

# **Light pollution regulation alternatives**

## **Abstract**

This diploma thesis deals with the subject of light pollution, the harmful effects of artificial (anthropogenic) light on natural nocturnal environment. The issue was first brought up some decades ago by astronomers whose night sky observations started to be obstructed by sky glow – one of the three types of light pollution. But there are far more reasons to re-evaluate the way and intensity with which we illuminate our surroundings. The natural day/night cycle and the way it changes throughout the year regulates the timing of biological processes of almost all life on Earth. Its disruption affects the orientation, reproduction and development of most animal and plant species. Humans are no exception – night-time artificial light exposure can lead to sleep disorders, depression, cardiovascular diseases and even increases the prevalence of some types of cancer. The first chapter of this thesis focuses on the complexity of the issue that is light pollution. The rest of it deals with the possible ways of regulating it.

Chapter two presents a summary of supranational efforts to minimize light pollution from all relevant fields, including the steps taken by the European Union so far. The third chapter compares the legal approaches of individual countries to the problem, namely Slovenia, Croatia, France, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Italy and the USA.

The fourth and final chapter investigates the ways the Czech legal system prevents or protects from obtrusive light. In the sphere of public law, we can name Act on the Conservation of Nature and Landscape, Environmental Impact Assessment Act, Construction act, even the offence of night-time disturbance. Municipalities are also mentioned, both as public lighting providers and as local private lighting regulators. Private law, concretely the Civil code, provides protection against obtrusive light through neighbourly immissions regulation. The conclusion of the thesis provides cogitation *de lege ferenda* and information on the anticipated future regulation of light pollution.

**Key words: light pollution, comparative law, Czech environmental law**