



## PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR GLOBAL ACTION (PGA)

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### **CZECH REPUBLIC BECOMES 110<sup>TH</sup> STATE PARTY TO THE ROME STATUTE OF THE ICC**

PARLIAMENTARIANS CELEBRATE THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A “NO IMPUNITY ZONE”

21 July 2009 - *The Hague/New York*: Today’s deposit of the Instrument of Ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) by the Czech Republic at the United Nations in New York brings to 110 the number of States that have joined the ICC system. Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), a network of over 1300 Lawmakers from all regions of the world committed to the protection of human rights under the Rule of Law, welcomes this pivotal development, which consolidates the entire European Union (EU) as a “no-impunity zone”.

The former Speaker of the Senate of Poland, **Prof. Longin Pastusiak**, who led the *PGA Campaign for the Universality of the Rome Statute* in Central and Eastern Europe after the adoption of the Statute in 1998, underscored the importance of having “*all the 27 EU Member States within the territorial and active personality jurisdiction of the ICC. No perpetrator of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes can find a safe haven in the EU*”, Prof. Pastusiak said. “*It is now time for the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the other 5 Member States of the Council of Europe [Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Monaco and Turkey] that have not yet joined the ICC system to ratify the Statute as early as possible, in order to ensure that all peoples benefit from the principle of equality of all before the law*”, the former PGA Board Member remarked.

In the newly elected European Parliament, PGA Members **Mr. Jo Leinen** (Germany) and **Prof. Vittorio Prodi** (Italy) saluted the decision of the Czech Government, which followed a qualified majority approval by the Czech Parliament in support of ratification in October 2008. In their view, this step taken by the Czech Republic is “*a call for the EU to continue and increase its efforts in support of international justice, the Rule of Law and the respect for human rights in all corners of the world in compliance with the EU Common Position on the ICC of 2003, which serves as platform for coherent efforts of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU in the fight against impunity for the most serious crimes*”, the two MEPs said in a joint statement today.

Through resolutions, reports and questions to the EU Council and the Commission, the European Parliament and the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP)—EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly have played an important role over the past 15 years in promoting the establishment and effectiveness of the ICC system. “*Now that we have a united voice of all EU Member States as Parties to the Statute, our efforts as Parliamentarians towards implementing its principles and norms within the domestic legal orders of our countries shall be re-doubled, as well as our external initiatives to prevent the repetition of atrocities in pre-conflict, crisis, conflict and post-conflict situations wherever they may be committed*”, Mr. Leinen and Prof. Prodi concluded.

Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), whose Members reached out on a number of occasions between 2002 and 2008 to their colleagues from all the political groups in the Czech Parliament to support the ratification of the Rome Statute, will continue to promote the universality and effectiveness of the ICC system, including improved cooperation of States with the Court in the arrest and surrender of persons regarding whom an arrest warrant has been issued by the Court as well as seeking better protection for victims and witnesses of international crimes.

\* *Special thanks to Mr. Paul Weissleder, UN Treaty Section for providing photo for PGA website*

#### **About PGA**

Parliamentarians for Global Action is a network of more than 1300 members of parliament from 130 countries around the world who, in their individual capacity, have pledged to mobilize political will in favour of the establishment, effective and complementary operation of an independent ICC. Members of PGA have contributed to 65 of the 110 ratifications or accession to the Rome Statute to date. PGA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition for the ICC. PGA receives the support of the European Commission (EU) and of the Governments of Belgium, The Netherlands, and Switzerland, as well as core support from Denmark, Sweden, Nigeria and The Hague Municipality.

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