[CZ] Election Campaign of Nationalist Parties

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Nationalist parties in the Czech Republic committed a number of infringements during the recent European Parliament election campaign. Candidates included members of the nationalist Workers' Party (Dělnická strana) and the National Party (Národní strana). Both parties submitted election spots to be transmitted on Czech Television and Czech Radio, the content of which provoked fierce reactions from the government, Czech Television and Czech Radio. One of the TV spots showed images of Roma families with the words "Stop Black Racism", "We don't want black racists among us" and "Stop Favouring Gypsies". The expression "a final solution to the Gipsy problem" was also used.

The broadcasters refused to air these spots. The spot was broadcast once on Czech Television and then withdrawn. Czech Radio refused to transmit two of the three spots that were submitted by the National Party because they were unlawful.

Political parties and unions are entitled to a reasonable period of airtime on public service channels during the European Parliament election campaign if at least one of their candidates has been authorised to stand. This rule is an exception to the general ban on advertising of political parties or candidates. The public service broadcasters are obliged to broadcast election spots, which they are not allowed to produce themselves. Channels that broadcast such third-party programmes are made directly responsible for their content by the parties that submit that content. If their content is unlawful, claims can be made directly against the parties that produced it and that are responsible for it. Broadcasters can nonetheless still be liable and therefore they too must check the content. However, an election spot can only be rejected if it seriously and obviously infringes generally applicable legislation.

Punishable offences include attacks on human dignity such as incitement to hatred, violence and arbitrary acts, insults, wilful contempt or slander. The broadcasters thought this criterion was fully met. Czech Television and Czech Radio have therefore reported this offence to the official authorities.

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