

Czechs a step away from smoking ban in bars, restaurants

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The Czech Republic is one step away from losing its status of one of the last havens for tobacco smokers in Europe.

The Senate, the upper house of Parliament, voted 45-12 on Thursday to approve a [smoking ban](#) in bars, restaurants and cafes. The lower house gave its green light on Dec. 9.

To become effective on May 31, which is World No Tobacco Day, it needs final approval: a signature from President Milos Zeman, who is a chain smoker.

Movie theaters, concert venues, exhibition halls and indoor sports settings would be banned from having separate rooms for smokers.

Unlike most of Europe, Czechs have remained tolerant of smoking. Right now it is up to restaurant owners to decide whether to allow or ban it.

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