

THE AMBASSADOR  
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

David Stewart MSP  
M1.05  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

London, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011

Dear Mr Stewart,

I am writing in support of the Scottish Parliamentary petition No. 1395, which appeals to the Scottish government to introduce targeted funding for lesser taught languages and cultures at Scottish Universities, such as the Czech, Polish and Russian Studies programme and the popular intercultural programme of Slavonic Studies at the University of Glasgow. This is a unique provision in Scotland and if targeted funding for these subjects is not introduced, it is feared that Scotland will lose this expertise in the near future. In an acknowledgment of the cultural, strategic, political and economic importance of the language-based provision dealing with Central and Eastern Europe at the University of Glasgow, the Czech government is providing considerable financial assistance to the Czech Studies centre at Glasgow's School of Modern Languages and Cultures. We fully finance a Czech language lecturer at the University of Glasgow (£19,500 annually) and have just instituted a Madeleine Albright PhD scholarship in Czech Studies, which the Czech government is also fully funding, by the sum of 60,000 euros.

Czech, Polish and Russian language-based cultural studies at the University of Glasgow have a long and venerable tradition and have a strong international reputation. The provision has existed in Glasgow for over a hundred years and is particularly significant because it provides the opportunity for synergy in the study of Central and Eastern Europe. The only comparable provision in the United Kingdom is London.

As you are well aware, contacts between the nations of Central and Eastern Europe and Scotland have been intensifying in recent years especially since the entry of countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland into the European Union. Economic ties are developing particularly well. In this situation, it would be regrettable if Scotland lost the unique provision for the language-based study of our countries.

Targeted funding for lesser taught, but strategically important languages and cultures exists in England. I am writing to ask you to support the introduction of similar targeted funding for Scotland. I feel this is of considerable social, cultural, strategic and economic importance.

Thank you very much in advance for your help.

Michael Žantovský