

## The Czech Republic celebrates Excellence

*Every year The Czech Republic dedicates the month of November to Excellence celebrations. Seminars and conferences are found in all corners of the country with the purpose of improving the growth of all branches of the Czech society and industry. The culmination of the celebrations takes place when leading edge executives and organisations pay tribute to the high standards and excellence exhibited by the very best companies and individuals. The hosts of this event were the nation's president, the prime minister and the chairman of the senate. The place of venue was Prague Castle. This year 500 guests had been invited to attend the peak event; the award ceremony on 22 November where more than 40 prizes and awards were to be presented. New Future Formula was invited to attend by the highly successful Czech body for quality and excellence, the Czech Society for Quality, which has managed to set the stage for and foster a people's movement unlike anywhere else in Europe. This is a brief account of a day that will stay with us forever.*

**For many years, New Future Formula** has advocated that EFQM Business Excellence must be adhered to in a highly concrete and down-to-earth manner, meaning changes and results can be recreated over and over again while employees and business leaders continuously improve themselves - and always with a smile on their lips. We call this CBI - Continuous Business Improvement. When invited to give lectures in various parts of Europe, we readily accept because every time we share our stories and experiences, we learn something new and are fortunate to meet skilled and inspiring people.

**Every year in November the Czech Society for Quality organises** a number of seminars jointly with a host of other bodies and commercial enterprises. This year, Ellen Gerdi Andersen from New Future Formula was invited to speak on the very day when all the celebrations peaked, 22 November. This was a highlight to us all. There is no doubt that concepts such as "yearly improvement rates", "cycles" and "people's movement" provided the audience with new and inspiring perspectives on their efforts to embrace quality, excellence and CBI.

**The nationwide celebrations were attended by many of the leading figures of Czech society and industry** - not least the spectacular evening function at Prague's famous castle looming high above the city. The evening was hosted by none other than President of the Czech Republic, Milos Zeman, Prime Minister, Bohuslav Sobotka, and Chairman of the Senate, Milan Stech.

The guests of honour were those that procure excellent quality and excel. They were celebrated in an unpretentious, elegant and stately manner by way of speeches expressing recognition and the presentation of awards. In fact more than 40 awards were presented. The nation's leaders presented the awards to executives and employees from the winning Czech organisations. On stage was exhibited much joy at seeing each other again, warm handshaking and hearty cheek



kissing. Those were memorable moments of the kind that creates a strong network across the nooks and crannies of Czech commerce. The event exuded an interest in being open and sharing knowledge with one another. This is the corner stone of a Czech people's movement towards excellence. All attendants shared the joy of every single award winning organisation. Throughout the evening equally ample rounds of applause were given to everybody, also the very last award winners to climb the stage to receive their awards at a late hour.

Compared with the infinite number of never-ending trivial celebrations of the entertainment industry in old-fashioned Western Europe, the difference was compelling. This event was stylish, elegant and boasting culture whilst at the same time hailing meritocracy and the long-term, immense efforts that are almost invariably behind the extraordinary results of an individual's or an organisation's achievements. Results that inspire and are to the benefit of the rest of society from a long and a short term perspective.

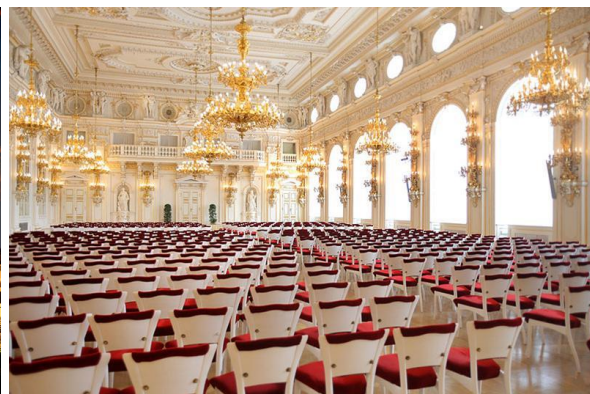
**The climax of the day** was of course when President Milos Zeman announced the winner and presented Miele Technika s.r.o. with the Czech Excellence Award. That evening the well-known Miele slogan "Immer besser", "Always better", took on an entirely new meaning. Perhaps you should add a new dishwasher from Czech Miele on your wish list for Christmas? It would seem a wise choice.

**We are very grateful that Mr Petr Koten**, CEO of the large, dynamic and highly successful Czech quality and excellence body, gave us the opportunity to enjoy this display of Czech excellence and to learn from an inspiring day and a lovely and memorable evening. A day and an evening like the 22 November go to show how far more interesting Europe has become over the past 25 years and how much has in fact improved. So full of zest and motivation in a time when much is so very insecure and blurred and the number of political distractions is too high to count.

**Perhaps the solution is "to walk the Czech talk" more?** Perhaps we should build strong and inspiring networks whose top performers are awarded distinct recognition, grant the politicians a facilitating role and draw on highly renowned artists to bind speeches and events together in a beautiful and spirited setting. This would motivate and set the focus! At any rate we are quite impressed with what the Czech Republic has managed to do and does. It is what European role models are made of.



*Prague Castle*



*"The Spanish Hall" where the quality awards were presented by the president, ministers and industrial leaders*





*President Milos Zeman arrives*



*CEO Petr Koten presents the quality award*



*Yours truly enjoys a glass of champagne*



*Państwa przedstawicielka rozkoszuje się lampką szampana*

