

THE PRAGUE POST

The Prague Post, November 27, 2002
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'International students gather for summit simulation'

BEFORE READING

Have you ever been part of a model government? Does your school have a model United Nations or model NATO?

AFTER READING

Answer the following questions:

1. What meeting took place in Komorní Hrádek during the NATO Summit in Prague?
2. What was the purpose of the meeting?
3. How many delegates participated?

What countries were they from?

4. What topics were covered during discussions?
5. What did the meetings look like?
6. Which heads of state and major political figures met with the students?
7. Why did students participate in the program?
8. What did students themselves say about the meeting?
9. What countries were represented at the meeting?
10. Did the students take the discussions seriously?
11. Are the students involved in the meeting interested in careers in politics?
12. Who organized the event?

Discussion:

Do you think it's useful to practice solving the issues that face our leaders? Do you think this could further our understanding of how international politics work?

Do you think that a simulation like the one in Komorní Hrádek can be meaningful? Do you think that students can benefit from it? Do you think that students should be more involved in politics and other fields of public life?

Vocabulary:

subtlety – hloubka, detailnost
milling around – postávat a povídat s ostatními

The Prague Post, December 4, 2002
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'Study says fewer Czechs light up'

BEFORE READING

Do you smoke? If you want, you can tell your class about reasons why you do or do not smoke. Do you think that Czech people smoke a lot? Do you think that they smoke more than North Americans?

If you are a non-smoker, do you find cigarette smoke irritating in restaurants and other public places?

Do you think that second-hand smoking is dangerous to non-smokers?

Research:

Research second-hand smoking and include statistics. Then present it to your class.

AFTER READING

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the differences between the Czech laws dealing with smoking in public places and North American ones?

2. What is the percentage of Czech men that smoke and male smokers from North America, the U.K. and Australia?
3. What about women smokers in the Czech Republic and North America?
4. What was the percentage of Czech smokers in 1992?
5. What was the percentage in 2000?
6. What anti-smoking measures has the Czech government taken in the past few years?
7. How active is the Czech government in promoting smoking awareness compared to North America?
8. Why did Jitka and Jan quit smoking?
9. What does Mr. Poledne think about the "smoking climate" of the Czech Republic?
10. How does he compare Czech and American students?

Discussion:

After reading the article, you see that the Americans smoke more than Czechs, but they do not smoke in public. Do you think that it makes any difference?

The article says: *Poledne also notes the recent declines in smoking are not across the board. "It is only educated people," he said. Among poor people and immigrant groups, the smoking rate is still very high.*

Do you agree with this statement? Can education and money influence your propensity to smoke? Discuss this paragraph in groups.

Vocabulary:

to reek – bít cítit, načichl
mundane – světský, pozemský
predominately – převážně
virility – mužnost



NGOs

What does the abbreviation NGO mean?

It is an abbreviation for non-governmental organization. These organizations are not founded by a state or government, but are established to maintain or aid social, educational, charitable, ecological, or other, activities serving the common welfare. An NGO can be a non-profit organization but these organizations can make profit. This profit is then used for reaching the organization's goal.

In 2001 there were over 47 000 civic associations (občanské sdružení), 701 companies of community service (obecně prospěšná společnost), 299 foundations (nadace) and 784 endowment funds (nadační fond) in the Czech Republic.

Some of these NGOs work on a local level (Suchop r (helping to sustain the environment of Jizerské hory) in Liberec, for example) or on a national level (Nadace VIA, Nadace Terezy Maxové, Nadace Charty 77, Nadace Duha, Nadační fond Kapka naděje, Tereza – sdružení pro ekologickou v chovu, Nadační fond Rozum a cit, etc.)

What Czech NGOs do you know of? Work in groups. Make a list of them and write down what they focus on. **Do research on one of them:** What is its main activity? Is it a local or a national organization? How does the organization collect money? How does it use the money raised for its goal? Do you like this organization? Why? Why not? Do you help this organization somehow? How?

What charitable activities taking place in the Czech Republic do you know of? Again, make a list.

Discussion:

What role do these organizations play in society?

Do you think the government or business community would be able to provide help to people with disabilities, ill or addicted people, refugees, children without families, etc. on such a large scale like NGOs do?

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHARITABLE ENDEAVORS

Philanthropic endowments and institutions have been around since ancient times. Plato bequeathed valuable land to his disciples so they could maintain his Academy; similarly, the Egyptian king Ptolemy I

founded and endowed the famed museum and library in Alexandria. During the Middle Ages, religious orders made endowments to promote religious and social welfare projects. In 1790 Benjamin Franklin bequeathed funds to be lent to “young, married artificers of good character.” The legacy of the Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel has been used since 1901 to honor international achievements in the fields of literature, chemistry, physics, physiology or medicine, and peace, and, since 1969, economics. Similarly, the will of the American journalist Joseph Pulitzer provides annual gifts for distinguished American contributions to journalism, literature and drama, and music.

Glossary:

Philanthropy - voluntary giving of time, assistance, or money for the public good. The term is from the Latin, philanthropy, which means “love of mankind”

THE THIRD SECTOR

We all want to live a good and comfortable life in good conditions. We want to have quality education and good health care and we want our human rights to be observed and to live in a clean environment, etc. We want to live in an ideal society.

Discussion:

Think about the following sectors (often called three main pillars) of a society:

Government – Business – NGOs

What is the relationship between them? What should it be like? Do they complement each other? How?

In the last century, focus upon the state and market was noticeable. Now people are realizing that neither of these are perfect and do not always work for the benefits of all citizens. Citizens should be allowed to express their feelings and suggestions even after one government is elected. There must be some dialogue and very often this dialogue is assisted by non-governmental and non-profit organizations (civic associations) – also called the third sector. The NGOs can also lobby – that means they push governments and political parties for implementation of laws and legislation that could not be brought to the parliament by individual people.

AGENDA 21

A document called Agenda 21 deals with the idea of sustainable development. What is sustainable development?

Research:



What is Agenda 21? When and where was it signed? What are its main goals?

(Teachers, you may want to cover this part, since it answers, in short, the previous questions: Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which humanity impacts on the environment. Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests was adopted by more than 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 3-14, 1992.)

Text of Agenda 21 can be found on www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21text.htm

Agenda 21 recognizes NGOs as partners in the implementation of sustainable development. NGOs should not only participate in the implementation of Agenda 21 but also play a part among the institutions charged with reviewing and evaluating the implementation.

Here are some extracts from what Agenda 21 (chapter 27) says about the role of NGOs:

“Non-governmental organizations play a vital role in the shaping and implementation of participatory democracy. Their credibility lies in the responsible and constructive role they play in society. Formal and informal organizations, as well as grass-roots movements, should be recognized as partners in the implementation of Agenda 21. The nature of the independent role played by non-governmental organizations within a society calls for real participation; therefore, independence is a major attribute of non-governmental organizations and is the precondition of real participation.”

(cont. on next page)

MILLENNIUM FORUM AND MILLENNIUM SUMMIT

Research:



**What was Millennium Summit?
When and where did it take place?
Who called for it?
Who participated?**

What was the main goal of this?

(Teachers, you might want to cover this part, since it answers, in short, the previous questions: Millennium Summit was called by the U.N. to “offer a timely opportunity for the world’s leaders to look beyond their pressing daily concerns and consider what kind of United Nations they can envision and will support in the new century” (Kofi Annan). The Summit was held on September 6-8, 2000, at UN Headquarters in New York. It was one of the largest-ever gatherings of Heads of State and it was a historic occasion for the 188 Member States of the U.N. to discuss future of our planet. Kofi Annan said that it should provide an opportunity for a “moral recommitment” to the principles of the UN Charter.)

Civil society organizations and NGOs had an opportunity to meet before the

Summit on the so called, Millennium Forum. At this meeting, which took place in New York on May 22-26, 2000, the organizations discussed the challenges of the new century. On May 26, they adopted the Millennium Forum Declaration and Agenda for Action, which was used as a bearing for the discussion on Millennium Forum. Moreover, the General Assembly has decided that a representative of the Millennium Forum may be included in the list of speakers for the plenary meetings of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

We can see that NGOs play a crucial role in today’s world.



**DO YOU GET INVOLVED?
How do you get involved in a non-governmental and non-profit**

organizations and charities? Do you volunteer somewhere? Do you contribute to collections? What else do you do?

If you want to help before Christmas and you do not know how, you can have a look at the article “When a gift means more” in an insert of *The Prague Post*, Holiday Guide, page 9 and get some ideas.

ACTIVITY: Your NGO

Work in groups:

Imagine you are starting an NGO. What will your NGO focus on? How would you help the society? (Remember, the NGO does not need to function on national level only, it can work on local level as well.) Who would be involved in your endeavors? How would you collect money? How would you use it? How would you collaborate with other NGOs? Would you try to include Agenda 21 into your plans?

Sources:

www.encarta.msn.com

www.neziskovsky.cz

Příručka občana, by The Center for democracy and free enterprise

www.un.org

DO YOU KNOW U.N. DAYS?

Do you know that the U.N. has designed a several days of the year with a special meaning? Here are some of them:

March 8 - International Women’s Day and United Nations Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace

March 21 - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 22 - World Water Day

April 7 - World Health Day

May 3 - World Press Freedom Day

May 15 - International Day of Families

May 31 - World No-Tobacco Day

June 5 - World Environment Day

June 20 - World Refugee Day

June 26 - International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking and International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

July 11 - World Population Day

August 12 - International Youth Day

August 23 - International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

September 8 - International Literacy Day

September 16 - International Day for

the Preservation of the Ozone Layer

September 21 - International Day of Peace

October 1 - International Day for Older Persons

October 5 - International World Teacher’s Day

October 10 - World Mental Health Day

October 16 - World Food Day

October 24 - United Nations Day and World Development Information Day

November 16 - International Day of Tolerance

November 20 - Universal Children’s Day and Africa Industrialization Day

November 25 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

December 1 - World AIDS Day

December 3 - International Day of Disabled Persons

December 10 - Human Rights Day

Year 2002 is an International Year of Mountains, International Year of Culture Heritage, and International Year of Ecotourism.

Year 2003 is an International Year of Freshwater.

You can get the whole list of these days and years on:

www.unac.org/en/news_events/un_days/index.asp

ACTIVITY FOR YOUR CLASS:

Choose one or two U.N. days that you like. Think about different ways of introducing the topic of the day to your school. Choose one activity and plan it properly, so that you can really organize it. (You can consider a school collection of money that will be sent to an NGO that is dealing with the issue, or you can organize a discussion on that topic (maybe you could consider inviting some professional in that field to lead the discussion), or you can prepare posters to remind other schoolmates about the problem. There are many possibilities.)



SMOKING

You've heard it time and time again; smoking is bad for you. Yet in light of all this information almost a quarter of the population of the Czech Republic are regular smokers. In an effort to get that number lower, here's some information that will hopefully keep you from starting to smoke or give you that final urge to quit if you already do.

Very few pupils are smokers when they start secondary school: among 11 year olds in 2000 only 1% were regular smokers. The likelihood of smoking increases with age so that by age 15 23% of pupils are regular smokers. The proportion of teenagers aged 11-15 who were regular smokers fell significantly from 11 per cent in 1998 to 9 per cent in 1999, followed by a slight increase to 10% in 2000. The overall reduction in **prevalence** has occurred mainly among 14 and 15 year olds – age groups which had shown a marked increase in **prevalence** in the mid 90s.



Smoking has more than 50 ways of making life a misery through illness and more than 20 ways of killing you. In general, smokers have poorer health than non-smokers. It has been estimated that, in England, 284,000 patients are admitted to NHS hospitals each year due to disease caused by smoking, occupying an average of 9,500 hospital beds every day. In addition, smoking related illness accounts for 8 million consultations with doctors and over 7 million prescriptions each year.

Half of all teenagers who are currently smoking will die from diseases caused by tobacco if they continue to smoke. One quarter will die after 70 years of age and one quarter before, with those dying before 70 losing on average 23 years of life. It is estimated that 60 million people worldwide, have died from tobacco-related diseases.

Smokers face a higher risk than non-smokers for a wide variety of illnesses, many of which may be fatal. However, many medical conditions associated with smoking, while they may not be fatal, may cause years of debilitating illness or other problems. Smokers are admitted to hospitals

twice as often as nonsmokers.

One in two long-term smokers will die prematurely as a result of smoking – half of these in middle age. Every year in the UK, about 120,000 people are killed by smoking, accounting for one fifth of all UK deaths. Most die from one of the three main diseases associated with cigarette smoking: lung cancer, chronic obstructive lung disease (bronchitis and emphysema) and coronary heart disease.

Deaths caused by smoking are six times higher than the 20,170 deaths arising from: road accidents (3,444); poisoning and overdose (2,663); other accidental deaths (8,986); murder and **manslaughter** (503); suicide (4,379); and HIV infection (195) in the UK during 1998. World-wide, about 4 million die prematurely each year as a result of smoking. Based on current trends, this will rise to 10 million a year by 2030.

Aside from all of the **nasty** side effects of smoking, cigarettes themselves are pretty disgusting things. Tobacco companies do their best to make it difficult for you to quit in many ways. Tobacco companies put ammonia in cigarettes which makes your brain absorb more nicotine than it normally would, making your body dependent upon high levels of nicotine and making you want to smoke more.

Many cigarettes contain licorice and cocoa, which sound innocent, except when you burn them they act as bronchodilators – which makes you **inhale** more smoke so the nicotine gets further into your body. Of kids who smoke, 86% smoke the three most heavily advertised brands. The majority of adult smokers don't smoke those brands. And of all people who have ever tried a cigarette, 88 percent tried their first cigarette by age 18.

Of course, smoking doesn't only effect the smoker. Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is responsible for approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths per year among nonsmokers. Of course, you are entitled to do what you want to your own body, but by smoking in public you are depriving

non-smokers of the right to choose not to smoke.

Finally, smoking is just unattractive. It makes you smell bad, your hair and skin look dull, and your fingers and teeth yellow. If you can see the effects of smoking on the outside or your body, just imagine what it's doing to your insides.

Vocabulary:

prevalence - *obecné rozšíření, panující zvyk*

manslaughter - *zabití (neúmyslné)*

nasty - *strašný, ošklivý, zlý*

inhale - *vdechovat*

ACTIVITIES:

What do you think about smoking? Do you smoke? If so, why? Have you ever tried to quit? Was it difficult? Talk to your classmates about what it felt like trying to quit.

Do you know of any places where you can't smoke? If you are a non-smoker, does it bother you that there are very few places where you can dine or socialize without having to inhale second-hand smoke?

Do a survey of your neighborhood. How many places are there for non-smokers to eat or socialize? Do the owners of these restaurants, bars or cafes care about the wishes of non-smokers? Can you think of anything that might get them to take non-smokers into account?

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