
Charles University Student Union Seals Partnership with the University of Iceland Student Union

Charles University Student Union Seals Partnership with the University of Iceland Student Union

The Charles University Student Union has started a partnership with the Student Union of the University of Iceland. In this past semester, visits of officials of both unions to the respective foreign universities took place. Our union was represented in Iceland by its chair Slaven Elčić, vice-chair Nelly Dederová, the ex-chair Olga Georgievová and its audit commissioner and one of the founders of the union, Martin Benda.

Martin Benda was also the originator of the whole project. He is a self-proclaimed Iceland fan and has visited the University of Iceland many times. Partnership with its student union was therefore a natural next step. The contact was an easy one to make. The Norwegian EEA fund has donated a generous contribution to Icelandic institutions and the Charles University Student Union applied for a grant via the IPIS agency. During their trip, members of the Charles University Student Union also managed to visit the student houses in Copenhagen and Oslo.

In Reykjavík, Czech students met the management of the student union and officials from other smaller associations. They also met the editor-in-chief of a student magazine and leaders of three political parties. Last but not least, they took part in a discussion with the university's steering committee and our ambassadors in Iceland.

Many conclusions can be drawn from the visit to Iceland. "As for working conditions and the overall infrastructure, our union has a lot of catching up to do. In Reykjavík, Oslo and Copenhagen, the student unions have much better facilities. Student houses, for instance, offer well-equipped offices and seminar rooms, canteens, music clubs etc. Oslo's Chateau Neuf student house has a congress hall for 1,000 people", said Martin Benda.

A look into the workings of the local Icelandic student media also proved fruitful. Their design and quality show that they have been around for decades and that they are household names. At the same time, according to Martin Benda, Charles University is not too far behind. University of Iceland, for example, only has one print monthly, whose online presence is rather poor. Associations that comprise the Charles University Student Union, and the Charles University Media section specifically, can monetize their magazines and maintain their presence in different kinds of media.

Besides union affairs, Czech visitors took a day-long tour of the Golden Circle. They saw the geysers, the Gullfoss waterfall and the former site parliament at Thingvellir.

Kateřina Polívková

Translation: Jaroslav Švelch