

“Czechia – A Country on the Coast” / CZECHIA 2026

Press Conference on 19 March 2026 at the 2026 Leipzig Book Fair / Press Release

The press conference for Czechia, the Guest of Honour at the 2026 Frankfurter Buchmesse, took place at the Leipzig Book Fair today. The event featured a presentation of Czechia’s programme at the Leipzig Book Fair, the programme for the Year of Czech Culture up to the summer (accompanying the Guest of Honour appearance at Frankfurter Buchmesse), as well as initial information about the SAMIZDAT project in cooperation with the Museum of Communication in Frankfurt and the open call for the new Book-to-Screen-cooperation with the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF).

After a short welcome by Juergen Boos, Director of Frankfurter Buchmesse, Tomáš Kubíček, Director General of the Moravian Library and Director of the Czech Guest of Honour programme, and Martin Krafl, Director of the Czech Literature Centre and Programme Director of the Guest of Honour programme, presented the upcoming themes and events for Czechia 2026. They looked forward to the numerous new Czech publications as well as to Frankfurter Buchmesse this fall, which will be attended by around 70 Czech authors. The Frankfurter Buchmesse’s list of new releases already includes more than 40 titles published in German-speaking countries since fall 2025 (as of March 16, 2026). Together with the works published in German since 2024 and the translations scheduled for release by fall 2026, the Guest of Honour expects more than 100 new releases.

Hugo Rosák, Head of the Film Industry Office at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, presented the “Book-to-Screen at KVIFF” project, which the festival is implementing for the first time this year in cooperation with Frankfurter Buchmesse, Book World Prague and the Moravian Library in Brno, with support from the PPF Foundation. The long-term goal is to create a market for film rights to adaptations of literary works from Central and Eastern Europe, thereby strengthening cooperation between the film and book industries. Literary guests then joined the discussion: Moderator Annika Grützner spoke with Markéta Pilátová and Miroslav Hlaučo about their writing and their impressions of the Guest of Honour appearance.

Juergen Boos, Director of Frankfurter Buchmesse, said: “The Guest of Honour programme is themed ‘A Country on the Coast.’ It’s a beautiful paradox: the Czech Republic has no coastline—but its literature has always crossed borders. It travels through languages, translations, and with its authors. And through new collaborations, such as the one with the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, between the book and film industries as well. That is precisely what our Guest of Honour programme is all about: making literature from Czechia visibly present on the international stage, strengthening the Guest of Honour’s book industry, and engaging it in dialogue with an international audience. The program here in Leipzig marks the kickoff to a literary year that will reach its peak in October at Frankfurter Buchmesse. I am very pleased that we will be able to experience around 70 literary voices from Czechia there.”

Tomáš Kubíček, Director of the Czech Guest of Honour programme, explains: “One of our highlights leading up to Frankfurter Buchmesse will be the exhibition *Samizdat: Words of Freedom in Czechoslovakia 1939–1989*, which will open on 19 August at the Museum of Communication in Frankfurt. With this exhibition, the museum explores a pivotal chapter in European media and contemporary history — from the Nazi occupation through the communist dictatorship to the political upheaval of 1989 — and highlights the role of underground publications as a tool of resistance against censorship and political repression.”

“We are thrilled that we were once again able to travel to Saxony with 14 authors for the accompanying festival ‘Leipzig liest’ at this year’s Leipzig Book Fair. They will present their works at 17 events throughout the week of the fair. I would particularly like to highlight the evening of Czech literature, which is scheduled for Saturday evening at the Schaubühne Lindenfels under the title ‘Bodies, Words, Saunas’ with Vratislav Maňák, Marek Torčík, Marita Kelbl, Iryna Zahladko and Antonín Zhořec, but authors such as Zuzana Řihová, Michal Ajvaz, Petra Dvořáková and Jiří Hájíček will also

offer insight into the diversity of the Czech literary landscape. The Halle-born artist and illustrator Barbara Šalamounová will commemorate the work of her German-Czech parents — the artist couple and university educators Jiří and Eva Natus-Šalamoun, whose work is closely linked to Leipzig — at an evening event,” explains Programme Director Martin Krafl.

Throughout the year, the Year of Czech Culture will bring various authors and artists to the German-speaking world for events and readings. In total, 44 authors will present their works at 22 events from March 2026 to June 2026, including at two literary festivals and several other venues. Further events between June and December 2026 will be announced later this year.

About the Guest of Honour Czechia

The Czech Republic will be the Guest of Honour at Frankfurter Buchmesse in 2026. The Guest of Honour programme is organised by the Moravian Library in Brno through its Czech Literature Centre. The programme is funded by public funds from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and carried out with the support of the PPF Foundation. The German-Czech Future Fund is the partner of the Year of Czech Culture and the Guest of Honour programme. Frankfurter Buchmesse, which will take place from 7 to 11 October 2026, is the world’s largest trade fair for the publishing industry. The guest country presents its literature and culture at the fair, in the city of Frankfurt, and at many other locations in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The Czech Republic’s Guest of Honour appearance is themed “Czechia – A Country on the Coast.”

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Guest of Honour 2026: Czechia

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Press Kit

