The lecturers & students of Charles University had a great honor to visit the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Prague to know closer the development of bilateral relationship between Republic of Indonesia and Czech Republic and the higher education programs in Indonesia as well on Tuesday, June the 2nd 2009.

The group was led by PhDr Jan Šiška, Pro-Dean of Faculty of Pedagogy, Charles University in Prague and was welcomed by Head of Chancery (HoC) double-acting as the Implementer of Education and Socio-Culture Function Azis Nurwahyu on behalf of the Ambassador Prof. Dr. Salim Said in the auditorium of the Embassy of Republic of Indonesia in Prague. International students from 4 countries (Malaysia, Oman, Bangladesh and Sierra Leon)-the Erasmus Mundus awardees of Special Education Needs who are studying in Charles University were also present in this visit as well as some youths from Czech Republic and Slovak who have been to Indonesia to learn arts and cultures through Darmasiswa Scholarship from Republic of Indonesia.

A Balinese traditional dance called 'tari topeng' or 'mask dance' was presented by Ary Aryantha, Indonesian Balinese dancer in the opening of the program for welcoming the guests while they were enjoying Indonesian food. It was followed by the presentation about the bilateral relations between Czech Republic and Republic of Indonesia. In the presentation, Azis Nurwahyu explained that the bilateral relations between both countries has got closer and closer since Indonesia proclaimed its independence in 1945 up to the present time and even it has undergone the 'golden anniversary' of diplomatic affairs. The long-tied relation was marked by the illustration of the most popular made-in Czech BATA shoes in Indonesia and lots of machineries by the brand of Skoda which long been used in different sugar plants in Indonesia. Nowadays, both
countries are conducting a lot of efforts to strengthen the mutual understanding and enhance the bilateral relations through various kinds of programs, such as Art and Culture Performances, Exhibitions, Film Festivals, Seminars, and Visits of Officials from both states.

A topic on International Program of Indonesia Higher Education was presented by Baby Poernomo, an Erasmus Mundus European Union scholarship awardee from Indonesia who is now completing her master program in Faculty of Education at Charles University in Prague. She has over 24 years experience working in the field of education and still works for the Ministry of National Education in Jakarta. In her presentation, she explained that Higher Education in Indonesia has shown a significant development since the last decade. It can be seen from the facilities, competent lecturers, and international programs such as students exchange, teachers exchange, scholars exchange as well as internship program for vice versa. At present, there are more and more international students interested in coming to Indonesia and studying in various universities and even some of the universities in Indonesia have been recognized as the world class universities.

In this program, some of the alumni of 'Darmasiswa' were present. 'Darmasiswa' is a scholarship provided by the Indonesian Government for all international students and professionals from countries which have diplomatic relationship with Indonesia to study Indonesian language, arts, music, and crafts for 6 months until 1 year. There have been many Czech youths who have been awarded this scholarship and opportunity to study in Indonesia. Students from Czech Republic and Slovak shared their huge experience when they stayed in Indonesia. They told the audience that besides studying in one of universities, they also learned the Indonesian tradition and cultures. They became more welcome to different cultures and know more about Indonesia which they thought as beautiful country with friendly people.

PhDr. Jan Šiška, Pro-Dean of Faculty of Pedagogy of Charles University closed the program by thanking the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Prague for the opportunity given to Charles University to visit the Embassy and got known Indonesia closer. He also said that the students exchange program in Indonesia as a very positive program for young generation because it is not only as a medium to learn about cultures & traditions but also to augment the perspective & mutual understanding among individuals with different backgrounds.

At the end of program, the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Prague presented a plate of Garuda Indonesia (The Eagle as a symbol of state) as a souvenir and Charles University handed in the information book on the university. (BP/Pr/02/06/09).