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Strasbourg
November 19, 2008

Honourable Members of the Deputy Chamber of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, are writing to you to raise our concern regarding the fact that the Czech Republic has not yet adopted the EU anti-discrimination legislation.

As you know, based on Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, in 2000 the Council of the European Union adopted Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment and Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. This EC legislation was adopted eight years ago with a view to tackling discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. This legislation has had a major impact in raising the level of protection against discrimination for people throughout the EU in those Member States where it was adopted and transposed into domestic legislation.

While several of the Member States have been in the process of transposing these rules into national law, and the need for additional efforts to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the legislation has been formulated, the Czech Republic, also a Member State since May 1 2004, has not made even the first step. The Directive 2000/43/EC, for instance, has not been transposed into laws on social protection, healthcare and access to healthcare, education and access to education, into legislation governing social advantages, into laws on access to goods and services and consumer protection, on access to housing, and the Anti-discrimination body meeting the requirements of the Art. 13 of the "Race" Directive has not been established in the Czech Republic either.

We are fully aware that the Czech Republic has ratified all the instruments for combating discrimination in the two main international human rights systems, the United Nations and the Council of Europe as well as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and that the country is also a party to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

We are also aware of the fact that a number of pieces of Czech legislation - for example the Charter of Fundamental Rights - cover important rights. For instance, a general antidiscrimination clause in Article 3 of the Charter expressly prohibits discrimination with respect to basic rights and freedoms on a number of grounds given in an open-ended list.

