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# Erasmus Weekend in South Bohemia

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At the end of October, the [International CUNI Club](#) offered students the opportunity to venture outside the city of Prague to rural South Bohemia and experience a different aspect of Czech culture on a three day excursion.



**Day One**, the group visited the picturesque city of Třeboň. The historical city dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and flourished during the middle ages and early modern time under the care of the local nobles, the Rožmberk and Schwarzenberg families. The city offers a wealth of historical and cultural attractions, including a Renaissance castle and a Gothic monastery. The main square boasts an array of Renaissance and Baroque houses where the group enjoyed some local desserts. We then continued on our journey to enjoy the unique beauty of the surrounding idyllic countryside. Nature lovers or not, the Svět Pond, also known as the World Pond (word to word translation to English) was enjoyed by all. The ponds themselves are as a result of human activities and are artificial. They were constructed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and are central to the Czech fish farming industry. Today they are listed as being of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The group then headed for one of the oldest continuously working Breweries in Central Europe, Regent Brewery. The Brewery itself dates back to 1379 and its unique structures are a central attraction in the city of Třeboň. We enjoyed an informative tour of the Brewery and a beer or two before retiring to our accommodation in the rural village of Žumberk.

**Day Two**, the group undertook a hike through the natural protected area, Theresian Valley. Throughout the day, we stopped for lunch and games at the hilltop thirteenth century Žumberk Castle. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century the castle was

uninhabited and became desolate. Today, however, the castle is under the care of the local village and is stable and can be viewed by the general public. That evening, the traditional Czech game, the path of courage was planned for our return at the accommodation. The game entails one trusting others in darkness. However darkness fell quickly and we had yet to return to the accommodation. The game became a reality as we hiked through the countryside in darkness. This however did not dampen our spirits, but brought a sense of adventure and excitement to the trip.



**Day Three**, the 13<sup>th</sup> century city of Český Krumlov was the destination. The city boasts Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque elements, as well as a sumptuous castle that ranks among the most important historical sites in Central Europe. The town is a pearl of Renaissance architecture located within a meander of the Vltava River. The castle was developed between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and boasts an extensive Rococo garden and a substantial bridge. Atop the castle stunning views of the city and surrounding countryside can be witnessed. Old Český Krumlov and the castle are UNESCO protected structures, with less than a thousand in the world making this list. The Rožmberk and Schwarzenberg noble families were again highly involved in the development of Český Krumlov, and echoes of each era in history can be seen throughout the city.

A train journey later we had returned to the city of Prague. Although it is near to impossible not to appreciate the enticing elegance of Prague, there was a slight sadness in the atmosphere as we left the idyllic Czech countryside behind us. A very successful weekend in all, where new friendships were forged and culture experienced. A big thank you to all at International CUNI Club for a unique weekend of new experiences and adventure.



**Claire O'Brien Kelly's** home university is University College Cork. At Charles University in Prague she studies at the Faculty of Law. She would like to gain international experience from both her study stay abroad as well as her internship in the International iForum.