

Historic places of worship: basic information by country

Country	Czech Republic
Names and email address/web site for people who have completed form	Petr Wollner wollner@apha.cz www.apha.cz ,
The current situation	
Brief country context to explain current situation	<p>The Czech Republic is a central European country, bordering with Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Poland, in the years 1918-1992 western part of Czechoslovakia, multicultural country of Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians and some other minorities.</p> <p>The first Slavic state in the region was Great Moravia in 9th century, followed by the Kingdom of Bohemia, lasting as an independent kingdom till 16th century. Since 1526 till 1918 part of the Austrian Empire.</p> <p>The Christianity was introduced both from German and Byzantine areas in 9th century. Initially the region was subordinated to the bishop of Regensburg, the Bishopric of Prague was established in 972.</p> <p>The most important development of the Church organisation came in 14th century during the rule of Charles IV., the King of Bohemia and the Emperor of the medieval Roman Empire.</p> <p>The Hussite movement and the Reformation in 15th and 16th centuries caused the division of the Church and the whole society like in other European countries, culminating in the Thirty Years War 1619-1648. The catholicization of the whole country followed in 17th and 18th centuries, bringing great development of the Roman Catholic Church, baroque architecture and arts. Most of the churches in rural areas and great number of the town churches were built or rebuilt in this period.</p> <p>The liberal ideas of 19th century, and especially the end of the Austrian Empire In 1918 and the independent Czechoslovakia created new division in the church, establishing the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, with many Roman Catholics becoming its members or leaving the Church for good and all.</p> <p>Very hard times came to the Churches and Christians of the country during the Communist period. Many priests were arrested, some killed, most of the Church property confiscated, lot of it destroyed. (churches and most parish houses were not officially taken over by the state, only left without any income for maintenance)</p> <p>Since the Velvet Revolution in 1989 restitutions of some basic church property, especially some monasteries, schools and hospitals took place. Basic needs of the Churches (especially salaries of the priests) are still covered by the State since Communist era when Communists required complete control over the Church. However, the most of the property, especially land, forests and some other buildings with the potential to create income, stolen by the Communist regime was not restituted yet, and also the essential law, changing the status of the Churches, giving more independence, and also more responsibility, was not accepted yet, despite the years of discussions with all governments.</p> <p>According to the census from 2001 the Czech Republic had 10,2 mil. inhabitants, 26% of the population declared as Roman Catholics, 5% other Churches, especially Czech Protestant Church, Czech Hussite Church, Orthodox Church and 18 other registered denominations, but only about 5% of the whole population attending Sunday services.</p> <p>Very complicated was the situation with the Jewish community</p>

	<p>in the Czech Republic. In the thirties of the last century there were about 400, 000 Jews living in the whole Czechoslovakia, including those who escaped from Germany after 1933. The holocaust meant for Czech Jews total disaster. Only 30,000 of them returned to start the new community life in 1945. Many of them moved later to Israel in the first period of communist regime. In the census in 2001 only 1527 people identified themselves as members of the Czech Jewish community, with few synagogues in function, and up to two hundred former synagogues or other buildings restituted by the Jewish Communities Federation.</p> <p>(www.fzo.cz)</p>
Places of worship in use	
Number of places of worship by religion/ denomination and religious attendance.	<p>Roman Catholic Church 7133 churches, approx. 3800 listed Czech Protestant Church estimated 350 churches Czech Hussite Church estimated 450 churches other denominations – up to 100 churches, some listed, mostly using prayer houses Jewish Federation – 7 synagogues for worship, 25 former synagogues used by different Christian Churches</p>
Who is responsible for the management of buildings?	<p>Responsibility for the management is 100% the owner. Most of the churches are owned by the Churches, up to 3% of the buildings are owned by the local municipalities or state.</p>
Who finances the maintenance? (State funding, Church tax...)	<p>According to the statistics of the Archdiocese of Prague in the past 10 years 35 to 40% of the funding is generated by the Church, 20-25 % is the state support mostly via the Ministry of Culture, 25-30 % support of the municipal budgets. Since 2007 some of the EU programmes also offer church restoration works funding, creating 10-15 % of the annual budget.</p>
What support organisations exist (to help a church or other organisation when there is a problem?)	<p>Each Church, and each Diocese within the Roman Catholic Church has its own Building and Restoration Department or similar unit to organize the maintenance of the buildings. Most of the buildings are listed, so any repairs or building activities in these buildings (churches) must get approval of the Czech Heritage Institute as a professional advisor and Heritage Department of the Regional Authority. These authorities also offer some amount of professional assistance and support in some types of the state and municipal funding.</p> <p>Some NGO's exist to support restoration of historical monuments but with very low impact to help the problem</p>
Places of worship not used for worship	
Number of places of worship that have closed for worship in recent years	<p>During the time of the communist regime 1948 – 1989 several hundred churches were demolished or abandoned without any maintenance. The most critical situation was in the border area originally inhabited by the Czech Germans till 1945, when 3 million of them were forced to leave Czechoslovakia, and also in the areas of military or coal mining activities. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989 most of the churches stolen by communist state were restituted, the slow process of renovation started. It was usually easier and quicker in the cities or villages with existing religious communities. However, there is estimated several hundred, maybe up to thousand churches with very low use. Most of them became the subject of interest to robbers, often organised by international gangs. Tens of thousands of valuable paintings, sculptures and other pieces of art disappeared. As a result most of the churches are now closed for public most of the time, electronically guarded, opened only for the religious services.</p> <p>There are still few hundred churches with no use and minimum maintenance, especially in the western and northern part of the country. In some cases (maximum up to 50 cases) those churches were rented or even sold for symbolic price to local municipalities, to use for cultural purposes as concerts or exhibitions, with exceptional church service once or twice</p>

	<p>a year. Transformation to completely different use is not accepted as a sensible programme.</p> <p>There are some cases of churches closed at the end of 18th century as a result of the Church reforms and abolition of some monasteries by the Emperor Joseph II., transformed later to all sorts of alternative use. Even now it creates discussions about the form of alternative use of these spaces, criticising examples of commercial, non cultural use.</p> <p>Several hundred synagogues were left without use after Holocaust, many of them now used as museums, archives, libraries and all sorts of other purposes. http://synagogy.euweb.cz/</p>
What organisations are responsible for the management of these places of worship	Owners of the place, in most cases municipalities
Who finances the above organisations?	Municipal budgets, possible support by the State (Ministry of Culture) in cases of listed buildings
General information	
Number of buildings of architectural or historical importance.	Approx. 4000 churches are listed, 52 churches and monastery complexes including churches are on the list of National Cultural Monuments (the highest level of listed buildings). Four churches and four town centres including the churches are on the list of UNESCO.
Rural/urban issues	Rural areas, especially in western and northern part of the country, became extremely atheistic, we call it a new missionary land. However, sometimes there is high interest of the local municipalities to take over the care of the church as a dominant building and the only interesting architecture of the village.
Tax situation	No church tax in the Czech Republic,
Have any surveys been compiled recently? (Please attach weblink or email document).	Surveys of the churches as well as other historical monuments take place permanently especially in the connection with major restoration works. There is a specialised bulletin on historical surveys published by the Czech National Heritage, unfortunately only in Czech language. http://www.pruzkumypamatek.cz ,
Which subjects are of special concern?	
Which are the areas that could be helped by working together at a European level	Inspiration and exchange of experiences in the field of the care of the churches and other places of worship, especially the systems of funding and managing the churches, the ways of alternative use of those churches which are not used for worship.
Predicted future national situation/direction it is heading	Hopefully the "Church law" will be confirmed within the next few years, setting conditions for self financing the Churches including the ways how to finance the care of the churches, especially the listed ones. More churches rented or given to the municipalities for alternative cultural use. A dream of the Christian – a new evangelisation of the country, bringing a new life to the churches within the whole land.
Any other comments	