

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **The Czech government is backtracking from its commitment to inclusive education**

International rights groups are concerned by recent statements from the Czech Government, indicating it would not abolish practical schools, and would continue operating pre-school education (kindergardens) and preparatory classes under the practical schools system. The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) and Amnesty International (AI) believe that these recent statements undermine the commitment made in the Government's Strategy for Combating Social Exclusion for 2011-2015 and the government is backtracking from its promises.

The organisations sent a joint letter yesterday, highlighting the government's lack of progress on inclusive education that would benefit both Roma children and children with disabilities. (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR71/003/2013/en>)

The Czech Government must prioritise this issue and take immediate measures, including a moratorium on placements of children, including Romani children and children with disabilities, in practical schools and classes; there should be a comprehensive review of the system to ensure compliance with international and regional standards on education and non-discrimination and at all times, ensuring the best interests of the child.

The Czech Government must also start implementing measures for progressive transformation of the system of schools established for "pupils with mild mental disabilities" including the phasing out of practical schools within a realistic time period and their replacement with inclusive education within the mainstream system in line with the Strategy.