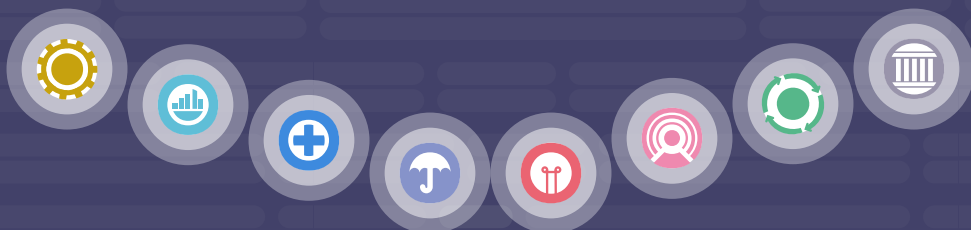


# GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY FOR 2021 - 2030



## SUMMARY

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# Introduction

Dear readers,

the brochure in your hands sets out briefly the Czech Republic's Gender Equality Strategy for 2021–2030. The strategy's vision is to create a society in which women and men can live freely and achieve their full potential, regardless of their gender.

To add clarity to this summary of the strategy's extensive analytical text, infographics, charts and selected noteworthy features of the current state of gender equality in the Czech Republic are included in this publication. We believe that this accessible format will give you a good insight into the state of gender equality in Czech society.

The strategy is the second framework government document for implementing gender equality policy in the Czech Republic. The first framework document was the Government Strategy for Equality of Men and Women in the Czech Republic for 2014–2020. The new strategy contains 8 chapters, 26 strategic objectives and 434 measures. It covers eight areas of society: Work and Care, Decision-making, Safety, Health, Knowledge, Society, External Relations, and Institutions.

Expert groups from the state sector, civic sector and academia were involved in formulating the measures. The measures represent a detailed guide to and description of the steps that governments should take in the next decade to ensure gender equality. The purpose of these measures is to build on the positive changes achieved and overturn negative trends.

It follows from the nature of the strategy as a strategic document of the Czech government that it is primarily intended for the central authorities of state administration. The strategy sets tasks for these authorities within the 2021–2030 framework. Work on these tasks will be carried out with the support from the EU funds and EEA/Norway Grants as well as in the day-to-day work of the ministries.

The full wording of the Gender Equality Strategy for 2021–2030, with extensive references and an overview of all measures, is accessible on the government's website [www.vlada.cz](http://www.vlada.cz), in the section devoted to the Government Council for Gender Equality, or at [www.tojеровnost.cz](http://www.tojеровnost.cz). In this special abridged version, we want to present the strategy's basic priorities and goals on the path towards achieving gender equality in the Czech Republic.

We hope you find it inspiring.

Team of the Gender Equality Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

# A brief history of gender equality in Czechia

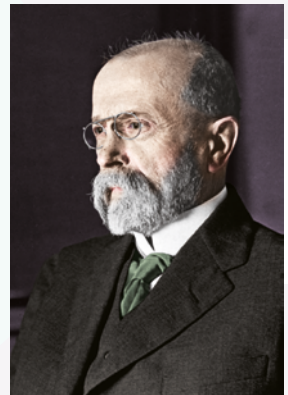
The path to women's emancipation in what is nowadays known as the Czech Republic began in the 19th century. The early developments were closely bound up with the national revival of Czech society. The endeavour to improve standards of education affected women and their subsequent professional employment. At the beginning of the 20th century, women's greater participation in public life was linked to efforts to build a democratic state in the First Republic.

The guarantee of suffrage for women in 1920 made Czechoslovakia one of the first European countries to take this step.

An important figure in the drive to the promotion of equality between women and men was **Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk**, the first President of Czechoslovakia, who attached great importance to equality both in legislation and his everyday life. There was also an intensification of activities by women's associations, affiliated under the Women's National Council headed by **Františka Plamínková**. Over time, the rules that made women subordinate to men in public and private life were removed. These included women's inability to act on their own behalf when dealing with the authorities, restrictions on property rights and the inability to decide on the upbringing and sustenance of children.



Františka  
Plamínková



Tomáš  
Garrigue  
Masaryk

**Sociolegal protection of women expanded in the first half of the 20th century.** These protections focused, for example, on the duration of pregnancy and early motherhood. Legal rules on widows' and widowers' pensions were also important for gender equality. Even family relationships were covered by the legislation.

The world wars brought a fundamental shift in the area of women's employment. The shortage of labour meant that women entered the labour market. However, the requirement to work was not accompanied by changes in the division of roles in the family. Caring for children and relatives, as well as domestic chores were still viewed as women's responsibilities. Women may have gone to work, but a second shift awaited them at home.

The socialist establishment placed a strong emphasis on the family as one of the fundamental societal institutions. **In the second half of the 20th century, women's status in the family was bound up with their status in public life.** Consequently, the path to emancipation had to lead through the family. **The family started to move away from the traditional model towards a democratic family model.** Time devoted to looking after children and the household began to be shared more evenly between men and women. Childcare services improved in terms of accessibility and quality. Another factor easing the burden on women was technological progress, which reduced the amount of time taken up by domestic chores.

After the overthrow of the communist government in 1989 and the restoration of democracy, other phenomena, which had already been addressed in other European countries, started to be discussed openly in the Czech society: greater unemployment among women than men, differences in earnings, low representation of women in decision-making and discriminatory treatment of women. The Czech Republic began to fulfil its international women's rights commitments and actively promote human rights and gender equality in its foreign policy.

The Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, which regards gender equality as one of its core principles, played a key role in continuously eliminating discrimination against women.

Gender equality is now one of the fundamental values of the Czech Republic. It is expressed on a general level in the **Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms**, which guarantees equality in dignity and rights and guarantees rights and freedoms to all, irrespective of gender. Detailed rules banning discrimination (based on gender) are set out primarily in the **Anti-discrimination Act**.

To support gender equality policy within the country's borders, the government adopts strategic and conceptual documents such as the **gender equality strategies** and its follow-up **action plans**. Fulfilment of these commitments is monitored annually via **gender equality reports**, which are drafted by the Gender Equality Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and subsequently presented to the Czech government. In addition to progress on gender equality tasks, the reports inform about gender equality developments in general during the past year.

# Key milestones in the emancipation of women in Czechia

Take a look at some of the important milestones that have accompanied the emancipation of women in the Czech Republic.

## New Act on the Family

The new Act on the Family introduced equality between husbands and wives. The legislation did away with the legal concept of “head of the family”, according to which the husband ruled the household, and the wife was obliged to obey and assist the husband. Economic relations between husbands and wives were also equalised. Property acquired in marriage became jointly owned.

## UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The convention is underpinned by the idea that changing the traditional roles of women and men in society and the family is necessary for achieving full equality between women and men.

## Parental allowance

Both mothers and fathers caring for at least one child up to the age of three were entitled to the allowance. However, while men could claim parental allowance, employers only had to grant time off from work to women, and not to men.

1920

## Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic

The Constitution gave women the right to vote. The first parliamentary elections in what is today the Czech Republic in which women could vote and be elected took place. republiky, v nichž volily a mohly být voleny i ženy.

1949

1957

## Legalisation of abortion

Women’s criminal liability for abortion was abolished. The legislation permitted an abortion undertaken for medical and other serious reasons. An abortion commission had to be convened to permit an abortion.

1982

1986

## Abortion commissions abolished

Every woman gained the right to abortion. Doctors could only refuse abortion requests on medical grounds, or if the pregnancy was too advanced.

1990

1991

## Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms

The Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms expresses the general principle of equality in dignity and rights. Article 3 of the Charter guarantees fundamental human rights to all without a difference, and sex is at the top of the list of possible reasons for discrimination.

## European Convention on Human Rights

Czechoslovakia was the first country in central and eastern Europe to sign the European Convention on Human Rights, which is the Council of Europe's most important human rights document. The Convention addresses discrimination on the basis of gender and enables men and women to take their cases to the European Court of Human Rights.

1992

## Gender Equality Unit

The unit was established at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. It played a conceptual and coordinating role in gender equality policy. The unit was subsequently moved from the Ministry to the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and back. Since 2017, its role has been taken over by the independent Gender Equality Department at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

1998

## Parental leave

An amendment to the Labour Code established the concept of "parental leave". Men taking parental leave were guaranteed the same labour protections as women. The amendment gave families more options regarding childcare.

2001

## Chamber of Deputies' Permanent Commission for Family Issues, Equal Opportunities and Minorities

The Commission deals with measures to improve the situation of families and seniors of both genders in the Czech Republic. It monitors the creation and implementation of the government's family policies and gender equality strategies and legal instruments for the protection of ethnic minorities.

2002

1995

## Beijing Platform for Action

The main objective of the Beijing Platform for Action was to make states commit to formulating national action plans designed to promote equal opportunities, to developing national institutional mechanisms for achieving these strategic goals and to consider impacts on women and men when drawing up government policies and measures (known as gender mainstreaming).

1998

## Government priorities and activities for implementing equal opportunities for women and men

The first policy document governing the co-ordination of gender equality activities was adopted by the Czech government. It was updated annually.

2001

## Government Council for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men

Later renamed to the Government Council for Gender Equality. The Council checks that government policies do not worsen existing gender inequalities, formulates recommendations for the government and monitors the implementation of the Czech Republic's international gender equality commitments.

2002

### Gender focal point

The position of a “gender focal point” was established at all ministries. The role of a gender focal point is to coordinate gender mainstreaming processes in the ministry policies.

2004

### Czech Republic joins the European Union

Accession made it necessary to transpose anti-discrimination directives into Czech law and to commit to actively promoting gender equality.

2009

### Anti-discrimination Act

The Act lays down the equal treatment obligation and defines what legal means can be used to protect citizens against discrimination.

2011

### Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

The first document specifically targeting the prevention of domestic violence and assistance for its victims. The action plan recognises the gendered basis of domestic violence and the connection between this violence and gender inequality.

2014

### Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men

The first medium-term framework government document for implementing gender equality policy in the Czech Republic for the years 2014–2020.

2016

### Action Plan for Equal Representation of Women and Men in Decision-making Positions

The first comprehensive strategic document at Czech government level focusing specifically on this issue for the years 2016–2018.

2021

### New Strategy for Equality of Women and Men for 2021–2030

This follows up the existing gender equality policy. It sets out a national strategic framework for the policy, which includes identifying problems in this field, measures to tackle gender disparities and tools for monitoring progress towards the various measures and goals.





WORK AND CARE

# Overview of the current situation

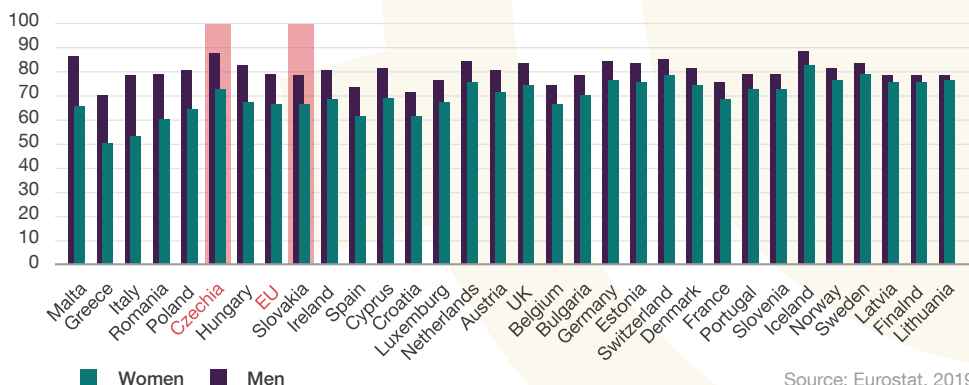
The situation in the labour market has been good in recent years. Long-term low unemployment and rising incomes have improved the position of Czech households. However, some population groups, predominantly women, still face discrimination at work or other disadvantages. These disadvantages are often linked to caring for children, ill parents or other relatives needing care. The right conditions for combining work life and family life are still not sufficiently ensured either in the legislation or in practice.

**“The economic activity of Czech women aged 20–64 is 15% lower than that of Czech men of the same age.”**

The big differences in the rates of employment of women and men – bigger than in most European Union countries – are mainly caused by women’s long absences from the labour market to care for children and other dependents.

## Chart 1 – Rates of employment of women and men in European countries

Ranked in descending order from the biggest difference in employment rates for women and men to the smallest.



Source: Eurostat, 2019

The low level of women’s economic participation has negative impacts in both macroeconomic and microeconomic terms. For the state, this means lost tax revenues and lost contributions to social and health insurance. For households, it means lower incomes and can lead to a risk of poverty and material deprivation.

# The traditional division of gender roles persists

Despite a number of initiatives designed to support active fatherhood, women are still the ones who predominantly take parental leave. Decisions about which partner will take parental leave are influenced both by stereotypical ideas about the traditional roles of men and women and by incomes. As research by the League of Open Men indicated, in roughly two-thirds of households with children under 18, men earn more than women, so the family would face a palpable financial strain if the father took parental leave.

**“Men accounted for just 1.7% of those receiving parental allowance in 2019.”**

A woman with children up to the age of 18 and in full-time employment spends on average 4.5 hours a day caring for her children and household, while a man in the same position spends just under 2 hours a day on these tasks. Women care for the family and household to the detriment of paid work and free time.

**HOW MANY HOURS A DAY DO THEY CARE FOR THE CHILDREN AND THE HOUSEHOLD?**

**2 HOURS**



**4,5 HOURS**

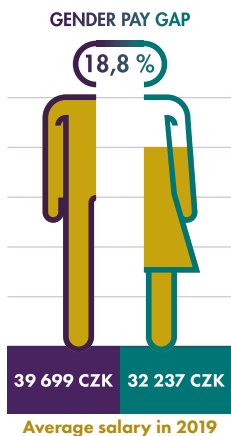


## Parents have to contend with a shortage of kindergarten places

The situation in the Czech Republic is also influenced by the lack of available local childcare. The proportion of children under the age of 3 registered with formal care facilities (9%) is far below the EU average (34.3%). Tens of thousands of applications for kindergarten places are turned down every year. In practice, this means that many parents have to defer their return to work because they haven't been able to get a place in a kindergarten or crèche. There is still a shortage of approximately 20,000 places for children under the age of 3 in the Czech Republic, according to a conservative estimate by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

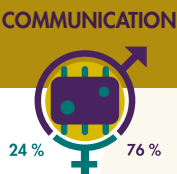
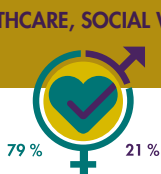
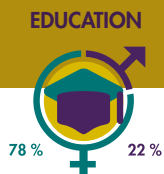
Another fundamental precondition for balancing work and family life is the availability of part-time work and flexible work arrangements. In this regard, too, the Czech Republic lags far behind other EU countries, with just 2.8% of men and 10.6% of women working part-time compared to the EU average of 8.7% and 31.3% respectively. Part-time work and flexible work arrangements are not the solutions by themselves, however, as they come with risks in the form of reduced job security and a greater risk of poverty. Placing too much emphasis on expanding part-time work without considering who makes use of this kind of work can also contribute to further labour market segregation and a worsening of women's economic status. That makes it essential to encourage men to play a bigger role in caring for children, relatives and households.

## The gender earnings gap persists

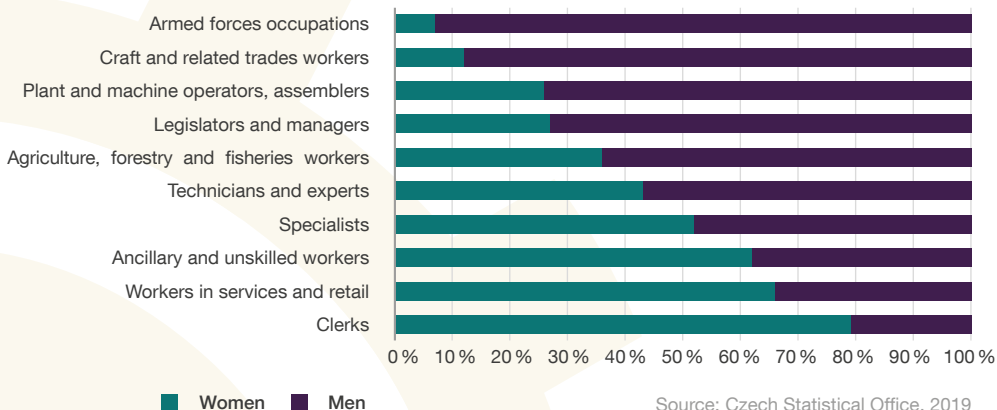


Women's average monthly pay in 2019 was CZK 32,237, with men earning on average CZK 39,699. That made the difference in average incomes 18.8% (a difference of CZK 7,462) in men's favour. One of the reasons for earnings differences is women dropping out of the labour market, which impacts career growth opportunities and leads to an absence of women in management positions. But other factors play a role. Women are more likely to work in lower-paid fields such as healthcare, education or social services. Research has also shown that women demand a 20% lower starting salary on average than men. Although firms are obliged to pay the same for the same work and work of the same value, they often do not. According to a study by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, even when factors such as work position, the type of employer and work experience are taken into account, a gap of 11% remains between men's and women's earnings. Since 2009, the Anti-discrimination Act has provided protection against pay discrimination, but Czech society is still not good at making use of that legislation, with only a small proportion of victims of discrimination taking their case to the courts.

There is still horizontal (sector-based) segregation of the labour market in the Czech Republic. What horizontal segregation means in practice is that men or women are concentrated in particular sectors of the labour market or in certain occupations. The ground for this segregation is already laid during education when girls are motivated more to study humanities and care subjects, while boys are encouraged to study technical fields.



**Chart 2 – Employment by CZ-ISCO classification**



What's more, low pay does only not impact women's lives solely during their productive age. The average old-age pension in 2019 was CZK 12,892 for women but CZK 15,461 for men. Consequently, women receive a pension that is almost a fifth lower than men on average. As a result, women aged over 65 are more than three times more likely to be at risk of income poverty than men, making female seniors the group at greatest risk of poverty.

**“A CERGE study revealed that approximately 34% of all jobs can be performed remotely.”**

The Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on labour market developments in 2020. The higher levels of women employed in commercial services and their greater participation in childcare at a time when schools were closed resulted in the crisis hitting women the hardest. The crisis changed the nature of work, with firms and government offices learning how to make use of work from home. A CERGE study, for example, revealed that approximately 34% of all jobs can be performed remotely. Numerous recovery schemes that could help eliminate disparities were also launched.

# What positive changes does the Strategy bring?

## Fathers' greater involvement in childcare

The Operational Programme Employment+ will be used to support activities designed to boost the motivation for men to take part in childcare and apply for the parental allowance.



## More places in kindergartens and crèches

Legislative amendments will be presented to secure funding for childcare facilities for children under the age of 4 from the state budget and to make it compulsory to guarantee a place for children aged 12–36 months.

## A wider range of flexible forms of work, work from home and part-time work

The Employment+ operational programme will be used to support projects designed to boost motivation for employers to offer part-time and flexible work.



## Less gender stereotyping in career choices

Training will be provided in order to make career advisors at primary and secondary schools more likely to offer schoolchildren of both genders non-stereotypical study fields.

## Better detection of pay discrimination

The number of inspections done by the State Labour Inspection Authority targeting equal pay will be increased so that pay discrimination is exposed more often.



## Increased pay transparency

It will be made compulsory to include information about basic pay in job advertisements. An amendment of the Labour Code will also render non-disclosure agreements on pay null and void.



2



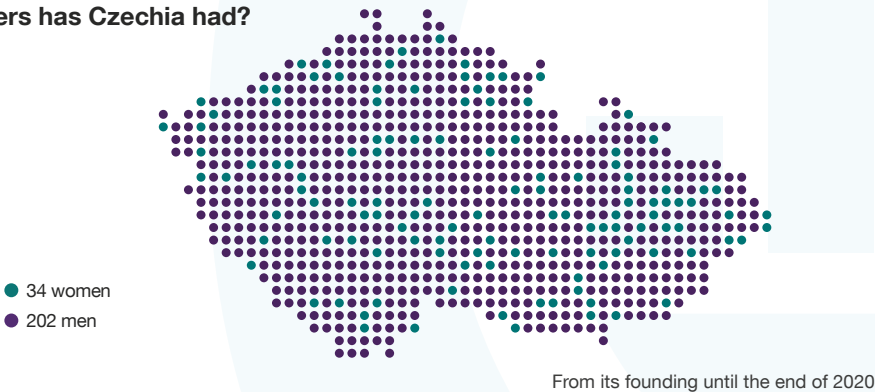
DECISION-MAKING

# Overview of the current situation

Women's representation in public decision-making has been increasing gradually in recent years. Even so, women's representation in decision-making positions in the Czech Republic is among the lowest in the EU. Women are now as educated and qualified as men and thus have the same prerequisites for holding senior positions and representing the public in politics. Owing to various reasons and various obstacles, however, women are still underrepresented in decision-making.

The equal representation of women and men in decision-making positions is one of the cornerstones of a functioning democracy. The Czech Republic is bound to take steps to actively promote balanced representation in decision-making by the international treaties which it has ratified.

## How many female and male ministers has Czechia had?



# Gender stereotypes are an obstacle to gender-balanced representation

The invisible obstacles that prevent women from being promoted and playing a greater role in decision-making are collectively referred to as the glass ceiling. These barriers can be gender stereotypes and traditional ideas about women's roles, non-transparent rules for filling decision-making positions, women's lack of confidence in their own abilities or the non-existence of women's networks. Decisions on who will get a decision-making position are often taken at informal events to which women have limited



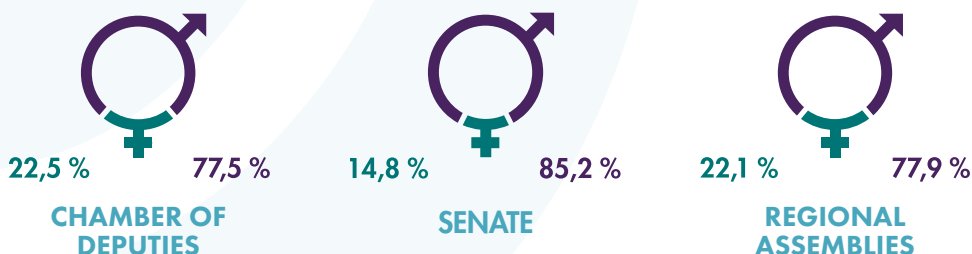
access due to either family obligations or conventions. Unconscious bias is another important factor. Studies confirm that people have a tendency to value traits that they themselves possess. Selection commissions composed solely of men may, therefore, prefer male candidates. Promoting transparency in selection processes and diversity in decision-making is, therefore, a key precondition for increasing women's representation in decision-making positions.

Vertical gender segregation is the concentration of women and men on different levels of employment in terms of responsibility and status. It includes women's unequal access to promotion and decision-making positions both at work and in public life.

## The number of women in politics is growing, but men still dominate

In 2019, the Czech Republic celebrated the 100th anniversary of its first elections in which women could vote. Czechoslovakia was one of the first countries to grant suffrage to women. However, women are still underrepresented in politics. In 2020, women secured merely 22.5% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 14.8% in the Senate. Women hold 22.1% of the seats in regional assemblies and 28.0% in municipal assemblies. In the 2018 presidential election, there were 9 male candidates and not a single woman compared to the previous presidential election, in which 3 of the 9 candidates were women.

**Chart 3 – Proportion of women in selected state authorities and local self-government**



**“In the last presidential election in 2018 there were 9 male candidates and not a single woman, while in the previous election the 9 candidates included 3 women.”**

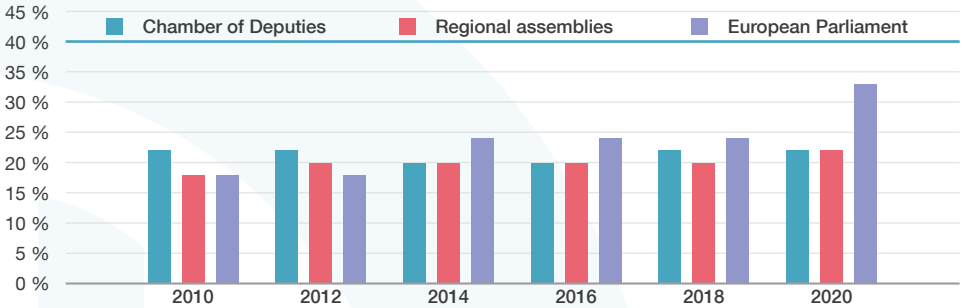
Soft measures in the form of awareness-raising and support campaigns may be increasing the number of elected women, but the growth is very slow. Current data reveal, for example, that at the current rate of growth it would take another 46 years before women would hold 40% of the seats in regional assemblies in the Czech Republic. In the Chamber of Deputies, the 40% representation would be attained in 2071. These facts explain why legislation laying down rules for the representation of women and men on candidate lists is important for increasing women's role in politics. Legislative measures have already been adopted by numerous European countries, such as Belgium, France, Croatia, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

Public opinion surveys confirm that the Czech society wants more women in decision-making positions and recognises the obstacles women face. For example, 59% of the general public think that men have more chances of promotion. Moreover, as many as 69% support legislative measures to increase the representation of women in politics.

**“As many as 69% support legislative measures to increase the representation of women in politics.”**



**Chart 4 – Women elected in elections to the Chamber of Deputies, regional assemblies and the European Parliament**

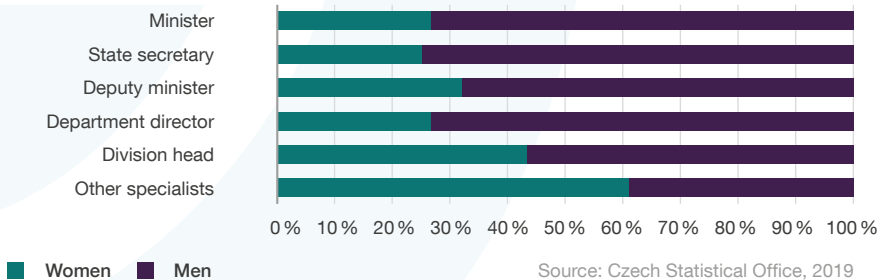


Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2020

## Different life experiences lead to different priorities

Women remain underrepresented at other levels of the public sphere, including state administration, the justice system, the diplomatic service, research institutions, State-Owned Enterprises and public-service media. It also continues to be the case that women are primarily represented in lower positions and their representation decreases as the organisational level increases.

**Chart 5 – Women’s participation in decision-making processes (as of 31.12.2019)**



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2019

The low representation of women in senior positions impacts the whole of society. Women and men still have specific experiences and needs in many regards. Consequently, women’s underrepresentation in decision-making can contribute to women’s specific needs being overlooked, albeit unconsciously. Practical impacts include a shortage of childcare services, underfunding of the social services or education and overlooking women’s sport requirements.

# What positive changes does the Strategy bring?

## Fewer obstacles to career growth

The Employment+ operational programme will be used to support education and qualifications improvement for women looking to develop their careers.



## Greater representation of women in -decision-making in public authorities

Gender-balanced selection commissions will be set up in the state sector and methodological tools for supporting diversity, including mentoring, will be created.

## Greater representation of women in companies' management and statutory bodies

Amendments of the Nomination Act and Act on Commercial Corporations will be drawn up. These will lay down rules in support of equal representation of women and men in commercial corporations' management and supervisory bodies, including state-owned enterprises.



## Improved awareness among people in decision-making positions in business

Awareness-raising activities targeting business governance and diversity will be supported.

## More women candidates in elections

A legislative proposal designed to support the equal representation of women and men on political parties' candidate lists in elections to regional and municipal assemblies, the Chamber of Deputies and the European Parliament will be presented.



## More young candidates in elections

Regular regional training will be organised to support a balanced representation of women and men in political parties and movements, focusing on young people.

3



SAFETY



# Overview of the current situation

The situation concerning safety has been improving in recent years. Crime, in general, has been declining, and the Czech Republic is regarded as one of the world's safest countries. This, however, does not apply to gender-based violence against women. The number of rapes is increasing, not declining. Gender-based violence in cyberspace has also been on the rise.

Women account for the vast majority of victims of gender-based violence. They are predominantly victims of domestic abuse, stalking and rape, i.e., violence with a huge impact on personal integrity and human dignity.

## Women are more afraid for their safety than men

Safety issues have a gender dimension. Women are more afraid, even though they are generally less likely to be victims of crime than men. Women express greater fear of all crimes except for car theft and organised crime. The biggest differences are in the fear of rape and other crimes linked to sexual violence. In women, these fears also have a bigger impact on behaviour – 60% of women avoid certain places or people after dark out of fear for their safety, compared to 20% of men.

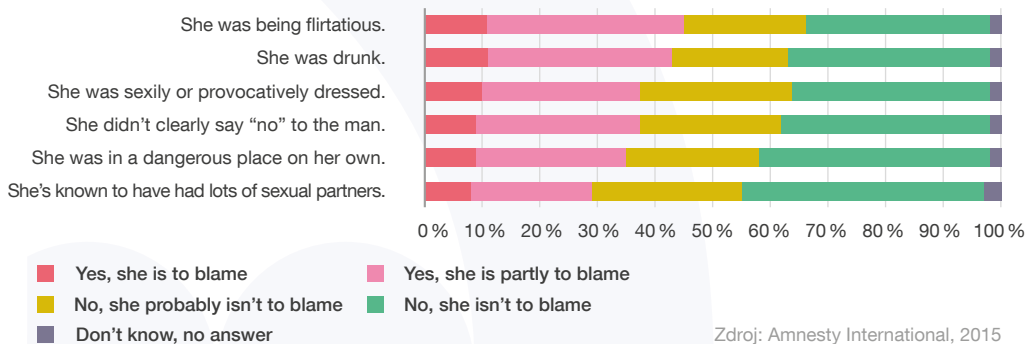
**“In women, these fears also have a bigger impact on behaviour – 60% of women avoid certain places or people after dark out of fear for their safety, compared to 20% of men.”**

Approx. 5–10% of Czech women have experienced rape. However, the vast majority of them did not seek help or contact the police.



Research done in the Czech Republic confirms dangerous stereotypes around domestic violence. A significant part of the public (43%) is convinced that some women have a tendency to choose aggressive partners and are therefore partly responsible for their situation. There is also a relatively common belief that victims bear some responsibility for their situation if they don't stand up to the aggressor (36%). This widespread view of the "weakness" of vulnerable people who remain in a pathological relationship contributes to their stigmatisation, creating a sense of guilt in the victim and making it harder for them to leave the aggressor.

**Chart 6 – Assessment of women's shared responsibility for rape in various situations**



The annual economic impacts of domestic violence have been calculated at 14.5 billion CZK (approx. 585 million EUR). That figure includes the loss to the gross domestic product due to inability to work as a result of an injury sustained during the incident, as well as treatment, police and justice system expenses and the cost of victim help services.

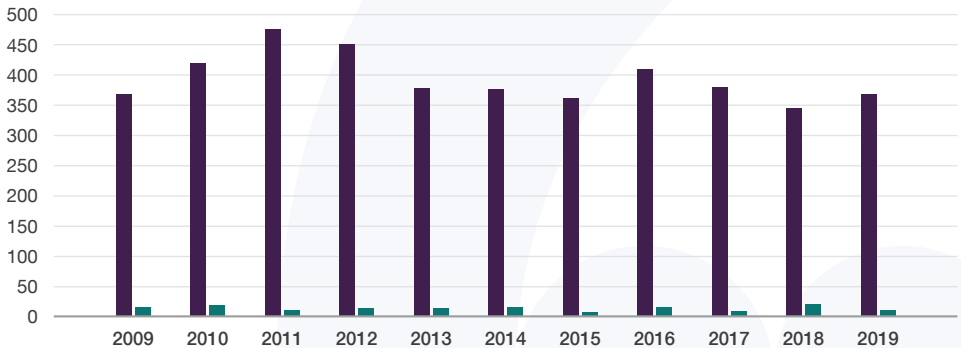
## Support for domestic violence victims is insufficient

The Czech Republic has a network of intervention centres providing basic assistance for domestic violence cases. Intervention centres exist in every region. However, shortage of specialised residential services for victims remains a long-term problem. Moreover, only 5 out of all the registered residential social services facilities provide services solely to the victims of domestic violence. These 5 facilities are operated by 3 organisations and are located in 2 cities in the Czech Republic. The capacity of these facilities stands at approx. 90 beds, i.e., at approx. 30 family places. The Council of

Europe recommends having 1 family place per 10,000 people as a minimum standard. To attain the standard, the Czech Republic would have to provide more than 1,000 places for victims. The Czech Republic, therefore, stands at 3% of the minimum standard.

There are only 3 safe houses with a capacity of 86 beds run by non-profit organisations that provide assistance exclusively to the victims of domestic and gender-based violence. Additional 10 beds are provided via another form of secret shelter. The Czech Republic, therefore, currently lacks 91% of the recommended bed capacity.

**Chart 7 – Number of men and women prosecuted for domestic abuse**



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2020

The Czech Republic has no specialised centres for victims of sexual violence. There are just two counselling centres that provide legal and specialist advice to sexual violence victims. A free helpline dedicated to victims of sexual violence has not yet been set up. The only helplines are for victims of crime in general. An international comparison also reveals that the Czech Republic's data collection on specialised support services for women who are victims of violence is still insufficient.

The situation is the same for the availability of programmes for violent offenders. There are currently only 9 organisations in the Czech Republic providing interventions for these people, most of them based in Prague and Brno. The availability of these services is, therefore, also considerably limited.

**“There are currently only 9 organisations in the Czech Republic providing interventions for violent persons.”**



The low availability of specialised services is also evident in the case of child victims. In cases where there is no specialised service nearby for children experiencing violence, it can take several years before the children receive professional help. Analyses also show that these services are provided in merely 10–15% of the registered cases of domestic violence, according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs data.

## Partner violence is more frequently experienced by adolescents

One of the present day's serious problems is the rise in partner violence among young people and adolescents. Partner violence among young people (aged 13–26) is usually characterised by different features and dynamics than domestic violence, which is why a specific term is used for it. Cyber violence plays a much more significant role here. This includes message harassment, checking a partner's phone without consent, forcing a partner to send erotic photographs, or revenge porn (threatening to post erotic photos or videos featuring the partner on social networks and/or actually doing it). The consequences of partner violence among young people can be very serious.

43% of young people experiencing violence in a relationship suffer from a long-term inability to concentrate at school or university. Every fourth girl (or boy) experiencing violence in a relationship suffers from anorexia or pronounced weight loss; 18% of young people experiencing partner violence fear for their life and 16% consider suicide.

The Covid-19 pandemic also had negative impacts on violence against women. The preventive measures designed to stop the spread of the disease kept victims confined in shared households with the perpetrators of violence. These fundamental restrictions considerably increased the risk of violence in intimate relationships. Organisations helping domestic violence victims registered increases of up to 40% in demand for their services.

# What positive changes does the Strategy bring?

## Lower tolerance of gender-based and domestic violence

Students and lecturers will be acquainted with the issue of violence in the family and partner relationships and made aware of the help that is available. The issue of gender-based violence will be included in curricula.



## Eliminating prejudices around the responsibility of the victims of violence

Harmful prejudices about domestic and sexual violence will be targeted by awareness-raising campaigns.



## Increased availability of specialised services for victims of violence

Sufficient funding will be provided for shelters, crisis beds, telephone helplines, and safe housing for victims of domestic and sexual violence.



## Improving the ability of the relevant professions to help victims

Selected professions (healthcare personnel, judges, public prosecutors, the police, and others) will receive annual training on how to provide help to victims without causing secondary victimisation.



## More effective data collection and improved understanding of the incidence of violence

Data collection on domestic and gender-based violence will be strengthened and systematised. Better data collections will make it possible to adopt more effective policies.



## Increased availability of help for violent persons

The programmes for violent persons will receive sufficient support so that help is available for everyone who decides to tackle their violent behaviour.



4



HEALTH



# Overview of the current situation

Health is a fundamental aspect of everyone's quality of life. People's health is influenced by both biological and socio-cultural factors. These are often different for men and women.

The right to health protection and access to healthcare are enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. The *Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine*, which makes it compulsory to ensure equal access to healthcare of suitable quality and to prevent unjustified discrimination, is also part of Czech law.

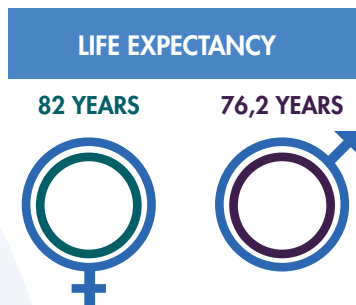
To date, systematic attention has not been paid in the public sphere to health inequalities between women and men, and care providers' awareness of these disparities is inadequate. Bar a few exceptions, it is mainly the academia and the civic sector that address the issue of gender and health in Czechia. That is despite the fact that there are numerous examples of the relevance of this issue.

## Gender stereotypes affect the health of women and men

Stereotypes linked to pressure to perform and mental and physical resilience can have a negative impact on men's perception of health and tendency to play down the illness. The negative consequences of society's expectations can include a greater rate of high-risk behaviour and a failure to take prevention seriously enough. The number of avoidable deaths in the Czech Republic in 2018 was 14,000 among men and 5,700 among women. In addition, men die on average six years earlier than women and make the majority among those who have voluntarily ended their life. The data show that approx. 1,100 men in the Czech Republic, four times more than women, commit suicide each year.

**“The number of avoidable deaths in the Czech Republic in 2018 was 14,000 among men and 5,700 among women.”**

On the other hand, women and girls up to the age of 20 make the majority among of who have been unsuccessful in committing suicide and have been self-harming with subsequent hospitalisation. Women make up 91% of patients treated for eating disorders. Research has also shown that women tend to neglect illness, and doctors, both male and female, tend to ignore women's pain. This puts women at a higher risk of not being taken seriously, being misdiagnosed and being prescribed the wrong medicines. In addition, medicines are still mostly tested on men, or on male populations and tissue. Another problem is the low representation of women in drug research and development. The risk of misdiagnosis is moreover compounded by the fact that the symptoms of some illnesses often differ from women to men.



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2018

The need to make allowance for the gender aspects of health was also confirmed by the differing impacts of Covid-19 on women and men, with different manifestations of the disease in women and men and different social consequences. For example, while women are more exposed to the virus as a result of social factors and greater representation in caring roles, men suffer a higher mortality rate.

Health disparities between women and men may also be aggravated by other factors, such as economic status, nationality, state citizenship, disability, age or sexual orientation, and gender identity.

## Labour market inequalities also affect the healthcare sector

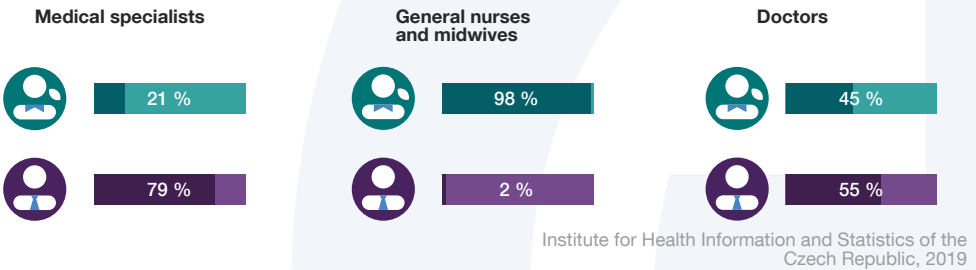
The Health chapter also tackles inequalities between healthcare workers. Although women make up most of the healthcare workforce, this sector shares the negative phenomena of the labour market in general: there is both horizontal and vertical segregation, serious work/life balance difficulties and unequal pay for women and men.

Approximately 241,000 women and 64,000 men work in healthcare in the Czech Republic. Of those numbers, 201,000 women and 49,000 men are specialists; roughly 33,000 doctors are women and 27,000 men. The biggest disparity between women and men working in healthcare is found in the care sector, with 92,000 women but merely 2,000 men working as general nurses/midwives.

### Chart 8 – Representation of women and men working in healthcare



### Chart 9 – Representation in various medical professions



Even though the gap between the number of male doctors and female doctors is not as wide as in some other countries, sector-based segregation in medical fields remains an issue. Studies on the Czech environment confirm that the career paths of female doctors are influenced by societal stereotypes. Care obligations and society’s expectations of women cause them to choose less prestigious fields that make it easier to balance work and family life. The second level of the problem is the fact that women do not tend to hold decision-making positions even in feminised fields such as medicine. Here, too, prestigious (decision-making) positions are more likely to be held by men for the very reason that they do not face as many work/life balance obstacles stemming from gender stereotypes.

This is also linked to the issue of the gender pay gap in healthcare. Female specialist doctors earn on average 22% less than their male colleagues, for example. And female general practitioners earn a quarter less on average than their male counterparts.

**“Female specialist doctors earn on average 22% less than their male colleagues.”**

Having said that, the proportion of female doctors and female medical faculty graduates is increasing every year. In 2018, women accounted for 71% of medical faculty graduates. Such a marked imbalance and the inability to combine work with family life create a risk that the staffing crisis in the health system, and by extension the availability of care, will get worse.

## Need for respectful obstetric care

Care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period is a specific area of health intrinsically linked to gender inequality. Czech obstetrics perform excellently in terms of the results of care for high-risk and pathological pregnancies and women giving birth. However, there is an enduring and strong societal demand for a respectful approach to obstetrics and the humanisation of its practice. The Ministry of Health has reacted to this demand by working on support for “alongside midwifery units”.

The services of alongside midwifery units are currently only available to a negligible fraction of women. Persisting legislative and other restrictions long faced by midwives in the Czech Republic hinder the expansion of these services. The situation is further complicated by the absence of national care standards and the fragmentation of the professions that come into contact with women during pregnancy and during and after childbirth. The Czech Republic has repeatedly been criticised by international organisations for this unsatisfactory state of affairs. Other issues are a formalistic approach to what informed consent means and inconsistencies in compliance with women’s right to free and informed choice.

The proportion of exclusively breastfed children upon leaving a maternity hospital has been declining in the Czech Republic since 2003. While in 2003, 90% of children were exclusively breastfed at the time when the mother left the maternity hospital, the figure stood at 81.4% in 2015.

Almost every fifth woman who left maternity hospital as a breastfeeding mother in 2015 did not breastfeed even for the entire six-week postpartum period. A third of women who left maternity hospitals in 2015 as breastfeeding mothers did not breastfeed for even 3 months. One of the reasons is that the Czech Republic lacks a satisfactory mechanism for ensuring the continuity of care during the postpartum period. In addition, the Czech Republic is still not implementing the revised version of the WHO and UNICEF 10 steps for successful breastfeeding known as the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative.

# What positive changes does the Strategy bring?

## Reduced inequalities in access to health and healthcare

Care providers will be trained in sensitive communication, diagnosis, and treatment. Awareness-raising activities for the general public will take place. Barriers in access to healthcare and inequalities in payments from public health insurance will be eliminated.



## Improved working conditions for health workers

The use of flexible work arrangements and the establishment of crèches in healthcare facilities will be supported. The influence of gender stereotypes will be tackled and equal opportunities for career growth will be put in place.



## Increased satisfaction with pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care

Women will be able to choose how to give birth, where and in what circumstances. Barriers to the independent performance of midwifery will be eliminated. Respect for the mother and a diverse range of postnatal services will be ensured.



## Increased ability to provide gender-sensitive health and social services

Methodological and teaching materials will be prepared and special instructors will be trained. An inter-ministerial body will be set up to pay systematic attention to gender equality in health.



## Fair pay for the work of nurses and female medics

Medical facilities will make use of the Czech version of the Logib tool to support equal and transparent pay. Appropriate pay growth for nurses and non-medical professions will be ensured.



## Improved support for breastfeeding

The recommended WHO and UNICEF procedures on breastfeeding will be introduced, including skin contact between mother and child after birth. Commercial influences and inappropriate promotion of alternatives to mother's milk, dummies and bottles will be restricted.



5



KNOWLEDGE



# Overview of the current situation

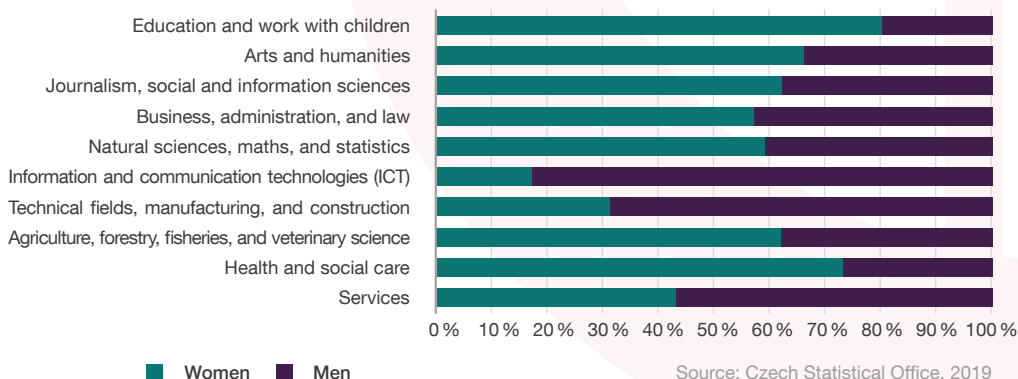
There are considerable differences between the professional careers of women and men and in the extent of promotion achieved in education, research, and science. Although they are no legal or other formal barriers to women or men entering educational or professional fields, many of these differences are caused by gender imbalances.

## Choice of occupation is governed by stereotypes

In the Czech society, decisions on future professions are still shaped by stereotypical ideas about women's and men's capabilities and the societal career expectations based on them. According to the latest research, the families of boys choose their future occupation according to how lucrative it is and the stereotypical understanding of the role of men as breadwinners. The families of girls, however, consider how easy it is to balance the job and motherhood, or other care when choosing an occupation. Boys are therefore more likely to prefer to study technical and science fields, engineering and ICT. Meanwhile, girls often choose to study teacher training, medicine, social services or humanities and artistic fields.

Technical fields and fields dominated by men are often better paid. Conversely, feminised fields tend to be paid worse and enjoy lower prestige because of the stereotypes associated with women's work.

**Chart 10 – University students by educational field**



The OECD PISA 2018 research reveals that 8% to 18% of fifteen-year-old boys expressed an interest in information and communication technologies, compared to only 1% of girls. The reason for ICT fields' greater popularity among boys is not the boys' better maths proficiency but gender stereotypes. Naturally, boys pay a price for gender stereotypes, too. Research by the Czech School Inspectorate shows that girls often receive better marks for the same results because they are viewed as more attentive and obedient. Social norms and stereotypes are also one of the drivers of the falling standard of boys' and men's educational attainment in recent years.

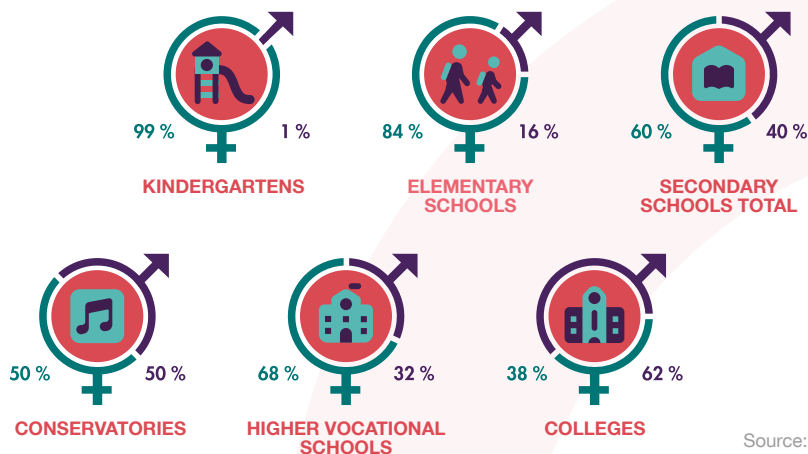
**“Research by the Czech Schools Inspectorate shows that girls often receive better marks for the same results because they are viewed as more attentive and obedient.”**

Occupational segregation has macroeconomic impacts as well. Exclusively male or exclusively female fields miss out on the valuable experience or economic potential of the missing half of the population, which is reflected in firms' performance and economic growth.

## Men dominate the management of educational institutions

The environment of educational institutions continues to display horizontal and vertical segregation. Generally speaking, the proportion of women declines with increasing levels of specialisation and decision-making powers. A substantially higher share of women can be found in the teaching workforce of kindergartens (99%), primary schools (84%), secondary schools (60%), and higher vocational schools (68%); by contrast, men comprise the majority of the academic staff at universities (62%). Furthermore, there are disproportionately more men in management positions than in the education workforce as a whole. While men account for just 40% of the total number of rank-and-file employees in secondary and higher vocational schools, they hold more than 55% of the management positions. These statistics show that women face various kinds of disadvantages to their career growth.

Chart 11 – Representation of women and men in the teaching workforce



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2019

## Czech science fails to make the most of women's potential

A low representation of women remains a problem in science, research, and innovation. Women account for 60% of individuals who completed a master's degree and 44% of those who completed doctorate study. Meanwhile, however, women make up just 27% of research workers, and their representation in the field has been in a long-term decline. The main reason for this is the difficulty to balance a science career with child-care, and the lack of options to balance personal and work life. Written and unwritten promotion rules that are linked to an uninterrupted publication history and long-term international mobility also tend to be a hurdle. The careers of female scientists are marked by dropouts due to motherhood and parenthood and family commitments and, henceforth, make women less mobile than men. This is reflected in women's career growth opportunities; their representation in management positions in Czech science and research has long been very low. Just 14% of the heads of research institutions in the Czech Republic are women; women also hold merely 23% of positions in decision-making, strategic and supervisory bodies. The failure to make use of the potential deriving from women's education is reflected in the reduced innovation potential of the Czech Republic.

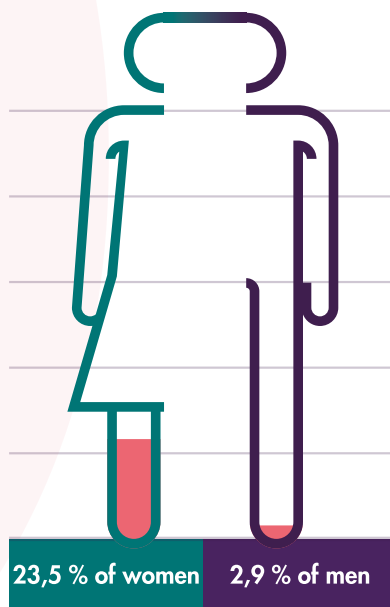


# “Women account for just 27% of research workers, and their representation in the field has been in a long-term decline.”

Compared to other countries, human resources management at universities and research institutions has long been undervalued in the Czech Republic. Research reveals that many of the rules in human resources management are unwritten or unpublished and, therefore, unenforceable, non-transparent, and susceptible to unequal treatment.

The lack of women means that the perspective of half the population is absent from science, research, and innovation. The failure to mainstream gender in science and research can lead to unintended consequences. Treating men as the norm in research and development and in the application of its results can result in the developed medicines being less effective when given to women or cars being less safe for women's bodies. In healthcare, overlooking biological differences between men and women can lead to differing diagnoses and responses to treatment. If publicly funded research and development are to benefit the whole of society, they must take the specific needs of women and men into account.

## IS PARENTHOOD A BARRIER TO WORKING IN SCIENCE?



has experience of being disadvantaged in the academic workplace due to parenthood

# What positive changes does the Strategy bring?

## Smaller differences in knowledge and skills

Teaching techniques that reduce differences in knowledge and skills between various groups of male and female schoolchildren, including Roma, will be developed.



## Less gender-based prejudice affecting professional careers

An amendment of Act No. 563/2004 Coll. will establish the position of a career advisor. This will expand career counselling services at primary and secondary schools.

## Greater emphasis on gender equality in education

The emphasis on gender equality will be strengthened in curricula.



## Better human resources management

The quality of human resources management will be included as an assessment criterion for science, research, and innovation institutions.

## Education in gender equality

Lifelong gender equality education of male and female university teachers and research workers will be supported



## Gender mainstreaming in science, research and innovation

Public funding for research and innovation will be conditional on gender mainstreaming.



6



SOCIETY



# Overview of the current situation

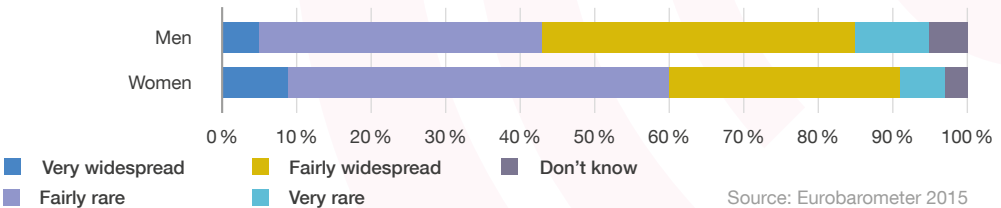
The media and politicians tend to view gender equality as a marginal issue. However, public opinion research shows that the Czech society regards gender equality as an important issue and is aware of persisting inequalities.

Studies have shown that 59% of the public think that men have a better chance of career advancement; 64% think that women and men do not have the same chance of getting child custody after divorce; and 79% think that women and men do not have the same chance of success in technical fields.

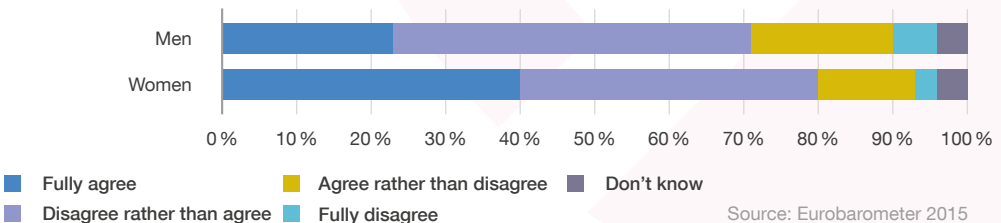
According to the research, 83% of Czech society agrees that striving for gender equality in society is important; 77% agree that state institutions should try to eliminate persisting inequalities; and gender equality is important on a personal level for 78%.

Women in Czech society are more likely to acknowledge existing inequalities: for example, 80% of women regard unequal pay as a serious problem, compared to 56% of men. That is understandable, as women are the ones affected the most by gender inequalities. Adopting measures to eliminate these inequalities is complicated by the fact, however, that women are markedly underrepresented in the positions responsible for formulating and adopting decisions throughout the whole of society.

**Chart 12 – Gender inequalities are currently**



**Chart 13 – Promoting equality is important for you**





# Confusion surrounds the concept of gender

The terms “feminism” and “gender” are inextricably linked to the concept of gender equality. Despite the long tradition of the feminist movement and its close historic link to the Czech nation’s revival efforts and the founding of independent Czechoslovakia, feminism is often seen today as something alien imported from the west. A number of myths surround the concept of “gender”, with most of the public misunderstanding its meaning.

Consequently, and despite the fact that society recognises specific gender inequalities and supports measures to solve these specific issues (e.g., to reduce the gender pay gap, or improve prevention of sexual violence), on a general level, the category of gender and the push for gender equality is often reduced to marginal problems and as such, it is side-lined.

## The view of the division of roles in the family is changing

Gender stereotyping is one of the key causes of inequality between women and men. Gender stereotyping prevents an individual assessment of a specific person’s abilities and needs. One example is the stereotypes surrounding women’s and men’s roles in the family and household, where women are automatically regarded as carers and men as breadwinners. These stereotypes lead to women being discriminated against in the labour job market and barred from decision-making positions.

The Czech public is more likely to hold stereotypical views than the rest of the EU. Roughly a third of the society thinks, for example, that public positions should mainly be held by men, while 48% of the public think women are the ones primarily responsible for housework.

Like in other countries, gender stereotypes and public attitudes are changing in the Czech Republic. The view that a woman and a man should care for children equally in a family was held by half of the Czech population in the year 2000 but 65% in 2020. A gradual change in attitudes towards a fair division of women’s and men’s roles in the past 20 years has been evident in all observed areas, including in opinions on the responsibility for the family budget, on pursuing a professional career, or on the exercise of public office.

**“The view that a woman and a man should care for children equally in a family was held by a half of the Czech population in the year 2000 but 65% in 2020.”**

Sexism in advertising is a specific issue linked to gender equality in the media and the public space. The Act on the Regulation of Advertising prohibits advertising that is contrary to good morals. In practice, however, sexist advertisement continues to appear in the public space, even though the Czech society is no great fan of it. Surveys show that 54% of the public dislike advertising that depicts women stereotypically, and 52% of the public dislike it when advertising features gratuitous exposure of women’s bodies. It is still the case, however, that women are far more likely than men to have a negative view of these kinds of advertising.

Even though women account for the majority of the workforce in the media industry, very few management positions in the media are held by women, and women are still not sufficiently invited onto the relevant programmes as experts. For example, merely 19.6% of all those invited to appear on *Otázky Václava Moravce*, the Czech Television’s flagship political discussion programme, in the first half of 2020 were women. Women’s roles in the media are, therefore, largely restricted to presenting roles and featuring in women’s programmes.

## Long-term public mistrust of non-profit organisations

The status of civic society is also closely linked to the effective promotion of gender equality and elimination of discrimination. The network of professional NGOs can make a fundamental contribution to the transfer of knowledge and experience “from the field” that is essential for effective policymaking. In addition, NGOs often provide direct assistance to various groups of women and men disadvantaged because of gender inequalities.

There are a number of NGOs addressing gender equality in the Czech Republic, and the issue is also covered by various research institutions and think tanks. Even though the state draws on the civic sector’s knowledge and expertise and delegates some of its responsibilities to it, it does not put in place the right conditions for the professionalisation of NGOs in some regards. Their activities are funded primarily by the EU and the EEA and Norway Grants.

The inadequate conditions for the professionalisation of the civic sector influence its perception in eyes of the public. Czech society's views on the work of NGOs have become more and more critical in recent years. Public opinion surveys show that the mistrust of NGOs in the public society has grown since 2014.

**“54% of the public dislike advertising that depicts women stereotypically, and 52% of the public dislike when advertising features gratuitous exposure of women's bodies.”**

The Czech government has long advocated for gender mainstreaming in its policies. The previous Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic for 2014–2020 sets a goal of gender mainstreaming in various areas of day-to-day life: in the media, environment, sport, public transport and the public space and cyberspace.

Although the situation has in many regards improved since 2014, the conditions for gender mainstreaming in public policies affecting these fields are still inadequately defined. The specific needs of women and men are only factored into policies on transport, sport, and the environment sporadically and unsystematically, even though many of these policies have an obvious gender dimension.

# What positive changes does the Strategy bring?

## Less gender stereotyping and sexism

Awareness-raising activities will be carried out and a non-stereotypical depiction of women and men in the media will be promoted. The capacities of the relevant supervisory and regulatory bodies will be strengthened.



## Better understanding of the issue of gender equality and its benefits

Emphasis will be placed on the practical benefits of gender equality and awareness will be raised about the impacts and benefits of projects in this area.

## Strengthening of gender culture in media content

The media will be provided with methodological guidance, and activities designed to monitor media content and increase the representation of women in media management will be supported.



## Better conditions for civic society

Sufficient capacities for professionalising the civic sector will be developed, and allocations for grant programmes connected to gender equality will be increased.

## Mainstreaming equality in areas of day-to-day life

Gender equality will be mainstreamed in public policies on transport, sport and free-time activities, environmental protection etc.



7



**EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

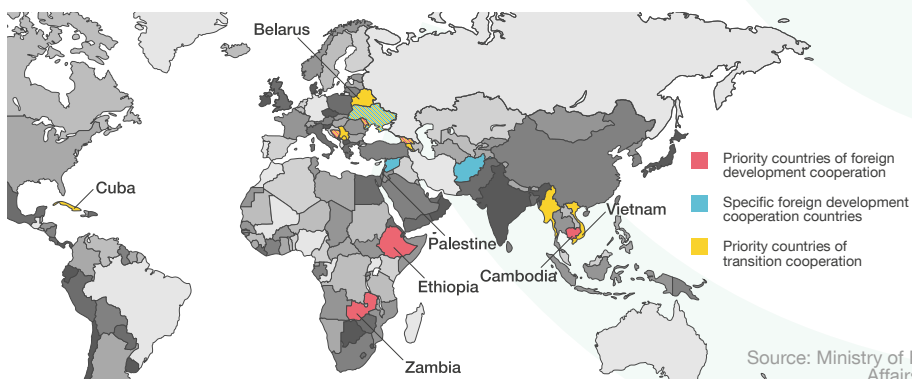
# Overview of the current situation

In recent decades, the fight for gender equality and strengthening the status of women and girls has become a global objective of the international community. The Czech Republic contributes to this global endeavour not only through its national policy but also through its foreign policy and international activities. Gender mainstreaming in external relations covers a broad range of topics, from gender issues in diplomacy and the foreign service, through support for gender equality in human rights and foreign development cooperation, to foreign missions and the fight against terrorism and arms exports.

## We also support gender equality in partner countries

Ensuring human dignity is one of the goals of the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic. The policy of supporting democracy and human rights, and thus also supporting gender equality, is inextricably linked to this objective. The Czech Republic promotes this objective in its foreign development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and support for human rights and transformation cooperation. The issue of gender equality and improving the status of women and girls is factored in at both the programme and project levels. In this way, the Czech Republic helps to reduce gender inequalities in the partner countries where these projects are being implemented. In practice, promoting the cross-cutting principle of gender equality can mean that a project seeking to improve the living conditions of refugee families does not overlook single mothers and ensures that their specific needs will be given due consideration when the project is implemented.

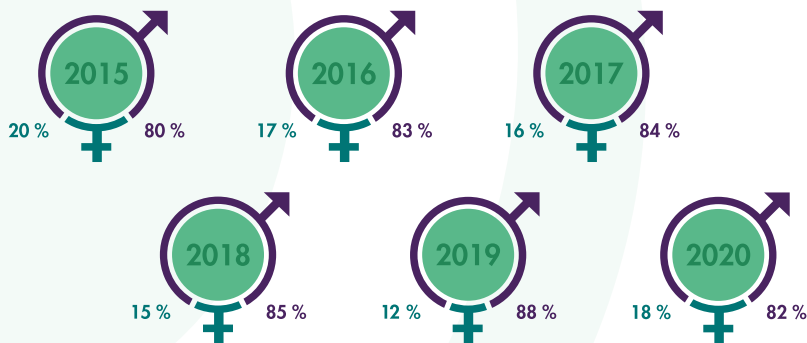
### Map of priority countries of the Czech Republic's foreign development and transformation cooperation



# “Ensuring human dignity is one of the goals of the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic.”

Like in the previous years, gender equality is a cross-cutting priority of the current foreign development cooperation strategy. The documentation for projects supported by the Czech Development Agency includes a special section on Equal Access for Men and Women. That said, a quantitative analysis by the Institute of International Relations focusing on 96 projects carried out between 2009 and 2017 found out that in more than a half of the projects, this section contained merely a general declaration that the project had no impact on gender equality, or it was not filled in at all. The appropriate emphasis on gender equality was not, therefore, not placed in numerous cases of foreign development cooperation projects.

**Chart 14 – Representation of women and men in the posts of ambassador of the Czech Republic**



Source: Association for International Affairs

# Women's role as peacemakers is growing in importance

The correlation between gender inequalities and the likelihood of internal conflict is widely acknowledged. Internal conflicts often lead to violations of fundamental human rights, with women being a particularly vulnerable group in this context. However, women and girls are not just victims of war. They also play an active role in conflicts, e.g., by serving in national armies, armed groups, or terrorist organisations. They also participate in civilian and military missions. The OSCE and UN agree that peace efforts are more effective and sustainable when women are actively and meaningfully involved.

Understanding that the roles of women and gender issues in security and peace processes need closer attention, the UN Security Council adopted its landmark Resolution no. 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2020. The resolution was the first building block of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Following the example of over fifty countries, the Czech government adopted the Czech Republic's national action plan on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in January 2017. At the end of 2020, the government adopted the follow-up national action plan for 2021–2025, which seeks to ensure that the Czech Republic's efforts and activities in peace and security adequately reflect the current needs, priorities and rights of women and men in the Czech Republic and abroad.

**“Between 1992 and 2011, women held merely 9% of positions in peace negotiation teams and accounted for merely 4% of the signatories of peace treaties.”**

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda stands on four main pillars. “Prevention” is based on the view that gender equality and peace are linked and mutually reinforcing and addresses the roles that women play in conflict prevention. “Protection” draws attention to the especially vulnerable position of women and girls in military conflicts, e.g., due to the frequent use of rape as a systematic tactic of war, with the aim to humiliate, control, terrorise or resettle the civilian population. The “Protection” pillar, therefore, seeks to protect women's rights in conflicts and post-conflict situations. “Participation” stresses the importance of involving women in conflict resolution and peace processes. “Assistance and Renewal” focuses on ensuring that women's needs are factored into post-conflict renewal, e.g., in the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration processes.





The first country to adopt a national action plan to implement UN Security Council resolution no. 1325 was Denmark in 2005. By the end of 2020, action plans for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda had been adopted by 89 countries, including 21 European Union member states.

## Establishing the Czech Republic's good name at the international level

The Czech Republic supports gender equality within its work in the European Union and other international organisations. At the EU level, the Czech Republic plays an active role in negotiating various legislative and non-legislative measures and strives for European cooperation in the prevention of violence against women or the elimination of unequal pay for women and men. The Czech Republic is also among the countries that welcomed the adoption of a European strategy for gender equality and is now participating in implementing the strategy. The Czech Republic's upcoming Presidency of the EU Council is an important opportunity for promoting the Czech priorities in this area. During the Presidency, the Czech Republic will chair sessions of the EU Council and its preparatory bodies, draw up compromise proposals and set the EU Council's agenda and priorities.

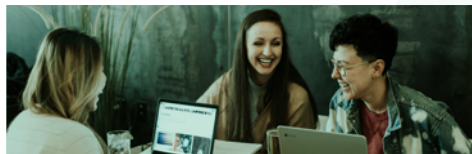
The Czech Republic supported a proposal that national recovery plans adopted under the EU Directive establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility should take into account the gender equality dimension. The total budget of the facility, which was unveiled by the European Union in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, is 672.5 billion EUR.

International activities also help build the Czech Republic's brand abroad. The tools listed above thus present an opportunity to boost the Czech Republic's image as a country that places importance on protecting human rights and promoting gender equality.

# What positive changes does the Strategy bring?

## Enhancing the positive impact of development projects

The proportion of foreign development cooperation projects applying the OECD DAC gender marker will gradually be increased.



## Promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda will be covered by national action plans. Furthermore, the role played by the non-profit sector and academia in the inter-ministerial working group on the women, peace and security agenda will be strengthened.

## Greater awareness of the possible impacts of arms export

Regular meetings will be held between the state sector, NGOs, and academia on the possible impacts of the export of small arms and handheld weapons on gender-based violence.



## Supporting the European Union in promoting gender equality

The Czech Republic will mainstream gender in relevant materials discussed within the EU Council formations, and it will not support efforts to weaken the EU's gender equality commitments.

## Branding of the Czech Republic abroad

By making gender equality one of the priorities of the Czech Republic's Presidency of the EU Council, the Czech Republic will continue building its image of a country that places importance on gender equality.



## Raising awareness of gender equality

Regular training focusing on the gender aspects of various areas of foreign policy will be provided to new employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mentoring services will be provided for junior diplomats.

8



# INSTITUTIONS



# Overview of the current situation

Gender equality is one of the fundamental values of the Czech Republic enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. The country's obligation to stamp out gender-based discrimination and persisting gender stereotypes follows from international conventions and EU law. Effectively promoting gender equality requires a suitable legal and institutional framework with sufficient human resources and expertise.

Since 2009, the ban on gender-based discrimination has been regulated by the Anti-discrimination Act, which also lays down forms of legal protection against discrimination. Gender-based discrimination is also forbidden by other legal regulations, e.g., by the Labour Code and the Education Act.

**“Research by the ombudsman in 2015 showed that gender-based discrimination is the second most common form of discrimination.”**

Research by the ombudsman in 2015 showed that gender-based discrimination is the second most common form of discrimination. The research also alerted to shortcomings in the enforcement of anti-discrimination law: poor awareness of protections against discrimination, low penalties and compensation in cases where discrimination is proven, and insufficient support for victims of discrimination.



Poor awareness of protections against discrimination



Low penalties and compensation when discrimination is proven



Insufficient support for victims of discrimination

## Different approaches to equality result from the absence of a specific law

Unlike certain other European states, the Czech Republic does not have a specific law governing the promotion of gender equality. Furthermore, responsibility for promoting gender equality is not explicitly assigned to any central state authority. In the past, this has led to an unsystematic and non-uniform approach to the agenda, and the human rights agenda in general, by various government bodies. The coordination of gender equality has thus at various times been the responsibility of the minister for human rights, the justice minister, the labour and social affairs minister, or the government commissioner for human rights, among others.

The role of the national coordinator of the gender equality agenda is currently fulfilled by the Gender Equality Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. The Gender Equality Department is also the secretariat of the Government Council for Gender Equality and is in charge of monitoring international commitments in the field of gender equality.

At the ministerial level, the coordination of gender equality and implementation of the relevant government resolutions takes place via “gender focal points”, also known as ministerial gender equality coordinators. To unify the position of gender focal points, in 2018, the Czech government adopted a standard defining the conditions for the effective promotion of gender equality at the level of ministries. The standard’s recommendations include ensuring that the position is not reduced to a personnel agenda and is filled by at least one full-time employee. Interim assessments have shown, however, that the ministries are falling short of this standard.

In the Czech Republic, the public defender of rights, also known as the ombudsman, fulfils the role of equality body. Above all, they provide guidance to victims of discrimination and conduct research in this area. However, the office of the ombudsman has to contend with the problem of limited capacities and insufficient powers undermining its ability to perform this role, including the possibility to represent victims of discrimination in the court proceedings.

The Czech Republic has long come in for criticism for its low personnel capacities and shortage of funding for the general equality agenda at the state administration level. A 2014 report by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) revealed that the human resources devoted to the gender equality agenda in the Czech Republic were the second-lowest in the EU.

# Gender mainstreaming is not always applied in the legislative process

In 2016, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern over the frequent changes in the assignment of responsibility for promoting gender equality at the government level and recommended securing sufficient resources for the Gender Equality Department, its funding from the state budget and putting in place a sustainable and stable framework for its work.

The application of gender mainstreaming in the formulation of legislation and public policies is insufficient. The Government Legislative Rules and Government Rules of Business require the reasoned statements and submission reports for materials concerning the status of natural persons to contain an assessment with regard to the discrimination ban and gender equality. Nevertheless, an analysis by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic from 2018 showed that very few government materials contain this assessment in reality.

Other legal regulations governing how draft legislation is submitted, such as the Act on the Rules of Business of the Chamber of Deputies, do not require this assessment at all. The promotion of gender equality is not systematically required at the local government level either. Consequently, gender mainstreaming in the formulation of legislation and public policies does not take place uniformly or at all.

## Lack of funds for promoting gender equality

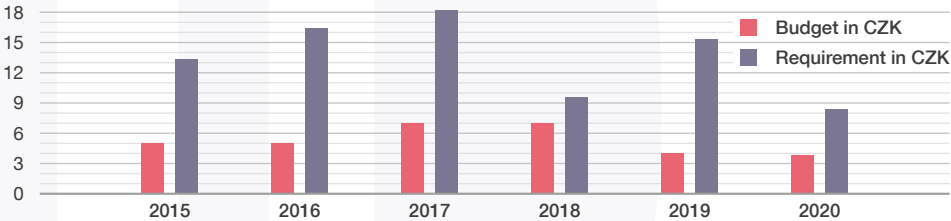
National funding for gender equality falls short of the needs and is not monitored systematically. The main sources of funding for promoting systemic changes and supporting non-state sector projects are the EU and EEA/Norway Grants mechanisms.

As a rule, gender equality activities of public administration fall under the relevant authorities' current expenditure, which derives from the state budget. When the budget is compiled, however, the Czech Republic does not apply gender budgeting tools, even though assessment of gender equality impacts when creating public budgets is recommended by the OECD, among others.

The only mechanism of state budget funding for NGO activities is the grant programme of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Gender mainstreaming is used in a number of grant programmes of other ministries, but always in only one of the several areas supported by the grant programme. Moreover, these programmes' allocations are generally small and do not have the potential to make a fundamental contribution to improving gender equality in the Czech Republic.

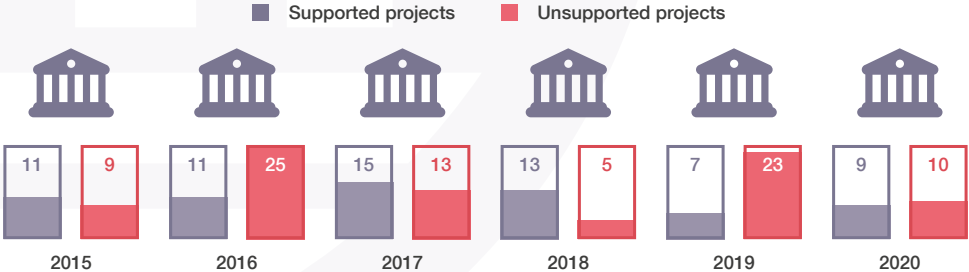
## “The only mechanism of state budget funding for NGO activities is the grant programme of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.”

**Chart 15 – Funding required and actually provided from the grants programme of the Office of the Government in support of gender equality (CZK million)**



Source: Office of the Government, 2020

**Chart 16 – Ratio of supported and unsupported projects from the grants programme of the Office of the Government in support of gender equality**



Source: Office of the Government, 2020

# What positive changes does the Strategy bring?

## Strengthening the Government Council for Gender Equality

The Government Council for Gender Equality will be strengthened so that it can react better to current social developments and needs. A change to the Council's statute will ensure that all ministries are represented in it.



## Ensuring the relevant institutions have sufficient capacities

The gender equality agenda will be primarily coordinated by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. An appropriate number of professional positions will be created. The powers of the Public Defender of Rights in the field of equal treatment will be brought harmonised with the EU standards.

## Rigorous gender mainstreaming

An e-learning course on assessing gender equality impacts will be created for public administration. Guidance for ministries will be strengthened. Ministries will rigorously apply gender mainstreaming when preparing and implementing all relevant public policies.



## Boosting the capacities of other public authorities

One position will be created at every ministry for carrying out government tasks in the promotion of gender equality. The work of departmental working groups will be strengthened. Local government authorities will be provided guidance.

## Adequate, effective and transparent funding

The use of gender budgeting will be promoted. Adequate and transparent funding will be provided from both the state budget and EU sources for the activities of public administration and other sectors for promoting gender equality.



## Creating functional support structures

Collection and publication of high-quality statistical data, broken down by sex, will be performed. A Czech gender equality index will be created. The state administration's partnership with academia and the civic sector will be strengthened.







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