



EVS project PUZZLE

Info Pack For new volunteers

1. How to get to OKO
2. Area Description and free time possibilities in Rychnov
 3. Clothes
 4. Weather
5. EVS flats in OKO

1. How to get to OKO

There are quite a lot of possibilities – you can find it online by checking the Czech transport site www.idos.cz or at the main train/ bus stations in Prague; but here are some suggestions:



BY TRAIN:

You can take **BUS AIRPORT EXPRESS** – a direct connection from the airport to the main train station.

The bus stations are directly outside all airport terminals. You can buy the ticket on the bus from the driver and the price is 50 Kc (about 2 Euro) including all of your luggage. The bus comes every 30 minutes (10.04, 10.34, 11.04, 11.34, 12.04, 12.34...) and goes directly to the main station.

The bus takes approx. 51 minutes from the airport to the train station and the bus has only 3 stops on its way: 1. Airport, 2. Masarykovo Nadrazi, (the old train station), 3. Hlavni Nadrazi (the main train station). Get off at **HLAVNI NADRAZI**, you will be directly next to the train station :)

The announcements on the airport express bus are in Czech and English so don't panic.

To buy the train ticket from Prague to Rychnov nad Kneznou, go to the main ticket office and say "Rychnov nad Kneznou" or write it down if they don't understand you. The price is usually 192 Kc.

Sometimes the train is direct from Prague, passing through Hradec Králové and Castolovice. Here are some of the train times from Prague:

09.10 - No.R947 / 11.10 - No.R949 / 13.10 -No.R793 /15.10 - No.R791 / 17.10 - No.R951

Sometimes the train only goes as far as Hradec Králové (about 1 hour away from Rychnov) and it is necessary to change train in Hradec Králové, Tyniste nad Orlici and in Castolovice. There are a lot of connections here but if you were to get stuck for some reason, someone will come and get you!

BY BUS:

STUDENT AGENCY runs a direct bus from Ruzyne Airport to the main bus station, **UAN Florenc**, in Prague. It may be necessary to book this bus before you travel as it can be full, or you could take the metro.

To check the bus connections visit the www.idos.cz website when you know the date you will be travelling as buses to Rychnov can vary a lot, it may be possible to get a direct one or you may still have to change in Hradec Králové or in Castolovice.

It may also be possible that another volunteer will meet you at the airport, but it depends on when you arrive!

And I will be waiting for you at the train/bus station in Rychnov on your first day to take you to your accommodation. I hope you will have enough instructions and have a good journey :)

Jitka. – Head of OKO

2. Area Description and free time possibilities in Rychnov

Dear next volunteers,

You could find a lot of information about our project in The Activity description and here is a description of our town and free time possibilities. This description have our volunteers prepared, they've spent almost one year in OKO project and our town. It is good to know that Rychnov is often small town or village for our volunteers, but for some volunteers, who are also from villages, is Rychnov nice, calm and quiet town with wonderful country site. So, you can start your reading.

Jitka

Every volunteer is likely to have their own opinion about Rychnov as a place to live and work, but to give you an idea of the town and the area, we have prepared this brief description with information we hope you will find useful:

The town itself is small, with around 12,000 inhabitants. It is quiet in the evening and very peaceful with very little crime (if any) and it feels like a very safe place to live. There are a lot of good schools in the area and so it attracts families as a place to bring up their children. The town has a lot of amenities in the form of small and independent retailers, for example there are clothes shops, jewellers, sports stores, an art shop and stationers to name a few. These shops all close on the weekends, but the supermarkets (Tesco/ Lidl/ Billa/ Pennymarket) remain open all week.

For young people there is a lot of choice of leisure activities for such a small town; with a new swimming pool, gym and exercise complex, ice-rink (where sometimes its also possible to watch a hockey match), cinema, theatre, museum, castle, and nearby there is countryside with lakes, rivers and woods where it is possible to take walks or go cycling, a short bus ride away are the mountains for skiing in the winter (there are some skis in the flat and its possible to borrow clothes from OKO), or there are small villages to visit with lots of history.

There is also a choice of cafés and restaurants, including a pizzeria, Chinese takeaway, kebab shop and of course traditional Czech food is available! In the evening there are a number of pubs and bars, (some of them are non-stops), and the town also has one nightclub. In the summer there are music festivals in the region, and if you like music there is a concert hall and a music school, where it is possible for you to take lessons in the week, and OKO can organise this. There is also a guitar in one of the flats.

It is true to say that Rychnov is not a student city, a lot of the young people move away to study and as a result the number of people you will be able to communicate with can be limited, but it is possible to make friends. Just remember that they may not be confident with English to begin with so it can help if you attempt some Czech! Day to day you will need to know some Czech as for example, shop assistants mostly cannot speak in English although some people also speak German here.

It's up to you how much or how often you will travel, one hour away is Hradec Králové, which is the largest city in the region, it has a lot of culture and things to do, and there is a large shopping centre there with a bigger cinema. Three hours away is Prague, as it is the capital it is obviously very busy and a lot more people speak English there; but of course there are many more beautiful and exciting places to visit in the Czech republic as well, and as you have your weekends free you will be able to see them. The number of trains and buses available is good; Rychnov has a lot for a small place, although a journey can involve lots of transfers! We are happy to be in a small town because being here really gives you a sense of the real Czech Republic, and it's a fascinating place!

OKO Volunteers



3. Clothes

For work it is fine for the volunteers to wear casual clothes, e.g. jeans and T-shirts, but remember to pack some warm clothes, a winter coat, good footwear and anything else you think you might need when the winter arrives, it can get cold!

“You should wear casual clothes (jeans and T-shirts). Only I prefer to wear usually suit, skirt, blouse or jumper because I deal with partners and clients and other teachers. Volunteers really wear usually jeans and T-shirts.” – Jitka

4. Weather

In summer (Jun, July, August)

The temperatures average around 20C to 30C, but it can get up to 30C or 34C. It doesn't rain particularly often, and sometimes it's warm enough for you to swim in the pools or lakes outside.



In autumn or in spring

You can expect temperatures of 10C/15C/ 20C. It can be sunny or cloudy, sometime foggy and windy or it might be raining. Really it's quite a mix of all the possibilities. You can see some wonderful sunny days but dull days, too.

In winter

The weather in the winter can be very changeable and diverse, day to day the temperature could be -5C, -10C, -20C or 0C, +5C. We usually have snow for about 2-3 months in Rychnov, as it's nearer the mountains than Prague, where it will only snow sometimes. In the Mountains however, (20 km from Rychnov) the snow usually lasts from December until March or April. The winter can be wonderful, with sun and deep snow, but sometimes it can be cloudy and without the sun the winter can become quite long and tiresome.

***In this moment** has already begun typical winter weather. (Thursday , 4th January) – Jitka*



5. EVS flats in OKO

There are two flats for the EVS volunteers in an office building about five minutes from the centre of the town. In the building, there are also two of OKO's clubrooms, where some of the language courses take place. You can walk to OKO, which is on the main square of Rychnov in five minutes.



There is a Penny market (supermarket) 5 minutes from the flats, the swimming pool and leisure centre are also in this area, and you can walk into the countryside in around 10 minutes.

Two volunteers stay together in each flat. In each flat there are two big rooms, a hallway, a toilet and a shower-room.

At the moment, in one of the flats, there is one room for each volunteer and the kitchen is in the hallway. In the other flat the kitchenette is in one of the bedrooms, the sofa and TV in the other.

Both flats are fully furnished. In each flat there is a stove (hob), an oven and cooking equipment and utensils. The sinks are not in the kitchen and the dishes have to be washed in the bathroom.

In one flat there is the washing machine, clothesline and iron. And in the other flat there is a TV, DVD-player and CD-player. One of the flats has a balcony.

There are sheets and some towels provided but it is up to you if you would like to bring your own. There is also one vacuum cleaner and one hair dryer.



The flat is equipped with all the necessary things that you may need in your every day life.

At first the walls of the rooms may seem white and empty. But it is always possible to paint them or you can bring posters and pictures, etc. to brighten it up and make it feel more homely.

There is no Internet or telephone at the flats. However, the volunteers have one Czech mobile telephone from OKO to share and Internet and Skype are always available in the office.

