

**2023  
2024**



# **ACTIVITY REPORT**

**SCIENTIFIC AND UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT**

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# EDITO

The Czech Republic and France have a long tradition of cooperation in the academic and scientific sectors, embodied as far back as the 19th century by Joachim Barrande, a French geologist who dedicated part of his life to the study of the Czech geological history. This continues today, with many collaborative research projects covering a vast range of topics, as well as intensive academic exchanges particularly within the framework of European university alliances.

Both our countries reaffirmed their attachment to these values at the highest level when signing, on the occasion of President Macron's visit to Prague on March 5th 2024, the new action plan for the strategic partnership between the Czech Republic and France – a bilateral partnership where collaboration in the fields of education, science and culture plays an instrumental role.

The Scientific and University Department of the French Institute in Prague is happy to contribute to the development of a framework conducive to these exchanges, always based on the same motto: connect, nurture and share.

We are pleased to present in this report the broad outlines of our action and the highlights for the period 2023-2024. We wish you a pleasant reading!

**Véronique Debord-Lazaro**

Science and Higher Education Attaché

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**03** Campus France

**11** Scientific Prizes

**04** France Alumni

**12** A year in pictures

**05** Scientific cooperation support

**13** Contact us

**07** Highlights of the year

**14** Our partners

# CAMPUS FRANCE



32

high schools visited  
in 2023-2024

1 613

students informed in  
person about studies in  
France in 2023-2024

624

Czech students chose  
France for their studies  
in 2022-2023

Campus France Czech Republic's main mission is to promote **French higher education** to high school and university students living in the Czech Republic.

Every year, we meet hundreds of students on our tour of Czech high schools to introduce study possibilities in France. We also visit students of Czech universities to present the **scholarships** they can apply for and the opportunities available in their field through the Erasmus programme or double degrees. We participate in the **Gaudeamus** fair in Brno, the biggest fair for higher education in the region. Once they have made their choice, we offer individualized support to help students at every stage of the application process, answer any question they may have and assist them with administrative paperwork.

We also organize and participate in **different events to promote student mobility** such as the *Erasmus Days* or international fairs at universities. Every year in June, we invite all high school and university students who will study in France during the next academic year to *Bienvenue en France* sessions to best prepare them for their arrival in France.

**Our office** is located at the French Institute in Prague and welcomes students by appointment.



# FRANCE ALUMNI

The France Alumni network is **the network of international alumni who have completed all or part of their higher education in France.**

In the Czech Republic, the network was created in **December 2016** with the aim to enable Czech Alumni to stay connected with the French culture and language while supporting them in their professional careers.

The Czech network currently has over **700 members** registered on the France Alumni Czech Republic platform.

Throughout the year 2023-2024, we kept the community alive by organizing several **convivial networking events**: France Alumni gathering in Brno, *Galette des rois des Alumni*, *Soirée dégustation de vins français...* We also contribute to events of other alumni networks (ie. Science Po Alumni).

Our alumni were also invited to our **"Rendez-vous à la française"**, this year at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen in October 2023 and at the Masaryk University in Brno in January 2024. These events aim at highlighting the opportunities offered by learning French and mobility in France for professional life; our alumni can share their experience with younger students, and meet with companies looking for French-speaking talent during a business forum.



## FRANCE ALUMNI DAYS 2024

After a successful first edition, the second edition of the **France Alumni Days** took place from May 11th to 26th, 2024.

In Prague, we organised several events to celebrate our alumni:

- In partnership with the Prague University of Economics and Business (VŠE), a round-table with French-speaking alumni took place at the French Embassy on the topic **"French-speaking talents, international careers"**. This was also the occasion to launch our exhibition of 14 new photos of Czech alumni, in the frame of the project **"Portraits d'Alumni"** that was started last year. As of September 2024, the portraits will start touring the Czech Republic, thanks to the support of our partners (Alliances françaises, universities...)
- Our traditional **Awarding ceremony for the 2024 French Government Scholarship laureates** gave us the opportunity to honour 26 new laureates in the presence of the French Ambassador and the Director for Higher Education and Research at the Czech Ministry for education.
- The French Ambassador, Stéphane Crouzat, also hosted the **15th anniversary of the programme "Un an en France"**, a successful initiative that allows high school students to spend one year in a French high school.



# SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION SUPPORT

*Toolbox to support scientific cooperation between France and the Czech Republic*

**Barrande workshops**

Networking opportunities  
for scientists

**Barrande Mobility  
and PHC Danube**

Mobility of researchers

**Barrande Fellowship  
Programme**

Mobility of Ph.D students

## Connecting Czech and French researchers

The **Barrande workshops** aim at **gathering scientists** from both countries to foster **new cooperations**. By involving students (Ph.D and master's), they also contribute to the **training of young researchers**, to their international exposure as well as to the development of a **sense of belonging** to a joint community.

Based on a successful recipe combining short presentations, lab visits and networking opportunities, the workshops gather **on average 30 to 50 participants** and are organized **alternatively in France and in the Czech Republic**.

*Barrande-Vltava meeting in Chemistry (Olomouc, August 2023); Barrande meeting in nuclear sciences (Mont Saint Michel, October 2023); Barrande meeting in nanosciences (Prague, May 2024).*



# SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION SUPPORT

## Researchers' mobility

The French Embassy operates **two programmes** that support the mobility of researchers in the frame of joint research projects (2 years): **Barrande Mobility** (bilateral mobility) and **Danube** (regional mobility, every other year).

They are open to all disciplines (chemistry, math, computer science, biology, SSH, agronomy, engineering, earth sciences) and strongly encourage the participation of young researchers.

# 30

### Barrande mobility projects supported this year

A special call for projects was launched this year, Barrande +, to support pre-existing Czech-French scientific and technological cooperation and help them open up to multi-country cooperation.

4 projects will benefit from a financial contribution from the Embassy.

## Mobility of Ph.D students



The bilateral mobility programme **for Ph.D students** between France and the Czech Republic, aims at **enhancing international education exchange** while encouraging scientific cooperation between Czech and French research teams. It is designed to provide Ph.D students in the Czech Republic with opportunities to study in France and Ph.D students in France with opportunities to study in the Czech Republic. The call is open to all scientific fields.

For the 5th edition of the programme in 2024, 48 candidates were auditioned, and 26 were selected:

- **16 mobilities to France**
- **10 mobilities to the Czech Republic.**

The **Barrande Fellowship programme** is carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic (MŠMT) and with the support of the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (DZS).



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

## Sounds of Science 2024

On June 28th, 2024, the third edition of "**Sounds of Science**" took place at the magnificent Estates Theater (*Stavovské Divadlo*), offering an exceptional opportunity to connect the arts and sciences.

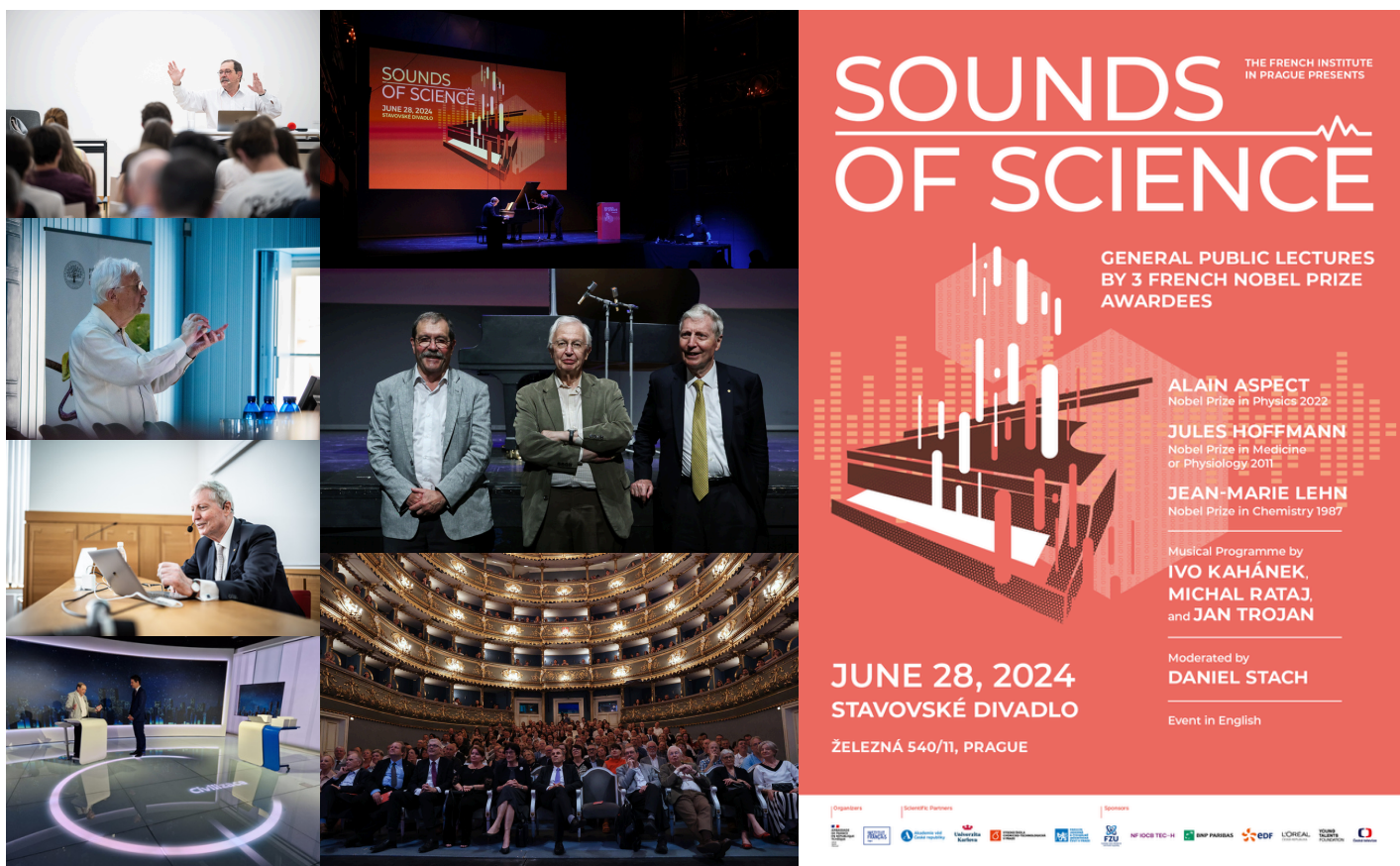
**Scientific lectures** were given to our audience by French scientists and Nobel Prize laureates gathered in Prague for the occasion. They introduced the latest scientific concepts and challenges in their respective disciplines in an enthusiastic and accessible way:

- **Jean-Marie Lehn** (Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1987)
- **Jules Hoffmann** (Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2011)
- **Alain Aspect** (Nobel Prize in Physics 2022)

In between lectures, **musical performances** were given by composers and sound designers Michal Rataj and Jan Trojan and the renowned pianist Ivo Kahánek, mixing classical with more contemporary, electro-acoustic and experimental music, as well as a partly AI-generated composition based on Dvořák's work, *From the Future World*.

The three Nobelists also delivered scientific conferences at Charles University, the Institute of Physics and the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences, who were all partners of the event.

The programme of the evening is available [here](#).



**SOUNDS OF SCIENCE**  
THE FRENCH INSTITUTE IN PRAGUE PRESENTS

GENERAL PUBLIC LECTURES  
BY 3 FRENCH NOBEL PRIZE AWARDEES

**ALAIN ASPECT**  
Nobel Prize in Physics 2022



**JULES HOFFMANN**  
Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology 2011

**JEAN-MARIE LEHN**  
Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1987

Musical Programme by  
**IVO KAHÁNEK,**  
**MICHAL RATAJ,**  
and **JAN TROJAN**

Moderated by  
**DANIEL STACH**

**JUNE 28, 2024**  
**STAVOVSKÉ DIVADLO**  
ŽELEZNÁ 540/II, PRAGUE

Organizers:  Scientific Partners:  Sponsors: 



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

## Focus on Digital Sciences

### Study visit of a Czech delegation to Paris on AI

As a follow-up to the success of the first Czech-French workshop in AI organized in 2022 in Prague, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Czech Embassy in France and the French Embassy in the Czech Republic organized a study visit to France on the topic of AI in October 2023. Over two days, the Czech and French AI ecosystems came together in a series of meetings, scientific discussions and visits to renowned AI research centres in Paris and Île-de-France. A group of senior Czech AI researchers, accompanied by senior members of ministries in charge of R&D and Innovation support, Petr Očko and Jana Havlíková, had the opportunity to exchange insights on the possibilities of Czech-French cooperation with some of the most relevant members of the French AI ecosystem.



### "SheAI : Hackathon for an inclusive society"

On December 15th, 16th and 17th, 2023, 38 women took part in the **SheAI Hackathon**, organized with **42 Prague and La French Tech Prague**. Artificial intelligence is revolutionizing our societies and can now be found in all sectors. If used properly, it can help meet the major challenges of our time: ecological transition, health, etc. It is also a source of new professional opportunities. Yet women are very poorly represented in this sector, both in universities and in the corporate world.

Our participants worked on projects they came up with, with the help of our experienced technical and business mentors. At the end of the weekend, our nine teams pitched their projects in front of the jury, which awarded prizes to 5 of them. Many thanks to all participants, organizers, mentors and sponsors! [Find out more about the hackathon on our Youtube channel.](#)



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

## Focus on Nuclear Sciences

### Barrande workshop in nuclear sciences

The 4th edition of the **Czech-French Barrande Workshop in nuclear sciences**, co-organized by the GANIL (Great national heavy ions accelerator), the Nuclear Physics Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the French institute in Prague took place in October in the Mont Saint Michel. In a friendly atmosphere, high-level scientific discussions took place on 4 different topics: nuclear energy, biological applications, nuclear astrophysics and nuclear instrumentation. Many young scientists joined the event, sharing their work and developing their network. The meeting was also an occasion to celebrate a long-standing collaboration moving forward, with the signing of a new institutional agreement between the GANIL and the Nuclear Physics Institute.



### “Building the Czech Republic’s New Nuclear Programme ”

On October 24th, 2023, a special event was organised by the French Institute in Prague and the I2EN (International Institute of Nuclear Energy) to present the wide range of training offer in the nuclear field as well as the associated professions and career paths. Thanks to the numerous experts, universities representatives and alumni who took part in the event, participants were able to get a wider overview of the sector, in terms of training and of career opportunities. The replay of the event is available on [the French Institute’s Youtube channel](#).



### Signing of the ANR-TAČR agreement

The Director General of the French National Research Agency (ANR) and the President of the Technological Agency of the Czech Republic signed a **historical agreement** on January 9th, 2024 at the French Embassy in Prague, joining forces to support research and innovation in the field of nuclear energy between both countries. Thanks to this, a first call for joint projects was launched in May.





# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

## “Nuclear New Build” Winter School

From March 18th to March 22nd, the University of Western Bohemia in Plzeň, the I2EN (International Institute of Nuclear Energy) and the French Embassies in Prague and in Bratislava organized **the 2024 edition of the trilateral France-Czech Republic-Slovakia Nuclear Summer School**, focused on “Nuclear New Build”. The objective of the 2024 trilateral winter school was to provide students with a general understanding of the main subject areas related to the construction of a new nuclear power plant (technology of course but also siting, licensing, project management, qualifying suppliers, financing, human resources...).

**20 students from the Czech Republic, France and Slovakia** gathered in Jáchymov, historical place for the extraction of Radium and Uranium, and benefited from the lectures of 13 experts on the topic. They also worked together in group projects and presented the outcome of their work at the end of the week.



## Czech-French Nuclear Forum

On the occasion of **the visit of President Macron** on March 5th, 2024 during which the Action Plan for the Strategic Partnership between both countries was signed, **the first Czech-French Nuclear Forum** was organized, during which opportunities for strengthened cooperation were presented, in all their dimensions (political, industrial and academic) by many distinguished guests. The academic representatives highlighted the crucial role of international collaborations in research to build the future of energy in Europe and that we will not reach our high ambitions if we do not manage to attract more students to technical fields.



# SCIENTIFIC PRIZES



## Scientific Prizes of the Embassy of France in the Czech Republic

The Embassy organizes the Scientific Prizes competition, which aims at **recognizing the best Ph.D students and young researchers** in the Czech Republic. Covering different fields of research, they are supported by companies or foundations:

- The **Jean-Marie Lehn Prize in Chemistry**, launched in 1994, in partnership with the IOCB Tech Foundation and the Czech Chemical Society
- The **Albert Schweitzer Prize in Medicine**, in partnership with Servier
- The **Sanofi Prize in Pharmacy**, in partnership with Sanofi
- The **Henri Becquerel Prize in Nuclear Sciences**, in partnership with EDF
- The **Joseph Fourier Prize in Computer Sciences**, in partnership with Eviden and IT4Innovations (supercomputer based at the technical University of Ostrava)
- The **Jacques Derrida Prize in Social Sciences and Humanities**, in partnership with the Young Talents Foundation
- The **Make Our Planet Great Again Prize (MOPGA)**, in partnership with BNP Paribas

Through 7 panels gathering 32 Czech researchers and 7 French experts who chaired the committees, 61 candidates were auditioned. Laureates were offered financial rewards by the sponsors, and the two first laureates of each category were offered a one-month research stay in France. The awarding ceremony took place at the Embassy of France on June 28th, 2024 and gathered more than 120 people to celebrate the success of the new laureates. They were awarded their prizes by the Ambassador of France and the **three Nobel Prizes, participating in the Sounds of Science event: Jean-Marie Lehn, Jules Hoffmann, and Alain Aspect.**



This year was a very special one as we celebrated the **30th anniversary of the Scientific Prizes**. Launched in 1994 at the initiative of Jean-Marie Lehn with the creation of the Chemistry Prize, the programme has since developed into 7 categories. On this occasion, a **series of videos** were prepared to honor the history of the programme, its main stakeholders and supporters, but also to showcase the impact of this type of competition on its beneficiaries and on the development of international cooperation in research. [They are available on the French institute's Youtube channel.](#)



# OUR YEAR IN PICTURES

## Celebrating the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games in partnership with the Faculty of Sports at Charles University



The “Relais autour du Monde” organized in the frame of our actions to promote sport and the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games.

*March 11th, 2024*

“Žijeme paralympiádou” organised at the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, Charles University, to promote parasport.

*April 4th, 2024*



Opening speeches and round table for the exhibition “History, Sport and Citizenship” at the French Institute's gallery.

*June 4th, 2024*



Study visit to Moravia by a French delegation led by Xylofutur on the wood-forest sector.

*November 21st-23rd, 2023*



“Queer24: Breaking barriers in Academia”, organised at Charles University's Kampus Hybernská.

*April 18th, 2024*



“Czech-French Science Meetup”, with Czexpats in Science at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Paris.

*April 25th, 2024*



Central European Finale “Ma thèse en 180 secondes”, organised at the ELTE University in Budapest, Hungary.

*June 6th, 2024*

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# OUR PARTNERS



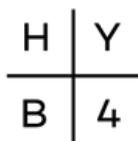
## Main partners



## Scientific Prizes and Sounds of Science



## Others partners



Many thanks to all our partners!





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