

Czechia Moves to Criminalise Communist Ideology



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2025-06-15

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The Czech Republic is the latest Eastern European country to tighten punishments for the promotion of communist ideology and its symbols.

Details. On 30 May 2025, the Czech Chamber of Deputies approved an amendment to the Criminal Code that criminalises organising, publishing, teaching, agitating, or even expressing solidarity with the communist project. The amendment is now heading to the Senate.

- ▶ The amendment updates Section 403 of the Criminal Code, which prohibits the “establishment, support and promotion of a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms”, including those that promote “racial, ethnic, national, religious or class resentment”. Under the new wording, communist and fascist propaganda are now legally equated.
- ▶ The punishment includes up to five years of imprisonment. In aggravated cases, it leads to a sentence of 3 to 10 years.

Context. Poland was the first Eastern European EU state to criminalise communist symbols and ideology in 1997, followed by Hungary (2000), Lithuania (2008), Latvia (2013, except for education/arts), and Slovakia (2020). Communist parties are banned or severely restricted in Estonia and Slovakia. These changes followed the European Parliament’s “European Conscience and Totalitarianism” resolution, which equates “Stalinism” with fascism and declares both “criminal regimes”.

- ▶ National laws have shifted over time: in 2011, Poland repealed its ban on communist symbols on free speech grounds but maintained a ban on promoting communist ideology. In contrast, Lithuania reinforced decommunisation, banning the red star, hammer and sickle, coat of arms, and portraits of communist leaders.