



Parliament of the Czech Republic

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES



The Czech Republic is a sovereign, unitary, and democratic state governed by the rule of law, founded on respect for the rights and freedoms of man and of citizens. (Article 1 of the Constitution of the Czech Republic)

The head of state is the President of the Czech Republic, who, together with the Government, represents the executive branch of power. Legislative power is exercised by a bicameral Parliament, composed of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Czech Republic is a member of both the European Union and of NATO.

The Parliament and the Czech Constitutional Order

The Constitutional order of the Czech Republic is based on a parliamentary form of government in form of "rationalized parliamentarism". The Parliament itself may be defined as a body composed of representatives of the people, elected by universal suffrage in elections and empowered with the legislative power to enact laws as well as to amend the Constitution. As mentioned above, the Czech Parliament is composed of two chambers, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Chamber of Deputies (also called the first chamber or lower chamber), exercises certain powers which the Senate does not have. For example, the Government is accountable solely to the Chamber

The Czech Republic – quick facts

Population:	10,3 mil.
Territory:	78 866 km ²
Capital:	Prague
Number of administrative regions:	14

Prague Castle – the Vladislav hall – the place of inauguration of the President of the Czech Republic



of Deputies, i.e. only the Chamber of Deputies votes on confidence or non-confidence in the Government.

Only members of the Chamber of Deputies (called Deputies) have the power to ask members of the Government questions. Only the Chamber of Deputies approves the state budget for each year. Moreover, the Chamber of Deputies may even override a Senate veto of a bill or a proposed Senate amendment to a bill by an absolute majority of Deputies. In contrast, the Senate exercises important powers when the Chamber of Deputies has been dissolved. In such a case, the Senate may adopt so-called "legal measures" regarding matters which may not be postponed and which would otherwise necessitate the adoption of a law. The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate have almost equal powers when it comes to the approval of amendments to the

- 1 – The Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
- 2 – The Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
- 3 – The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic
- 4 – Prague Castle, the seat of the President of the Czech Republic



Constitution and when it comes to expressing consent with the ratification of international treaties. The President takes the oath at the joint meeting of both chambers.

The development of the Czech Constitutional Order

- 1848 – Declaration of the first constitution on the territory of what is today the Czech Republic
- 1861 – First elections are held to the Provincial diets according to a system of curias
- 1907 – Adoption of universal and equal suffrage for elections to the Parliament
- 1918 – Independence of the first Czechoslovak Republic
- 1920 – Approval of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic
- 1939 – Establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (occupation by the German military)
- 1948 – The Communist Party comes to power in Czechoslovakia
- 1968 – The Prague spring (and the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw-pact troops)
- 1989 – The Velvet revolution (the end of the Communist regime)
- 1993 – Establishment of the Czech Republic

The Mandate of a Deputy

The rights and obligations of a member of the Chamber of Deputies are referred to as the Mandate of a Deputy. The Mandate of a Deputy may be characterized as a free mandate, by which it is meant that a Deputy is bound only by his own conscience when voting on matters in the Chamber of Deputies. The Mandate of a Deputy exists from the moment a Deputy is elected to

the Chamber of Deputies and ends at the end of the electoral term or upon the resignation or death of the Deputy. Each Deputy is required by the Constitution to take this oath of office: *"I hereby swear my allegiance to the Czech Republic. I swear to uphold its Constitution and its laws. I swear on my honour that I shall discharge my office in the interest of all the people, and to the best of my belief."*

The Mandate of a Deputy includes certain immunities which are guaranteed to all Members of Parliament. These immunities exclude Members of Parliament from the general regime of sanctions applicable to individuals, in order to ensure that the legislative body is entirely independent in the decisions that it takes. The Constitution distinguishes two forms of immunities granted to Deputies. The first form of immunity applies to speeches and voting in the Parliament. No Member of Parliament may be criminally liable for any speech made in the Parliament. A Deputy is only liable in disciplinary proceedings held before the Chamber of Deputies for such speeches. The second form of immunity applies more generally and is procedural in nature. A Deputy may not be charged with a crime without the consent of the Chamber of Deputies.



Meeting hall of the Thun Palace – the plenary meeting room of the Chamber of Deputies today

The Parliament of the Czech Republic

	The Chamber of Deputies	The Senate
Number of Members	200	81
Term of office	4 years	6 years
Electoral system	Proportional representation (d'Hondt method)	Majoritarian with two rounds of elections
Number of electoral districts	14	81
Who may stand for election	A citizen aged 21 years of age or older	A citizen aged 40 years of age or older

The Constitutional Order of the Czech Republic

