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CASH AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT COUNTRY REPORT

CZECH REPUBLIC

Executive Summary

Banking

The Czech central bank is the Czech National Bank (CNB). Bank supervision is performed by the CNB.

Balance of payment statistics are collated using a survey-based system managed by the CNB.

Resident entities are permitted to hold fully convertible domestic and foreign currency bank accounts domestically and outside of the Czech Republic (Czechia). Non-resident entities are also permitted to hold fully convertible domestic and foreign currency bank accounts within Czechia.

Czechia has ten majority Czech-owned banks, 14 majority foreign-owned banks and 10 credit unions. There is a significant foreign banking presence in Czechia: 26 foreign banks have also established branches in the country while 12 have representative offices.

Payments

Czechia's only national payment system is CERTIS.

The most important cashless payment instrument in Czechia, in terms of both volume and value, is the electronic credit transfer. The use of direct debits and card payments is increasing, especially in the retail sector. However, individuals still generally prefer to make payments with cash. In addition, the Czech Post Office (Czech Post) can provide payment facilities similar to those offered by banking institutions.

Liquidity Management

Czech-based companies have access to a variety of short-term funding alternatives. There is also a limited range of short-term investment instruments available.

Cash concentration is the more common technique used by Czech companies to manage company and group liquidity. Of the available techniques, zero-balancing is the most commonly used.

Notional pooling is available in Czechia. However, it is less commonly used than cash concentration. It can be difficult to obtain inter-company cross-guarantees in Czechia, limiting the offering of multiple entity notional pooling to larger banks.

Trade Finance

Czechia applies the European Union (EU) customs code and all its associated regulations and commercial policies. All trade is free from restriction between Czechia and its fellow European Economic Area (EEA) member states.

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PNC's International Services

PNC can bring together treasury management, foreign exchange, trade finance and credit capabilities to support your international needs in a coordinated and collaborative way.

International Funds Transfers

International Funds Transfers to over 130 countries in USD and foreign currency can be accessed through PINACLE®, PNC's top-rated, online corporate banking portal.

Multicurrency Accounts

Set up demand deposit accounts that hold foreign currency instead of U.S. dollars. These accounts offer a simple and integrated way to manage and move money denominated in more than 30 currencies, including offshore Chinese Renminbi. You can easily view deposit and withdrawal details through PINACLE.

PNC Bank Canada Branch ("PNC Canada")

PNC Bank, through its full service branch in Canada, can help you succeed in this important market. PNC Canada offers a full suite of products including payables, receivables, lending, and specialized financing to help streamline cross border operations.

Multibank Services

PNC's Multibank Services provide you with balances and activity for all your accounts held with PNC and other financial institutions around the world. PINACLE's Information Reporting module can give you a quick snapshot of your international cash position, including USD equivalent value, using indicative exchange rates for all your account balances. You can also initiate Multibank Transfer Requests (MT101s), and reduce the time and expense associated with subscribing to a number of balance reporting and transaction systems.

Establish accounts in foreign countries

Establishing good banking relationships in the countries where you do business can simplify your international transactions. PNC offers two service models to help you open and manage accounts at other banks in countries outside the United States.

- PNC Gateway Direct comprises an increasing number of banks located in many European countries and parts of Latin America. PNC's team will serve as a

point of contact for setting up the account helping with any language and time barriers and will continue to serve as an intermediary between you and the bank you select. You can access reporting and make transfers via PINACLE.

- PNC's Gateway Referral service can connect you to a correspondent banking network that comprises more than 1,200 relationships in 115 countries.

Foreign Exchange Risk Management

PNC's senior foreign exchange consultants can help you develop a risk management strategy to mitigate the risk of exchange rate swings so you can more effectively secure pricing and costs, potentially increasing profits and reducing expenses.

Trade Services

PNC's Import, Export, and Standby Letters of Credit can deliver security and convenience, along with the backing of an institution with unique strengths in the international banking arena. PNC also provides Documentary Collections services to both importers and exporters, helping to reduce payment risk and control the exchange of shipping documents. We assign an experienced international trade expert to each account, so you always know your contact at PNC and receive best-in-class service. And PNC delivers it all to your computer through advanced technology, resulting in fast and efficient transaction initiation and tracking.

Trade Finance

For more than 30 years, PNC has worked with the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank) and consistently ranks as a top originator of loans backed by the Ex-Im Bank both by dollar volume and number of transactions.¹

Economic Updates

Receive regular Economic Updates from our senior economist by going to pnc.com/economicreports.

(1) Information compiled from Freedom of Information Act resources.

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Financial Environment

Country Information

Geographical Information

Capital	Prague
Area	78,867 km ²
Population	10.67 million
Official language	Czech
Political leaders	Head of state — President Milos Zeman (since March 8, 2013). Head of government — Prime Minister Andrej Babiš (since December 6, 2017).

Business Information

Currency (+ SWIFT code)	Czech koruna (CZK)
Business/Banking hours	08:00-17:00 (Mon-Fri)
Bank holidays	2019 — April 19, 22, May 1, 8, July 5, 6, September 28, October 28, November 17, December 24-26 2020 — January 1, April 10, 13, May 1, 8, July 5, 6, September 28, October 28, November 17, December 24-26 2021 — January 1, April 2, 5, May 1, 8, July 5, 6, September 28, October 28, November 17, December 24-26 <small>Source: www.goodbusinessday.com</small>
International dialing code	+ 420

Country Credit Rating

FitchRatings last rated Czechia on August 3, 2018 for issuer default as:

Term	Issuer Default Rating
Short	F1 +
Long	AA -
Long-term rating outlook	Stable

Source: www.fitchratings.com, January 2019.

Economic Statistics

Economics Table		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP per capita	(USD)	19,567	19,746	19,475	17,249	18,190
GDP	(CZK billion)	4,042	4,077	4,261	4,472	4,715
GDP	(USD billion)	206	208	205	182	193
GDP volume growth*	(%)	- 0.9	- 0.5	+ 2.7	+ 5.3	+ 2.5
BoP (goods, services & income) as % GDP		- 0.9	- 0.3	+ 0.4	+ 0.9	+ 1.7
Consumer inflation*	(%)	+ 3.3	+ 1.4	+ 0.3	+ 0.3	+ 0.6
Population	(million)	10.55	10.55	10.54	10.54	10.61
Unemployment	(%)	8.6	7.7	6.1	5.1	4.0
Interest rate (local currency MMR)[†]	(%)	0.98	0.45	0.36	0.31	0.29
Exchange rate[‡]	(CZK per USD)[†]	19.578	19.571	20.758	24.599	24.440

		2017		2018		
		Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3
GDP per capita	(USD)	-	20,362	-	-	-
GDP	(CZK billion)	-	5,055	-	-	-
GDP	(USD billion)	-	216	-	-	-
GDP volume growth*	(%)	+ 5.0	+ 4.5	+ 4.0	+ 2.3	+ 2.4
BoP (goods, services & income) as % GDP		-	+ 1.8	-	-	-
Consumer inflation*	(%)	+ 2.6	+ 2.5	+ 1.9	+ 2.3	+ 2.4
Population	(million)	-	10.62	-	-	-
Unemployment	(%)	2.5	2.9	2.3	2.3	NA
Interest rate (local currency MMR)[†]	(%)	0.69	0.42	0.87	0.99	1.47
Exchange rate[‡]	(CZK per USD)[†]	21.783	23.376	20.663	21.485	22.107

*Year on year. [†]End period. [‡]Official rate.

Sources: *International Financial Statistics*, IMF, January 2019 and 2018 Yearbook.

Sectoral Contribution as a % of GDP

Agriculture - 2.3%

Industry - 36.9%

Services - 60.8% (2017 estimate)

Major Export Markets

Germany (32.8%), Slovakia (7.8%), Poland (6.1%), France (5.1%), UK (4.9%), Austria (4.4%), Italy (4.1%)

Major Import Sources

Germany (29.8%), Poland (9.1%), China (7.4%), Slovakia (5.8%), Netherlands (5.3%), Italy (4%)

Political and Economic Background

Economics

Interest Rate Management Policy

Czechia's base interest (repo) rate is set through the Czech National Bank (CNB). Its main objective is to maintain price stability, defined as keeping headline inflation (i.e. the consumer price index) at a percentage point above or below 2%. Interest rates are set at eight monthly meetings a year of the CNB's Bank Board.

Foreign Exchange Rate Management Policy

The exchange rate is classified as free floating. It is subject to supply and demand in the foreign exchange market; however, the CNB may intervene to contain volatile swings in the exchange rate.

Major Economic Issues

A leading economy in Central Europe, Czechia recorded growth of 4.5% in 2017. The IMF has forecast GDP growth of 3.1% for both 2018 and 2019. Growth has been supported by strong private consumption, driven by a robust labor market (1.9% unemployment rate in November 2018, the lowest rate ever recorded in the EU) and rising wages (real monthly wages rose 6% year-on-year in Q3 2018). These conditions also helped the country to reach a budget surplus of USD 2.38 billion in 2016, its first surplus since 1995. However, low unemployment, surging wages and soaring house prices are pushing inflation higher, prompting the CNB to tighten monetary policy after years of policy easing. In August 2017, the central bank raised its base interest (repo) rate from 0.05% to 0.25%, the first increase since 2008, and again, in November 2017, to 0.50%. Most recently, the central bank raised its repo rate to 0.75% in February 2018, to 1% in June 2018, to 1.50% in September 2018 and to 1.75% in November 2018.

Czechia is the 33th largest exporter of goods globally, exporting electrical equipment, vehicles and industrial machinery. Germany (32.8%), Slovakia (7.8%) and Poland (6.1%) are its main export markets.

In recent years, the Czech government has implemented a package of measures aimed at controlling the budget deficit. These have included changes to entitlements, family benefits and pensions, as well as a reduction in personal income tax and an increase in indirect taxation. It is expected that a part of the budget surplus will be used, in part, to pay down state debt, currently 34% of GDP. In September 2018, the Czech government approved the draft state budget for 2019, proposing a budget deficit of CZK 40 billion. The central budget proposals, which focus on investment and growth of pensions and salaries in the state administration, still need to be approved by legislators.

On April 6, 2017 the central bank ended the CZK's peg with the euro, thereby allowing the currency to appreciate. The CZK had been kept as close as possible to CZK 27 against the euro

since 2013, in order to keep the CZK weak. The Czech Republic intended to join the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) II in 2009, but it failed to meet the joining criteria as a result of its budget deficit. The government has yet to name a new target date for joining the ERM II and eurozone.

Politics

Government Structure

Political power resides mainly with the Parliament of the Czech Republic and cabinet under the terms of its constitution ratified in 1992.

The national government is based in Prague. The Czech Republic formally separated from the Slovak Republic in 1993. The country adopted Czechia as its formal short name in July 2016.

Czechia is divided into 13 regions and the capital city of Prague, within which there are also local municipal and district councils.

The president is the head of state, but exercises limited executive power.

Executive

At national level, the executive is headed by the prime minister. The prime minister forms a government from the parliament and is accepted by the president.

The new minority government of Prime Minister Andrej Babiš government, which took office in June 2018, is a coalition of his liberal ANO 2011 movement and the center-left Social Democrats (Czech Social Democratic Party, ČSSD).

President Milos Zeman was directly elected as head of state in January and took office on March 8, 2013. He was re-elected for a second term in January 2018. The president is elected for a five-year term. The next presidential election is scheduled for January 2023.

Legislature

At national level, the legislature has two houses.

The 200-member Poslanecka Snemovna, or Chamber of Deputies, is elected no later than every four years by proportional representation.

The 81-member Senat, or Senate, is elected for six-year terms by simple majority voting. One-third of the seats are contested every two years.

The next election to the Chamber of Deputies is scheduled for October 2021, while the next election to the Senate is scheduled for October 2020.

International Memberships

Czechia is a member of the EU, joining in 2004. It is also a member of the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Major Political Issues

Czechia joined the EU in 2004, but in 2016, anti-EU sentiment within the country led some MPs, as well as President Zeman, to call for a Cexit-style referendum in 2017. Relations with the EU have been tested over the country's response to the migrant crisis, with the Czech government strongly resisting a quota system for resettling refugees as proposed by the EU (to date it has accepted just a dozen migrants out of the 2,691 migrants the EU requested). The Czech government's refusal to cooperate with the relocation agreement has led the EU to launch infringement procedures against the country. More broadly the government has questioned the EU's fundamental principle of the freedom of movement within the EU.

In October 2017, populist candidate Andrej Babiš and his centrist movement ANO (Action for Dissatisfied Citizens), which means "Yes" in Czech, won the country's general election with 29.6% of the vote, almost 20 percentage points ahead of their nearest rival, shifting the country to the right. The conservative Civic Democrats took second place with 11.3% of the vote, ahead of the anti-establishment group Czech Pirate Party (10.8%) and the far-right, anti-EU Freedom and Free Democracy Party (SPD) (10.6%). The Social Democrats (ČSSD), who had finished first in the previous election and led the previous coalition which also included ANO and the Christian Democrats, came in sixth with 7.3% of the vote, down from 20.5% in 2013, after failing to capitalize on the country's rapid growth, balanced budget and low unemployment. The Christian Democrats saw their share drop from 6.8% to 5.8%.

In November 2017, the center-left government of Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka resigned making way for Mr Babiš, a billionaire businessman who has been called the "Czech Trump" by some media outlets because of his business empire and populism, to become prime minister.

Mr Babiš was appointed prime minister on December 6, 2017 and his minority government, which has failed to form a coalition because of allegations that one of Mr Babiš's companies fraudulently obtained EUR 2million in EU funds, was sworn in on December 13, 2017. However, the new government resigned on December 17, 2017, a day after losing a vote of confidence in parliament. However, President Milos Zeman, who won a close presidential election run-off against liberal opponent Jiří Drahoš on January 26-27, 2018, and is tasked with appointing prime ministers, has given Mr Babiš, a close ally, a second chance to form a government. In June 2018, Mr Babiš, who had led a caretaker government since January, agreed a coalition with the Social Democrats to form a new government. However, with just 93 of 200 seats in the lower house, the coalition also persuaded the Communists to provide their support, giving the party its first say in national politics since 1989. In July 2018, the new government won a mandatory confidence vote. In November 2018, Mr Babiš and his minority coalition government survived a no-confidence vote which was filed by six opposition parties due to fraud allegations against Mr Babiš involving EU subsidies.

Taxation

Resident/Non-resident

A company is considered resident if its registered office or place of effective management is located in Czechia.

Tax Authorities

Financial Office (including Specialized Financial Office for selected tax subjects); Customs Office; General Financial Directorate; Appellate Financial Directorate; Customs Directorates; and Ministry of Finance.

Tax Year / Filing

The tax year generally corresponds to the calendar year, but may be changed to any 12 consecutive calendar months by notifying the financial authorities.

The deadline for filing the tax return is the first day of the fourth month after the end of the taxable period. The deadline may be extended to the first day of the seventh month if the tax return is prepared and submitted by a registered tax advisor under a power of attorney. The power of attorney must be filed with the financial office by the original tax return filing deadline. A three-month extension to file a return may be granted at the discretion of the tax authorities. The deadline for companies that are subject to statutory audits is automatically extended to the first day of the seventh month after the end of the taxable period.

Two or four advance payments of tax are required, depending on the previous year's tax liability.

If the taxpayer is an audited company or is in possession of a "data box," the tax return must be filed electronically.

Consolidated returns are not permitted; each company must file a separate return.

Corporate Taxation

Resident companies are subject to taxation on their worldwide income at a rate of 19%. A rate of 5% applies to the profits of investment funds, and mutual funds (including qualified investor funds) and a 0% rate applies to pension funds (with certain exemptions).

Non-resident companies are only taxed on Czech-sourced income, and are generally subject to the same taxation rules as residents. Proceeds from the transfer of shares in a Czech tax-resident company are always treated as Czech-sourced income regardless of the tax residency of the transferor/transferee. Czech tax law, however, requires that certain types of income of non-resident companies be subject to withholding tax, even though withholding is not required when payments of a similar type of income are made to Czech tax residents.

Investment incentives are available in certain circumstances and include 10-year tax relief, job creation grants, grants for retraining employees and property-related incentives. Additional deductions of R&D costs also may apply.

Ten per cent of gross taxable income arising in Czechia (other than that subject to withholding tax) and paid to non-residents must be withheld by resident payers as 'securing tax'. A reduced rate of 1% applies to the income of non-residents derived from the sale of financial instruments (securities and derivatives). The securing tax withheld generally serves as a tax advance payment for the final tax liability of the foreign recipient of the Czech-sourced income. If the non-resident recipient of such taxable income does not meet the obligation to file a tax return in Czechia, the securing tax can be used to offset the non-resident's final tax liability in Czechia. A securing tax liability may be eliminated if the recipient company is located in a country with which Czechia has a double taxation treaty. Furthermore, securing tax does not apply to recipients who are either EU tax residents or tax residents of other countries in the European Economic Area (EEA).

There is no surtax or alternative minimum tax.

Losses may be carried forward for five years. The carryback of losses is not permitted. Several anti-abuse provisions govern the utilization of tax losses; for example, tax losses may not be deducted when there has been a substantial change in the composition of the persons participating in the equity or control of the company, unless 80% of income is generated by the same activity for which the tax loss was assessed.

Czechia has implemented the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive. Generally speaking, if a parent company holds at least a 10% share for at least 12 consecutive months in another company (a subsidiary), the distributions of profit are exempt from tax in Czechia. Similarly, any gain or loss from the transfer of participation in a subsidiary is also tax-exempt.

Advance Tax Ruling Availability

A taxpayer may request an advanced tax ruling in certain cases which are stipulated by law. The most common rulings are:

- the method of establishing transfer prices;
- determination of a research and development deduction; and
- the possibility of utilizing tax losses carried forward.

The binding ruling is effective for a maximum period of three years.

As from January 1, 2018, a new type of binding ruling is introduced on the allocation of profits to a permanent establishment.

Thin Capitalization

Thin capitalization rules apply to loans and credits from a related party and to loans/credits from an unrelated party where a related party is obliged to grant a corresponding loan/credit to the unrelated party (“back-to-back financing”). The proportion of loans/credit to equity must not exceed 4:1 (6:1 if the debtor is a bank or an insurance company). Financing expenses related to loans/credits where the interest or the maturity is contingent on the profit of the debtor are non-deductible.

Under the current Czech thin capitalization rules, parties are deemed to be related when one company directly or indirectly participates in another company’s capital or voting rights, or when one company participates in the capital or voting rights of both companies, whereby that company has a holding of at least 25%. Parties are also related by having the same personnel participating in their management or supervision. Parties may be deemed to be related if they entered into an agreement with the intention to decrease their tax liability.

Transfer Pricing

Czechia’s transfer pricing rules apply to transactions between related parties according to the arm’s-length principle. If prices in a transaction involving related parties differ from current market prices and the difference cannot be justified, the market prices are used for tax purposes. Advance pricing agreements may be obtained from the tax authorities.

Certain companies are required to attach an appendix to the income tax return that lists and summarizes all related party transactions that took place during the tax year.

Capital Gains Tax

Capital gains are subject to corporate income tax. Capital gains chargeable to corporate income tax are generally calculated by deducting the cost from the disposal proceeds.

Capital gains from the disposal of a shareholding in a subsidiary by a parent company may be exempt from corporate income tax under the local implementation of participation exemption.

If a foreign owner sells an investment in a company based in Czechia, gains will be subject to tax as part of the aggregate tax base, regardless of the buyer’s residence, unless otherwise provided in an application tax treaty. The exemption applies when the seller is a company having an eligible legal form that is an EU tax resident (including Czechia) that holds at least a 10% interest in the sold company for an uninterrupted period of 12 months. The participation exemption for non-EU resident companies on capital gains is applicable under the same requirements as apply to the participation exemption for dividends.

Stamp Duty

There is no stamp duty.

Withholding Tax (Subject to Tax Treaties)

Payments to:	Interest	Dividends	Royalties	Other income	Branch Remittances
Resident companies	None	0% / 15%	None	None	NA
Non-resident companies in the EU/EEA, and non-residents outside the EU/EEA with a valid tax treaty or TIEA	0-15%	0-15%	0-15%	0-15%	None
Non-residents outside the EU/EEA without a valid tax treaty or TIEA	35%	35%	35%	35%	None

Dividends paid to a non-resident are subject to a 15%/35% withholding tax, unless the rate is reduced under an applicable tax treaty. The standard rate is 15%, with the 35% rate levied on income paid to a tax haven (i.e. a jurisdiction that has not concluded a tax treaty or an agreement for the exchange of information on tax issues with Czechia).

Under the EU parent-subsidiary directive, dividends paid by a Czech company to a parent company located in another EU member state are exempt from withholding tax if the parent company maintains a holding of at least 10% of the distributing company for an uninterrupted period of at least 12 months. The exemption also applies to dividends paid to a parent company from the EEA or Switzerland.

Interest paid to a non-resident is subject to a 15% withholding tax, unless the rate is reduced under a tax treaty or exempt under the EU interest and royalties directive (or a similar measure for the EEA or Switzerland). The standard rate is 15%, with the 35% rate levied on income paid to a tax haven (i.e. a jurisdiction that has not concluded a tax treaty or an agreement for the exchange of information on tax issues with Czechia).

Taxpayers from EU/EEA member states are allowed to file a tax return at year end to deduct costs related to interest payments.

Royalties paid to a non-resident are subject to a 15% withholding tax, unless the rate is reduced under a tax treaty or exemption is available under the EU interest and royalties directive (or a similar measure for the EEA or Switzerland). The standard rate is 15%, with the 35% rate levied on income paid to a tax haven (i.e. a jurisdiction that has not concluded a tax treaty or an agreement for the exchange of information on tax issues with Czechia).

Income paid to a non-resident for technical services rendered in Czechia is subject to a 15%/35% withholding tax that is generally precluded by a tax treaty (although the treaty with India allows a 10% withholding tax) or if a service permanent establishment (PE) is created (generally after six

months of rendering services in the Czech territory). In the latter case, no withholding tax applies, but the PE is taxable on a net basis at 19%.

Tax Treaties/Tax Information Exchange Agreements (TIEAs)

Czechia has exchange of information relationships with 104 jurisdictions through 90 double tax treaties and 14 TIEAs (www.eoi-tax.org, January 2019).

On January 27, 2016, Czechia, as part of the OECD/G20 Base Erosion and Profit Shift (BEPS) initiative, signed a multilateral co-operation agreement with 30 other countries (“the MCAA”). Under this multilateral agreement, information will be exchanged between tax administrations, giving them a single, global picture on some key indicators of economic activity within multinational enterprises (MNE).

With Country-by-Country reporting, tax administrations of jurisdictions where a company operates will have aggregate information annually relating to the global allocation of income and taxes paid, together with other indicators of the location of economic activity within the MNE group. It will also cover information about which entities do business in a particular jurisdiction and the business activities each entity engages in. The information will be collected by the country of residence of the MNE group, and will then be exchanged through exchange of information supported by such agreements as the MCAA. First exchanges under the MCAA will start in 2017-2018 on 2016 information. There are 68 signatory countries to date.

Sales Taxes/VAT (including Financial Services)

The registration threshold for VAT is CZK 1 million, i.e. all taxable entities with supplies exceeding this amount for 12 consecutive months are obliged to register for VAT. If a person performs only VAT-exempt supplies, the obligation to register for VAT does not arise.

There is no registration threshold for non-established entities (entities without a permanent place of business) and branches. These entities must register for VAT upon receiving their first provision of taxable supplies in Czechia. The reverse charge mechanism applies as a general rule for business-to-business services. However, certain exceptions apply.

The standard VAT rate is currently 21% and reduced rates are 0%, 10% and 15%. The reduced VAT rates apply to a restricted list of goods and services.

VAT is levied on imported goods at the same rates as domestic goods. Exporting goods to non-EU countries is an exempt supply.

VAT exemption applies to specific types of supplies. Financial and insurance services are VAT-exempt without the right to VAT recovery.

As from 2016, taxable entities must submit local sales/purchases reports that will enable the authorities to match sales with purchases. Taxpayers also must report supplies received from other EU member states and even supplies for private purposes, for which only an internal document usually is issued.

Financial Transactions/Banking Services Tax

No specific transactions or banking services taxes are applicable in Czechia.

Cash Pooling

No specific tax rules apply to cash pooling in Czechia. However, the areas which need to be specifically considered in the case of cash pooling are thin capitalization, transfer pricing and withholding taxes.

Real Estate Tax

A real estate tax is levied on the occupation of real property or plots of land. The rate depends mainly on the size of the land (including paved surfaces as a special type of land).

The only transfer tax is real estate transfer tax at a rate of 4%.

Payroll and Social Security Taxes

There is no payroll tax payable by employers.

Under Czech law, Czech legal entities and branch offices of foreign entities are required to make contributions to the Czech social security and health insurance systems to the amount of 34% of the gross remuneration of all locally employed employees subject to the Czech social security system (9% to the state health insurance funds and 25% to the state social security funds).

The mandatory contributions are fully deductible for corporate income tax purposes provided that they are paid before the end of the first month of the following taxable period.

The amount of social security and health insurance contributions made by the employee is 11%.

All tax information supplied by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and Deloitte Highlight 2018 (www.deloitte.com).

Cash Management

Banking System

Banking Regulation

Banking Supervision

Central bank

The Czech central bank is the Czech National Bank (CNB). It is based in Prague and its authority as an independent institution derives from the 1993 Czech National Bank Act and its amendments.

Within Czechia, it is the banker to the government and to other banks. It issues currency, sets monetary policy, manages the payment system, regulates the banking sector and generally supports Czech government economic policy, though it does maintain its independence.

The main objective of the CNB is to maintain price stability.

Other banking supervision bodies

Bank supervision is performed by the CNB, which is also responsible for supervising securities firms, insurance companies, pension funds, credit unions, bureaux de change and payment system institutions.

Central Bank Reporting

General

Czechia replaced mandatory central bank reporting requirements in January 2008, with a survey of selected subjects as the means of collating balance of payment statistics.

What transactions - listed

The CNB gathers financial account data, income balance data, and data on a selected range of services from companies and institutions selected to report. The Czech Statistical Office gathers data on other current account transactions.

Transaction data is collected in the following categories:

- Transfers between resident and non-resident entities.
- All transactions on residents' accounts held abroad.
- Any bond issuance abroad.

The CNB can request further supporting documentation for any transactions resulting from foreign trade.

Data is collected on direct investments, financial credits from non-residents, foreign securities and associated collections, and financial market operations.

Whom responsible

The resident entity selected as part of a representative sample of companies is ultimately responsible for the transmission of the required information.

The CNB collects data on inward and outward direct investment via annual surveys, on portfolio investment via monthly reporting by a sample of brokers and bonds issued by Czech residents abroad, and through quarterly surveys of selected non-bank institutions covering financial loans, trade credits, foreign direct investment, accounts abroad and future debt service payments.

Quarterly data must be submitted within 75 days of the end of the quarter, while monthly data must be submitted within 6 weeks of the end of the month.

Additional reporting for liquidity management schemes

At present, there are no additional reporting requirements.

Exchange Controls

Exchange structure

The Czech koruna has a floating exchange rate arrangement; its exchange rate is determined by supply and demand in the open market. The CNB may intervene to control any volatile swings in the exchange rate.

Czechia has not yet set a date for adoption of the euro (EUR) or participation in the ERM II (European Exchange Rate Mechanism).

Exchange tax

There is no exchange tax.

Exchange subsidy

There is no exchange subsidy.

Forward foreign exchange market

There are no restrictions on forward foreign exchange markets.

Capital flows

Ministry of Finance approval is required for foreign investment from outside the EU in the air transport sector (when it exceeds 49% in an airline), and in lotteries.

Loans, interest and repayments

Restrictions apply to financial loans from resident insurance companies to non-residents, if the assets cover over 5% of their technical reserves (10% if the non-resident is from within the EU), and from resident private pension funds to non-residents (other than the governments and central banks of OECD member countries).

Royalties and other fees

There are no restrictions.

Profit remittance

There are no restrictions.

Bank Account Rules

Resident entities are permitted to hold fully convertible domestic and foreign currency bank accounts domestically and outside of Czechia.

Non-resident entities are permitted to hold fully convertible domestic and foreign currency bank accounts within Czechia. Non-residents are also permitted to hold domestic currency accounts outside of Czechia.

To open a bank account, a company must supply a copy of its registration documents along with the appropriate account opening documentation.

Anti-money Laundering and Counter-terrorist Financing

- Czechia has enacted anti-money laundering legislation, including legislation implementing the fourth EU Directive, and counter-terrorist financing legislation (Act 253 of 2008 Coll., as amended, Act 69/2006 Coll., Regulation (EC) 1889/2005, Regulation (EC) 1781/2006 and Decree 281/2008 Coll., as amended). New rules for banks under the Amendment to the Anti-Money Laundering Act (the Amendment) came into effect on January 1, 2017. The Amendment gives certain discretion to the banks when evaluating the application of relevant provisions to individual cases in their day-to-day activity. The Amendment also introduces changes regarding the customer due diligence process.
- The 5th EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive (Directive (EU) 2018/843) entered into force on July 9, 2018, amending the 4th EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive, and member states must transpose this Directive into national law by January 10, 2020.
- Czechia is a member of the Council of Europe MONEYVAL Select Committee, which is an associate member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and observes most of the FATF+49 standards.
- Czechia has established a financial intelligence unit (FIU), the Financial Analytical Unit (FAU-CR), which is a member of the Egmont Group.
- Account opening procedures require formal identification of the account holder. Natural persons are identified with reference to a valid verified identification card while legal persons are identified with respect to their registration documentation.
- Financial institutions are required to identify the persons acting on behalf of the legal entity as well as the beneficial owner.

- Customers must also be identified when entering an agreement to open a safety deposit box or storing valuables in a bank's own safety box.
- When a third party holding a power of attorney represents a customer in a transaction, both the customer and the third party must be identified by the financial institution and a copy of the authority to represent must be provided.
- Financial institutions must maintain the validity of customer information so that the level of risk can be assessed.
- Individuals must be identified where the regular amount of premium of life insurance due annually reaches EUR 1,000 or there is a one-off premium of EUR 2,500.
- Financial institutions in the broadest sense are required to report suspicious transactions to the FAU-CR within five days of the transaction taking place.
- All financial and credit institutions have to identify customers performing transactions exceeding EUR 1,000.
- Individuals sending or receiving financial instruments or commodities of high value by mail exceeding EUR 10,000 across the country borders in a single action or multiple actions aggregating thereto over twelve months, must declare this to the customs authorities.
- Individuals entering or exiting the EU must declare currency of EUR 10,000 to the customs authorities.
- Records must be kept for 10 years after the completion of the transaction or the termination of the transaction.

Data as at January 2019.

Banking Sector Structure

Major Domestic Banks

Bank	Total assets (USD million) December 31, 2017
Ceska Sporitelna	62,422
Ceskoslovenska obchodni banka (CSOB) Ceska Sporitelna	61,782
Komercni banka	47,151
UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia	31,562
Raiffeisenbank	16,094
PPF banka	10,094
J&T Banka	6,715

Source: www.accuity.com

Overall Trend

The Czech banking system is well capitalized, resilient and stable. Remarkably, compared to many of its European neighbors, it has maintained profitability throughout and since the global financial crisis.

Czechia has 48 banking institutions, including five building societies. Of these, ten are majority-Czech owned (the Czech Export Bank and Czech-Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank are state-owned) and 14 are majority foreign-owned. There is a significant foreign banking presence in Czechia - 26 foreign banks have established branches in the country and 12 have representative offices; a number of international cash management banks operate in the country either through an established branch, an acquisition of a local bank or through partnerships with third-party banks. There are also nine credit unions.

There are three main domestic banks, providing the full range of banking services to corporate clients - Československá obchodní banka (CSOB), owned by KBC, the Belgian bancassurance group, Česká spořitelna (Czech Savings Bank), owned by Austria's Erste Bank and Komerční banka, majority owned by France's Société Générale. Over 80% of the banking sector is in foreign hands.

The CNB revoked the license of Russian-owned ERB Bank in October 2016, citing exposure violations with regard to bond investments, poor risk management, and lack of controls.

Payment Systems

Overview

Czechia's national payment system is Czech Express Real-Time Interbank Gross Settlement (CERTIS). Operated by the CNB, CERTIS is the country's real-time gross settlement system and processes all CZK-denominated payments, regardless of value or format. This means that collecting banks must electronically convert any paper-based instruments such as checks before they can be cleared via CERTIS.

EUR-denominated payments can be processed by either EBA Clearing's clearing systems or, like other foreign currency payments, bilaterally between banks.

The European Payments Council's SCTInt scheme (a pan-European 24/7 instant payment scheme for SEPA credit transfers) was launched in November 2017. The scheme allows the transfer of money, initially up to EUR 15,000, to another account in less than 10 seconds.

In December 2017, the CNB announced a plan to develop a nationwide instant fund transfer system by the end of 2018. The system, which enables individuals to transfer up to CZK 400,000 in real time 24 hours a day, seven days a week, launched in November 2018.

High- and low-value

Name of system	CERTIS
Settlement type	Real-time gross settlement
Settlement cycle	<p>Payments can be submitted from 17:00 CET while settlement takes place from midnight. Payments are settled in real time with immediate finality.</p> <p>High-priority payments must be settled on a same-day basis. Low-priority transactions are not always settled on the same day. Instant payments can be submitted between 15:00 CET on T-1 and 15:00 CET on T through the XAMOS system.</p>
Links to other systems	NA
Payments processed	All payments denominated in CZK.
Currency of payments processed	CZK
Value and other limits to processing	There are no value thresholds.
Operating hours	24 hours per day
System holidays	The system is open on all Czech business days.
Cut-off times	<p>Customer payments = 15:30 CET</p> <p>Interbank payments = 16:00 CET</p> <p>Instant payments = 15:00 CET</p>
Participants	48 direct participants; licensed banks and the CNB participate directly. Other institutions participate indirectly via direct participant banks. CERTIS also has five ancillary systems (“third parties”).
Access to system	<p>Access is through the telecommunications network. CERTIS operates the browser-based CERTIS-AMOS System (AMOS), which provides information on current balances, individual payments and queued payments to CERTIS participants. AMOS also enables electronic signatures and data encryption and the electronic submission and processing of data without intervention from the CNB.</p> <p>XAMOS is an application interface enabling direct participants to transmit and receive instant payments and enquiry about instant payment processing status and system participants.</p>
Future developments	<p>The CNB has developed a nationwide instant fund transfer system enabling individuals to transfer up to CZK 400,000 in real time 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The new system was launched in November 2018.</p> <p>As there is currently no date planned for joining the eurozone, there are no plans as yet for the Czech Republic to migrate to TARGET2.</p>

Payment and Collection Instruments

Overview and Trends

The most important cashless payment instruments in Czechia are electronic credit transfers, the use of which has grown with the increased adoption of electronic and internet banking. Direct debits and card payments are increasing rapidly, especially in the retail sector.

All debit cards issued by banks in Czechia are Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA)-compliant. The country's banks offer pan-European SEPA credit transfers (SCTs) for EUR-denominated payments and SEPA direct debits (SDDs).

In January 2016, a Revised Directive on Payment Services (PSD2) entered into force. The overall objective of the PSD2 is to increase the competition on the European Union payment market, facilitate innovative payment services and ensure that payment services are safe and offer complete consumer protection. The directive had to be incorporated into the EU members' national laws and regulations by January 13, 2018. However, as of May 2018, only 23 (including Czechia) of 28 EU members had fully transposed the directive into their national laws. The PSD2 entered into force in Czechia on January 13, 2018.

Statistics of Instrument Usage and Value

	Transactions (million)		% change 2017 / 2016	Traffic (value) (CZK billion)		% change 2017 / 2016
	2016	2017		2016	2017	
Checks	0.2	0.2	0.0	20.9	21.2	1.4
Debit card payments	624.7	768.2	23.0	419.9	500.4	19.2
Credit card payments	110.1	120.9	9.8	86.6	102.5	18.4
Credit transfers	1,616.6	1,819.3	12.5	247,981.4	295,448.0	19.1
Direct debits	66.0	66.2	0.3	346.2	330.9	- 4.4
E-money payments	1.3	0.8	- 38.5	-	-	-
Total	2,418.9	2,775.6	14.8	248,855.0	296,403.0	19.1

Source: ECB Payment Statistics, October 2018.

Paper-based

Checks

Usage of checks is not widespread, as is the case in other Central and Eastern European countries, and is expected to cease in the next few years. Private checks and bank checks (bankers' drafts) can be used generally to withdraw money from a bank account to make a payment between individuals, but most companies do not issue or accept checks for payment.

Most checks are truncated into electronic items by the collecting bank before processing through CERTIS.

There are two other check clearing procedures:

- the bank's internal network is used to process checks drawn on and paid into the same bank;
- checks are presented to the drawee bank on a collection basis and settled through CERTIS.

Paper-based Credit Transfers

Paper-based credit transfers are still used among small companies and consumers, though electronic credit transfers are rapidly replacing paper-based ones. These are cleared via CERTIS.

Electronic

Credit Transfer

Credit transfers are the main form of payment instrument used by companies to pay suppliers and salary payments. They are also used for tax and benefit payments.

Domestic and cross-border electronic credit transfers in EUR can be made using the Europe-wide, SEPA-compliant, XML-based credit transfer format.

High-value

High-value and urgent credit transfers are processed through CERTIS. They are generally used by companies and investors to settle financial obligations. All payments settled through CERTIS are done so with immediate finality. High-priority payments must be processed on the same day. Customer and interbank payments must be received by 15:30 and 16:00 local time respectively.

For high-value credit transfers in euro within the EU, payments can be executed across the pan-European TARGET2 RTGS system. Due to the high degree of foreign investment in the Czech Republic, most larger Czech banks can access TARGET2 or the EBA's EURO1 clearing system through their parent bank's network.

Cross-border credit transfers in other currencies can be made via a combination of SWIFT connectivity, correspondent banking relationships and branch network capabilities.

Czech Post also offers a cross-border cash-based money transfer service for foreign currencies, subject to international postal regulations. A domestic money transfer service is also offered with one of Czechia's commercial bank's internal systems used for transferring funds.

Low-value

Standing orders are particularly used by customers to pay utility bills.

Non-urgent and low-value credit transfers are processed through CERTIS however low-priority payments are not guaranteed to be settled on a same-day basis.

The CNB has developed a nationwide instant fund transfer system enabling individuals to transfer up to CZK 400,000 in real time 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The new system was launched in November 2018. Instant payments are processed through CERTIS.

Low-value cross-border transfers can be processed through Czech banks' indirect access (via parent banks) to the EBA's STEP1 or STEP2 systems and through banks' traditional correspondent banking relationships or networks via SWIFT.

EBA Clearing and Italy's SIA Group (which already serves as a technical operator for STEP2) have developed and implemented a pan-European real-time infrastructure for instant EUR payments. The service, called RT1, is fully compliant with the SEPA Instant Credit Transfer (SCT Inst) Scheme of the European Payments Council (EPC) and aligns with the ISO 20022 global messaging standards for instant payments. Both RT1 and SCT Inst were launched in eight European countries (Austria, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Spain) on November 21, 2017. The EPC's SCTInst service will be available across 34 SEPA countries, 24/7, 365 days a year, by 2019. SCTInsts have a maximum limit of EUR 15,000 per transaction and take no more than ten seconds to complete.

Direct Debits

Direct debits are increasingly used for regular, low-value household bill payments. Direct debit authorization can be initiated either in paper-based form or electronically.

Intrabank direct debits are settled the same day while interbank direct debits can take as long as five working days to be settled. Direct debits are processed as low-priority payments in CERTIS.

SEPA Direct Debit (SDD) CORE and B2B services enable cross-border EUR-denominated direct debits to be made. The EBA has been processing SDD payments in STEP2 since the launch of the SDD schemes on that date.

The SIPO (Centralized Collection of Household Payments) service is offered by Czech Post. A SIPO is a single direct debit contract enabling all regular utility bills to be paid from a bank account in one aggregate cashless payment.

Payment Cards

Use of payment cards continues to increase in Czechia. Approximately 9.9 million debit cards and 1.79 million credit cards were in circulation at the end of September 2018. There are over 10.8 million cards with contactless payment functionality in circulation and over half of all payment card transactions are completed using contactless technology.

All debit cards and most credit cards are issued in affiliation with Visa or MasterCard. American Express and Diners Club credit cards are also in circulation.

All payment cards in circulation should now be SEPA-compliant EMV chip payment cards.

ATM/POS

Both ATM machines and electronic POS terminals are increasingly common. At the end of September 2018, Czechia had 5,395 ATMs and 215,539 EFTPOS terminals. All ATMs and POS terminals in Czechia should now be EMV chip-compliant.

Five ATM and EFTPOS networks currently exist in Czechia; the networks are interoperable. Česká Sporitelna and CSOB both run proprietary networks.

Electronic Wallet

Numerous single-purpose e-purse cards are available and issued by public transport and mobile phone companies.

Digital wallets, such as Google Pay and MasterPass by MasterCard, are available. In 2016, ČSOB launched the country's first mobile wallet supporting both Visa and MasterCard schemes.

Liquidity Management

Short-term Borrowing

Overdrafts

Both resident and non-resident entities can arrange overdrafts which are typically arranged as revolving lines of credit.

Fees (commitment fees and arrangement fees) and charges are negotiable. Additional penalties may be charged for unauthorized extensions over the agreed overdraft.

Banks will usually charge interest at a margin on Pribor (Prague interbank offered rate).

Bank Lines of Credit/Loans

Resident and non-resident entities can arrange short-term bank loans denominated in local and foreign currency from local and foreign banks. Loans with terms of one week to one year are most common.

Fees (commitment fees and arrangement fees) and charges are negotiable.

Banks will usually charge a floating rate of interest at a margin on Pribor.

Trade Bills - Discounted

Discounting trade bills are not a common form of short-term financing used by companies in Czechia.

In most cases, the borrower will borrow through the use of discounted trade bills with periods of six months or less.

Factoring

Factoring is available and growing in Czechia, mostly as a disclosed service.

The factoring of export proceeds is available if certain conditions are met, namely, an exporter must have access to uncovered free credit, payment under the contract must not exceed 180 days, and the exports in question must be shipped to a country where factoring is available.

Commercial Paper

The domestic commercial paper (CP) market has been slow to develop; however, some of the larger foreign brokerage banks will trade CP on the secondary markets.

CP must be placed through a licensed securities broker. Maturities range from one month to one year with no minimum requirement for an issue. Currently, there is no rating system used for CP.

Bankers' Acceptances

Bankers' acceptances are rarely used.

Supplier Credit

Companies negotiate the rate of interest between each other. Supplier credit is generally offered for no more than three weeks after the invoicing bill.

Intercompany Borrowing, including Lagging Payments

Czech or foreign groups are permitted to establish intercompany loans, but these are seldom used as a form of short-term financing due to problems with company indebtedness.

Short-term Investments

Interest Payable on Bank Account Surplus Balances

Interest-bearing current, or checking, accounts are available to both resident and non-resident entities.

Demand Deposits

Interest-bearing demand, or sight, deposit accounts are available to both resident and non-resident entities.

Time Deposits

Time deposits are popular short-term investment instruments in Czechia. Banks offer them for terms from one day to over a year, although terms up to 90 days are most common.

Certificates of Deposit

Certificates of deposit (CDs) are not commonly used as investment instruments in Czechia. They are available usually in maturities from two weeks to five years, with maturities of up to one year most common. The minimum denomination for a CD is CZK 50,000.

Treasury (Government) Bills

Treasury bills (T-bills) are issued by the CNB and the Ministry of Finance and are an important short-term investment instrument for companies.

The CNB issues T-bills with maturities of up to nine months. The Ministry of Finance issues T-bills with maturities of one month to one year. T-bills are sold at weekly auctions in denominations of CZK 1 million. There is a popular secondary market for T-bills.

Commercial Paper

The domestic CP market has been slow to develop and is not commonly used for short-term investment. Where available, commercial paper is usually available in maturities ranging from one month to one year.

Money Market Funds

Money market funds are available in Czechia.

Repurchase Agreements

The CNB is the only institution that offers repurchase agreements (repos), and only banks with accounts at the CNB may deal with them. Repos usually have two-week maturities, although shorter terms are occasionally involved.

Bankers' Acceptances

Bankers' acceptances are rarely used.

Liquidity Management Techniques

Cash Concentration

Cash concentration is the more common technique used by Czech companies to manage company and group liquidity. Of the available techniques, zero-balancing is the most commonly used. Single currency cash concentration is possible between multiple entities while cross-currency cash concentration is only possible within the same legal entity.

Both resident and non-resident bank accounts can participate in a cash concentration structure located in Czechia. However, central bank reporting requirements may need to be met and itemized charges apply on transactions between resident and non-resident bank accounts.

Notional Pooling

Notional pooling is available from the leading cash management banks in Czechia for single and multiple legal entities.

Single currency notional pooling is possible between multiple entities. However, because it can be difficult to obtain inter-company cross-guarantees in Czechia, the provision of multiple entity notional pooling tends to be limited to larger banks. Notional pooling structures for multiple entities are subject to arm's length transfer pricing and thin capitalization rules.

Cross-currency notional pooling is restricted to within the same legal entity.

Notional pooling is available to non-residents, but infrequently used. This is because interest payments to parent companies are subject to thin capitalization rules.

Trade Finance

General Rules for Importing/Exporting

A member of the EU, Czechia follows the EU customs code and all associated regulations and commercial policies apply.

All trade with other countries in the EEA is free from tariffs and other controls.

The EU has also established trade agreements with a number of other countries as well as with other regional trade blocs.

Eight free zones are currently operating in Czechia.

Imports

Documentation Required

Imports originating outside the EU will normally need to be accompanied by a commercial invoice, a customs declaration, a bill of lading and a packing list. A certificate of origin may also be required.

Imports originating inside the EU do not require formal supporting documentation, although a commercial invoice should normally be supplied.

Import Licenses

Various textiles and clothing imports from Belarus and North Korea, various steel products from Kazakhstan and Russia, and certain agricultural imports (listed in the Common Agricultural Policy – CAP) require licenses with quota restrictions.

Import Taxes/Tariffs

As a member of the EU, Czechia applies the common customs code to all imports originating from outside the EU. In general terms, the EU customs code applies higher levels of tariffs on agricultural imports.

Financing Requirements

There are no particular financing requirements for imports.

Risk Mitigation

Czechia does not operate a national risk mitigation program for importers.

Prohibited Imports

Czechia prohibits various imports in line with EU regulations and UN Security Council resolutions. Imports are prohibited for safety and moral reasons, to preserve wildlife, and to protect national security.

Exports

Documentation Required

Exports to countries outside the EU will normally need to be accompanied by a commercial invoice, a customs declaration, a bill of lading and a packing list. A certificate of origin may also be required.

Exports to countries within the EU do not require formal supporting documentation, although a commercial invoice should normally be supplied.

Proceeds

There are no restrictions on the use of export proceeds.

Export Licenses

Various agricultural products (listed in the CAP) require export licenses.

A security license is required for exporting certain armaments.

Export Taxes/Tariffs

Czechia does not levy taxes or tariffs on exports.

Financing Requirements

There are no particular financing requirements for exports.

Risk Mitigation

Export financing is provided by the state-owned Czech Export Bank and the largest commercial bank, Československá obchodní banka (CSOB).

The Export Guarantee and Insurance Corporation (EGAP) provides state-supported credit insurance for exports. Private export credit insurance is also an option.

Prohibited Exports

Czechia prohibits various exports in line with EU regulations and UN Security Council resolutions.

Information Technology

Electronic Banking

The majority of Czech companies have access to electronic banking services and their usage is routine. There is no bank-independent standard for electronic banking, but the local version of MultiCash and domestically-developed Gemini (by BSH Praha) are the most common electronic banking packages. A full range of electronic banking services is available, from daily transaction and balance reporting, to domestic and international payment information and initiation.

Though internet banking is still primarily geared toward retail customers, most corporate electronic banking services offer internet features or browser-based components. In 2017, 57% of all individuals used the internet for online banking; 30% used mobile banking services.

The leading commercial banks also provide SMS/mobile phone banking services that allow clients to access accounts via their cell phones.

External Financing

Long-term Funding

Bank Lines of Credit/Loans

Medium and long-term financing is both available in the form of bank loans. Syndicated loans are a popular way of securing large-value long-term credit. Mortgage loans have also been a popular method of long-term financing over the past decade in the wake of low interest rates, though the housing market peaked in 2007 and has cooled in the wake of the global financial crisis.

Bank loans can be arranged by both domestic and foreign-based companies in both domestic and foreign currency.

Bank loans denominated in domestic currency are usually arranged at a margin to Pribor.

Leasing

Leasing is a popular form of longer-term finance for Czech companies. It is used to finance a range of underlying assets, the nature of which determines the term of the lease contract. The Income Taxes Act No.586/1992 does set out specific schedules for depreciation. Typically, vehicle leases are available for terms of five years, computer equipment over four years, machinery leases up to ten years and property leases for longer, often up to 50 years.

Leases can be set floating rates of interest adjusted every three months. They can be arranged as an operating lease (where maintenance costs are covered by the leasing company) or as a finance lease.

Bonds

Bond issuance is a popular method of long-term financing due to the lack of suitable alternative investment instruments in Czechia.

Maturities usually range between three to five years, but some larger companies can issue bonds with up to 15 year maturities.

Private Placement

The private placement of bonds is not normally practiced in Czechia.

Asset Securitization / Structured Finance

Asset-backed bonds, such as mortgage bonds in CZK, have been issued in Czechia since 1995.

Government (Agency) Investment Incentive Schemes / Special Programs or Structures

The EU's structural funds are available to finance infrastructural development. However, with the growth in size of the EU, the funds available for such investment have to be distributed to more countries. Funds are also available through the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund.

Useful Contacts

National Treasurers' Association

Czech Treasury Association — www.czechtreasury.cz

National Investment Promotion Agencies

CzechTrade - National Trade Promotion Agency — www.czechtradeoffices.com

CzechInvest - Investment and Business Development Agency — www.czechinvest.org

Central Bank

Czech National Bank — www.cnb.cz

Supervisory Authority

Czech National Bank — www.cnb.cz

Payment System Operator

Czech National Bank — www.cnb.cz

ATM/POS Network Operator

Bank Card Association — www.bankovnikarty.cz

Banks

Komerční banka — www.kb.cz

Ceská Sporitelna — www.csas.cz

Ceskoslovenska obchodni banka — www.csob.cz

Stock Exchange

Prague Stock Exchange — www.pse.cz

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Finance — www.mfcr.cz

Ministry of Economy

Ministry of Industry and Trade — www.mpo.cz

Chamber of Commerce

Czech Chamber of Commerce — www.komoracz.eu

Bankers' Association

Czech Banking Association — www.czech-ba.cz