



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic



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Short country name "Česko"/"Czechia" to be entered in UN databases

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The name **"Czechia"** will not replace the full official name of the Czech Republic. It is simply the English version of the country's short name ("Česko") and as such it will be entered in the UN databases of country names. In fact, **"Česko" has officially been the Czech Republic's short name since 1993**. It is part of a national standard established in that year by the Czech Office for Surveying, Mapping and Cadastre and approved (from the linguistic perspective) by the Czech Language Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

The full country name "Czech Republic" ("Česká republika") will remain the country's official political name. "Czechia" will be used only as the English version of the short country name "Česko". It is up to each entity to decide whether to use the short version ("Česko/Czechia") or long version ("Česká republika/Czech Republic").

In some languages the Czech Republic's short name is already well established e.g. in French - la Tchéquie, Spanish - Chequia, German - Tschechien.

The formation of the name “Czechia”

“Czechia” is grammatically correct and approved by the Czech Language Institute. Historically, the name first appeared in a Latin text in 1602. Its use in English texts dates back to 1841 and 1856; in 1866 it was first used in Australian newspapers. Between 1918 and 1960 it commonly appeared in US press as an expression referring to the western part of Czechoslovakia – which actually is “Česko/Czechia” in the current sense of this word.

Czechia” is a standard Latin-derived word. The Latin suffix –ia appears quite often in English country names (e.g. Austria, Australia, Croatia, Virginia, California, Indonesia, Slovakia, Latvia, Colombia). As a matter of fact, it appears in the names of the historical “lands” – geographic entities forming the present-day Czech Republic: Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. “Czechia” may sound unfamiliar at first, but so certainly did many other geographic names of non-English origin that are now in common usage (Idaho, Utah, Massachusetts, Lithuania, Zimbabwe, Belarus, Croatia, etc.).

Why are names such as “Czech”, “Czechlands” and “Bohemia” all wrong?

The Czech Language Institute has identified several English variants of the short name for the Czech Republic: Czech, Czechland/Czechlands, Czechia. The first one is unacceptable for this purpose because it is already in common use as a demonym, the name of the Czech language, and an adjective. “Czechland” and “Czechlands” are correctly formed in linguistic terms; nevertheless they are ad hoc neologisms that might be understood as pointing back to the name of a historical composite state - Czech Lands. “Bohemia”, in turn, refers to only one of the historical “lands” forming the present-day Czech Republic and, unlike “Czechia”, does not include the remaining historical “lands” - Moravia and Silesia.

The “Czechia” vs. “Chechnya” problem:

One of the problems raised in this context is the risk of confusing “Czechia” with “Chechnya”. However, poor geographical knowledge cannot be a reason for not using a country’s name. “Czechia” resembles “Chechnya” just like the “Czech Republic” resembles the “Chechen Republic”. Moreover, “Chechnya” is not an independent state. This means that the risk of confusion (at international conferences or sports events) is negligible or zero. There are countries with even more similar-sounding names (Austria/Australia, Iran/Iraq, India/Indonesia, Mali/Malawi, Niger/Nigeria, Gambia/Zambia, Slovakia/Slovenia, or even with identical names (Georgia/Georgia); apparently, none of them considers it necessary to abandon their short name and strictly use their formal political name.

An interesting point is that “Czech” might also be mispronounced as [tʃe tʃ]. English has about 300 words in which “ch” is pronounced [k] – e.g. architect, anarchy, anchor, chemistry, chaos, mechanism. English pronunciation has no clear-cut rules and must be learned by listening.

No burden on the national budget or on EU funds

As the name Czechia is being added as the official short name and is not replacing the full official name, “Česká republika/Czech Republic” can still be used in all contexts. This means that nobody will incur any costs in this connection. There is no need to change corporate logos, promotional materials or “Made in” inscriptions on products. The change will not result in any costs payable from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The investment in the “Czech Republic - Land of Stories” campaign will not be lost. It is entirely up to the CzechTourism agency (the author of the campaign) whether it will use the long or the short name.

The czechia.eu domain

In connection with the plan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to request the United Nations to enter “Česko/Czechia” in the UN country name databases, the Ministry has reserved with the EURid (European Registry of Internet Domain Names) the free-of-charge domain czechia.eu, and will gradually move the country’s presentation to this new domain.