunition worth three billion crowns from the Sellier&Bellot company, 5,500 bullet-proof jackets worth 255 million from the Argun company and four combat vehicles for 94.5 million from SVOS Prelouc.
 - Prague Municipal Court sentences Michelle Sudku to 30 years in prison for stabbing a female customer in a Prague shopping centre to death and attempting to kill a girl in a cafe in 2016.
8. - The government approves a bill on social housing to restrict the "trading in poverty." However, the Chamber of Deputies failed to pass the bill before the October general election.
9. - President Zeman announces that he will try to defend his presidential mandate in the direct presidential election in January 2018.
10. - Prime Minister Sobotka defends his post of CSSD leader and Interior Minister Milan Chovanec remains his first deputy. Labour Minister Michaela Marksova, Foreign Minister Lubomir Zaoralek and lower house chairman Jan Hamacek defended the posts of CSSD regular deputy heads, while MP Jan Birke and Prague Deputy Mayor Petr Dolinek became new deputy heads.
 - President Zeman vetoes a bill on new rules for Czech national parks. The Chamber of Deputies overrode his veto on April 4.
 - Babis releases results of a report on his incomes by the EY and PWC auditing firms that confirmed that he had the total income of 2.4 billion crowns in 1996-2005. He had his incomes checked in reaction to the criticism for having purchased one-crown bonds of the Agrofert concern that he owned until February.
18. - Cardinal Miloslav Vlk dies at the age of 84.
23. - Olomouc High Court rejects the appeal by U.S. citizen Kevin Dahlgren who was sentenced to life for four murders of his Czech relatives in Brno. In August, Dahlgren filed a petition for an appellate review.
24. - The Prague Municipal Court again decides that the Madonna of Veveri, a 14th-century Gothic panel painting that enjoys the status of national cultural heritage, belongs to the Catholic Church. The National Gallery challenged the previous verdict.
25. - Petr Gazdik defends the post of chairman of the Mayors and Independents (STAN) movement.
28. - Science Academy (AV) former head Jiri Drahos announces his candidacy for president.
31. - Black coal mining stops in the Paskov mine of the OKD company which is in insolvency since last year.
 - MP Jeronym Tejc (CSSD) announces that he will not run in the October general election over his discords with the current CSSD leadership. Tejc unsuccessfully ran for the party's first deputy chairman at its election congress on March 10. In November he announced he was leaving the CSSD.
4. - President Milos Zeman grants pardon to man suffering from cancer who was convicted of property crime and illegal arms possession.
 - Chamber of Deputies once again passes a government tax package raising tax reliefs of families for second and further children. Zeman signed the legislation on April 28.
5. - Prague 1 District Court imposes suspended sentences on three members of Ztohoven artistic group for having hoisted red boxer shorts instead of presidential flag at Prague Castle. The artists were also bound to pay 55,000 crowns for the castle's damaged roof and 8,400 crowns for removed flag.
6. - Foreign Minister Lubomir Zaoralek (CSSD) dismisses Jan Zavesicky as general director of Czech Centres.
7. - Czech diplomacy says it considers U.S. intervention in Syria as step aimed to prevent further chemical attacks on civilians, condemns use of chemical weapons as barbarous.
 - Lower house passes amendment tightening conditions of residence and employment of foreigners and curbing economic migration. The Senate eventually rejected the amendment, but the lower house passed it again and Zeman signed it into law on July 13.
10. - The government approves an increase in the health insurance contributions the state pays for selected groups including children, pensioners and the unemployed by 3.5 billion crowns in 2018, compared with the sum projected for 2017.
12. - Lower house approves government's amendment to the welfare system that raised parental benefits for parents of twins, triplets and other multiple births, and the tax relief for first child. The Senate passed the bill in early June, Zeman signed it on June 21.
 - The Supreme Court (NS) orders that lobbyist Marek Dalik be released from prison, where he was serving sentence for his unlawful steps in connection with the purchase of Pandur APCs by a previous government. The NS did so after discussing the petitions for an appellate review submitted by both Dalik and the State Attorney's Office.
13. - President Zeman dismisses Karel Boruvka as Czech ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.
19. - The High Court in Prague definitively upholds seven-year prison sentence for Petr Kusnierz, former director of Northwest Regional Operation Programme, for influencing subsidy projects.
21. - It is announced that Foreign Minister Zaoralek wants to turn to the European Court of Human Rights to challenge a British court's acquitting a British citizen who killed a Czech in 2016.
24. The government approves Colonel Lenka Smerdova's promotion to the rank of general, along with another three officers, as the first woman to achieve the rank. The promotion ceremony took place on May 8.
25. - A court acquits Jindrich Fruhauf, who was accused of pelting Zeman with eggs at a Prague rally in 2014. He was acquitted based on the lack of evidence.
28. - The annual Oil Guzzler mock-prize for an environment unfriendly step goes to Transport Minister Dan Tok (for ANO), the Green Pearl mock-prize goes for a statement unfriendly to the environment went to CSSD MP Roman Vana.

APRIL

MAY

4. - Deputy PM Babis (ANO) files a criminal complaint about audio recordings from his private meetings that appeared on the Internet.

5. - PM Sobotka (CSSD) withdraws his plan to hand in the government's resignation after finding out that President Zeman understands the step as the departure of the prime minister only. This interpretation would not solve the cause of the crisis, which were scandals of Babis, Sobotka said, and sent a proposal for Babis's dismissal as deputy PM and finance minister to Zeman.

- Simona Kratochvilova is put off duty as deputy education minister on suspicion of a misuse of the ministry's subsidies to sports. According to Seznam.cz, Kratochvilova repeatedly struck behind-the-scenes deals on the drafting on subsidy programmes with Czech Football Association chairman Miroslav Pelta.

9. - Education Minister Katerina Valachova (CSSD) suspends the granting of subsidies to sports organisations and associations.

11. - It is announced that life convict Jiri Kajinek, convicted for double contract murder, will be granted presidential pardon. Zeman signed it on May 21.

24. - Zeman dismisses Babis as finance minister, ANO MP Ivan Pilny replaces him in the post.

- Lower house approves the proposal to establish a commission to investigate a possible leak of information from police files in connection with an audio recording showing Babis in conversation with a journalist from a daily previously owned by Babis.

27. - Deputy PM Pavel Belobradek is re-elected Christian Democrat (KDU-CSL) chairman for another two years. The KDU-CSL congress also approves the plan of the party's election coalition with the Mayors and Independents (STAN).

29. - Former South Moravia Governor Jiri Zimola (CSSD) announces he will not run for the party in the October general election.

JUNE

5. - Interior Minister Milan Chovanec (CSSD) says the Czech Republic will accept no more migrants from Italy and Greece based on the EU quotas.

7. - The Supreme Court (NS) states that the Prague High Court's intervention in the corruption case of a group around former CSSD regional governor David Rath breached the law in favour of the suspects. Police wiretappings can be used as evidence in this case, the NS decided.

- The lower house passes a ban on fur animal farms in the Czech Republic. They have to terminate operation by the end of January 2019. The Senate passed the relevant bill on July 20.

8. - The lower house released MPs Josef Novotny (for CSSD) and Jaroslav Borka (KSCM) for prosecution over suspected machinations with the Northwest programme of EU subsidies.

- The Senate approves legislation boosting the indexation of pensions. Monthly pensions will go up by some 500 crowns as of 2018, compared with 400 crowns by which they would have risen under the old rules. The retirement age was set

at 65 years, but the cabinet will be empowered to shift the age limit. Zeman signed the bill on June 21.

- PM Sobotka announces separation from his wife.

14. - The government approves the Finance Ministry's draft 2018 state budget with a deficit of 50 billion crowns.

15. - PM Sobotka resigns as CSSD chairman. The party's leadership was taken over by his statutory deputy, Interior Minister Milan Chovanec, while Foreign Minister and another CSSD deputy chairman, Lubomir Zaoralek, replaced Sobotka as leader of the party's campaign ahead of the October general election.

19. - The CSSD's Prague branch turns down former PM Jiri Paroubek's request for readmission to the party.

21. - Katerina Valachova (CSSD) ends as education minister, is replaced by her deputy minister Stanislav Stech (for the CSSD). Zeman accepted Valachova's resignation on June 19.

27. - African swine fever appears in the Czech Republic.

28. - The lower house approves draft amendment to empower legal arms owners to intervene in defence of the country's security, if needed.

29. - Former Skoda Auto car maker head Vratislav Kulhanek officially announces his candidacy in the January 2018 direct presidential election. He is a member of the extra-parliamentary Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA).

JULY

12. - The lower house definitively turns down draft career order for teachers that was to make the job more attractive, and also the new heritage protection bill that was to make the care for cultural heritage more effective and transparent.

21. - Zeman proposes Karel Srp, long-standing chairman of the Jazz Section organisation, for a member of the Council of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (USTR), but the Senate eventually turned down the nomination.

24. - The government approves the Czech military's plan to purchase over 140 vehicles worth 9.2 billion crowns in the years to come.

25. - High Court in Prague decides that lobbyist Marek Dalik should serve five years in prison for a fraud during the negotiations about the purchase of Pandur APCs for the Czech military in the late 2000s. Dalik later left the prison based on an appellate review, but turned up there on November 6 based on a definitive court verdict.

- The Mayors and Independents (STAN) decides to run in October general election separately, reacting to the Christian Democrats' (KDU-CSL) withdrawal from a previously struck two-party coalition deal. Jan Farsky becomes STAN's election leader.

- The Constitutional Court (US) upholds state inspectors' power to enter households to check heating methods. It dismissed right-wing deputies' proposal that the relevant part of the air protection law be abolished.

31. - A general meeting of the AGPI company nods to the transfer of the pig farm situated next to the Roma Holocaust memorial in Lety, south Bohemia, to the state. The cabinet decided on the purchase on August 21; in October, it said the state would pay about 450 million crowns for it; the relevant contract was signed on November 23.

AUGUST

2. - Two Czechs are sentenced each to six years and three months in Turkey for cooperation with members of the Syrian Kurds' YPG paramilitary units, which Ankara considers a terrorist organisation.

- Rare 16th-century wooden church in Guty, neighbourhood of Trinec, north Moravia, burns down. Police accused three men of arson.

9. - The Czech Republic files a lawsuit with the European Court of Justice against the European arms directive, demanding its scrapping and a preliminary postponement of the effect of the directive EU countries are bound to incorporate in their legislation by mid-September 2018.

10. - Police send request to the Chamber of Deputies to release ANO MPs Babis and Faltýnek for criminal prosecution over suspected fraudulent drawing of an EU subsidy by Babis's Stork Nest company.

15. - A total of 31 entities apply for registration in October general election, seven more than in the previous election in 2013.

21. - The government decides on raising the monthly minimum wage in the country by 1,200 crowns (11 percentage points) to 12,200 crowns as of January 2018.

22. - Justice Minister Robert Pelikan (ANO) decides to strip Supreme State Attorney Pavel Zeman of his duty of confidentiality so that he can be questioned by a lower house commission investigating leaks of information from police files.

29. - MEP Petr Mach, head of the extra-parliamentary Free Citizens' Party, announces his departure from European Parliament as of the end of August. He was replaced by Jiri Payne in the EP.

SEPTEMBER

1. - PM Sobotka (CSSD) testifies as a witness in the case of OKD coal mining company's privatisation. He said he was sorry that the one who was to blame for the loss of the state majority in OKD in 1996 had not been brought before a court.

6. - The lower house releases Babis and Faltýnek (both ANO) for prosecution on suspicion of fraud in drawing EU subsidy for the Stork Nest company.

11. - The government coalition agrees to raise teachers' wages by 15 percent as of November, and the wages of other state administration employees by 10 percent, as demanded by trade unions.

12. - The lower house approves a recommendation by its commission investigating leaks from criminal files that suspected crimes of state attorneys be checked by an independent special department at the Supreme State Attorney's Office and that all law enforcement bodies enclose info on all their contacts with media in criminal files.

- A district court recognises Karl des Fours Walderode's claim for plots in north Bohemia that were confiscated base on the post war decrees of president Edvard Benes. The return of property in north Bohemia has been sought by Walderode's widow Johanna Kammerlander for 25 years now.

13. - The last regular Chamber of Deputies session ahead of the October general election ends.

22. - Ostrava Regional Court abolishes customs office's decision to impose a property freezing order to block the FAU-company's property worth 340 million crowns. The court said the customs authority had no reason for so massive property freezing.

25. - The government board agree on raising the budget of universities by three billion crowns next year, otherwise the schools threatened with protests.

- The government approves an increase in pensions, raising an average monthly pension by 475 crowns as of January 2018.

- The government approves 2018 state budget bill with a deficit of 50 billion crowns (and projecting the revenues at 1,31 billion and expenditures at 1,36 billion crowns).

26 - The probation and mediation service signs contract with the SuperCom firm, which won a tender for the supply of electronic tags for convicts' monitoring.

29. - A state attorney obtained the police's decision to launch prosecution in the Stork Nest case involving a suspicious subsidy drawn by a firm of ANO deputy Babis.

OCTOBER

4. - European Commission says it decided to sue the Czech Republic and Luxembourg for failing to meet their duties regarding the rule of free movement of workforce across the EU.

9. - Police level accusations against ANO chairman Babis and deputy chairman Faltýnek over suspicious drawing of an EU subsidy by Stork Nest company. The police later said a total of 11 people were accused in this case.

11. - The whole government coalition rejects Zeman's pro-Russian stances presented in his speech in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on October 10. PM Sobotka said they were at sharp variance with Prague's official foreign policy. Zeman said in his speech that the Russian annexation of Crimea was a fait accompli, and advised Ukraine to agree with Moscow on compensation. He rejected the West's anti-Russia sanctions as ineffective.

12. - Babis dismisses the Slovak Constitutional Court's (US) ruling that cancels the decision by the supreme and regional courts that he figures as a former communist secret police StB agent in StB files unrightfully. The US complied with a complaint lodged by the Memory of the Nation Institute (UPN), and returned the case to the Regional Court in Bratislava.

17. - The Prague Municipal Court decides that the late Czech artist Zdenek Miler's granddaughter must no longer grant copyright for the production of items with the Little Mole motif, as the contract on the basis of which the copyright were granted was void. The court decision was not definitive.

18. - About 7000 general practitioners go on one-day strike; Health Minister Miloslav Ludvik (CSSD) said the ministry has no additional money to spend on covering medical services.

20. - Charles University's (UK) Academic Senate re-elects Tomas Zima UK rector for another period starting in February 2018.

21. - Babis's ANO movement wins the general election far ahead of the second Civic Democrats (ODS), third Pirates and fourth Freedom and Democracy Movement (SPD). The

Social Democrats (CSSD) suffer a debacle, overtaken by the Communists (KSCM). The remaining parties in the new Chamber of Deputies are the Christian Democrats (KDU-CSL), TOP 09 and the Mayors and Independents (STAN). A record number of nine parties entered the Chamber.

- Matej Stropnický announces his resignation as Green Party chairman.

24. - The counter-intelligence service BIS writes in its annual report for 2016 that the role and intensity of Russian secret services increased with a focus on sensitive information from politics. China's espionage, too, intensified operations aimed against Czech interests and security, BIS wrote.

25. - Nuclear physicist Vojtech Petracek is elected new rector of the Czech Technical University (CVUT) in Prague.

27. - Long-standing KSCM chairman Vojtech Filip announces that he will not seek re-election at the party's extraordinary national congress in April.

28. - President Zeman bestows the Order of the White Lion on six soldiers and foreign politicians. The top Czech state award went to Vienna Mayor Michael Hupf, Slovenian President Borut Pahor and former German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder for their outstanding contributions to the Czech Republic. Three Czech and Czechoslovak soldiers were presented with the Order of the White Lion of the military category.

31. - President Zeman assigns election-winning ANO leader Babis to start negotiations on forming a cabinet.

- Central Bohemia Region Governor Jaroslava Pokorna Jermanova (ANO) announces her decision to give up her mandate of a lower house deputy.

NOVEMBER

5. - Former prime minister and former ODS chairman Mirek Topolánek says he will be running for president in the January direct election.

6. - Liberec Region Governor Martin Puta says he decided to give up his mandate of a lower house deputy. He did so on November 24.

19. - Supreme Administrative Court (NSS) says a check uncovered the incorrect counting of preferential votes in the October general election in Central Bohemia, due to which Petr Bendl became an ODS deputy though the post should have gone to Martin Kupka. The NSS ordered that Kupka replace Bendl on the list of ODS deputies.

21. - The police send a new request to the lower house for the release of Babis and Faltýnek for prosecution. After the two were re-elected deputies in October, their prosecution was interrupted.

- Czech Foreign Minister Lubomír Zaorálek sharply rejects an article that appeared on the web of the Russian army's Zvezda TV, which said Czechoslovakia should be grateful for the Soviet-led military intervention of August 21, 1968. President Zeman protested against the article a day later, during his visit to Russia where he met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Sochi.

22. - The Chamber of Deputies elects Radek Vondráček (ANO) its chairman.

- A court finds Jana Necasová (formerly Nagyová) and military intelligence (VZ) officers Milan Kovanda, Jan Pohunek and Ondřej Paleník guilty of misuse of the VZ,

imposes a two-year suspended sentence on Necasová plus a five-year ban from state administration. The officers, too, received suspended sentences of 20, 20 and 18 months, respectively. The verdict is not valid yet.

24. - The Interior Ministry approves the presidential candidacies of all nine bidders whose successful registration was expected. President Zeman seeks re-election, his most serious rival candidates being former Science Academy chairman Jiří Drahoš, entrepreneur and lyricist Michal Horáček and former PM Mirek Topolánek.

- The Chamber of Deputies elects Vojtěch Píkal (Pirates), Tomio Okamura (SPD), Vojtěch Filip (KSCM) and Jan Hamáček (CSSD) its deputy chairmen. ODS head Petr Fiala was elected as the fifth deputy chairman on November 28.

- The High Court in Prague confirms the admissibility of the extradition of Russian Yevgeni Nikulin to the USA, where he is wanted on suspicion of hacking. Nikulin's extradition to Moscow, which also applied for it, is also admissible.

26. - TOP 09 elects MEP Jiří Pospíšil, 42, its new chairman replacing Miroslav Kalousek, who did not seek re-election.

29. - Bohuslav Sobotka's (CSSD) government approves its resignation. A new cabinet formed by ANO leader Babis is to be appointed on December 13.

- President Zeman says Dan Tok (for ANO) will keep the post of transport minister in the new government. Babis chose former deputy interior minister Lubomír Metnár for interior minister.

- Economist and former MP and minister Tomáš Ježek, one of the fathers of the Czech "voucher privatisation" project, dies aged 77.

30. - Babis confirms that Deputy Finance Minister Alena Schillerová will be new finance minister, Siemens company's manager Tomáš Huner will be industry and trade minister and Central Bohemian councillor Jaroslava Němcová will be labour and social affairs minister.

DECEMBER

2. - A concrete footbridge near Troja chateau in Prague collapses, part of it falls into the Vltava River. Four people were injured.

3. - Babis confirms on Czech TV that Robert Plaga (ANO), deputy education minister for universities, will be education minister in his cabinet.



NEWS SUMMARY 2017 (CULTURE)

注:本報告は、チェコ政府公表資料、新聞、インターネット等報道資料をとりまとめたもの。
詳細情報については、それぞれの情報ソースを参照願いたい。

CULTURE

CFE REVIEW OF MAJOR CULTURAL EVENTS IN THE CR IN 2017 – 4.12.

JANUARY

- Jiri Belohlavek, the chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic (CF), signed a contract with the orchestra for another six years at the beginning of January. However, he died after a long serious illness five months later.
- Harpsichordist Zuzana Ruzickova, horn player Katerina Javurkova and British orchestra conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner became the first holders of the new Classic Prague Awards in January.

FEBRUARY

- Commentators Vladimir Kucera and Petr Honzejek won the 2016 Ferdinand Peroutka Award for journalism in February.
- Czech film "Masaryk," which depicts one period in the life of diplomat and politician Jan Masaryk (1886-1948), son of the Czechoslovak first president Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, had world premiere at the International Film Festival in Berlin on February 17. However, the critical response was not very positive.

MARCH

- Masaryk also won 12 Czech Lion film awards on March 4, though it was released in Czech cinemas all over the country on March 9 only.
- A new monument of former Dutch foreign minister Max van der Stoep (1924-2011) who supported Czechoslovak dissidents was unveiled in Prague in March.
- Nowhere to Hide, Swedish-Norwegian film about the IS-controlled part of Iraq, won the 19th One World International Documentary Film Festival held in Prague on March 6-15, offering 121 documentaries from some 70 countries. Afterwards, the festival took place in another 33 towns in the Czech Republic.
- The Slav Epic series of paintings by Czech Art-Nouveau artist Alfons Mucha (1860-1939) was displayed at an exhibition in Tokyo held from March 8 to June 5, which was visited by more than 662,000 people.
- World-famous Chinese conceptual artist Ai Weiwei presented his artifact The Law of the Journey, a giant 70-metre-long inflatable boat with 258 above life-size figures of refugees, created exclusively for the National Gallery (NG) in Prague, on its premises in the Veletržní Palace in March.
- The 24th Febiofest international film festival was held in Prague on March 23-31 and then its echoes continued in other Czech towns. The winner of the festival's New Europe competition of young, starting film-makers was Icelandic-Danish drama Heartstone by Gudmundur Arnar Gudmundsson.

APRIL

- Czech writer with Bulgarian roots, Bianca Belova, received this year's European Union Prize for Literature for her novel Jezero (The Lake) in April. Belova's novel also won the

Czech Magnesia Litera main award for the book of the year two months earlier.

- The 24th Days of European Film festival took place in Prague on April 6-13. The event continued in Brno, the second largest Czech town, from April 14 to 17 and its echoes were in another six Czech towns.

MAY

The 23rd Book World Prague 2017 international book fair and literary festival was held at the Exhibition Grounds on May 11-14, presenting writers and literary experts from nine UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature as its main topics was Genius Loci in literature this year.

- The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra led by Daniel Barenboim opened the 72nd Prague Spring international music festival with Bedrich Smetana's My Country symphonic cycle on May 12. The event offered more than 40 concerts until June 2.
- The Czech National Heritage Institute (NPU) won the European Grand Prix for heritage conservation, presented by the Europa Nostra association, for the restoration of the Kuks Baroque complex in east Bohemia.
- The Icelandic film Heartstone directed by Gudmundur Arnar Gudmundsson won the Europe prize for the best European debut and the French film Heartstrings directed by Michel Boujenah became the most successful film receiving both the audience award for the best feature film and the award of the international children's jury at the 57th International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Zlín, south Moravia, held from May 26 till June 3. It presented 326 films from a record number of 62 countries.
- The 19th Khamoro ("Little Sun" in the Roma language) international festival of Roma culture was organised in Prague for one week at the end of May and the beginning of June.
- The painting Twilight in Rainforest (1929) by Czech Surrealist artist Toyen or Marie Cerminova (1902-1980) was sold for 30 million crowns at a Prague art auction on May 28, which was this year's record high auction prize, the fourth highest ever paid for a painting in the Czech Republic and the highest price paid in the country for Toyen's work.

JUNE

- Popular signer Karel Gott returned to a big stage after a serious illness on June 1. A week later, he opened an exhibition highlighting his life and the 60-year-long music career on a boat in Prague, which ran through the end of September.
- Little Crusader by Czech film director Vaclav Kadrnka, made in Czech, Slovak and Italian co-production, won the Crystal Globe, the main award for the best film at the 52nd Karlovy Vary International Film Festival held on June 30-July 8. The event offered some 170 films and welcomed a number of renowned foreign guests, such as U.S. actors Uma Thurman, Casey Affleck and Jeremy Renner and British director Ken Loach.

JULY

- Some 130 Czech and foreign bands, singers and musicians performed during four days of the annual Colours of Ostrava music festival staged in this north Moravian industrial town in July.
- The 43rd Summer Film School (LFS) festival, held in Uherske Hradiste, south Moravia, from July 28 to August 6, focused mainly on Swedish cinematography and offered more than 200 films.

AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER

- In September, the Czech Film and Television Academy (CFTA) selected the film Ice Mother (Baba z ledu, 2017) directed and written by Bohdan Slama, as the Czech candidate for Oscar nominations in the category of the Best Foreign Language Film.
- On September 27, the Prague Municipal Court upheld suspended sentences imposed on members of the Ztohoven guerilla artistic group for hanging out red boxer shorts at Prague Castle, the presidential seat, in 2015 in protest against President Milos Zeman.
- Czech documentary Cervena mapping the fate of Czech-born opera singer Sona Cervena won the Grand Prix at the 54th Golden Prague international television festival held on September 27-30, presenting 70 programmes focused on music, theatre and dance.

OCTOBER

- American of Russian origin Semyon Bychkov became a new chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (CF) in October, signing a five-year contract with CF director David Marecek.
- Canadian writer and activist Margaret Atwood, 77, received the international Franz Kafka Prize bearing the name of this Prague-born German Jewish writer at the Old Town Hall in Prague on October 17.
- Czech dissident writer Jachym Topol and dancer and choreographer Petr Zuzka were among the laureates of the state awards for achievements in various art disciplines that Culture Minister Daniel Herman presented on October 22.
- The Wall by Russian film-maker Dmitry Bogolubov, showing the cult of communist leader Joseph Stalin in contemporary Russia, was awarded as the 2017 best world documentary at the 21st Ji.hlava international documentary film festival in Jihlava, south Moravia, the largest event of its kind in Central and Eastern Europe, held on October 24-29.
- The 19th Designblok international design festival took place at Prague's Exhibition Grounds, featuring works of a record number of 304 designers, brands, studios and art schools, at the end of October.

NOVEMBER

- Dissident singer Marta Kubisova, signatory of the Charter 77 human rights manifesto who was persecuted under the communist regime, ended her music career symbolically at a concert in her native town of Ceske Budejovice, south Bohemia, on her 75th birthday on November 1.
- A picture by Slovak photographer Martin Bandzak called "Hezbollah, Celebration of Victory over Israel" won the

Press Photo competition, becoming the Photography of the Year 2017, at a ceremony on November 21.

- The Prague Writers' Festival, held on November 10-15, hosted Robert Menasse, laureate of the German Book Award, Syrian poet Adonis, Turkish scriptwriter, camerawoman and writer Ayse Kulin and American writer and journalist Wesley Lowery.
- Pop music singer Karel Gott, 78, won the Czech Nightingale pop music poll in the best male singer category for the 42nd time in his career on November 25. The best female singer was Lucie Bila and the best band was Kabat as in the past years.
- Multimedia artist Martin Kohout, 33, became this year's winner of the Jindrich Chaluppecky Award for young Czech artists that was presented in Brno on November 26.

DECEMBER

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OTHER

- In other music genres, but classical music, the Prague audiences applauded, for instance, British pop singer Robbie Williams at a single concert with British band Erasure, as well as Australian singer Nick Cave, British singer and guitarist Chris Rea, the legendary British rock bands Queen, Depeche Mode and Deep Purple, American bands Green Day and Linkin Park and Guns N'Roses. British singer and composer Sting became the main star of the second Metronome music festival in Prague. Besides, Italian film music composer Ennio Morricone performed in the Czech Republic again this year when he sold out the giant O2 arena in Prague in February.

