

## Press Release

### The Czech Republic becomes a party to the ICC Statute:

### The European Union is now a full supporter of the ICC

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organisation in the Czech Republic, League of Human Rights (LIGA), welcome the deposit by the Czech government of the instrument ratifying the Rome Statute with the United Nations' Secretary General. Following years of insufficient attention to the ratification process by the Czech authorities, the country has now finally fully embraced principles of international criminal justice.

LIGA has been a leader of an informal Czech NGO coalition since 2002, which was established to advocate for the ratification of the ICC Statute. The ratification was not a priority for both chambers of the Czech Parliament prior to the Czech Republic's preparations to and undertaking of the European Union's (EU) Presidency in the first half of 2009. The Senate passed the ratification bill in June 2008 and the Chamber of Deputies did so in November 2008 by a constitutionally prescribed 3/5 majority. However, the ratification process was then put on hold and remained stalled during the Czech EU Presidency. An unexpected development took place on 8 July 2009, when the current Czech President, Václav Klaus, approved the ratification bill thus successfully completing the ratification process, which led to yesterday's deposit at the United Nations.

LIGA and FIDH recommend that the Czech Republic work further on the implementation of the ICC Statute, including through ratification of the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Court, which is crucial for the effectiveness of the Court's operations. We also recommend a stronger emphasis on the implementation of the war crimes described in the ICC Statute into its new criminal code that will take effect on 1 January 2010.

The Czech Republic is the 110<sup>th</sup> State to join the ICC. With this ratification, the EU as a whole becomes a full supporter of the ICC. EU Member States played a very significant role both in the creation of the ICC, as well as in supporting its initial phase of operations. Taking into account the challenges that the Court currently faces in particular in the field of State cooperation, it is imperative that the EU and EU Member States continue to advocate for and provide concrete support for the effective functioning of the ICC.

#### More information:

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