

ORAL QUESTION H-0256/09
for Question Time at the part-session in May 2009
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure
by Alexander Alvaro
to the Commission

Subject: Freedom of speech and the Czech Act limiting the freedom of the press

An unprecedented law limiting freedom of speech and freedom of the press has recently been introduced in the Czech Republic, namely the Czech Act of 5 February 2009 which amends Act No 141/1961 Coll., on criminal court proceedings (Criminal Code), providing for up to five years in prison and a heavy fine of up to EUR 180 000 for publishing any account from police wiretapping.

Is the Commission aware of whether the recently adopted Czech Act has a precedent in any other EU country?

Would the Commission agree that with reference to Article 6 of the Treaty on the European Union and recognising the legal value of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, this unprecedented law of the Czech Republic raises serious concerns with regard to the impact on freedom of expression (as guaranteed by Article 11 of the aforementioned Charter) arising in particular from the threat of severe penalties of up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to EUR 180 000?

Does the Commission consider that this Act may constitute a serious breach by the Czech Republic as outlined by the Article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union?

Tabled: 20.04.2009
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