



**EMBASSY OF SOUTH AFRICA
RUSKA 65, 100 00 PRAGUE 10
NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2016 (No.12)**



WORD BY THE AMBASSADOR



*Christmas tree,
Old Town Square,
Prague
December 2016*

We have come to the end of another year. As it turned out, 2016 was a rather tumultuous year in the international arena. There were so many momentous happenings to absorb that one sometimes felt buffeted by storm winds. Perhaps history will one day judge it as the year that defined the beginning of a starkly new direction. But time will tell.

For now, let me focus on the much smaller environment of the South Africa Embassy in Prague where it has been a quietly productive year. Altogether, we organised around 25 events in the course of the year. I travelled to several Czech Regions to meet with political and civic leaders, academicians and business people, encountering delightful and interesting people everywhere.

Now, everyone is preparing for Christmas. The city is bedecked in festive lights and the traditional Christmas tree on Old Town Square is delighting tourists and Praguers alike. Festive meals are being planned for family get-togethers.

It remains for me to thank the Embassy staff for all their hard work during the year and to wish them and their families as well as all Embassy friends and South African compatriots in the Czech Republic a very happy festive period and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

EMBASSY NEWS

Christmas Lunch – Farewell to Ms Radebe-Mothibe

Ambassador hosted the traditional Christmas lunch for the Embassy staff at the Official Residence on 13 December 2016. Staff members contributed typical Christmas dishes and other delicacies. The atmosphere at the lunch was warm and cheerful.



The Ambassador welcomes the staff at the Residence

The Christmas lunch also served as a farewell to Ms Puleng Radebe-Mothibe, who terminated her term of duty in Prague.

*****We wish her much success in her further career.*****



Ambassador Verwey and Ms Radebe-Mothibe



Ms Hlávková, Rubešová, Procházková & Mahmoud



Mr Ncongwane, Ms Růžičková & Mr Wood



Mr Stifter, Mr Walters and Ms Herclová



Ms Haklová & Ms Radebe-Mothibe



Ms Jelínek, Ms Hosking and Ms Van Belkum

Glass of wine with President of Parliament



POSLANECKÁ SNĚMOVNA
PARLAMENTU ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY

The President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Mr Jan Hamáček invited the Diplomatic Corps for a glass of wine on 20 December 2016.



Annual Meeting with Cardinal Duka

On 7 December 2016 the Ambassador and other members of the Diplomatic Corps attended the annual Christmas reception hosted by the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Dominik Duka.



Visit to České Budějovice

The Ambassador attended the evaluation meeting and a working brunch which was organized by the GEOMED institution at the České Budějovice Airport on 9 December 2016. Present also were dignitaries and business people from České Budějovice as well as the Chinese Centre in the city. The Embassy has close links with South Bohemia.



*Dr Petr Petr,
Ambassador
Verwey and
Mr Ladislav Ondřích,
Director of
ČB Airport*

Visit to Brno

On 15 December 2016 the Ambassador attended the preview of the historic drama about former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia Jan Masaryk (1940-1948). The screening took place in Brno at the joint initiative and invitation of the Czech and Slovak Foreign Ministers, Mr Lubomír Zaorálek and Mr Miroslav Lajčák respectively. The event was attended by members of the Diplomatic Corps of both capitals.



Together with some other members of the Corps, Ambassador also went on a guided tour of Villa Tugendhat in Brno. The villa, which is a monument of functionalist architecture, has received the prestigious UNESCO designation.



Ambassador Verwey and other Ambassadors at Villa Tugendhat, Brno, 16 December 2016

Architect Kate Otten in Prague

Ms Hosking and Ms Herclová attended a lecture *Negotiating Landscapes* by well-known South African architect Ms Kate Otten in Kino Světozor in Prague on 1 December 2016. The lecture was organized by the Civic Association Kruh <http://www.kruh.info>.

Around 300 people, including architecture students and architects, construction engineers and humanities students were present. They were captivated by Ms Otten's interactive presentation on the contemporary architectural landscape in South Africa.



Ms Hosking and architect Kate Otten

For more details about Kate Otten and her architecture, please see <http://www.kateottenarchitects.com/>

Diplomatic events

The Ambassador attended a Christmas reception hosted by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom; a diplomatic dinner hosted by the Ambassador of Turkey; a lunch hosted by the Ambassador of Switzerland; a farewell lunch for Israeli Ambassador hosted by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom; Lucia celebration hosted by the Ambassador of Sweden; and a farewell reception hosted by the Ambassador of Israel; a concert of Celyabinsk Chamber Choir hosted by the Folklore Association of the Czech Republic; Advent Concert of Brass Band organized by the Mayor of Prague 6; and a screening of the documentary *Foreign Affairs* followed by a debate under the auspices of the Ambassador of Luxembourg.

STAFF NEWS/SA CITIZENS

Arrival of Ms Madiba

Ms Dipuo Madiba and her husband Mr Sello Mahlangu arrived in Prague on 21 December 2016. She replaced Ms Radebe-Mothibe in the post of Third Secretary.



We wish our new colleague an enjoyable stay in Prague and much success and happiness at her job.

Africa-Zambia Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) in Pretoria on 07 December 2016.



Ministers Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane and Mr Harry Kalaba during the South Africa - Zambia Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC), Pretoria, 7 December 2016.

Picture: Jacoline Schoonees

SOUTH AFRICAN NEWS

Zambian President visited RSA

Zambian President Edgar Lungu paid a State Visit to the RSA from 07-09 December 2016.



President Zuma welcomes President Lungu at the Union Buildings. Photo: Elmond Jiyane/GCIS

South Africa and Zambia's economic relationship continues to grow; over 120 South African companies are doing business in Zambia. The two Presidents addressed a Business Forum attended by more than 150 businessmen from both countries.



President Jacob Zuma with the President of the Republic of Zambia Edgar Lungu during the press conference, Union Buildings. Picture: The Presidency

Ahead of the State Visit, International Relations and Cooperation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane and her Zambian counterpart, Minister Harry Kalaba, co-chaired the inaugural session of the South

Day of Reconciliation

On 16 December 2016, South Africa celebrated the *Day of Reconciliation*. It was introduced in 1994 as a way to heal the rift between the people of South Africa and bring harmony to a nation still suffering from decades of injustice.

World AIDS Day

South Africa commemorated World AIDS Day on 1 December 2016 to unite in the fight against HIV, show support for people living with HIV and remember those who have died of the condition.



Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa addressing the 2016 World AIDS Day Commemoration at Sinabala Stadium in Daveyton, Gauteng

CZECH NEWS

PM Sobotka visited Poland

Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka met his Polish counterpart Beata Szydlo in Wisla, Poland on 12 December 2016 to discuss cooperation in various spheres, especially in traffic infrastructure. A team of Czechs and Poles will jointly work on a project to make a section of the Oder River navigable

between Ostrava, North Moravia, and Kozle, Poland.



Joint press conference of PM Bohuslav Sobotka and Beata Szydlo, Wisla, Poland, 12 December 2016. Picture: The Government

President Zeman visited Portugal

President Miloš Zeman paid a State Visit to Portugal on 14 December 2016. He met his Portuguese counterpart Marcelo de Sousa, visited the parliament and opened an exhibition on King of Bohemia and Roman Emperor Charles IV.



Czech President Miloš Zeman and Portuguese President Marcelo de Sousa, Lisboa, 14 December 2016. Picture: Presidency of the Portuguese Republic

President Protocol's chief resigned

Mr Jindřich Forejt, head of the Czech Presidential Office Protocol Department, resigned from his post for personal and health reasons. He will be replaced by Miroslav Sklenář.



Guitarist Radim Hladík died



Famous Czech rock guitarist Radim Hladík died from pulmonary fibrosis aged 69 on 4 December 2016. Radim Hladík was member of The Matadors and then founder and leader of the group Blue Effect.

Adam Ondra climbed El Capitan in Yosemite



Adam Ondra (23), a world champion Czech climber, achieved the second free ascent of Yosemite's hardest big-wall free climb, the Dawn Wall, in the record time of eight days from 14-21 November 2016.



Adam Ondra and El Capitan. Picture: Pavel Blažek

Czech puppeteering added to UNESCO cultural heritage list

Czech and Slovak puppetry was added to the UNESCO world intangible cultural heritage list in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 2 December 2016. The Czech Republic was already represented on the list by the Slovácko verbuňk dance, Hlinecko region masopust (carnival) processions and masks and the South Moravian Ride of the Kings tradition.



Vojtěch Hlásný in South Africa

Traveller Vojtěch Hlásný is currently in South Africa following the footsteps of Czech explorer and ethnographer Dr Emil Holub (1847-1902). Details about his journey will be given after his return to the Czech Republic.



For more information about the activities of the South African Embassy in Prague please visit our website: <http://www.saprague.cz>