

14 February 2013



Seven young Czech nationals are being funded by the Czech Republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to serve in the UNV Internship Programme and met with Ministry officials before their deployment. In front of Czernin Palais in Prague (from left) are Iva Ulmanova (assigned to UN Women Kosovo), Jan Naplava (serving at UNAIDS Cambodia), Dana Siedemova (assigned to UNEP Ethiopia), Eva Bazingerova (assigned to UNICEF Vietnam), Vera Hozova (with the UNV Contact Center in Prague), Jiri Matousek (serving at UNDP Kosovo), Veronika Jemelikova (assigned to UNV Cambodia), Vladislava Spichalova (UNV Contact Center in Prague), and Marketa Stodolova (assigned to IOM Bosnia and Herzegovina). (Photo: UNV Contact Center in Prague, 2013)

## UNV youth volunteers welcomed at Czech Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Prague, Czech Republic:** The Czech Republic has long been associated with the fight for the protection of human rights, cultural heritage and human development. In a way, Czech volunteers such as myself who are being deployed by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme represent a continuation of the legacy of great Czech leaders such as Tomas Garrigue Masaryk and Vaclav Havel, and their commitment to democracy, peace and humanity.

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I am one of seven lucky youth volunteers, selected from over 130 applicants, who have been funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic to serve in the UNV Internship Programme. We will be stationed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kosovo and Vietnam, where we will contribute to development efforts in those countries while gaining valuable experience in the United Nations.

On a cold January afternoon, all seven youth volunteers met in Prague with representatives of the Ministry in Palais Czernin, a beautiful baroque building built during the 17th century. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Tomáš Dub welcomed us and expressed his belief in our work and the mission of UNV.

The meeting at the Ministry was exciting, because it showed us the determination of our country to support our efforts, regardless of the economic crisis.


Following our meeting at the Ministry we travelled to UNV's headquarters in Bonn, Germany, to undertake the pre-departure briefing with other youth volunteers. This gave us the opportunity to meet an amazing group of young, talented people whose development experience spans the globe and who all were highly motivated to make their lives and work matter.

All of us will be working in a wide range of areas including environmental protection, gender equality, education, economic development, youth outreach and HIV/AIDS. I was excited to meet people with such a variety of expertise and I felt challenged to live up to expectations, which are high because of the great performance of our predecessors as well as other Czech people trying to make a difference in the world.

The youth volunteers mentioned above were recruited and deployed under the UNV Internship Programme.

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*Bio: Born in the Czech Republic, in the heart of Europe, Veronika Jemelikova graduated from Charles University in Prague with a master's in security studies and a bachelor's in political science and international relations. She worked with talented youth from all over the world in the Leadership ExChange program and spent a further 14 months in Afghanistan, where she worked for the Czech Government's Provincial Reconstruction Team in Logar Province. Veronika also spent months volunteering in Panama and studying economic development in Colombia. She is also a co-founder of Hecha y Derecha, an organization which aims to empower Latin-American women. Veronika is excited to begin her work as a Communication, Youth and Outreach Specialist for UNV in Cambodia.*

 Europe and the CIS

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