



Coalition for the International Criminal Court

www.iccnnow.org

For more information, contact:

In Brussels: Luisa Mascia
European Coordinator - Coalition for the ICC
Tel: +32 2 502 62 15; +32 485 927957 (m) E-
mail: mascia@iccnnow.org

In the Czech Republic: Jan Kratochvíl
League of Human Rights
tel.: +420 608 021 038
e-mail: jkratochvil@llp.cz

In New York: Anaga Dalal
Head of Communications, Coalition for the ICC
Tel: +1-646-465-8517; +1-201-600-4718
Email: dalal@iccnnow.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Global Civil Society Coalition Applauds Czech Republic for Joining
International Criminal Court as 110th State Party
*ICC Membership Now Universal among European Union Countries***

New York, NY/ Brussels, Belgium - The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)—a global network of more than 2,500 non-governmental and civil society organizations—today applauded the Czech Republic’s formal ratification of the Rome Statute, the ICC’s founding treaty, at United Nations headquarters today.

This historic step follows Czech President Václav Klaus’ signature into law of the International Criminal Court ratification bill on 8 July 2009. “With his signature, President Klaus finally sealed the Czech Republic’s commitment to the ICC and made the European Union unified and unequivocal in its support for the ICC,” said Luisa Mascia, CICC Regional Coordinator for Europe. “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked tirelessly to overcome strong opposition to the Court. It took years, but the commitment of the Foreign Ministry and civil society to ratification did not waver.”

In the Czech Republic, national and international civil society has been promoting the ICC ratification campaign for the past ten years and played a decisive role by actively engaging the most reluctant members of parliament and ensuring that public attention has remained focused on ratification. An October 2006 CICC event with parliamentarians, civil society, member states and Czech officials provided an opportunity to hear and discuss the position of parliamentarians with regards to ratification. Among other events, civil society has actively raised awareness with the media and the general public, organized roundtables with Czech Parliamentarians and letter campaigns aimed at official authorities.

“We join the enthusiasm of the international community for the Czech Republic’s ratification,” said Jan Kratochvil of the Czech League for Human Rights and Coordinator of the Czech Coalition for the ICC. “Today’s ratification proves that civil society’s tireless efforts have not been in vain.”

The Czech Republic signed the Rome Statute ten years ago on 13 April 1999. There were several failed attempts to ratify the treaty, until fall 2008 when the Czech Chamber of Deputies finally approved the ratification bill by an overwhelming majority, following the Senate’s approval of the Statute.

“With the Czech Republic and Chile recently joining the Court, all of the European Union and all governments in South America have ratified the Rome Statute,” said William Pace, convenor of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC). “The goal of universal ratification and ending impunity for the worst crimes in international law has taken another important step forward,” added Pace.

As of July 2009, 110 countries have joined the ICC, which is the first permanent international court capable of trying individuals accused of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Central to the Court’s mandate is the principle of complementarity, which holds that the Court will only intervene if national legal systems are unable or unwilling to do so. There are currently four active investigations before the Court: the Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of Congo; Darfur, Sudan; and Uganda. There are also a number of situations under analysis including in [Afghanistan](#), [Chad](#), [Colombia](#), [Côte d'Ivoire](#), [Georgia](#) and [Kenya](#).

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