On the 30th of May 2008 The Equal Rights Trust wrote to Miloslav Vlcek, Chairperson of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament calling on him and other deputies of the Czech Parliament to adopt the Law on Equal Treatment and Legal Measures of Protection from Discrimination and Amendments to Some Laws (the anti-discrimination bill), which is scheduled to be put to the vote during the 3 June 2008 session of the Chamber.

On 16 May 2008 President Vaclav Klaus vetoed the anti-discrimination bill which the Czech Parliament had adopted on 24 April 2008. In an open letter to Miloslav Vlcek, President Klaus stated that he considered this law to be “useless, counter-productive and of low quality and its consequences very problematic”. President Klaus also stated that the current legal protection against discrimination in the Czech Republic is adequate.

The President's position is in stark contrast with the results of studies carried out by leading Czech and international non-discrimination experts. The existing Czech legal system lacks definitions of discrimination and fails to provide even minimal protection against discrimination in certain areas of activity, including education, social security, and health. There is neither a consistent system of sanctions, nor an institutional framework to protect against discrimination in the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic has failed to transpose the European Union's equal treatment directives within the required deadlines. It lags behind other new member states such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, which have adopted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.

A simple majority of the 200 members of the Chamber of Deputies is required to override the Presidential veto.

To see ERT's letter, go to

http://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/Microsoft%20Word%20-letter%20to%20Speaker%20of%20the%20Czech%20Chamber%20of%20Deputies.pdf