



# FACULTY OF LAW

CHARLES UNIVERSITY  
Právnická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy



## Charles University in Prague

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Founded in 1348 by the Czech King and Roman Emperor Charles IV, Universitas Carolina Pragensis is the oldest university in Central Europe and 19th oldest university in continuous operation in the world. It has enjoyed a long international reputation for high quality teaching and research. From the very beginning, instruction in Canon Law and Roman Law have been a part of the curriculum of Charles University and have formed the basis of *ius communae europae*. Johannes Kepler, Bernard Bolzano, T. G. Masaryk and Albert Einstein are included among the University's distinguished alumni. The fortunes of the University have been linked with the fate of the nation. In the second half of the XIXth century, the University was challenged by the aspirations and ambitions of political self-reliance. In 1882 the government in Vienna was forced (by the efforts of independence in the cultural and intellectual life of the Czech society) to divide the University into two separate institutions, the German one and the Czech one. This double status lasted until the German occupation. Protests by its students resulted in the closing of Czech universities from 17 November, 1939 for the next six years. Some students and professors were executed, many of them oppressed. In 1945 the German University was abolished and the Czech one re-established. But, academic freedoms and privileges were violated again by the communist regime after the coup d'état in 1948. Charles University supported the political revolt of the Prague Spring in 1968. After a 'strike of sympathy' evoking strong feelings of solidarity between students and university academic staff, Jan Palach, a student of the Faculty of Arts, committed suicide, in an attempt to provoke resistance against the Russian occupation. Oppression followed. . . The rebellion of Charles University students on 17 November, 1989 started subsequent political developments in the country. Since the re-establishment of a democratic government and basic rights in the Czech Republic in 1989, Charles University has been facing the challenge of evolving and adapting in a rapidly changing environment, and has been prompted to revive its international position as a centre of excellence. The total number of its students now amounts to more than 45 000 throughout 17 Faculties.