

The Life of a Young Chechen amongst his Czech Peers

“I, Alkhan Pashayev, was born on August 28, 1989. Thanks to my teacher, Vakha Temirkhanov, I was able to learn our traditional Chechen dances, and thanks to the Berkat organisation I was able to discover the Czech Republic. This was like a dream for me.”



I came to the Czech Republic for the first time in 2003. At that time, I was 14 years old. It was the beauty of the towns in the Czech Republic which fascinated me the most - they were so clean and bright and shiny. This is my main recollection of my first trip – the beautiful towns and what life can be like without war.

The second time I was here was in 2006. This time, I was 17 years old. It was then that I discovered that there were really a lot of things which should be done in life. I watched people here and thought about how they lived, and what they considered important for their future and in their lives. And this is why I also began to have a strong desire to focus on something. My soul told me I wanted to be like these people, I wanted to capture their essence and act in the same way as each of them.

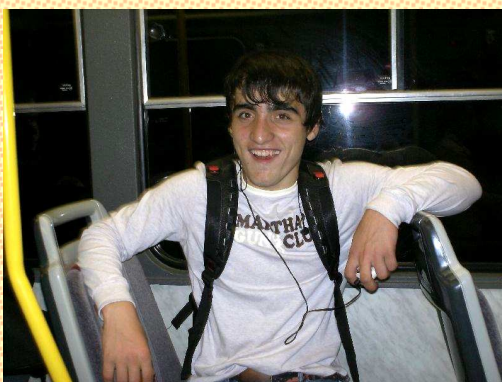
I was permitted to spend one year in the Czech Republic to study and to dance. It was a big gift for me. And it was also a big step ahead for my future. To be among different people and to have the possibility to observe their habits and culture... By and large, my stay abroad has caused me to ask how I will find my way.

Should I be a fireman? This is what my grandfather and my father wanted me to be... But I have not found myself in this profession so far. My mother would want me to be a dentist – but this is not for me either. In the end I may become a fireman, but right now I have another idea. I have found something different that I would like to do – I would like to be a correspondent!

Why this decision? I have found new friends here who have taken me to various photography exhibitions, parties and other events. Everything has happened thanks to them, and especially thanks to Ivana Plíhalová, and of course thanks to the wonderful Berkat association.

Young Czech people – they do everything possible to ensure that their future lives are easy and pleasant. They plan everything, for example, half a year or even a whole year in advance! They are always active, they never sit about, they do what they have to do a day in advance and they don't waste time.

I have learnt more about the culture of the young people in the Czech Republic thanks to my new friends and I think that it will come in useful later on in life. I have recognized their values thanks to the students of the Caritas College in Olomouc. Nevertheless, none of this would have been possible without my main Czech teacher, Zdenka Vychodilová.



But the person who I am closest to here in the Czech Republic is Ivana Plíhalová, who has been like a mother to me here. She is always able to advise me and to help to me. She is a goddess of a mother! And everybody knows that there is nothing sweeter than having a mother who understands you. Everybody understands what this means.

In short, Czechs are interesting, friendly and good at what they do!

Alkhan Pashayev, November 2007

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