

## **Reply by the Czech Republic to the alert no. 219/2023**

The protection of freedom of expression and independent media, as well as the safety of journalists are among the highest priorities of Czech foreign policy in the human rights field. The Czech Republic considers these fundamental rights to be an essential prerequisite for a functioning democratic society. The Czech Republic condemns every form of threat, attack and harassment towards journalists and finds it essential to protect the safety of journalists and free journalistic reporting. In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Czech government adopted a Civil Society Programme to support human rights defenders and independent journalists from Russia and Belarus by granting them the opportunity of residence based on a long-term visa or a residence permit. The Czech Republic is concerned about the threats directed to the journalists Alesya Marokhovskaya and Irina Dolinina from iStories, it is essential that journalists who have been forced to leave their own country can continue their work without fear. The Prague Police investigated the case, however the case was closed because it was not possible to find out the facts that would justify the initiation of criminal proceedings against a specific person.