

Part X - One Working Day with...

Our series about working days of the Czech Academy staff in the times of epidemic is coming to the end. The last part is devoted to the Academy Director high counsellor Col. Ing. František Vlach, MBA, LL.M, Ing-Paed IGIP.

If you find it odd to have so many titles, be informed that Director has never stopped studying and he will be proud to get his Ph.D. soon. He started to work at the Academy 20 years ago*. Gradually promoted from an IT teacher, he became Director five years ago. Under his management, the Academy has developed into a modern training institution. The most significant changes have taken place this year. Director is looking forward to the students to enjoy the novelties.

It is Tuesday 1 December 2020. Director František Vlach enters the Academy at 6:20.

He proceeds to his office. Today his administrative assistant is out of office, so he lets his door open. Before the computer starts working, Director signs a number of certificates. His morning routine involves changing into his uniform, reading e-mails and a phone consultation with the Deputy Director General of the Czech Prison Service Brig.-Gen. Simon Michailidis, MBA.

When Director is getting ready for the final exam he is the committee chair at today, his First Deputy Col. Antonín Sůva appears at the door. There is a problem with the skype connection and outlook is not working either. The Head of IT Department Tomáš Větrovec needs time to restore the connection with the prisons. The examination schedule will most probably be disturbed. Antonín offers replacing Director at today's exam. Director accepts it and changes his plans for today.

This new situation enables Director to devote his time to Deputy Director General Brig.-Gen. Simon Michailidis who comes to the Academy to learn about the organization of the final exams on the spot and analyse the quality of preparedness of new uniformed staff for their assignments at prisons. Brig.-Gen. Michailidis and Col. Vlach discuss the plan of educational activities for the first term of 2021. It is clear that the face-to-face form will not take place yet. Training must be kept in the distance form.

When the top manager leaves at 10:00, an executive of a company IVPP** arrives to discuss the cooperation in the field of prison staff education within the MBA programme. Květuše Sluková, Ph.D. worked for the Prison Service for a long time in the past. For a few years she was František's colleague at the Academy. Their meeting takes place in a friendly atmosphere.

The next meeting starts at 10:40. This year, Director has successfully completed several projects of repairs and reconstructions. One of them is the renovation of a fitness room used by students and the Academy staff. Jan Michalec from the Headquarters and Filip Kraemer, a member of Logistics Department, come to consult the project completion as the ordered modern appliances are expected soon.

2020 has been an exceptional year also from the HR point of view. Quite a few staff members retired, younger teachers have applied. A psychologist Capt. Martin Antušák with a long penitentiary experience has to pass a final exam to become a teacher – officer. The examination committee is led by Director.

At 12:00 another meeting is called. This one is focused on the construction of an eating house, Director has been trying to build for five years. The Head of Logistics Department Dita Müllerová and her colleague Lenka Kohoutová look desperate when they inform about all the obstacles they come across. Getting a building permit in the Czech Republic is one of the hardest processes in Europe. In fact, it takes longer than in some African countries. Director is repeatedly asked for written explanations why it is important for the Academy – the only prison staff training centre in the Czech Republic – to have its own eating house including a kitchen.

A few days ago, the season of Advent started. Director would like a teacher Michal Čechoň to create New Year's Cards that will be sent to the Czech and foreign partner institutions. At 12:45 a photo-shoot is organized.

At 13:00 Director and his two deputies, Col. Antonín Sůva and Ing. Inka Mery, discuss HR issues.

There is about half an hour left for Director till another meeting starts, so he goes through his e-mails. He is glad to learn that the Agreement of Cooperation sent by post has reached the Institute of Education of the Slovak Prison and Guard Corps in Nitra. The document opens the door to the bilateral cooperation development. If the situation allows it, next year Slovak partners are expected for a short study visit at the Academy.

At 14:00 a teacher Vladimír Kupec comes to the Director's office. Vladimír decided to resign and Director would like to offer him a new job. Vladimír can be considered one of the fathers of the new simulation centre of the Academy. The building will be opened soon and a custodian is needed. Vladimír accepts this responsibility.

Before he leaves the Academy today, Director manages to write some more emails. At 15:00 Director and three of his colleagues he takes home in his car, finish their working day.

It is impossible to take a general portrait of Director's working days. During the epidemic he does not travel as often as usual. Most of working meetings and conferences including international ones are run online. Director is sorry about formal and informal meetings with his colleagues that have had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Teachers' Day or the Czech Penitentiary Day could not be celebrated. But he believes that each crisis brings new opportunities and the efforts he and his team put in the Academy's development will reveal when students are back at school.

* <https://www.vscr.cz/akademie-vs-cr/twenty-years-on-machova-street/>

** <http://www.ivpp.cz/>