



**EMBASSY OF SOUTH AFRICA
RUSKA 65, 100 00 PRAGUE 10
NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2017 (No.1)**



WORD BY THE AMBASSADOR



*Ms Rubešová
clearing snow
at the Embassy*

The year 2017 started off in Arctic conditions over most of Europe, including the Czech Republic when a cold front brought heavy snowfall and temperatures below 10 degrees C. Everyone wrapped up warmly and walked with great care to avoid slipping on icy pavements. We had been lulled into kind of false complacency because of the relatively mild winters over the past few years but were sharply reminded that this is actually normal winter weather for Prague.

Workwise, the year 2017 began at its usual brisk pace with a number of traditional New Year's receptions for the Diplomatic Corps hosted by Government leaders who used the occasion to set out their agenda for the year.

The Embassy programme started with a tourism promotional event co-organised with SAA representative, Mr Petr Gol. Sadly, Petr is leaving his current position to embark on a new career path. We thank him most sincerely for the great cooperation over the past few years and wish him well for the future.

I had the privilege of attending a ceremony in the Great Hall at Charles University commemorating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Czech-German Declaration in 1997. It was a reminder how two countries could overcome the trauma of past history and move forward to build close and cooperative relations for mutual benefit.

EMBASSY NEWS

Joint Embassy – SAA event

About twenty representatives of travel agencies and tour operators attended an event jointly hosted by the Embassy and South African Airways (SAA) at the Official Residence on 19 January 2017.



Outgoing SAA representative Petr Gol gave a presentation on the airline and traveller/photographer Martin Šil gave feedback on his November scientific expedition to the Drakensberg to measure the height of the Tugela Falls.



*Ambassador Verwey, Martin Šil
and Petr Gol*



Mr Gol and Ambassador Verwey welcome the audience



Mr Šil giving a presentation of the Tugela Falls expedition



Ms Hosking and Mr Ncongwane

According to the expedition's finding, the Tugela Falls measure 983M and not 948M as previously indicated. It is therefore the tallest waterfall in the world. (Salto Ángel in Venezuela measures 979M).

The expedition has submitted their measurement and conclusion to the relevant international institutions with a request to recognise their finding and to enter the change into the geographical records.

Excellent food and South African wines contributed to the cheerful atmosphere at the event.

New Year's Meetings

January is always the month of traditional New Year's meetings of the Diplomatic Corps with the government leaders of the host country.

Glass of wine at MFA



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic

Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Lubomír Zaorálek invited the Prague Diplomatic Corps for a glass of wine at the Foreign Ministry on 13 January 2017. In his address, the Minister gave overview of the last year and goals for 2017. He said that Czech diplomacy would maintain its focus on China, Japan and the Republic of Korea; it would also reinvigorate its interest in Africa.



Minister Lubomír Zaorálek addressing the Heads of Mission, MFA, 13 January 2017. Picture: MFA



Ambassador Verwey talking to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Lubomír Zaorálek. Picture: MFA

Meeting with mayor of Prague

Mayor of Prague Ms Adriana Krnáčová met the Diplomatic Corps on 16 January 2016.



Mayor's Residence



Ms Krnáčová

New Year's meeting with the President of the Senat



The meeting of President of Senate Mr Milan Štech with the Diplomatic Corps was held on 17 January 2016.



President of Senate Milan Štech addresses the Diplomatic Corps. Picture: The Senate

Meeting with Prime Minister

Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka hosted the Diplomatic Corps at the Lichtenstein Palace on 19 January 2017. Global security situation, Brexit and support for exports were the main topics of Prime Minister's address.



Prime Minister's News Year's meeting with the Diplomatic Corps. Picture : The Government

Visit to Institute of Art History

On 19 January 2017 the lady Ambassadors, including Ambassador Verwey, paid a visit to the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) and met the President elect of the CAS, Dr Eva Zažímalová.



Dr Zažímalová and lady Ambassadors

Diplomatic events

The Ambassador attended the farewell reception of the outgoing Ambassador of the USA Mr Andrew Shapiro; a wine tasting hosted by the Ambassador of Argentina and a ceremonial event on the occasion of the anniversary of the signing of the Czech-German Declaration.

SOUTH AFRICAN NEWS

World Economic Forum in Davos

Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa led the South African delegation to the 47th World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland from 17 to 20 January, 2017 under the theme *Responsive and Responsible Leadership*. The forum hosted over 2 700 leaders from business, government, academia, NGOs, science and media.



Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa arriving in Davos to lead SA delegation at the 2017 World Economic Forum Annual Meeting. Picture: The Presidency



Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan highlighted the importance of emerging markets at the Davos Forum. In May 2017, South Africa will host the WEF on Africa in Durban.



Minister Pravin Gordhan during a panel session at the World Economic Forum in Davos, on 19 January 2017. Picture: Jason Alden/Bloomberg

President of SADR visited South Africa

President Jacob Zuma hosted President of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Mr

Brahim Ghali, for a Working Visit to South Africa on 6 January 2017.

The year 2017 marks the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.



President Brahim Ghali and President Jacob Zuma in Pretoria, 6 January 2017. Picture : GCIS

President Zuma received Letters of Credence

On 24 January 2017 President Jacob Zuma received Letters of Credence from 15 Ambassadors and High Commissioners Designate at a credentials ceremony at the Sefako Makgatho Presidential Guesthouse in Pretoria.



President Jacob Zuma takes a Family Photo with Ambassadors and High Commissioners-Designate during a credentials ceremony, Pretoria. Picture: The Presidency

Legendary jazz musician Thandi Klassen passed away

Legendary jazz musician and recipient of the National Order of the Baobab, Ms Thandi Klassen passed away on 15 January 2017, aged 86.



Thandi Klassen. Photo: YouTube

Caster Semenya married

Famous South African athlete and 2016 Olympic gold medalist Caster Semenya married her long-time partner Violet Raseboya on 7 January 2017.



Violet Rasebova & Caster Semenya. Photo: Instagram

Gospel singer Lundi Tyamara died

Famous South African gospel singer Lundi Tyamara died of a long illness on 27 January 2017 aged 38.



Gospel star Lundi Tyamara. Picture: Facebook

CZECH NEWS

Traditional New Year's luncheon at Lány Castle

Presidential couple Miloš and Ivana Zeman hosted Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka and his wife Olga at Lány castle for the traditional New Year's lunch on 2 January 2017.



PM Bohuslav Sobotka and President Miloš Zeman with their wives, Lány Castle, 2 January 2017. Picture: The Government

Japanese Foreign Minister visited Czech Republic

Japanese Foreign Minister Mr Fumio Kishida paid a visit to Prague from 7-9 January 2017 to discuss the international political situation, bilateral economic cooperation and a possible visit by Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka to Japan.



Foreign Ministers Fumio Kishida (Japan) and Lubomír Zaorálek (Czech Rep), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, 8 January 2017. Picture: MFA

Release of Charter 77 commemorated

A series of events marked the 40th anniversary of the launch of the Charter 77 declaration, including a conference organized by Václav Havel library. The Charter 77 was released on 6 January 1977 criticizing the violation of human and civil rights by the Czechoslovak government. Late President and dissident Václav Havel was one of the initiators and signatories of the document. The publication of the document provoked a harsh reaction from the government at the time including imprisonment, forced exile, loss of citizenship etc, imposed on signatories.

Visit to Germany



Foreign Ministers Lubomír Zaorálek and Frank-Walter Steinmeier signing a statement on the declaration. Picture: MFA

Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek visited the Federal Republic of

Germany on 25 January 2017 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the signature of the Czech-German Declaration

Anniversary of Czech-German Declaration

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Embassy and Charles University co-hosted a strategic dialogue and a ceremonial event marking the anniversary of the signing of the *Czech-German Declaration on the Mutual Relations and their Future Development*, in the presence of Foreign Minister Lubomír Zaorálek and Federal Minister Christian Schmidt on 30 January 2017.

Pavel Telička elected European Parliament Vice President

Czech member of the European Parliament Pavel Telička has been elected one of the parliament's Vice Presidents on 18 January 2017. Mr Telička was the chief negotiator for Czech admission to the European Union in 2004.



Naděžda Kavalírová passed away



Naděžda Kavalírová, the long-standing chairwoman of the Czech Confederation of Political Prisoners, passed away on 20 January 2017 aged 93. Kavalírová spent several years in prison during the communist rule.

Bird flu outbreak in Czech Republic

Highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza has been found in swans and at several poultry farms in more than ten places of the Czech Republic. One large commercial poultry farm was also affected. Infected poultry has been culled.

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