

## [CZ] Amendment to the Press Law Submitted to Parliament

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At the end of May, the Czech government proposed a draft bill to amend the Press Law (no.81/1966) in its revised version (Law no.86/1990).

At the heart of the proposed amendments are the rights of identified individuals, ie the right of reply and the right to further statements and corrections.

The right of reply is to be granted to persons whose honour, dignity or privacy is harmed by a particular report; this applies even if the content of the report is accurate.

If the names of individuals are published in connection with court cases and if this leads to defamatory reporting, those persons must be given the option of making further statements. The possibility of publishing corrections - without involving the courts, which would check the accuracy of a report - enables the individual concerned to put his side of the story. The publisher is forbidden from commenting on such "corrections". Provision is also made for these remedies to be incorporated into broadcasting law through the amendment of Law no.468/1991 on radio and television.

The draft also refers to the right to collective action in cases of human rights violations or breaches of public order. Moreover, publishers' liability for infringements of the ethical principles of the Constitution is standardised and such infringements may lead to financial penalties or publication bans. The draft has been heavily criticised, for example by the World Association of Newspapers at the 52nd World Newspaper Congress.

