



History

As in any democratic state, the government of the Czech Republic accepts responsibilities in many areas including defence, social security and education as well as its role for maintaining and improving the health of the citizens. Through monitoring, research and health education, the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) functions as a scientific body that provides information and expert advice to serve this purpose. Whereas the initiatives were previously aimed mainly at the national population, nowadays the Institute participates in projects focusing also on improving global health.

The Establishment of the NIPH (1921-1939)

Plans for establishing a national public health institute were first drafted under Vavro Šrobár, the first health minister of Czechoslovakia. During his ministerial tenure, a donation from the Rockefeller Foundation was negotiated. On 25 August 1921 Ladislav Procházka, the subsequent minister of health, signed the official agreement between the Ministry of Health and the Rockefeller Foundation, with a pledge by the Foundation to contribute the sum of 26 966 600 Kc for the purposes of building the Institute, on condition that the Ministry of Health would secure at least 23 471 700 Kc for the same purpose. It was also agreed that the process should not take longer than six years. A site in an immediate neighbourhood of Vinohrady Hospital was chosen and the buildings were designed by the architect Rudolf Kvěch.

The Public Health Institute during The War (1939-1945/9)

On 3 March 1939 the National Institute of Public Health in Prague ceased to exist as an institution of the Czechoslovak Republic. Slovakia had formed its own health institute, although it did not manufacture sera and vaccines.

The Era of Reorganisations (1949-1989)

In 1949 the NIPH was reorganised under law no. 70/1949 and renamed as the National Health Institute. Its headquarters remained in Prague, with a regional institute for Slovakia in Bratislava and branches in other major cities.

The Reestablishment of the NIPH (1989-2003)

After 1989 the Institute went through a number of changes that reflected new trends in both society and preventive medicine. In January 1990, Prof. Bohumil Ticháček, DrSc, was selected to head what was still the IHE. He is responsible for returning to the traditions, original title and democratic leadership of the Institute.



Contemporary history (2004 until now)

The entry of the Czech Republic into the European Union in 2004 presented yet another historic landmark in the area of public health where the Institute played an important role. Not only that it helped in implementing EU policies and legal obligations into Czech law but its researchers also contributed to drafting new EU-wide regulations (for example in the area of toy health and safety). Through this process, the Institute proved its prominent position and successfully joined the leading European organisations that provide scientific expertise for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). During the Czech Presidency of the EU in 2009, the Institute became the centre for drafting the European legislative norms for public health.
