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Visions for the future of the Czech Republic – Manifesto

The Czech Republic is a land of promise, offering a sense of serenity amidst a troubled world. Nestled behind the mountains of Central Europe, this hidden gem provides clarity and opens the door to new possibilities.

However, the core values of the European dream – peace, freedom, democracy, equality, human rights, and a sustainable environment – are under threat. The urgency of the climate emergency and the recent challenging events demand a shift in mindset and immediate action. It is crucial that we stand together, united and resolute.

Now is the time for our voices to be heard.

What is the true potential of the Czech Republic? What role can it play at the heart of Europe? How can it lead us toward a better future? These questions require bold actions and solutions. Through design, let us reimagine the possibilities, ignite inspiration, chart new directions, and foster meaningful discussions on design for urban density, regional balance, decarbonisation, health, population growth, selfsufficiency, new forms of governance, etc.

The CZ2 project and exhibition delves into the past, the present, and the dreams for the future of the Czech Republic.

Over 150 students from across the Republic and the rest of the world have collaborated to share their visions.

The collection of ideas displayed on the 1:20 000 map of the country and in the spaces around it, together with the interviews with a myriad of specialists and stakeholders, are an invitation for the public to actively shape our collective destiny.

These ideas serve as a catalyst, inspiring us to take action.

We extend a heartfelt invitation to join us in this journey of imagination. To form a discussion platform that is democratic, transparent, impartial, and accessible to all.

The more who join, the greater our collective impact will be.

CZ in need of holistic vision(s)

"You have created a wave of hope and energy in the past months. I would like us to use it to create a common vision for the Czech Republic. I would like to start this process during my presidency. Our reactions to the crises of recent years, as well as the presidential election, have convinced me that we can unite behind one goal, even though we see different ways to achieve it. We just need that spark of determination that it makes sense."



 Petr Pavel, Czech president inauguration speech

Prague castle, 9. 3. 2023

Project path



Dean seeking visions

A CTU's newly elected dean Dalibor Hlaváček (on the left) aimed to bring new visions to architectural education through international collaboration with guest professors. A new studio was established to introduce internationally renowned personalities, current topics, and innovative teaching methods.

A Dutch architect and urban planner Winy Maas (on the right) became the first guest professor to lead the studio in the academic year 2022/23. His approach and guidance became an inspiration for the academic community and education – also in the form of testing new ways of using and infilling the faculty's building.



How to design the country

At the beginning of the process, tutors from 5 universites in CZ and NL met to discuss possibilities of mutual collaboration on the topic of the country's future. The aim was set to involve around 150 international students in proposing visions for positive change and a new arrangement of the country, CZ2.

The first workshop held at FA CTU allowed all students to meet, discuss, organize, and confront their data findings and ideas for the first time. These ideas were then collectively sketched on a large map in a 1:50 000 scale where all the relationships became visible, emerging as a first test of collaboration platform.



CZ2 Exhibition

The project began with a dream, a vision of 150 young people collectively developing ideas that would be presented on a map, that would literally embrace the spectator. This dream became a reality during the final workshop. The students had to test the models of their ideas while constructing the physical environment at the same time.

The workshop resulted in an exhibition, which showcased the map with models of 100 visions developed throughout the semester. The exhibition encompassed a public presentation unveiling the team's methodology and proposals.



CZ2 Platform

The workshop, the exhibition presentation, and the entire semester concluded with a panel discussion as a first step in igniting a meaningful discourse about the country.

Throughout the journey, students and tutors witnessed a general lack of visionary strategic planning in CZ, and also the lack of transparency in communicating these visions to the broader professional and general public. To address this, the team reached out to media with a hope to ignite a public discussion and inspire others to join this effort in forming a stable platform for designing the new version of CZ – CZ2.

CZ2 Team gathered under the map of the Czech Republic with ideas developed during the first workshop

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From CZ0 to CZ2 – Methodology

CZ0 – History CZ1 – Present CZ2 – Future



History of the Czech Republic In this timeline, we explored significant milestones of the country through the lens of different agendas including politics, economy, health, as well as art and culture. By doing so, we aimed to understand what the CZ0 was, what the CZ1 is and what the CZ2 could become.



CZ1

Observations

The initial stage of our research involved gathering observations of the country to establish a fundamental understanding of CZ.

CZ is Rail transport



CZ1 Maps

Description: The Czech Republic has a well-de-veloped railway network that pro-vides reliable transportation options for both passengers and goods. You can see in the map, the railway parameter is very dense, but the speed of train is slow. As of 2023, there are 6,256 multicipalities in the CZ and 2,808 train stations. With a faster train CZ will be interconnected than ever. Legend: 🎾 Railway path 0 25 50 100 km Student: Minkyung Shin w.cd.cz/default.htn d.com/central-europe.html ,https

Subsequently, we gathered and created detailed maps to further analyse and explore various aspects of the country.

CZ is Rail transport

Train track carpet

1. More than 1/3 municipalities have train stations 2. Total system length : 9,619 km 3. operating speed : 160 km/h









Interviews

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To deepen the understanding of individual topics coming out of the research, a series of interviews was conducted with experts from across the Czech Republic, as well as with prominent personalities.

Mobility Trains are not just for the big city!



Ashub Novacek is working as a ticket controller on the Ceske Drahy trains. He mostly works on the regional trains around Prages, where he lives. Jakub is 30 years old and has been working as a ticket of different of years. The rides the train from village to village almost every day, Jakub Novacek is working as a ticket on tradier on the Caske Dathy trains.

824 line? Do you think that if the train stations woul improved and making them into an attract

MOBILITY Czech Railways



PETR FELK Petr Pejk is remarkable individual who previously served as the Ombudsman of Ceské dráby (Czech Rallways). Throughout his tenure, he demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring the rights and well-being of passengers and employees within the equinization.

What is your opinion on the state and future of what innova rail transport in the Czech Republic? you expect i years, and h

CZ1

Comparisons

The last step involved comparing CZ to the other 26 members of the EU, enabling us to contextualize its position and characteristics. All the data was transferred to per capita values to refer to countries' scale and population.

Railways



How good is CZ1?

Out of all the data gathered, conclusions had been made on how good is CZ1 in different topics in comparison to other members of the European Union. The topics were organized into 6 agendas – Society, Built environment, Economy, Ecology, Governance, and Culture, ranging from CO_2 emissions of coal factories, over history defined socio-economic disproportions in regions like Sudeten land, all the way to an increasing amount of high-tech companies in the country.

These issues and potentials were eventually turned into goals, aspirations, where we asked what the Czech Republic can become.



How good is CZ1?



How good is CZ1?





CZ2

The exhibition CZ2: Visions for the future of the Czech Republic represents the culmination of an extraordinary semester-long collaborative project, bringing together over 150 international students from the Faculties of Architecture at CTU, TU Delft, TU Liberec, VUT Brno, and ARCHIP. These students embarked on a profound exploration of the Czech Republic's future, resulting in an extensive array of ideas and projects that aim to address key issues and potentials of the Czech society.





At the heart of the exhibition lies a captivating model, occupying the atrium of the Faculty of Architecture at CTU. This installation serves as a visual narrative of proposed visions, complemented by a large collection of data including observations, maps, rankings among EU countries, interviews with experts, and a documentary capturing the entire creative process. Together, they offer visitors a multi-faceted experience, allowing them to engage deeply with the possibilities and visions for the future development of the country.







The CZ2 Exhibition is not just an artistic showcase; it is a testament to the interdisciplinary collaboration – in this case of the participating students and academic institutions. It is also a form of manifest, invitation, a call for a discussion platform that would allow a professional and general public to seek and form the country's vision, the country's direction.

The exhibition stands as a beacon of this endeavor, an inspiration, igniting and fostering conversations toward a prosperous while sustainable Czech Republic.





CZ2 Visions

Issues and potentials coming out of the data research served as a catalyzator for proposals of impactful visions.

The design process was conducted using the "Before and After" approach. This method allowed us to provide the clearest possible understanding of a specific idea, showing both the existing condition and the vision for future development.



Speed the Czech up

Travelling in the Czech Republic right now is quite slow. The idea proposes implementation of high-speed trains into CZ. With the usage of high-speed trains, the time and distance would shrink enabling to connect regions around the country and other European areas.



Speed the Czech up

Before

After

Speed the Czech up

Extra layer

Adding an additional layer to the rooftops of the Czech Republic would create a natural and seamless transition, increasing density and providing new housing options while reducing urban sprawl.



of urban areas



Extra layer

Fungi-fy the mines

Black coal mines largely present in the Czech context consist of deep shafts and tunnels. These spaces have varying temperatures, which is ideal for facilitating the growth of diverse mushrooms. Many species stimulate brain neurons and are therefore beneficial for health. The whole process of mine harvest thus presents a novel form of agriculture usable for medical purposes.

> **22 km²** usable area

1

coal mine

transformed



Goal

Before and after image



Comparison

of mushroom

production

Apara Response Respon

Before and after map of mines used for mushroom production



CZ

51.4

t/mil. capita

Netherlands

17,055

t/mil.capita

Learning from the best

in EU

Model

+62,857.2 t/mil. capita of mushrooms produced

...to increase mushroom production

Impact

Fungi-fy the mines

Before

After

Fungi-fy the mines

Wildlife on the move

To enable safe migration of animals through CZ, the highly fragmented natural habitats are connected with natural migration corridors.



Wildlife on the move

Before

After

Wildlife on the move

Farm the rooftops

Rooftops of "panelaks" (prefabricated apartment building structures) are used to grow fruits and vegetables in greenhouses to increase the accessibility of local food, and therefore decrease the need of transportation.



Farm the rooftops

2. 27



Farm the rooftops

NUSSEEME.

Go vegan

Meat production accounts for high amounts of greenhouse gasses. Turning the population vegan, would lead to spatial, ecological, and health improvements. It would enable to turn fields used for livestock production to farm vegetables and decrease CO_2 production.



of land for livestock production

Go vegan

Before

fter

Go vegan

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CZ2 Next – Future of the project

Exhibition variants Tour Platform



Exhibition variants

The experience of the map and therefore of the country is greatly dependent on its arrangement. When spread horizontally, visitors can comfortably walk between regions evaluating ideas directly at their location. When put vertically, the spectator has an overview of the entire country allowing to find relations in the macro scale.

At the atrium of the Faculty of Architecture at CTU, we tested multiple folds and divisions to test the full potential. However, thanks to the modular system, the amount of variants is almost endless. It is all about the space's properties and what kind of topics are desired to be highlighted with the exhibition.























CZ2 Exhibition's purpose from the beginning was to propose, inspire, share, and ignite a discussion. At the same time, we always wanted to reach out further than to the architectural community, further than to the realm of academia. In the end, this is a project about the country, for the country, so the entire country should have a chance to see it.

Therefore, we plan a tour. Tour around major cities, but also distant areas with virtually unlimited path options.



CZ2 Platform

At the end of our project, as an ultimate vision, stands a stable platform. One that allows evaluating existing situations and proposing solutions. One that presents these proposals in a tangible, clear manner so that the whole nation can understand and contribute.

Currently, national agendas and visions are defined, presented, and executed mostly by political establishments. The communication lacks the transparency of methodology, and visions' objective values are clouded by affiliation to a concrete political party. Longer planning is therefore undermined. Think tanks on the other hand may provide objective proposals, but they lack visibility for the general public.

Could there be a platform that can stay objective while efficiently leading a discussion between professionals, political executional power, and Czechs as an entire nation?

Whether the final form would be an online channel, a network of cultural centers in Czech cities, or a recurring public event is open for exploration.

This CZ2 Platform, however, should be democratic, transparent, impartial, and accessible to all.

Credits

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