

Reply by the Czech Republic to the alert no. 195/2023

The freedom of expression in the Czech Republic is guaranteed by Art. 17 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (a constitutional law) and the freedom and support of independent media are among the highest priorities of the Czech foreign policy in the field of human and political rights. The Government of the Czech Republic highly values numerous initiatives of the Council of Europe in the area of freedom of the media and the work of the Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists. Concerning the alert of 8 August on Dismissals and Resignations at Azadliq Radiosu, the Czech Republic hereby informs that - although the seat of the headquarters of the Azadliq Radiosu, the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) is in the Czech Republic and this station has a license in the Czech Republic - neither the Czech regulatory body (The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting) nor other Czech authorities can interfere with the internal processes of the media and employee relations. The Czech Republic operates strictly according to its applicable legal framework as regards the freedom of expression, labor law or criminal law. As such, the Czech Republic is not entitled to intervene on its own in this matter, as this would be an impermissible interference with the broadcaster's editorial freedom, which is guaranteed by the Czech legal order. In this context, the Czech Republic and the United States declared in the Joint Statement on Media Freedom by the United States and the Czech Republic of May 2023 that they “will continue to collaborate to ensure that RFE/RL is able to continue to function effectively in its Prague headquarters, including on the issue of workforce management, bearing in mind the institution’s operational needs and the external threats that it faces”.