Tschechien Frankfurter Buchmesse Ehrengast 2026

CZECHIA AS GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR 2026

Press newsletter January 2026

The Czech Republic and Germany are connected by more than just a shared border. For centuries, the two countries have enjoyed a lively exchange — politically, economically, but above all culturally and in literature.

Common roots, different paths: Germany and Czechia both belong to the Central European cultural sphere. Cities such as Prague, Dresden, and Munich were hubs of trade, art, and learning for centuries. The Habsburg Monarchy, the Holy Roman Empire, and later the upheavals of the 20th century had a profound impact on Czechia and Germany. And yet, different national self-images developed: while Germany long struggled between federalism and centralism, Czechia defined itself particularly strongly through language and culture as an expression of national identity – a legacy of the Czech national movement in the 19th century.

This dialogue is particularly evident in literature. The German canon, with Goethe, Schiller, Thomas Mann, Christa Wolf, and Anna Seghers, stands for humanism, enlightenment, and critical engagement with history and guilt. Czech literature, with authors such as Karel Čapek, Milan Kundera, Bohumil Hrabal, Božena Němcová, and Lenka Reinerová, is characterized by subtle irony, existential depth, and the processing of political constraints. A key figure between the two worlds is Franz Kafka: writing in German, living in Prague, equally influenced by Czech and German culture. His texts show how fluid cultural boundaries can be and how much the two traditions pervade each other.

Differences and similarities can also be seen in attitudes towards life. German culture traditionally tends towards a systematic approach, order and philosophical insight, while Czech culture often cultivates a quiet, self-deprecating humor and focuses on the absurdity of everyday life. Nevertheless, both share a certain melancholy and a deep sensitivity to historical ruptures. This closeness is particularly evident in music, theater, and film: from Bach and Beethoven to Dvořák and Smetana, from large opera houses to small stages where social issues are discussed. Coffee house culture, as a meeting place for artists, writers, and intellectuals, is also part of their shared heritage.

Today, cultural exchange is more intense than ever. Translations, joint festivals, theater and film projects show that differences do not have to divide, but can serve as a source of inspiration. Czechia and Germany remain cultural neighbors with different voices, but similar questions about freedom, identity, and responsibility. It is precisely this ongoing dialogue that constitutes the richness of both cultures and invites us to read, listen, and understand across borders.

Your Guest of Honour Czechia press team
Annika Grützner, Nathalie Weber and Mathias Voigt

Please contact us if you would like further information, review copies, or if we can arrange interviews for you!

Cultural tips

Eli Beneš' debut novel **"Nepatrná ztráta osamělosti"** was the first Czech book to be included in the prestigious "Books at Berlinale" selection. Further information can be found here.

Events

28.1.2026, 7:30 pm
Young poetry from Czechia: Reading & discussion with Štěpánka Borská, Sufian Massalema, Mellanie Kašjak and Antonín Zhořec
Haus für Poesie, Berlin

29.01.2026, 6:30 pm
Reading & discussion: Michal Ajvaz – Die andere Stadt
Ingeborg-Drewitz-Bibliothek, Berlin

9.02.2026, 6:30 pm
Reading & discussion: Iva Procházková – Die Spur der Kälte
Hansabibliothek, Berlin

12.02.2026, 7:30 pm
Reading & discussion: Jaroslav Rudiš – Gebrauchsanweisung für Bier and Gebrauchsanweisung fürs Zugreisen
Buchhandlung Weltenleser, Frankfurt am Main

16.02.2026, 7 pm
Reading & discussion: Miloš Doležal – 1945: Sommer der Dämonen
Literaturforum im Brecht-Haus, Berlin

Book tips

Lenka Blaze: „Ich bin introvertiert"
(Hanser, translated by Lena Dorn, release on 27.01.2026)

There are many of us, and you are not alone! An emotionally illustrated non-fiction book about introversion and sensitivity.

Are you introverted or sensitive? Why is that a great thing, and why does the world so desperately need this superpower? That's exactly what this children's book is about. Drawing on her own story, Lenka Blaze helps introverts to understand themselves better, to realize that they are not alone, to accept their insecurities, and to recognize their strengths. Because it's absolutely okay to be different! She sensitively explains what can help—e.g., taking specific breaks, setting new boundaries, or even therapy. The author also shows the great talents that introverts possess: creativity, loyalty, empathy, and so much more! An absolutely empowering and eye-opening reading experience.

You can find further information on the book here.

Lenka Blaze: „Mein kleines rotes Buch"
(Gerstenberg, translated by Julia Christin Miesenböck, release on 2.2.2026)

An inspiring, provocative, cheerfully illustrated book about menstruation—a topic that is still far too often kept secret! Your period is nothing to be ashamed of. It can even be fun to get to know it! This little red book accompanies readers through the adventure of menstruation. How did people deal with their period in the past, and what great options are available today? What are the different experiences of menstruating people, and how can you best take care of yourself? For everyone – with or without monthly bleeding.

You can find further information on the book here.

Vratislav Maňák:
„Mit Wittgenstein in der Schwulensauna"
(Karl Rauch Verlag, translated by Lena Dorn, release on 10.2.2026)

Not only Ludwig Wittgenstein, but also Didier Eribon, Claudio Magris, and many others stand alongside Vratislav Maňák as he examines male homosexuality in contemporary Central Europe and returns to its sexual roots. He points out that issues commonly associated with the lives of gay men can certainly correspond to the experiences of mainstream society. Why does "the forbidden" excite us? How do we experience our bodies? And where are the boundaries of masculinity? Vratislav Maňák seeks answers in seven delicate texts that combine sociological reportage with literary essay. To this end, he visits places that can be described as gay spaces, including Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest.

Vratislav Maňák paints a multi-layered panorama of gay life beyond stereotypical notions and, with his essays, invites us to take a fresh look at identity, desire, and culture—with openness and curiosity.

You can find further information on the book here.

Marek Torčík: „Was die Zeit nicht nimmt"
(Anthea Verlag, translated by Mirko Kraetsch, release on 10.2.2026)

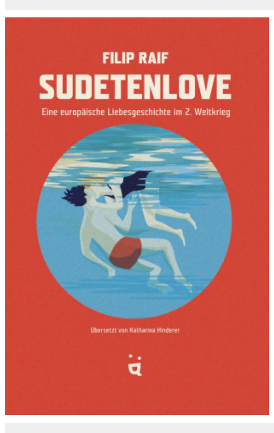
A phone call in the night—and the past returns.

A nighttime conversation with his mother takes Marek back to his youth. Back to a family with dysfunctional patterns and an environment that punishes difference. As a queer boy in a conservative industrial town, bullying is Marek's constant companion. And the political and economic upheavals of 1989 weigh heavily not only on him, but on the whole family – in the form of poverty, alcoholism and violence.

Melancholic, fragile, but above all hopeful, Torčík describes the search for identity of a young man with the courage to be himself.

You can find further information on the book here.

Filip Raif: „Sudetenlove"
(Helvetiq Verlag, translated by Katharina Hinderer, release on 12.2.2026)



A European love story set during World War II.

Sudeten Mountains, 1937: Hedwig and Fritz meet while skiing and fall in love. It is the beginning of a great love that came too late: war is looming and the Czechoslovakian border region with Germany is like a powder keg that could explode at any moment. Hedwig and Fritz give everything for their love. But is it strong enough to overcome the boundaries that world politics has drawn between them?

You can find further information on the book here.

About the Guest of Honour

Czechia is the Guest of Honour of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2026. The Guest of Honour appearance is being organised by the Moravian Library in Brno and its Czech Literature Centre section. It is being financed by public funds from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and is implemented with the support of PPF Foundation. Partner of the Year of Czech Culture and Guest of Honour is Deutsch-Tschechischer Zukunftsfonds / Česko-německý fond budoucnosti.The Frankfurt Book Fair, which will take place from October 7 to 11, 2026, is the world's largest trade fair for publishing. The Guest of Honour presents its literature and culture at the fair, in the city of Frankfurt, and at many other locations in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Czechia's Guest of Honour appearance is themed "Czechia – A Country on the Coast."

https://czechia2026.com

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