

PRESS RELEASE

New York, May 27, 2009

## Days of the Czech European Union Presidency at the United Nations

The Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations in cooperation with CzechTourism New York, the Bohemian Benevolent and Literary Association, Czech Center New York, People in Need and other partners presents "Days of the Czech EU Presidency at the United Nations".

The Czech Republic assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on January 1, 2009 and will hand it over to its successor Sweden on June 30. From the first day, the Czech Presidency at the UN in New York, headed by H.E. Mr. Martin Palous, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations, was confronted with the situation in Gaza and since then continued to be an active voice of one of the main groups at this universal forum and also largest contributors to UN activities.<sup>1</sup> The main motto of the Czech Presidency has been "Europe without Barriers", relating both to the elimination of remaining barriers inside the EU area as well as with respect to its partners outside. The motto has also a symbolic meaning that refers to important milestones in the post-cold war reunification of Europe. The year 2009 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fall of the Iron Curtain/Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia as well as 10<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of first rounds of NATO and EU enlargement by former communist countries in the Central and Eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic.

The program of the festival shall make a reference to the above-mentioned Czech and European anniversaries by featuring a new film **Power of the Powerless** examining the difficult moral choices people were forced to make under communism and the role of civil society and human rights defenders in the fall of the totalitarian regime. In the context of its historical experience, over the last several years, the Czech Mission to the UN has organized a number of Human Rights related events on various issues and will continue this tradition in the future. The screening of a documentary **Burma VJ**, winner of the Václav Havel Special Award at One World Festival 2009, is the newest initiative. Compelling reflection of the contemporary world through the eyes of a Czech photographer of international fame is to be offered by **Antonín Kratochvíl's The Time in which I Live**. The Czech cultural tradition in the European and international context shall be presented by a concert of a star Czech singer and actress **Zuzana Stivínová From the Stage to the Bar** and an **exhibition about Jaroslav Ježek**, a visionary Czech composer of jazz, classical, incidental and film music of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The **Czech Gourmet Festival** presented by the National Team of Czech Chefs' Association completes our "menu".

Schedule of featured events:

**EXHIBITION OF ANTONÍN KRATOCHVÍL'S PHOTOGRAPHS "THE TIME IN WHICH I LIVE"**

OPENING JUNE 1, 6 P.M., UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT LOBBY

**CZECH GOURMET FESTIVAL AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

JUNE 8 – 12, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., UNITED NATIONS Delegates Dining Room

**CONCERT OF ZUZANA STIVÍNOVÁ "FROM THE STAGE TO THE BAR"**

JUNE 8, 7:00 P.M., BOHEMIAN NATIONAL HALL (371 E 73<sup>RD</sup> ST. BETWEEN 1 AND 2<sup>ND</sup> AVE.)

**ECHOES OF ONE WORLD AT THE UN IN NY – FILMS:**

**POWER OF THE POWERLESS**

&

**BURMA VJ**

JUNE 15, 7:00 P.M., BOHEMIAN NATIONAL HALL

JUNE 17, 7 P.M., BOHEMIAN NATIONAL HALL

*One World* is today's largest and one of the most important human rights film festival in Europe established in 1999 by the Czech NGO People in Need.

**JAROSLAV JEŽEK EXHIBITION**

OPENING: JUNE 16, 6:30 – 8:30 P.M., ON DISPLAY: JUNE 16 – JULY 30, BOHEMIAN NATIONAL HALL (371 E 73<sup>RD</sup> ST. BETWEEN 1 AND 2<sup>ND</sup> AVE.)

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<sup>1</sup> The EU produces approx. 25% of world GNP. Its contributions amount to 38% of the UN's regular budget, over 40% of the peace-keeping budget, over 50% of the voluntary contributions to the UN funds and programs, over 55% to global development aid, it is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance worldwide, EU participates in 22 UN missions worldwide with approximately 10.000 peacekeepers deployed on the ground.