



## **Report on legislative recommendations pursuant to Section 22 of the Public Defender of Rights Act**

Pursuant to Section 24 (1)(c) of Act No. 349/1999 Coll., on the Public Defender of Rights, as amended, I inform the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic of my recommendations to adopt, amend or annul legal regulations I have addressed to the Government or an authority whose competence is concerned.

### **Recommendation for the Government to adopt a law that would provide for certain rights of persons with disabilities accompanied by a specially trained guide dog (File No.: 23/2015/SZD of 11 April 2016).**

Over the last few years, the Public Defender of Rights received many complaints by persons who were, for instance, not allowed to enter certain buildings or public transport vehicles with their assistance dogs. Some complainants faced the same obstacles in receiving spa treatment or in their places of employment.

Specially trained guide dogs help remove, mitigate or overcome the effects of disability. Their purpose is to compensate for a certain handicap. Such dogs are indispensable parts of the lives of people with disabilities. They allow them to exercise their right to free movement and independence.

Currently, the law does not regulate the rights of persons accompanied by specially trained guide dogs. While these rights may be inferred from the Anti-Discrimination Act, their enforcement in practice is far from effective. In the Czech Republic, there are no legal rules defining the rights of people accompanied by guide dogs.

The Public Defender of Rights has been engaged in the subject of specially trained guide dogs for a long time, specifically since 2009. In 2010, this engagement resulted in issuing the Recommendation of the Public Defender of Rights on the access of guide dogs to public areas. The current proposal, therefore, presents a logical next step in this direction. **For this reason, I recommended that the Government adopt a law that would regulate the rights of persons with disabilities who use specially trained guide dogs, encompassing the following areas:**

1. Definition of public areas that are freely accessible by persons accompanied by specially trained guide dogs. These include, for example, office buildings, courts, cultural establishments or public transport vehicles. “Freely accessible” means that the accompaniment by a guide dog is not subject to any fees or any additional rules such as compulsory muzzling. Similarly, this law should ensure unrestricted access to education, work and housing. In this context, a guide dog is an inseparable part of the accompanied person. The same regulation should also apply to guide dog trainers.
2. Specification of the guide dog training. The Czech legislation does not regulate neither the status, nor the conditions of the training of dogs intended to accompany persons with disabilities. There is no independent national inspection body in the Czech Republic that



would assess the training provided or the trainers' professional qualifications. There is no accreditation centre that would guarantee the trained dogs' quality.

**On 14 June 2016, the Government Committee for Persons with Disabilities discussed my recommendation for the Government and also recommended that the Government adopt a resolution for the relevant law to be drawn up and submitted for approval.**

As of 28 July 2016, the Government has not discussed the recommendation.

In Brno on 28 July 2016

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Public Defender of Rights