



A Head Start for Czech Children

A Conversation with His Excellency Václav Klaus, President, Czech Republic, and Livia Klaus, First Lady, Czech Republic

EDITORS' NOTE After graduating from the University of Economics in Prague, where he studied international economic relations and international trade, Václav Klaus served in various positions in the Czechoslovak central bank (1971 to 1986), and later worked at the Centre for Prognostics at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. During the Velvet Revolution, in 1989, Klaus joined the Civic Forum and became its leader in October 1990. After the party split in 1991, Klaus became a

cofounder of the Civic Democratic Party. From December 1989 to July 1992, Klaus served as Czech finance minister, and after the Civic Democrats' victory in the 1992 general election, he became prime minister. The recipient of 16 honorary doctorates in nine countries and 19 international awards, and the author of more than 20 books, Klaus was elected president of the Czech Republic in February 2003.

With a degree in international business and a Ph.D. in world economy, both from the University of Economics in Prague, Livia Klaus spent much of her career as a researcher at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (1967 to 1993) before becoming executive secretary of the Czech Economic Society (1994 to 2000). The author of numerous articles and an active philanthropist, she has participated in several international conferences focused on finance, banking, and the transformation of the Czech economy.

FOUNDATION BRIEF Based in Prague, the Václav and Livia Klaus Foundation supports humanitarian activities in the Czech Republic, with an emphasis on social, health, and educational projects.

First Lady: I have combined forces with my husband to create a foundation that carries our name, which we established together after he was named president of the Czech Republic. Foundations and charitable activities have a long-established



President Václav Klaus and First Lady Livia Klaus

tradition in our country. There are many such organizations, small and large, that are dedicated to our fellow citizens. My husband and I have been devoted to such activities in a formal and informal manner for more than 15 years.

When my husband became president, our lives changed a great deal. The responsibilities of first lady did not permit me to continue my professional career as an economist. We had to think about how we could unite our forces to fulfill our charitable obligations and activities. That is why we established the Václav and Livia Klaus Foundation. We were led by the belief that the distinguished position of head of state could be used to help the needy in their daily lives in other ways than those that are already the responsibility of the president of the republic.

President: We primarily focused on education, and in particular, education for people who have been impeded in their efforts to achieve whatever they want to achieve. One of our foundation's successful projects is directed at youth in children's homes. We've called it "Startovné do života," which means "head start in life." This project helps children ages 14 to 18, who are ready to leave foster care or children's homes. We've established bank accounts for them to which we add funds, so that the shock of embarking on an independent life will not be so harsh. This system of financial contribution motivates these young people to do the best they can

in their studies, and helps them build a sense of individual responsibility.

We feel that individual responsibility is so important because of its relationship to freedom. On the 10th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher came to the Czech Republic and made a memorable speech. She said, "You think you have freedom, but you don't have freedom until you have individual responsibility and the rule of law." And she

was so right. Fifteen years later, the sense of individual responsibility is still missing from our society.

First Lady: Our foundation organizes language courses abroad for children from children's homes or foster families, and we run a project that helps them get their driver's licenses and undertake other practical training. We have also established a network of guardians, who help these young people decide how best to use the financial aid, so that they will be able to make the maximum contribution to society and lead satisfying and rewarding lives. As much as possible, we want to equalize conditions for these children, who, through no fault of their own, are disadvantaged when they enter the working world, compared to children from normal families.

In addition, we have established a special Internet portal designed to help older citizens become familiar with the Internet. We hope it will make them realize how the Internet can simplify their lives in senior citizens' homes, and expand their communication with the outside world.

President: The goal of the foundation is much wider than can be stated here. One of our continuing assignments is to gain financial support, without which we could not possibly conduct these activities. After many long years of Communism, when people were not encouraged to think for themselves, we are attempting, through our humble work, to develop a sense of responsibility in our society. ●



Accenture's Central and Eastern European Hub

An Interview with Radomír Sabela, Director,
Europe BPO Delivery Center, Accenture Ltd, Prague



Radomír Sabela

EDITORS' NOTE Prior to joining Accenture in 2004 in his current post, Radomír Sabela was regional director for Central and Eastern Europe and vice president of Philips Medical Systems in Hamburg, Germany, and earlier served as CEO of Philips Czech Republic. He has also held executive leadership roles with major Czech companies, and served as a member of the board of trustees for the Czech Management Center and vice chairman of the Dutch-Czech Chamber of Commerce.

COMPANY BRIEF Headquartered in New York and domiciled in Hamilton, Bermuda, Accenture Ltd (NYSE: ACN) offers its clients – including British Airways, Microsoft, and T-Mobile – technology consulting services and outsourced technology services across 18 industry groups, in areas such as enterprise integration, human resources, strategic planning, and supply-chain management. With more than 100 offices in about 50 countries, the company reported sales of approximately \$15.1 billion and net income of approximately \$691 million in the fiscal year ended August 31, 2004.

Why did Accenture decide to invest heavily in the Czech Republic and make it the strategic hub of your Central European operations?

We were influenced by a number of

factors, including language proficiency and the level of education and technical skills of area professionals. Prague and Bratislava give us access to a broad talent pool, which we expect to continue to expand and diversify, providing us with the opportunity to tap leading-edge skills more easily. These locations also give us the ability to scale rapidly and help us maintain and improve our cost competitiveness. By opening a second Accenture Delivery Center in Prague, we further extend our presence in the country and provide a clear indication that the Czech Republic plays a strategic role in our consulting, technology, and outsourcing businesses.

Accenture provides consulting, IT and BPO (business process outsourcing) services to clients in both Europe and across the globe. What makes your different services valuable to your clients?

Accenture is a global management-consulting, technology-services, and outsourcing company. Our high-performance business strategy is built on our expertise in consulting, technology, and outsourcing, which we use to help our clients perform at the highest levels, so that they can create sustainable value for their customers and shareholders. Using our industry knowledge, service expertise, and technology capabilities, we identify new business and technology trends and develop solutions to help our clients around the world enter new markets, increase revenues in existing markets, improve operational performance, and deliver their products and services more effectively and efficiently.

Accenture has many strengths that distinguish us in the marketplace, including our extensive industry knowledge, broad and evolving service offerings, and our expertise in both BPO and IT-application and IT-infrastructure outsourcing. Accenture is helping companies realize immediate opportunities to reduce costs and receive higher-quality services with a bold new approach called business transformation outsourcing. Accenture's business transformation outsourcing is a program designed to change the way a company works, by using consulting, technology, and

outsourcing offerings to achieve a rapid, sustainable, and radical improvement in performance across a number of areas.

Accenture opened a second office in Prague in June. How will the new office enhance Accenture's capabilities in Europe?

The original delivery center, created in 2001 and based in Nové Butovice, provides BPO services, including finance and accounting, and procurement and customer support, to clients in 14 languages. The new facility, in the Chodov quarter of Prague, will provide the same services and will be the primary multi-lingual, multi-client European service center for Accenture HR Services, the Accenture BPO business unit that provides HR administration services to large, multinational organizations.

The continued demand for Accenture capabilities is one of the reasons I remain optimistic about the future. The reliable, professional, and high-quality outsourcing services we have provided to our global clients thus far has heightened our company's reputation for business continuity. The more than 20 clients serviced by the centers in Prague and Bratislava recognize the quality of those services, as well.

How does Accenture utilize the Prague center to serve global clients?

Accenture's global delivery model leverages our workforce of more than 115,000 people in 48 countries, and our network of more than 40 delivery centers around the world, to provide a full range of consulting, technology, and outsourcing services to clients across more than 30 industries. As part of this network of delivery centers, Prague has leveraged its highly educated, professional talent pool's combination of technical expertise with detailed local industry knowledge to become a key node in Accenture's global delivery network. The Prague delivery center also provides our clients around the world with our full range of services – from finance and accounting to claims processing, supply-chain management, corporate services, procurement, human resources, and warranty-claims validation – in more than 14 languages. ●