

## **Press release: A group of Czech citizens is taking the government to court over climate inaction**

Prague April 21, 2021

Today, after 18 months of preparations, a group of Czech citizens has filed an administrative “climate” lawsuit against the Czech Government and its ministries with the Municipal Court in Prague. It is the first climate litigation ever undertaken in a Visegrad Four country. The action is being brought by six plaintiffs. The first of them is the association itself (Klimatická žaloba ČR), representing 221 Czech citizens. It is joined by a municipality affected by climate change, Svatý Jan pod Skalou, and four more individuals as separate plaintiffs who suffer from the adverse effects of climate change in their private and professional lives: two farmers, a forest owner and one person suffering from acute environmental anxiety. If the plaintiffs succeed, the court can order the Czech Government to start actively addressing the causes and effects of the climate crisis.

*“This lawsuit was long overdue. With one of the highest historical per capita emissions globally and being firmly established in global value chains, our country is co-responsible for the ensuing climate crisis. Instead of addressing this moral debt, the Government chose to ignore the problem and point fingers at others. In the meantime, our farmers face wild swings in temperature, our foresters count the dead trees, and our people bear witness to the destruction of their natural environment. If this is not a clear violation of our fundamental rights, then what is?”* asks Martin Madej, a speaker for the plaintiffs.

The initiative calls for the measures taken by the Czech Republic to be revised and brought into compliance with its constitutional and international obligations, most importantly those which stem from the Paris Agreement. The petitioners further argue that the Government is failing to take steps to protect their lives, health, rights and property to the extent warranted by the urgency of the climate crisis.

Complementing the legal arguments and evidence for the court, the association also commissioned expert opinions by world-renowned climatologists, Professor Kevin Anderson and Dr Daniel Calverley of Manchester University, and the German-based think tank Climate Analytics. According to these assessments, the Czech Republic's plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are grossly insufficient and are massively exceeding (approx. 2.5 times) the country's carbon budget. The plaintiffs therefore call on the Czech Government to bring its policies in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

The lawsuit was prepared by the law firm Frank Bold Advokáti, and their lawyers will later represent the plaintiffs in the court proceedings. Financing for the legal fees was raised partly from crowdfunding and partly from foundations that support climate litigation worldwide. The text of the lawsuit (in Czech) and the submitted evidence (partly in English) are available at [www.klimazaloba.cz](http://www.klimazaloba.cz).