

Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030

updated
version



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of the Czech Republic



Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030: Updated Version

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**GENDER
EQUALITY
STRATEGY
2021–2030**

Dear readers,

This brochure provides a concise overview of the updated Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030. The original version of the Strategy was approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in March 2021. In 2023 and 2024, the document was revised to address new challenges faced by Czech society. The updated Strategy was approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in October 2024. Its vision is to foster a society where everyone can live freely and realise their full potential. The updated version primarily responds to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine, while also taking into account economic developments and the need for public budget consolidation.

In order to present a clear and concise summary of the Strategy's comprehensive analytical content, we have enriched this publication with infographics, graphs, and selected key insights into the current state of gender equality in the Czechia. We believe that this engaging format provides an accessible overview and a deeper understanding of gender equality in our society.

The Strategy consists of eight chapters, 26 strategic objectives, and 368 measures. It covers the following areas of social life: Labour and Care, Decision-Making, Safety, Health, Knowledge, Society, External Relations, and Institutions.

The development of the individual measures involved expert groups consisting of representatives from the government, academic and civil sectors. These measures outline a comprehensive plan and the steps that Czech governments should take by the end of 2030 to ensure gender equality. Their aim is to build on the positive changes already achieved in certain areas of gender equality, while also addressing and reversing negative trends where disparities continue or are worsening.

As a strategic document of the Czech Government, the Strategy is primarily directed at central government authorities, detailing specific tasks assigned to them. Its implementation is supported through standard ministerial operations and supplemented by funding from the EU and EEA/Norway grants.

The complete text of the updated Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030, including comprehensive references and a full list of measures, is accessible on the official government website, www.vlada.gov.cz, under the section dedicated to the Government Council for Gender Equality, as well as at www.tojrovnost.cz. This special abridged edition offers a concise overview of the Strategy's key priorities and objectives, charting a path toward achieving gender equality in Czechia.

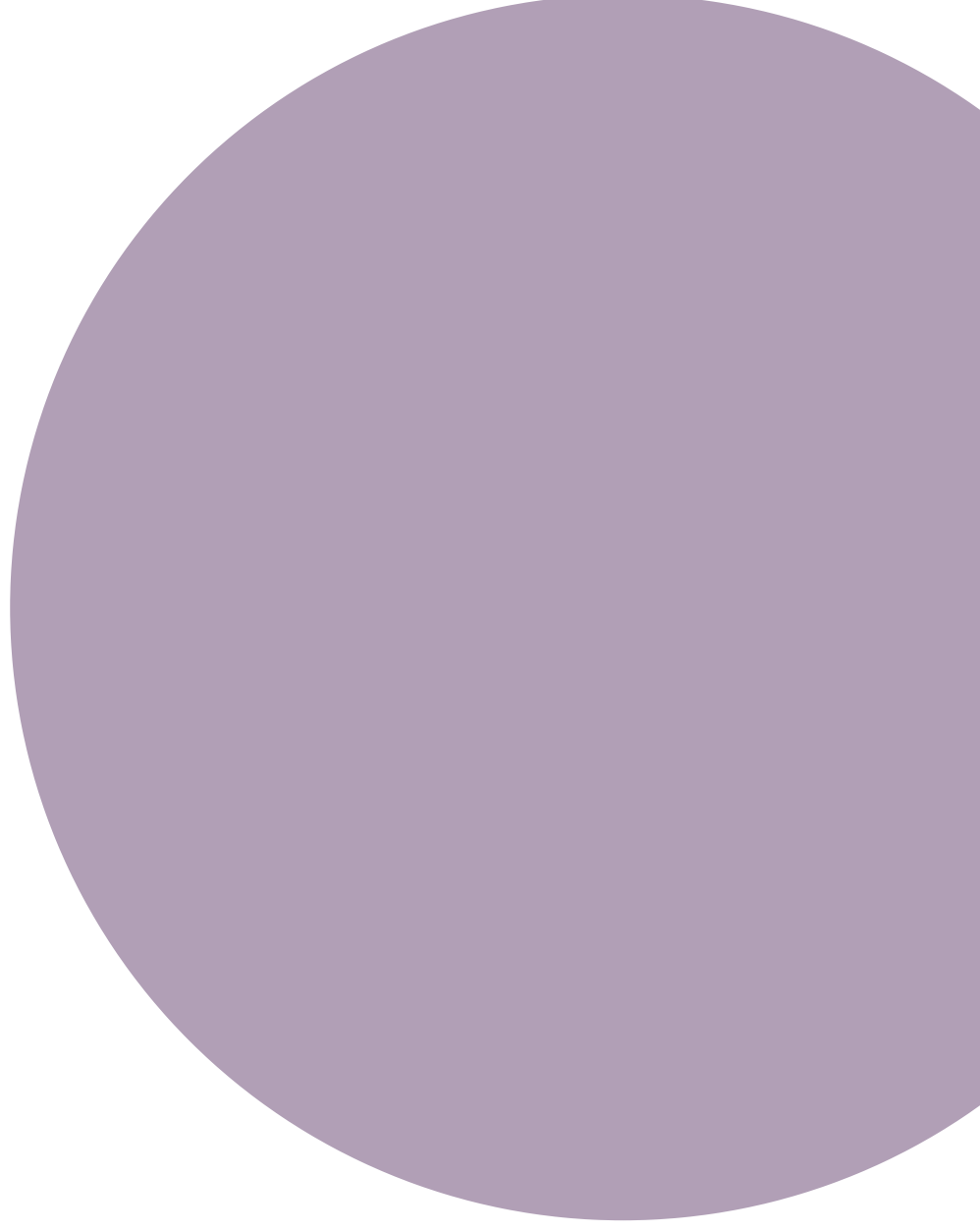
We hope you find it an inspiring read.

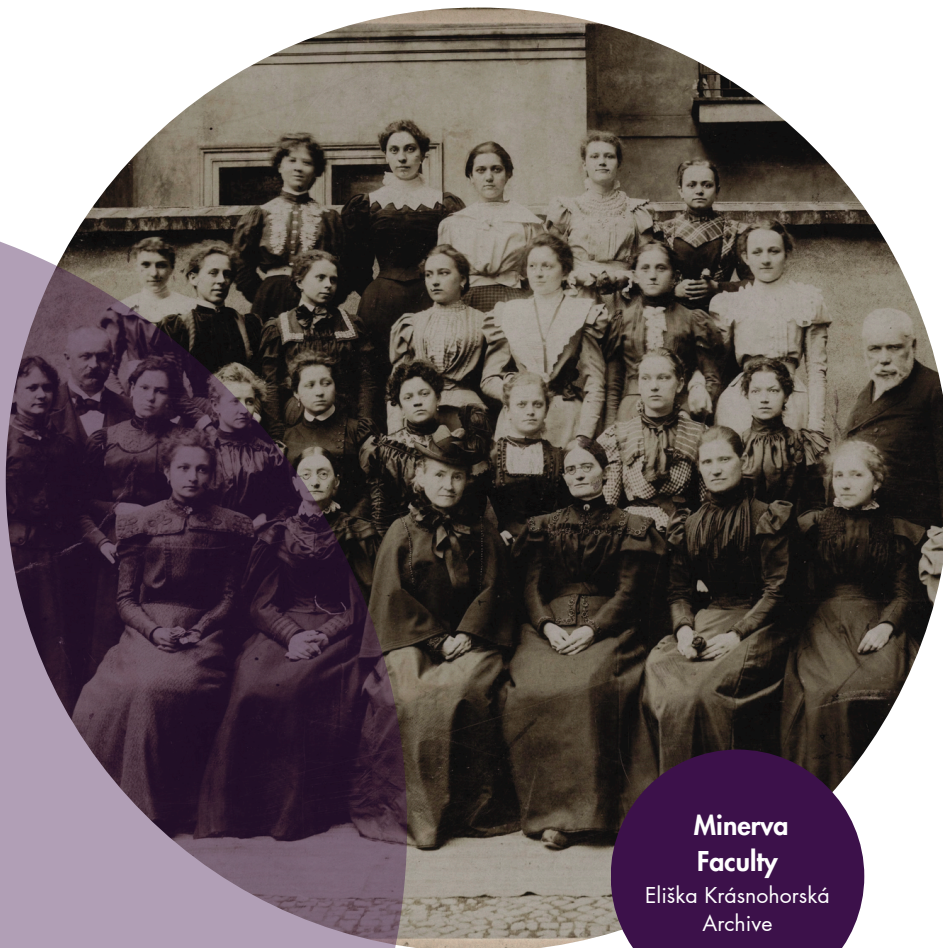
**The Gender Equality Department Team,
Office of the Government of the Czech Republic**

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PATH TO EQUALITY





**Minerva
Faculty**
Eliška Krásnohorská
Archive

A brief history of gender equality in Czechia

The path of women's emancipation began in the territory of the present-day Czechia in the 19th century. It was closely linked to the National Revival of Czech society. The increase in the level of education was also reflected in the status of women and their subsequent professional careers. At the beginning of the 20th century, the development of women's activities and their greater participation in social life was linked to the efforts to build a democratic state during the First Republic.

A significant figure in advocating for gender equality was Tomáš G. Masaryk who emphasised the importance of equal rights for women not only in new legislation but also in everyday life. The activities of women's associations grew stronger, unified under the Women's National Council led by Františka Plamínková.

Over time, rules that subordinated women to men in both public and private life gradually diminished. These included restrictions such as the inability to act independently in official matters, limits on acquiring property rights, or the inability to make decisions about children's upbringing and care.

In the first half of the 20th century, social and legal protection for women also developed, particularly during pregnancy and early motherhood. From the perspective of gender equality, adjustments to widow and widower pensions were also significant. Family relations underwent legal changes as well, some of which were significantly influenced by Milada Horáková.

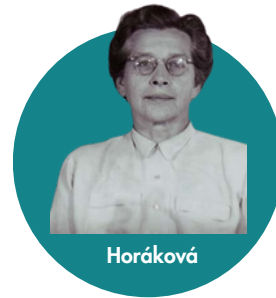
During the world wars, there was a major shift in the employment of women. A shortage of labour meant that women entered the workforce. However, this obligation to work was not accompanied by a change in the division of roles within the family. Childcare, caring for relatives, and household chores remained exclusively the responsibility of women. Although women went to work, they faced a "second shift" at home.

The socialist regime placed great emphasis on the family as one of the fundamental social institutions. In the second half of the 20th century, the status of women within the family became intertwined with their status in public life. The path to emancipation thus had to go through the family, which began to shift from a traditional to a more democratic family model. The time dedicated to childcare



By granting women the right to vote in 1920, Czechoslovakia became one of the first European countries to extend this fundamental democratic right.

and household responsibilities by women and men began to balance out. Childcare services improved in quality and became more accessible. Technological advancements also played a role in alleviating the burden on women by reducing the time required for household chores.



After 1989, as democracy returned to Czech society, several issues already tackled in other European countries gained recognition. These included higher female unemployment, gender pay gap, low female representation in decision-making, and discrimination against women. Czechia committed to upholding its international obligations on women's rights and actively promoting human rights and gender equality in foreign policy.

Today, gender equality is a core value of Czechia. This principle is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees equality in dignity, rights, and freedoms for all, regardless of sex. Specific provisions banning sex-based discrimination are detailed in the Anti-Discrimination Act.

To advance gender equality nationally, the Czech government adopts strategic and policy frameworks, including the Gender Equality Strategy and related action plans. Progress is reviewed biennially through reports prepared by the Gender Equality Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and presented to the Government.

Additionally, the department publishes an annual gender equality report, offering an overview of key developments in this area.

Czechia's accession to the European Union, which regards gender equality as one of its core principles, played a key role in addressing the disadvantages faced by women.

Milestones

Join us for a look at some historical milestones on the path to gender equality in Czechia.

1890

Minerva

Thanks to Eliška Krásnohorská, the first girls' grammar school was established in Prague.

1897

University Studies

Women were allowed to study at the Faculty of Philosophy. Other faculties followed later.

1907

Universal Suffrage for Men

The reform abolished the so-called curia system of elections and granted all men equal rights to vote for the Imperial Council.

1912

First Female Member of Parliament

Božena Viková-Kunětická won the election to the Bohemian Diet and became the first female member of Parliament.

1920

Universal Suffrage for Women

The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic enshrined women's right to vote. The first parliamentary elections in the territory of the present-day Czechia were held in which women voted and could be elected.

1949

New Family Act

The New Family Act introduced equality between husband and wife. It abolished the legal institution of the head of the family, according to which the man was the head of the household and the woman was obliged to obey and help him. The economic relations of the spouses were also made equal. Property acquired during marriage became common property.

1957

Legalisation of Abortion

Under the new law, abortions could be performed for medical and other compelling reasons. The permission of the abortion committee was required to authorise an abortion. The criminal liability of women for abortion was abolished.

1965

Hormonal Contraception

Hormonal contraceptives were launched in the Czechoslovakia.

1982

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

In Czechoslovakia, the Convention came into effect. It is based, among other things, on the belief that full gender equality can only be achieved through a fundamental change in social and family patterns.

1986

Abolition of Abortion Committees

Every woman who requested an abortion had the right to obtain one. A doctor could only refuse the request on medical grounds or if the pregnancy was too advanced.

1990

Parental Allowance

Both mothers and fathers caring for at least one child under the age of three became eligible for the allowance. While men were entitled to receive it, unlike women, their employers were not required to grant them leave from work.

1991

Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms

The Czech Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms upholds the principle of equality in dignity and rights. In Article 3, it guarantees fundamental human rights to all individuals, without distinction, and places sex at the top of the list of possible grounds for discrimination.

1992

European Convention on Human Rights

Czechoslovakia was the first country in Central and Eastern Europe to commit to the European Convention on Human Rights. This Convention, among other things, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and provides citizens with the possibility to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.

1995

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. Its main objective is to build national mechanisms for achieving gender equality and to integrate a gender perspective into all government policies.

1998

Gender Equality Unit

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs initially set up a unit responsible for overseeing and coordinating gender equality policy. This unit was later moved between the ministry and the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. Since 2017, its responsibilities have been taken on by the independent Gender Equality Department within the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

2001

Parental Leave

The amendment to the Labour Code introduced parental leave. Men received the same workplace protections as women while on leave.

2001

Government Council for Equal Opportunities

The aim of the Council (now known as the Government Council for Gender Equality) is to prevent the deepening of gender inequalities through government policy and to ensure that Czechia fulfils its international commitments in the area of gender equality.

2002

Gender Focal Points

A position of “gender focal point” was established at each ministry. These gender equality coordinators are responsible for coordinating the implementation of gender equality policies within the respective ministries.

2004

Czechia's Accession to the European Union

Among other things, the accession brought the obligation to transpose anti-discrimination directives into Czech law and the commitment to actively promote gender equality.

2009

Anti-Discrimination Act

The Act establishes the obligation of equal treatment and defines legal means of protection against discrimination.

2014

Government Gender Equality Strategy 2014–2020

The Government's first medium-term framework document for implementing gender equality policy in Czechia for the 2014–2020 period.

2018

Paternal Leave

An amendment to the Sickness Insurance Act introduced paternity leave for fathers of newborns, initially limited to seven calendar days and later extended to two weeks in 2022.

2021

Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030

The Strategy approved by the Government in 2021 adopts a comprehensive approach to gender equality, establishing a national plan to eliminate gender inequalities. It includes specific measures and mechanisms for monitoring progress.

Glossary

Second shift or invisible work includes duties (stereotypically women's) related to the household and caring for children and loved ones, which often remain invisible and therefore unappreciated by society, unlike paid employment.

Feminism is a socio-political movement and ideology that aims to achieve gender equality in the spheres of public and private life.

Feminist foreign policy is an approach to foreign policy and diplomacy based on five key principles: intersectionality, empathetic reflexivity, substantive representation and participation, accountability, and an active commitment to peace. It focuses on gender mainstreaming in all aspects of foreign policy.

Gender refers to a category referring to the socially and culturally conditioned and constructed differences and characteristics that society attributes to women and men based on their sex.

Gender stereotypes are oversimplified and biased perceptions regarding the characteristics, opinions, and roles of women and men in society, employment, and the family.

Gender mainstreaming refers to the systematic integration of a gender perspective into all phases of the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures, and budget expenditure programs, with the aim of promoting gender equality and preventing discrimination.

Gender-based violence are all acts of physical, as well as psychological, economic, material, sexualised, symbolic, or latent violence, targeted at women because they are women, or at men because they are men, or acts of violence that disproportionately affect women or men.

Gender roles are learned, vary across human societies and change over time. They are historically and locally conditioned. They are not a natural and immutable characteristic of women and men, but reflect the current state of social relations between them.

Gender equality means equal visibility, equal status and participation of women and men in all spheres of public and private life at all levels.

Horizontal segregation of the labour market means that men or women are concentrated in a particular sector of the labour market or in certain occupations. Segregation already occurs during education, with girls being more motivated to study humanities and nursing, while boys are more motivated to study technical subjects.

Intersectional approach points out that in addition to the category of gender and sex, there are other categories (ethnicity, nationality, health status, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, age, etc.) that can exacerbate unequal conditions or discrimination.

Gender equality plans (also known as GEPs) are a tool that helps institutions systematically address gender inequalities by setting objectives and measures tailored to the needs of the organisation. This makes gender equality a visible commitment and a key part of the institution's strategy and management.

Patriarchy is a social system in which men occupy a superior position to women and in which the characteristics and activities perceived as masculine by society are valued more highly than those perceived as feminine.

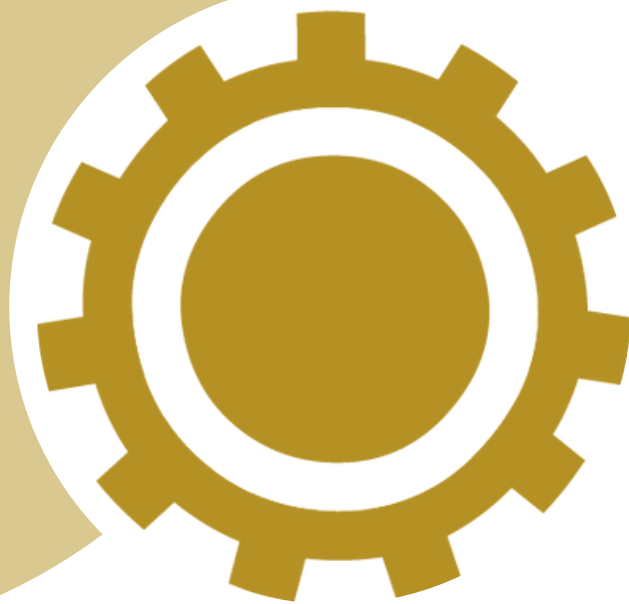
Sex refers to biological and physiological traits derived from chromosomes, reproductive organs, etc. that influence phenotypic traits associated with females and males within a species.

Glass ceiling or invisible barrier refers to traditional attitudes, assumptions and values that prevent women's empowerment from fully participating in society. It causes women to rarely reach the highest political, economic and professional positions.

Vertical segregation is the concentration of women and men at different levels of employment in terms of level of responsibility and position. It involves unequal access of women to promotion, to decision-making positions, both in employment and in public life.



Photo: Paige Cody.



LABOUR AND CARE

Overview of the Current Situation

In recent years, the labour market situation had been favourable until the onset of the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of Russia's war against Ukraine. Persistently low unemployment and rising incomes had contributed to an improvement in the living standards of Czech households. However, this positive trend has now come to a halt.

Certain groups, particularly women, continue to face discrimination or other forms of disadvantage in the workplace. These disadvantages are often linked to caregiving responsibilities for children, elderly parents, or other dependants in need of care. Czechia has one of the highest employment gaps between women and men within the EU, primarily due to prolonged career interruptions among women to care for

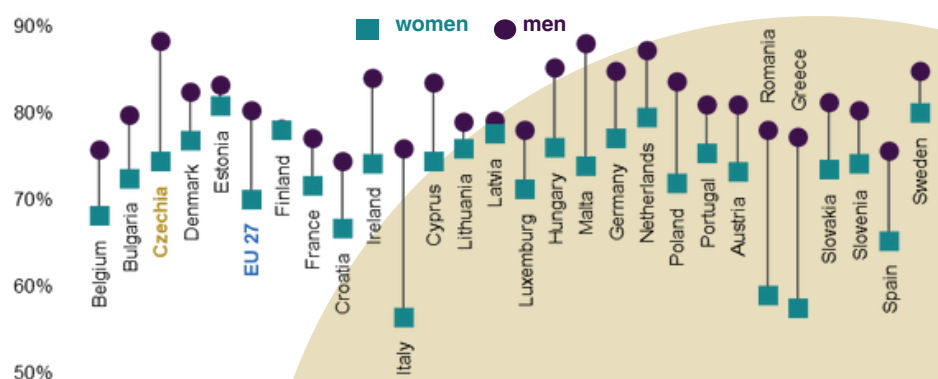
LABOUR AND CARE



children or other dependants. Neither legislation nor practical measures currently provide sufficient conditions for balancing work and family life.

Czechia has one of the highest gender employment gaps in the EU. After the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the gap was 14.9% in 2022 to the disadvantage of women.

Gender employment rate in EU countries (2023)



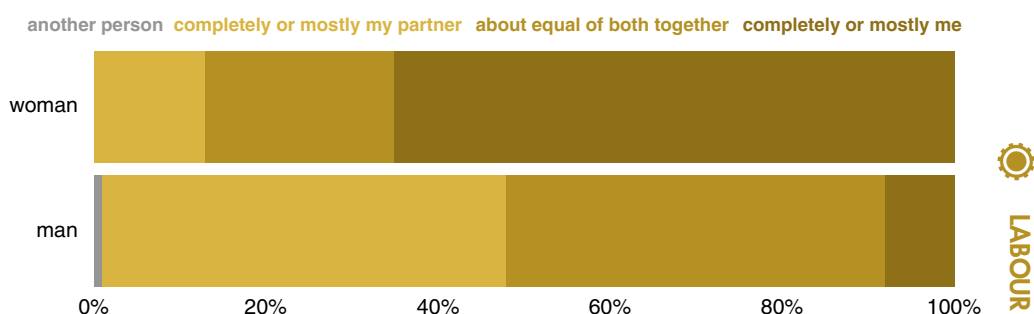
Source: Eurostat, 2024

The Gradual Transformation of Traditional Gender Roles

In recent years, there has been a gradual shift in attitudes towards the division of gender roles within the household. According to a 2024 CVVM survey, 77% of Czech society believes that both women and men should share childcare responsibilities, compared to just 65% four years ago. A similar shift in public attitudes can be observed in other aspects of household management.

Czech society is steadily moving away from traditional gender roles. However, it is still predominantly women who take parental leave. This decision is influenced not only by persistent perceptions of traditional gender roles but also by income disparities between partners.

Distribution of housework chores within the household



Source: EIGE 2021

The low involvement of men in caregiving is reflected in the low percentage of fathers taking paternity leave, which mirrors the proportion of men using parental leave (less than 2%). Despite the extension of paternity leave from seven to fourteen calendar days in 2022, there has been no significant increase in uptake, even four years after its introduction.

Shortage of Preschool Places for Children

The situation in Czechia is also affected by a shortage of affordable and locally accessible childcare and preschool education. Between 2012 and 2022, the percentage of children under three enrolled in formal childcare facilities remained below 5.3%, significantly lower than the EU average. According to the Barcelona targets, Czechia should increase this participation rate by 90%.

There is also an insufficient number of affordable, accessible places for children over the age of three. Each year, tens of thousands of applications for preschool placements are rejected. In 2022 alone, nearly 50,000 applications were denied.



LABOUR AND CARE

In practice, many parents are forced to postpone their return to work due to the lack of available spots in preschool or childcare groups.

In 2022, the share of men receiving parental allowance was only 1.8%. This proportion has not significantly changed over the past five years.

One of the key prerequisites for balancing work and family life is the availability of part-time and flexible work arrangements. In this regard, Czechia significantly lags behind other EU countries—in 2022, only 10.2% of women and 2.7% of men worked part-time, compared to the EU averages of 28.4% for women and 8.2% for men. However, part-time work and short-term contracts alone do not solve the issue, as they come with risks such as lower job security and/or a higher risk of poverty. An excessive focus on developing part-time jobs without

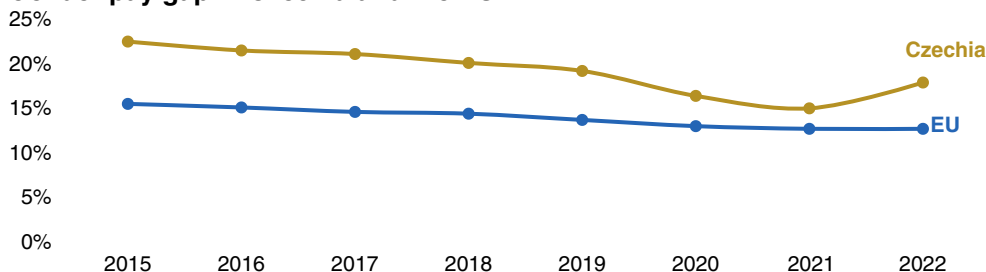
LABOUR AND CARE

considering who is taking them up can contribute to further labour market segregation and worsen women's economic status. For this reason, it is essential to support men's involvement in childcare, care for other family members, and household responsibilities.

Gender Pay Gap

In 2022, the average wage for women was 38,861 CZK (approximately 1,548 EUR), while men earned 47,239 CZK on average (approximately 1,882 EUR), resulting in a 17.7% wage gap (8,378 CZK, approximately 334 EUR). One reason for this gap is women's leave(s) from labour market due to care, which hinder career advancement and contributes to their underrepresentation in management roles. Other factors also play a role, such as women being more likely to work in lower-paid sectors like health, education, and social services. Surveys show that women also tend to request lower starting salaries than men.

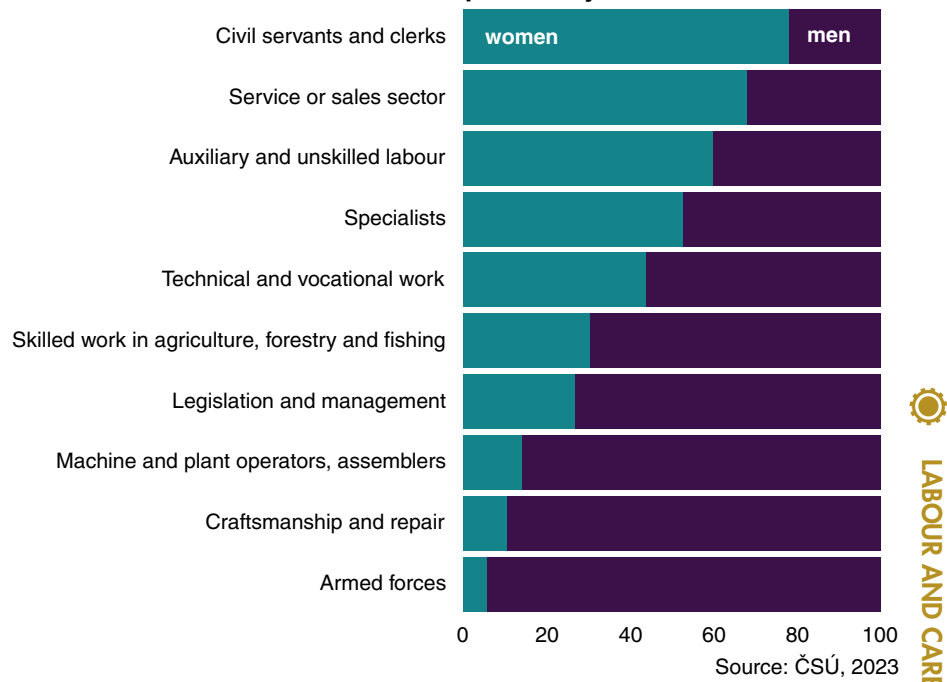
Gender pay gap in Czechia and the EU



Source: Eurostat, 2024

Although companies are required to provide equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, this is often not the case. Since 2009, the Anti-Discrimination Act has provided protection against wage discrimination, yet Czech society has not yet fully embraced it, and only a small proportion of victims of discrimination turn to the courts for redress.

Representation of women and men in occupations by CZ-ISCO classification



Low wages affect women not only during their working lives but also in retirement. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the average pension for women in 2022 was 17,327 CZK (approximately 690 EUR), compared to 20,696 CZK (approximately 825 EUR) for men. To help bridge this gap, a “parenting bonus” was introduced, increasing pensions by 500 CZK (approximately 20 EUR) per child raised—most often benefiting women. Despite this, women's pensions remain 16% lower than men's. As a result, women over 65 are three times more likely to experience income poverty, making elderly women the most vulnerable demographic.

In 2022, Czechia had the third-largest gender pay gap in the EU at 17.9%.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

LABOUR AND CARE



Adoption of the Gender Equal Pay Action Plan 2023–2026

LABOUR AND CARE



Lifting restrictions on combining parental benefits with placing a child in preschool care or education



Introduction of measures to support part-time work (e.g. insurance discounts)



Creation of approximately 600 new childcare groups, providing around 8,000 places



Adoption of measures to support flexible forms of work, flexible working arrangements, including improving conditions for workers on short-term contracts

NEXT STEPS

LABOUR AND CARE

Full transposition of the non-transferable part of parental leave



Introduction of the right to place a child aged 12/18 months in a preschool education or childcare facility



Guarantee parents returning from parental leave within two years of their child's birth the right to their original position



Requiring base salary/wage information to be included in job advertisements



Adoption of an action plan/strategy focused on supporting informal caregivers



LABOUR AND CARE



DECISION-MAKING



Photo: studiroman

Overview of the Current Situation

In recent years, the share of women in public decision-making has been steadily rising. However, their representation in leadership roles in Czechia remains among the lowest in the EU. Women today are equally educated and qualified as men, giving them the same potential to hold senior positions and represent the public in politics. Yet, due to various barriers and challenges, their participation in decision-making remains disproportionately low.

Gender Stereotypes as a Barrier to Equal Representation

The invisible barriers that hinder women's career progression and their representation in decision-making are collectively referred to as the glass ceiling. These barriers include gender stereotypes, traditional views on women's roles, non-transparent procedures for appointing decision-makers, a lack of self-confidence among women, and the absence of female networks. Decisions regarding leadership positions are often made at informal events, where women may have limited access due to family commitments or societal expectations. Unconscious bias also plays a key role.

Representation of women and men in national parliaments



Source: EIGE, 2024

Studies show that people tend to favour characteristics similar to their own. As a result, selection committees made up of men may show a bias towards male candidates. Promoting transparency in recruitment processes and fostering diversity in decision-making are crucial for increasing women's representation in leadership roles.

Gender vertical segregation refers to the unequal distribution of women and men across different job levels, based on responsibility and position. It involves women having limited access to career advancement and decision-making positions, both in the workplace and in public life.

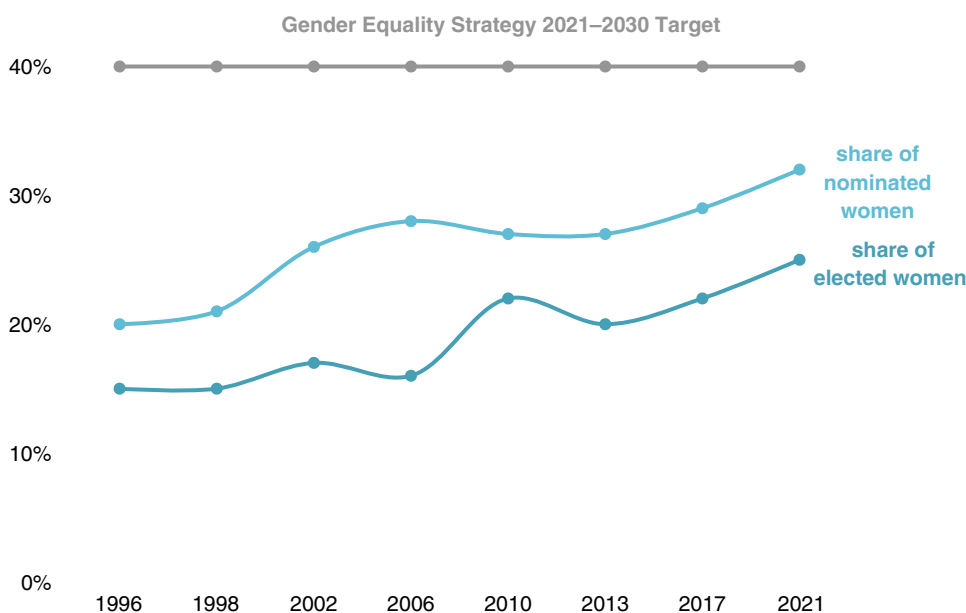
More Women in Politics, but Men Remain Dominant

Czechoslovakia was one of the first countries to grant women the right to vote. However, female representation in politics remains low. As of early 2024, women make up 25.0% of the members of the Chamber of Deputies and 18.5% of the Senate. Women represent 22.1% in regional councils and 29.0% in municipal councils. In the 2023 presidential election, there were eight male candidates and one female candidate, while the previous election featured only male candidates.



DECISION-MAKING

Share of women in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic



Source: ČSÚ, 2021

While soft measures such as public education and supportive campaigns have gradually increased the number of elected women, progress remains very slow. Recent data from Otevřená společnost indicate that, at the current pace, it will take another 42 years for women to hold 40% of seats in regional councils in Czechia, and 40% representation in the Chamber of Deputies would not be achieved until 2058. To enhance women's participation in politics, it is essential to implement legislative reforms that set conditions for balanced representation on electoral lists. Similar measures have already been introduced in several European countries, including Belgium, France, Croatia, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia.

The highest proportion of nominated and elected women is typically found in the European Parliament elections. As of 2024, women make up 38% of the 21 Czech MEPs.

DECISION-MAKING

Female presidential candidates



Source: ČSÚ, 2023

Public opinion surveys clearly indicate that Czech society is calling for greater representation of women in decision-making positions. As many as 69% of respondents support legislative measures aimed at changing the status quo and facilitating women's entry into politics. This sentiment is reflected in the fact that 59% of the population believes men have better career prospects, while women continue to face numerous obstacles in advancing their careers.

As many as 69% of the Czech public support legislative measures to increase women's representation in politics.

Number of male and female ministers in Czechia from 1 January 1993 to 26 January 2024

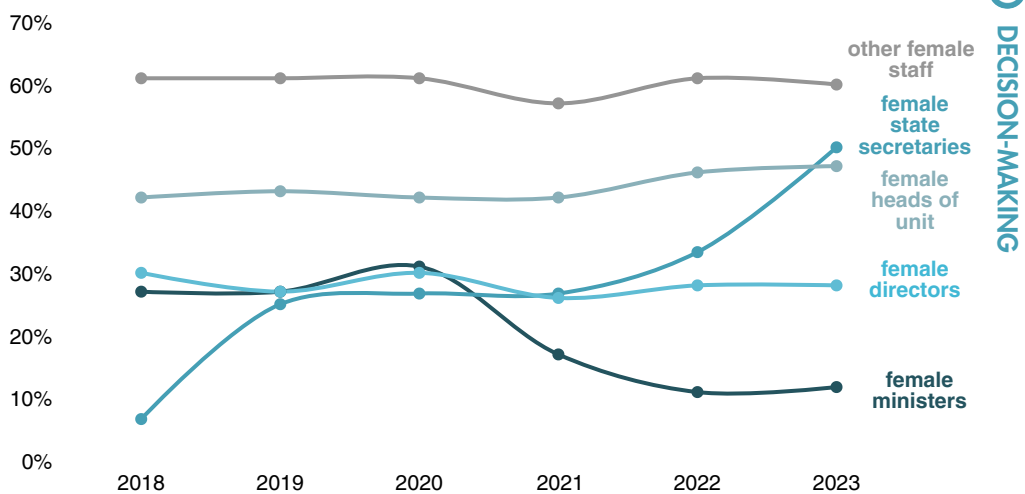


Source: ÚV ČR, 2024

Different Life Experiences Lead to Different Priorities

Women remain underrepresented at various levels of the public sector, including in public administration, the judiciary, diplomacy, scientific institutions, state-owned companies, and public media. Additionally, women are predominantly found in lower-ranking positions, with their representation decreasing as the level of responsibility rises.

Representation of women in public administration



Source: ÚV ČR, 2024

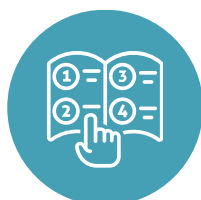
The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles has far-reaching societal effects. Men and women continue to have distinct experiences and needs in various areas. When women are insufficiently represented in decision-making, their specific needs may, albeit unintentionally, be overlooked. In practice, this could lead to a lack of childcare services, underfunding of social services and education, or the disregard of women's sports needs.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

DECISION-MAKING



Approval of the amendment to the Capital Market Undertakings Act



Update of the “15 Tips for Supporting Women in Political Parties” guide to encourage greater female participation

DECISION-MAKING



Support for networking and mentoring programs for women pursuing a political career



Development of a methodology to help ministries implement tools promoting gender-balanced representation



Emphasis on promoting gender balance in public authority bodies using gender-sensitive language

NEXT STEPS

DECISION-MAKING

Organising a workshop for political parties and movements in collaboration with the OSCE



Ensuring the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data in municipal leadership



DECISION-MAKING

Conducting an analysis of the causes behind the low representation of women in leadership positions within the judiciary



Delivering training sessions to promote balanced gender representation, focusing on youth organisations and women's factions



Developing alternative legislative solutions to support gender balance in political representation



SAFETY





Photo: Transly Translation Agency.

Overview of the Current Situation

The overall security situation in recent years has improved, with crime rates declining and Czechia ranking among the safest countries. However, this progress does not extend to gender-based violence against women. Reports of rape are not decreasing—in fact, they are rising. In 2023, the Czech Police recorded the highest number of rape cases in the past 15 years.

Gender-based violence in cyberspace is also on the rise. Domestic violence remains a serious issue, with recent data showing that nearly 30% of women and 12% of men have experienced it. In most cases, the perpetrator was the partner.

Women are overwhelmingly the victims of gender-based violence, particularly crimes like domestic abuse, stalking, and rape—offenses that deeply infringe on personal integrity and human dignity.

Approximately 5–10% of Czech women have been victims of rape, yet the vast majority never seek help or report it to the police.

T SAFETY

Women Feel Less Safe Than Men

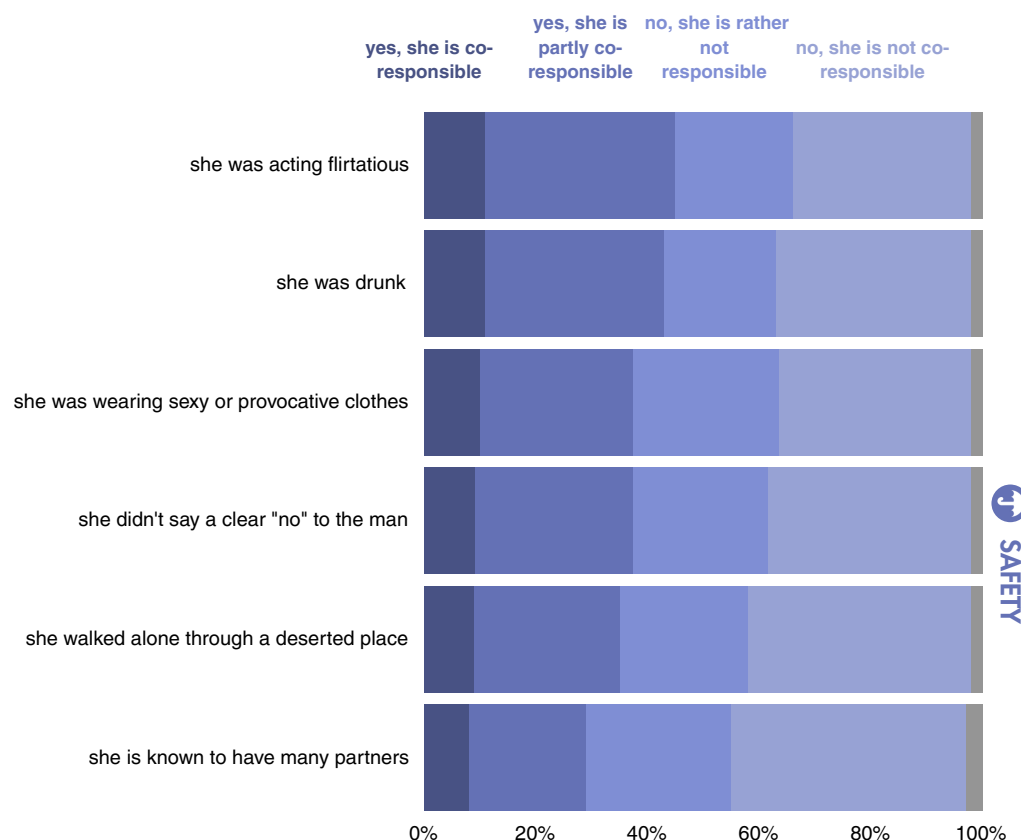
Issues of safety are closely linked to gender equality. Women tend to feel more fearful for their safety, even though they are generally less likely than men to become victims of crime. They express higher levels of concern about almost all types of crime, except for car theft and organised crime. The biggest differences are seen in fears surrounding rape and other sexual violence-related crimes. These concerns also have a greater impact on women's behavior.

Due to safety concerns, 60% of women avoid certain places or people after dark, compared to 20% of men.

Research in the Czechia highlights harmful stereotypes about domestic violence. A large portion of the public (43%) believes that some women are prone to choosing abusive partners, and are therefore partly responsible for their situation. A common belief is that victims are responsible for their circumstances if they do not resist the abuser (36%).

This widespread idea of the “weakness” of those trapped in abusive relationships contributes to their stigmatisation, creates a sense of guilt about their situation, and makes it harder for them to leave their abusers.

Is a woman co-responsible for rape?



Source: Focus, 2018

A 2024 study estimated the annual economic cost of sexualized violence on the Czech healthcare system at 2.26 billion CZK (approximately 90 million EUR). An earlier study found that domestic violence costs the public budget 14.5 billion CZK (approximately 577 million EUR) each year. This figure includes economic losses due to work incapacity from injuries, treatment costs, expenses for the police and justice system, as well as social services for victims.

Support for Victims of Domestic Violence is Insufficient

In Czechia, a network of intervention centres offers basic support for dealing with domestic violence, with centres established in each region. However, a long-standing issue is the shortage of specialised residential services for victims. Only five of the registered residential social services are dedicated exclusively to victims of domestic violence, and these are run by three organisations in two cities. The total capacity of these services is around 90 beds—roughly 30 spaces for families. A related challenge is the lack of specialised services for victims of sexual violence. In 2023, the first such centre (PORT, operated by the organisation proFem) opened in Prague. In other parts of the country, these services remain unavailable.

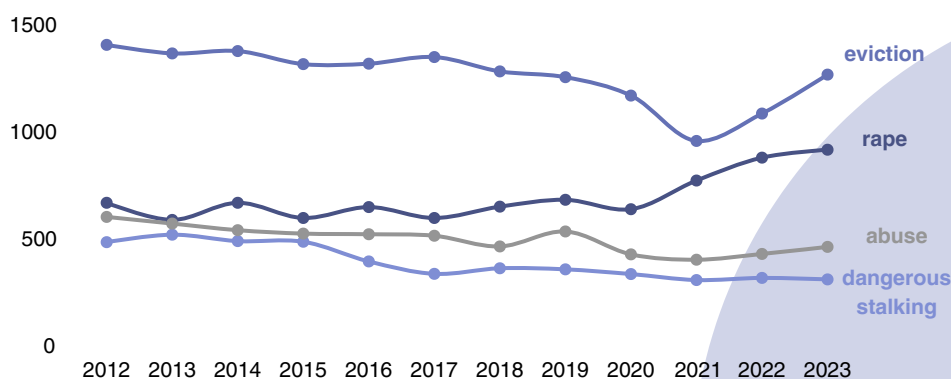
In 2023, the first specialised center for victims of sexual violence opened in Prague. Safe accommodation services for victims of domestic violence are currently only available in Prague and Brno.

SAFETY



The availability of programs for individuals who commit violence in close relationships is similarly limited. Currently, there are only 10 organisations in Czechia offering interventions, mostly based in Prague and Brno. This means access to these services is also highly restricted.

Number of detected cases of rape, abuse of a person living in a shared accommodation, dangerous stalking and evictions



Source: Policie ČR, 2024

The limited availability of specialised services is also evident in supporting child victims. In cases where no specialised services for children experiencing violence are available in the area, it can take years for them to receive professional help. Analysis also shows that these services are provided in only 10–15% of reported domestic violence cases, according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs data.

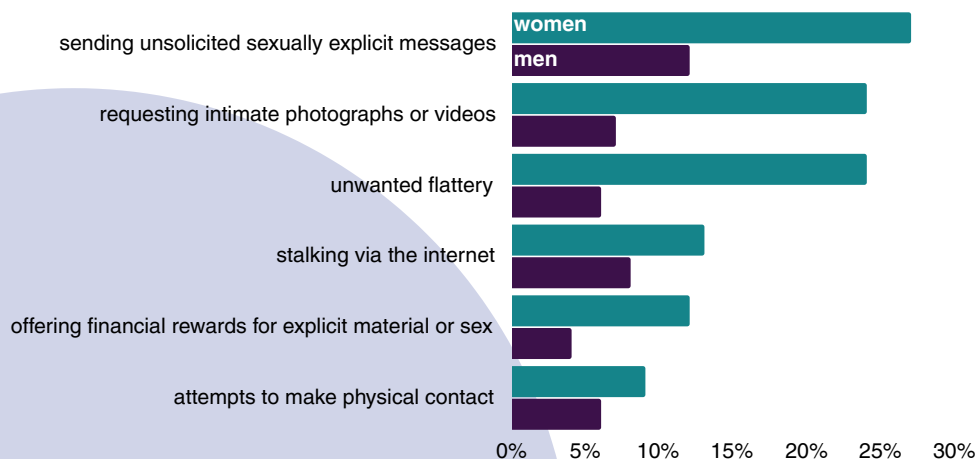
Adolescents Are Increasingly Affected by Partner Violence

One of the significant issues in this area is the rise in partner violence among young people and adolescents. Partner violence in young people (ages 13-26) typically exhibits different characteristics and dynamics compared to domestic violence, which is why this specific term is used. Cyberviolence plays a particularly prominent role in this context, including behaviors such as bombarding a partner with messages, accessing their phone without consent, coercing them into sending explicit photos, or engaging in “revenge porn” following the end of a relationship (threatening to post or actually posting explicit photos or videos of a partner on social media). The consequences of partner violence among young people can be profoundly damaging.

43% of young individuals with experience of relationship violence report long-term difficulty concentrating in school or on their studies. One in four girls (or boys) who have experienced violence in a relationship suffer from anorexia or significant weight loss. 18% of young people experiencing partner violence fear for their own lives, and 16% of victims have considered suicide.



Experience of inappropriate behaviour on the internet



Source: Úřad vlády ČR, 2022

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

SAFETY



Adoption of a domestic violence law with a new unified definition of domestic violence



Adoption of a redefined rape offense based on consent

SAFETY



Introduction of the possibility for criminal courts to specialise in domestic and sexual violence



Establishment of the first-ever specialised centre for victims of sexual violence in Czechia



Increase in the capacity of professions working with victims of domestic and gender-based violence

SAFETY

NEXT STEPS

Improving the availability and specialisation of services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence



Reducing societal tolerance for domestic and gender-based violence



Developing a framework for working with perpetrators of domestic violence



Expanding training for professionals who work with victims of domestic and gender-based violence



Raising awareness of domestic and gender-based violence issues within public institutions and private companies



↓ SAFETY

HEALTH





Overview of the Current Situation

Health is a crucial aspect of an individual's quality of life. It is influenced not only by biological factors but also by social and cultural factors, which often differ between women and men.

The right to health protection and access to healthcare is in Czechia guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. The Czech legal system also includes the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, which requires the provision of equal access to healthcare of appropriate quality and prohibits unjust discrimination.

To date, public authorities have not consistently focused on gender inequalities in health, and healthcare providers' awareness of these disparities remains insufficient. With a few exceptions, the issue of gender and health has primarily been addressed by the academic and civil sectors. There are many examples that illustrate why this issue is important.

Gender Stereotypes Impact the Health of Women and Men



Stereotypes related to pressure on performance, as well as mental and physical endurance, can negatively affect men's perception of their health and lead to the underestimation of illness. These societal expectations often result in men engaging in riskier behaviors and neglecting preventive measures. In 2020, the number of preventable deaths in Czechia was 6,700 for women and 16,000 for men. Men also tend to die, on average, six years earlier than women, and they account for the majority of completed suicides. According to ČSÚ data, around 1,000 men take their own lives every year, four times the number of women.

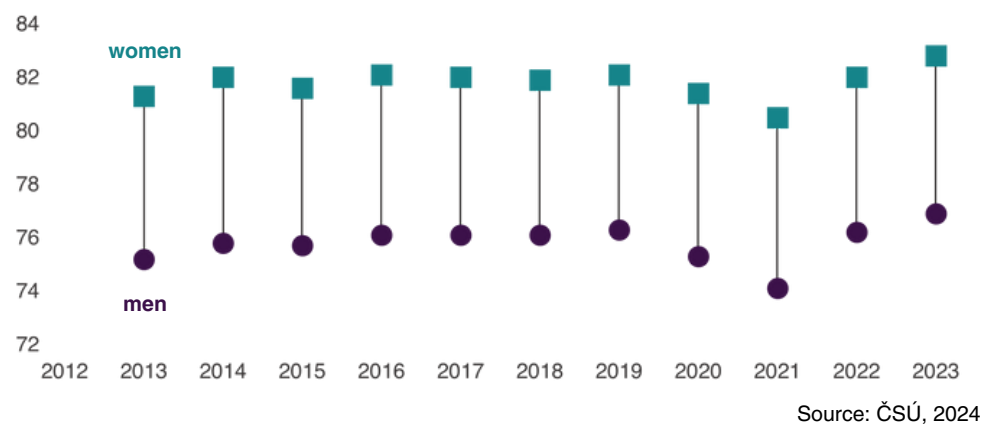
Conversely, women and girls under 20 are more likely to attempt suicide. Women also represent 91% of individuals treated for eating disorders.

Research shows that women's health issues and pain are often overlooked or dismissed by healthcare providers. As a result, women are more likely to be misdiagnosed, receive incorrect treatments, or be prescribed medications that were primarily tested on male populations. Additionally, there is a significant underrepresentation of women in pharmaceutical research and development.

**In 2020, there were
16,000 preventable
deaths among men
and 6,700 among
women in Czechia.**

The risk of misdiagnosis is further increased by the fact that some illnesses often present differently in women and men.

Life expectancy of women and men



The need to take gender into account when addressing health issues was highlighted by the different impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and men. These differences were evident both in the varying symptoms experienced by each gender and the broader societal consequences. For example, women, due to social factors and their higher presence in caregiving roles, were more exposed to the virus, while men experienced higher mortality rates.



Health inequalities between women and men can be further deepened by other factors such as economic status, ethnicity, nationality, disability, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Inequalities in the Labour Market Extend into Healthcare

The chapter Health also addresses inequalities among workers in the healthcare sector. Despite women making up the majority, the sector mirrors the broader labor market's negative trends—horizontal and vertical segregation, difficulty balancing work and personal life, and gender pay gap.

Approximately 252,000 women and 68,000 men work in healthcare, including around 32,000 female doctors and 25,000 male doctors. The most significant gender disparity is found in the nursing sector, where about 90,000 women and only 2,000 men work as nurses or midwives.

Female healthcare workers



Source: ÚZIS, 2024

HEALTH Although the proportion of female and male doctors does not show major differences in international comparisons (54.5% women and 45.5% men), sectoral segregation still exists within medical fields. Studies in the Czech context confirm that women's career paths in medicine are influenced by societal stereotypes. Due to caregiving responsibilities and social expectations, women tend to choose less prestigious specialties that offer better work-life balance.

The average pay gap between female and male doctors is 17% in the salaried sector and 20% in the wage sector.

Another issue is that, even in feminised fields like medicine, women are rarely in decision-making roles. Prestigious positions are more likely to be held by men because, due to gender stereotypes, they face fewer obstacles in balancing work and family life.

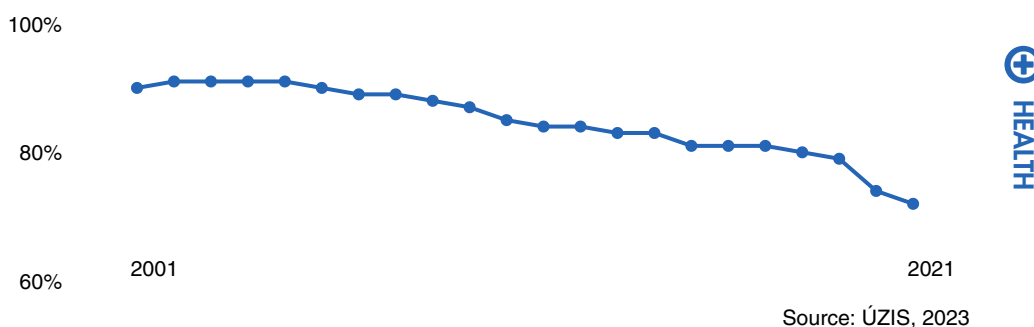
This connects to the issue of gender pay gap in healthcare. The share of female doctors and medical graduates continues to increase each year, reaching 72% in 2021, compared to 28% men. With this imbalance and the challenge of balancing work and family life, there is a risk of deepening the staffing crisis in healthcare, which could impact the accessibility of healthcare. A key factor in the decision to stay at a particular healthcare institution may also be whether it is affected by discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

The Need for Respectful Obstetric Care

An area of healthcare closely linked to gender equality is care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. Czech obstetrics delivers excellent results in managing high-risk and complicated pregnancies and births. However, there has been a long-standing societal demand for a more respectful approach and the humanization of maternity care for women with low-risk pregnancies. In response, the Ministry of Health has started working to support so-called midwifery care centers.

However, these centers currently serve only a small proportion of women. Their further development is hindered by ongoing legislative and other restrictions faced by midwives in Czechia. Additionally, the structure and operation of these midwifery centers vary across the country, and efforts to standardise them have not yet been successful. Another challenge is the often formalistic approach to informed consent and the inconsistency in upholding women's right to make free and informed decisions.

Proportion of newborns breastfed at hospital discharge



Almost one in five women who left the maternity hospital breastfeeding in 2022 did not continue breastfeeding throughout the entire six-week postpartum period. A third of women who left the hospital breastfeeding in 2022 stopped within three months. One reason for this is the lack of a reliable system in Czechia to ensure continuous care during the postpartum period. The country also has yet to fully implement the revised version of the WHO and UNICEF's Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, known as the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

In Czechia, the percentage of babies fully breastfed upon leaving the hospital has been steadily declining since 2003. While 90% of mothers fully breastfed their babies at discharge in 2003, this dropped to 73.4% by 2022.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

HEALTH

- 
- Establishing cooperation with the Patient Council**
- 
- Monitoring gender pay gap in university hospitals and state healthcare institutions**
- 
- Conducting gender audits and promoting flexible work arrangements in some healthcare institutions**
- 
- Creating a working group focused on the remuneration of healthcare professionals**
- 
- Establishing an inter-ministerial and interdisciplinary Commission on Infant and Child Nutrition**

HEALTH
+

HEALTH

NEXT STEPS

Mainstreaming gender in health policies related to prevention and health literacy



Developing a conceptual document to enhance gender sensitivity among doctors and other healthcare personnel



Improving working conditions in healthcare



Promoting higher representation of men in caregiving professions and more women in leadership roles



Developing a strategy for implementing the 2018 Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative



⊕ HEALTH



KNOWLEDGE



Overview of the Current Situation

There are still significant differences in career paths and professional advancement between women and men in both education and research. While there are no legal or formal barriers preventing women and men from entering specific fields of study or work, gender inequalities continue to influence study outcomes and opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning have had a major impact on education. Motivation to study has dropped significantly for both girls and boys. However, remote learning appears to have led to a decrease in boys' ambitions to pursue higher education. This has further deepened the gender gap in tertiary education.

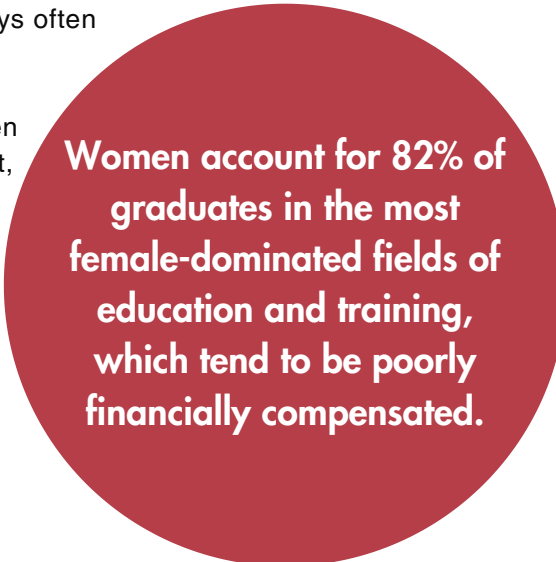
These ongoing inequalities are also reflected in the results of the 2022 PISA survey, which showed disparities between girls and boys in mathematics and reading literacy. A significant step toward addressing these issues was the approval of the 2023 Competency Framework for Teaching Graduates, which aims to promote equal opportunities for all students.

KNOWLEDGE

How Stereotypes Influence Career Choices

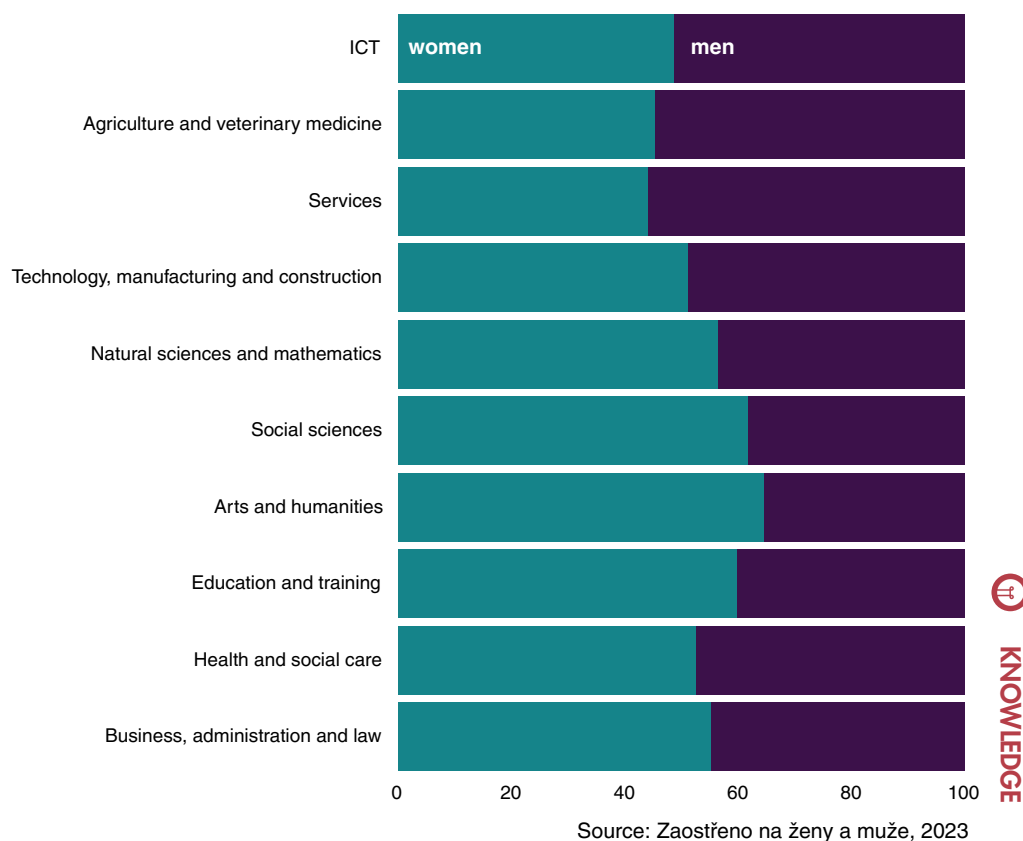
Career choices in Czech society are still heavily influenced by gender stereotypes and societal expectations about the roles of men and women. As a result, boys are more likely to pursue fields such as engineering, technology, and natural sciences, while girls tend to choose careers in education, healthcare, social services, the humanities, and the arts.

Studies show that parents of boys often prioritise career paths based on financial stability, reinforcing the traditional expectation of men as primary providers. In contrast, parents of girls are more likely to consider how a career can be balanced with motherhood or other caregiving responsibilities.



Women account for 82% of graduates in the most female-dominated fields of education and training, which tend to be poorly financially compensated.

Proportion of women and men studying at universities by field of study



Long-term OECD PISA studies reveal that boys show significantly more interest in information and communication technology (ICT) than girls. However, this is not due to boys having better mathematical abilities but rather the influence of persistent gender stereotypes. These stereotypes also negatively impact boys—according to a survey by the Czech School Inspectorate, girls often receive higher grades for the same academic performance because they are perceived as more diligent and well-behaved. These societal norms and biases may be contributing to the decline in boys' and men's academic achievement in recent years.

PISA 2022 data also show that girls and pupils from more advantaged backgrounds tend to receive better grades than boys and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, even when their actual skills test results are similar.

In Czechia, family background has a strong and lasting influence on students' academic performance. PISA 2022 results indicate that up to 22% of the differences in math literacy scores among Czech students can be attributed to socioeconomic factors. This makes Czechia one of the countries where socioeconomic background has the greatest impact on educational outcomes.

Studies by the Czech School Inspectorate indicate that girls often receive higher grades for the same performance because they are seen as more meticulous and well-behaved.

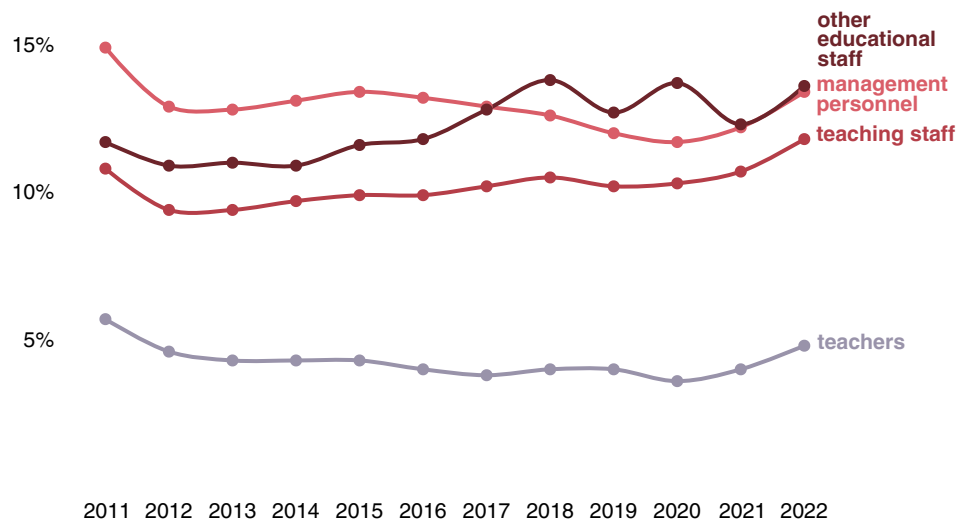
Men Hold the Majority of Leadership Roles in Education

The educational environment continues to be shaped by both horizontal and vertical segregation. In general, the higher the level of expertise or decision-making authority, the fewer women are represented. Women make up the vast majority of teaching staff in preschools (99%), primary schools (84%), secondary schools (60%), and higher vocational schools (68%). Meanwhile, men dominate academic positions at universities, accounting for 64% of faculty members.

KNOWLEDGE



Gender pay gap between teaching staff



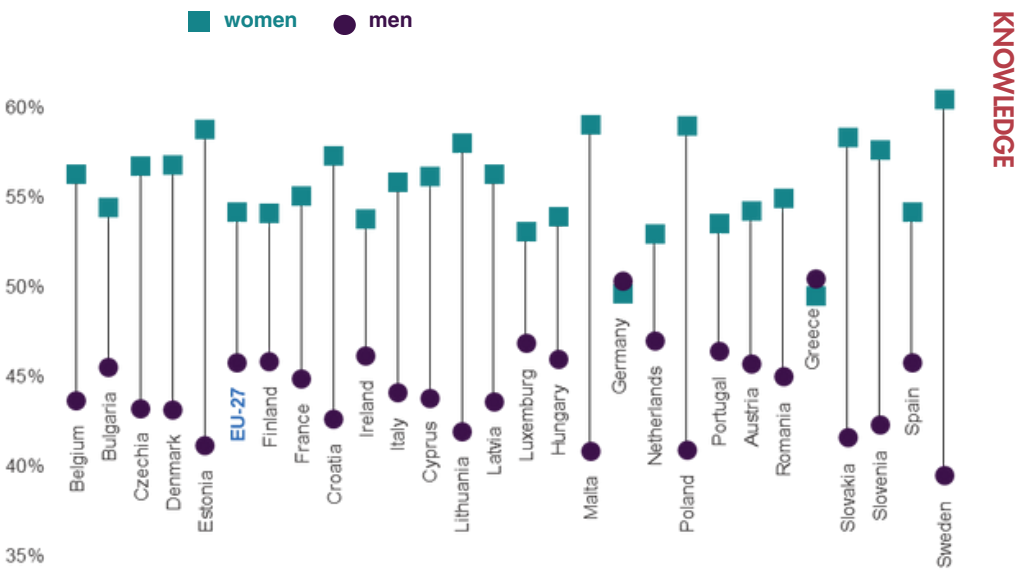
Source: MŠMT, 2023

Men are overrepresented in leadership roles compared to their overall presence in education. Despite making up just 40% of staff at secondary and higher vocational schools, they hold more than 54% of leadership positions. These figures from the Ministry of Education highlight the barriers women face in advancing their careers.

Czech Science Is Not Fully Tapping into Women's Potential

Women remain significantly underrepresented in science, research, and innovation. While they make up 60% of master's graduates and 44% of those completing doctoral studies, they account for just 27% of researchers—a figure that has remained stagnant for years. The key challenges include the difficulty of balancing a scientific career with childcare, as well as a lack of support for work-life balance. Career advancement in academia often depends on uninterrupted research output and long-term international mobility, both of which can be difficult for women who take maternity leave or have caregiving responsibilities. As a result, female scientists face more career disruptions and tend to have fewer opportunities for mobility compared to their male colleagues.

Percentage of women and men at universities



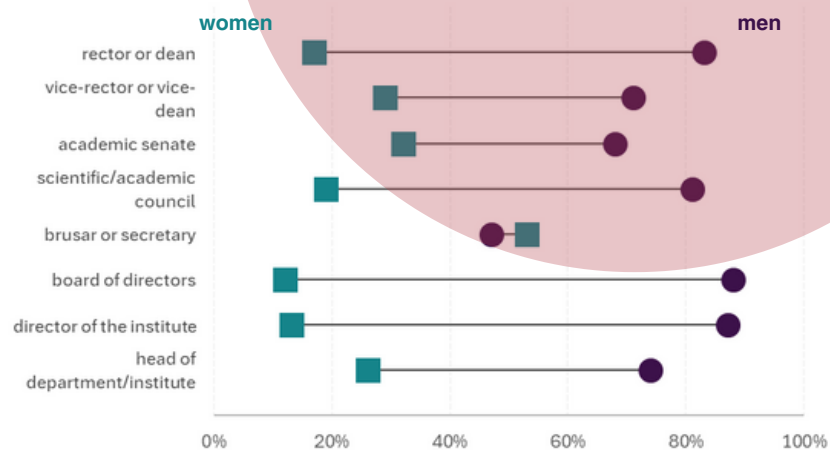
Source: EIGE, 2023



KNOWLEDGE

The failure to fully leverage women's education and skills is limiting Czechia's innovation potential.

Women's participation in decision-making in the management of research and higher education institutions



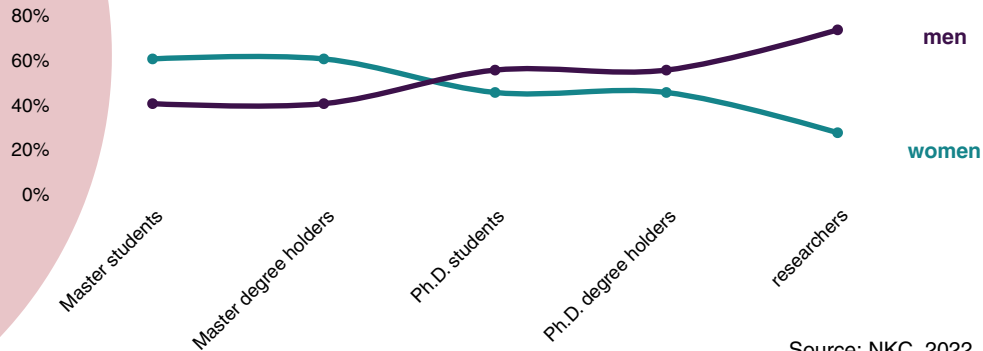
Source: NKC, 2020



The lack of female representation in science, research, and innovation means that the perspectives of half the population are missing. Ignoring the gender dimension in research can have unintended consequences. When men are treated as the default in studies, and findings are applied universally, it can lead to less effective medications for women or reduced vehicle safety for the female body. In healthcare, failing to account for biological differences between men and women can result in misdiagnoses and varied treatment responses.

Women hold just 7% of leadership positions in public research institutions, and they make up 26% of advisory and expert bodies. Only 15% of professors are women.

Professional career in science



Source: NKC, 2022

The impact of gender inequality goes beyond the physical world and extends into the digital one as well. Artificial intelligence, which plays an increasingly significant role in our lives, often mirrors existing societal biases. Algorithms trained on data with inherent distortions can reinforce stereotypes and discrimination. As UNESCO highlights, even large language models, which are central to many AI applications, can perpetuate these biases. This makes it crucial for the development and use of AI to be guided by ethical considerations.



KNOWLEDGE

Experiencing disadvantages in the academic workplace due to parenthood



Source: NKC, 2022

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

KNOWLEDGE



Establishing ombudsperson positions at universities



Introducing gender-inclusive titles for professional qualifications

KNOWLEDGE



Developing gender equality action plans in research institutions



Increasing Ph. D. grants



Creating a competency framework for teaching graduates

NEXT STEPS

KNOWLEDGE

Reducing career path inequalities



Integrating gender equality into revisions of the national curriculum framework (RVP)



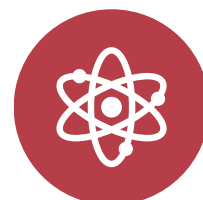
Increasing the representation of women in review committees



Introducing return grants after maternity/paternity leave



Integrating a gender dimension in science, research, and innovation



KNOWLEDGE

SOCIETY



Photo: Timur Shakerzianov



Overview of the Current Situation

Public opinion research shows that Czech society views gender equality as an important issue and is aware of the ongoing inequalities. According to data from the Office of Government of the Czech Republic, 59% of the public believes men have better career advancement opportunities, 64% think women and men do not have the same chance of gaining custody of a child after divorce, and 79% believe women and men do not have equal opportunities in technical fields.

In Czech society, women are more likely to recognise existing inequalities. For example, according to data from the Czech Academy of Sciences' Institute of Sociology, 80% of women see income inequality as a serious issue, compared to 56% of men. This is understandable, as most gender inequalities tend to negatively affect women.

In recent years, issues related to gender equality have received increasing media and political attention. Specific cases of sexual violence have gained significant media coverage, helping push forward systemic changes.



Gender inequality has also been the subject of several successful books published in recent years, and the challenge of balancing parenthood and career in the film industry was even addressed at the 2024 Český lev Awards. Thanks to the efforts of civil society and some politicians, there has been increased pressure to reform legislation on domestic and sexual violence, and the topic is now being discussed in the Czech media more than ever before.

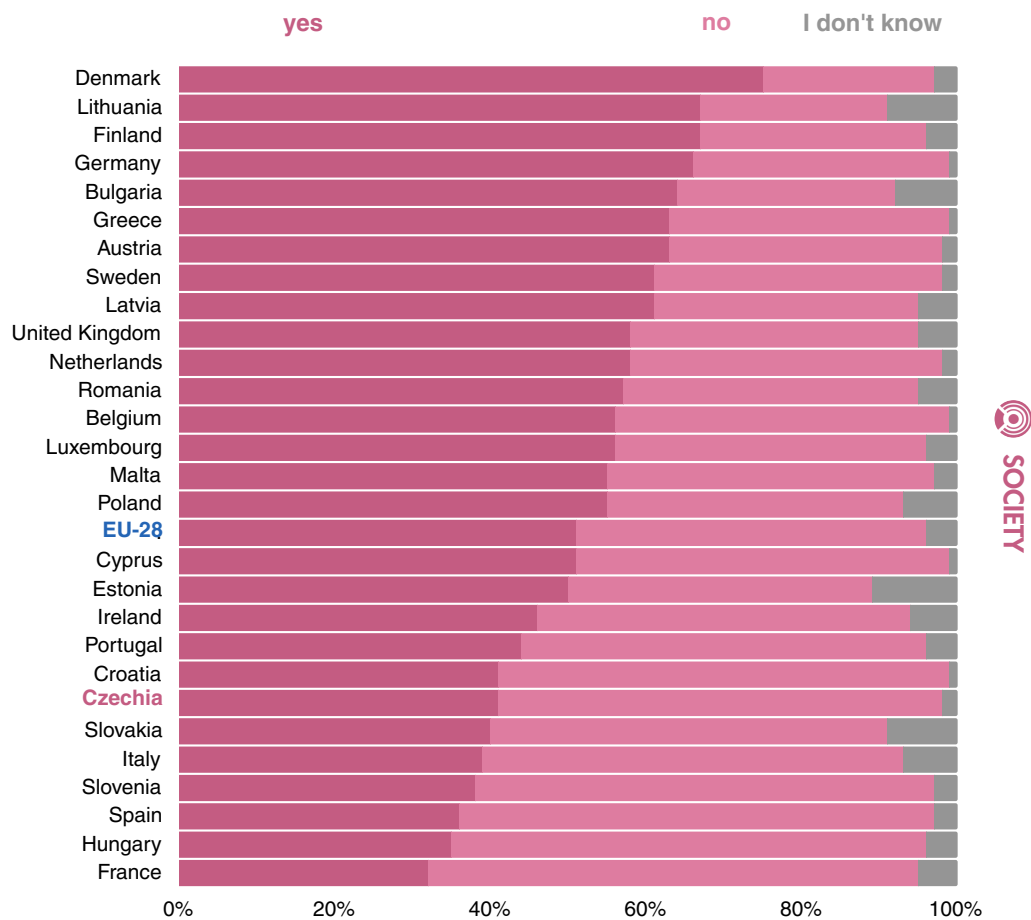
According to research by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, 83% of Czech society believes that striving for gender equality is important, 77% agree that state institutions should work to eliminate ongoing inequalities, and 78% think promoting gender equality is important on a personal level.

The Term 'Gender' is Surrounded by Ambiguities

The concept of equality between men and women is closely tied to the terms “feminism” and “gender.” Despite the long history of the feminist movement, which has been deeply connected to the efforts to revive the Czech nation and the creation of our independent state, feminism is often viewed today as a foreign concept imported from the West.

Although equality between men and women is seen as important in Czech society, both on an individual and societal level, the term “feminism” is not widely embraced. There are also many myths surrounding the concept of “gender”, and most people do not fully understand its meaning.

Do you think that gender equality has been achieved in your country?



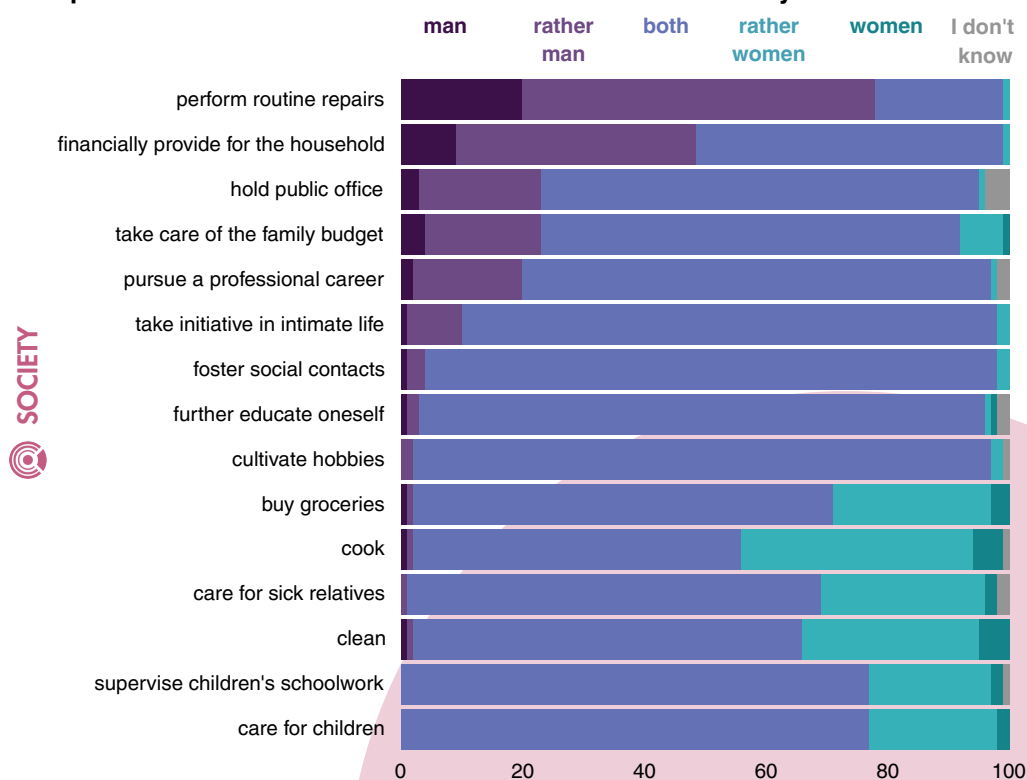
Source: Eurobarometer, 2017

Although society recognises specific gender inequalities and supports efforts to address issues like the gender pay gap and better sexual violence prevention, on a broader level, the concept of gender and the push for gender equality are often viewed as marginal concerns and pushed to the background.

The View on Roles in the Family is Changing

One of the key causes of gender inequality is gender stereotypes. These are broad generalisations that prevent the individual evaluation of people's abilities and needs. For example, there are stereotypes about the roles of women and men in the family and household, where women are automatically seen as caregivers and men as the financial providers. These stereotypes contribute to discrimination against women in the job market and their underrepresentation in decision-making roles.

Opinions on the division of household chores in the family



Source: Eurobarometer, 2024

Compared to the rest of the EU, stereotypical views remain more prevalent in Czech society. A 2024 CVVM survey found that roughly a quarter of the population believes public office should primarily be held by men. Meanwhile, household responsibilities like cooking and cleaning are still largely seen as women's duties, with 43% and 34% of respondents holding this belief, respectively. However, in recent years, attitudes have been shifting noticeably toward a more balanced division of childcare and household responsibilities.

Like in many other countries, gender stereotypes and public attitudes in Czechia are gradually changing. Over the past two decades, there has been a clear shift toward a more balanced division of roles between men and women, particularly in areas such as financial responsibility, career ambitions, and participation in public office.

In 2000, only half of the Czech public believed that men and women should share childcare responsibilities equally. By 2024, that number had risen to 77%, according to CVVM data.

The Role of Women in the Media

The representation of women in the media is a key issue linked to gender equality. Media shape public opinion and can play a crucial role in upholding human rights and democratic values. However, they also have the power to reinforce and perpetuate gender stereotypes. The main challenges include the underrepresentation of women in media production, the repetition of gender biases, and the lack of female experts featured in discussions.

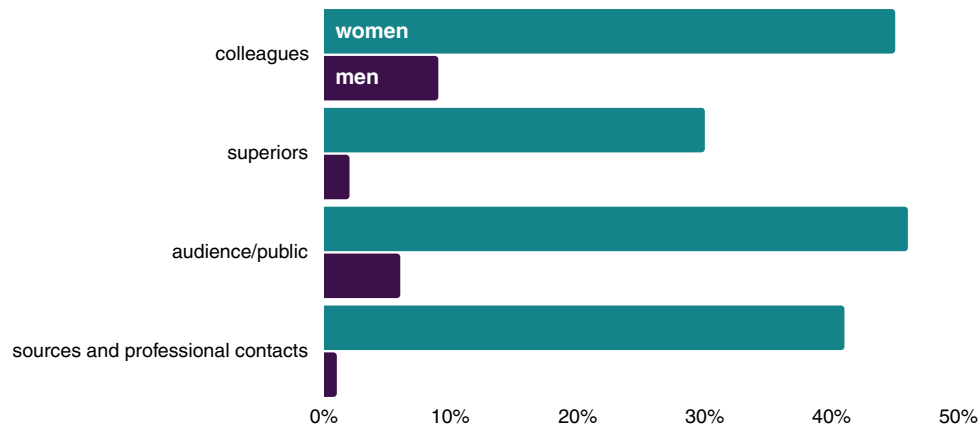


A study by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) highlights that while women make up the majority of media industry employees, they hold only a small fraction of leadership positions. As a result, they have limited influence over media content, as they are rarely invited as experts and are largely absent from decision-making roles. Instead, women in media are often confined to roles as presenters or contributors to programs primarily targeting female audiences.

In Czech public media—Czech Television, Czech Radio, and the Czech News Agency—gender disparities in leadership remain unchanged. No executive director positions in these institutions are held by women. Women are also underrepresented on media governing boards. In 2023, the Czech Radio Council had no female members, while the Czech Television Council included just three women out of 18 members. The highest female representation was in the Czech News Agency Council, where three out of seven members were women.

Additionally, women are significantly underrepresented in expert roles in news programming. For instance, in the second half of 2023, women made up only 16% of all guests on Czech Television's flagship political talk show Otázky Václava Moravce.

Experiences of sexual harassment of women and men in the media



Source: Ženy v médiích, 2024

The Importance of the Civil Sector



The effective promotion of gender equality and the elimination of discrimination is closely tied to the role of civil society. A network of professional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can significantly contribute to sharing essential knowledge and experience from the “ground” to help shape effective public policies. NGOs also frequently provide direct support to women and men disadvantaged by gender inequalities.

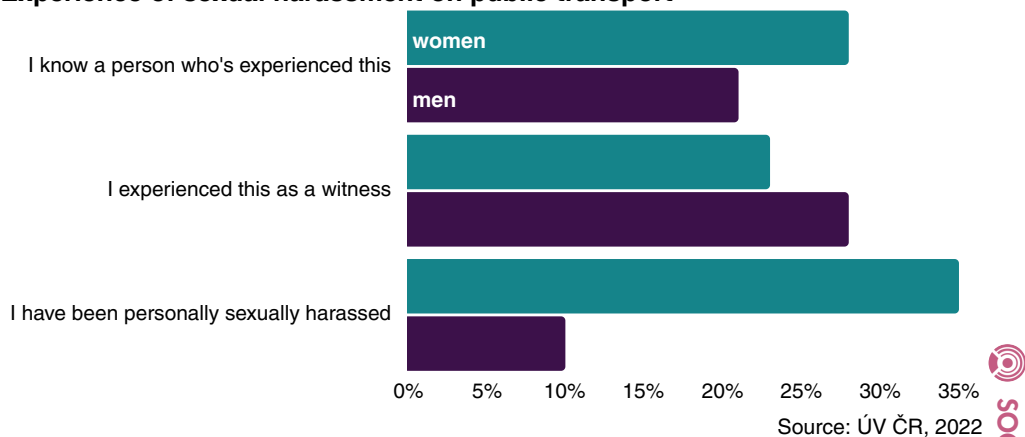
In Czechia, numerous NGOs focus on gender equality, and this issue is also addressed by various research institutions and think tanks. While the government draws on the knowledge and expertise of the civil sector and delegates some of its responsibilities to them, it does not always provide adequate conditions for the professionalization of NGOs. Their activities are mainly funded through EU sources or EEA and Norway grants.

According to CVVM research, public distrust towards NGOs has increased from 2014 to 2020. Currently, a larger portion of the population remains skeptical about NGOs, with 44% of respondents expressing trust, while 48% do not.

Gender Equality and Everyday Life

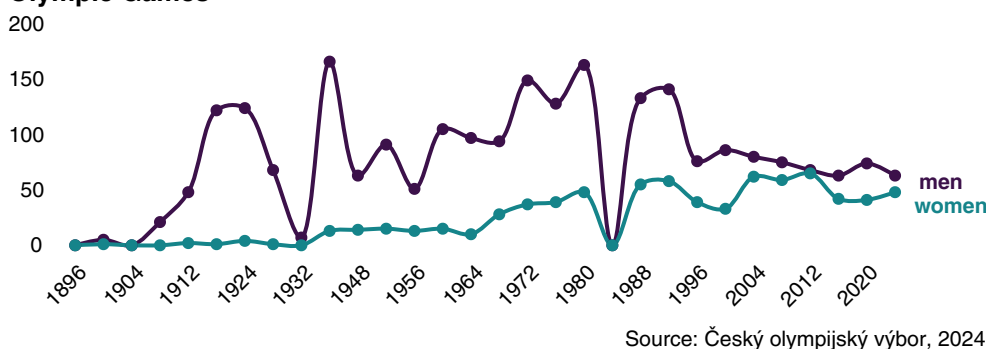
The issue of gender equality is being increasingly integrated into public policies concerning transportation, public spaces, the environment, and sports. In 2021, the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic conducted a study on sexual harassment in public transport. According to the findings, 35% of women and 10% of men reported experiencing sexual harassment.

Experience of sexual harassment on public transport



In 2023 and 2024, the National Sports Agency, in collaboration with the Czech Olympic Committee and the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, began actively tackling the issue of women's representation in sports. The Czech Olympic Committee adopted a National Action Plan to promote gender equality in sports and leadership roles. The National Sports Agency is progressively incorporating gender equality into its sports funding. In 2024, the Paris Olympics took place—the first-ever games with equal participation from female and male athletes.

Composition of the Czech and Czechoslovak national teams at the Summer Olympic Games



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

SOCIETY



Various awareness campaigns aimed at preventing domestic and gender-based violence



Regular networking events for female politicians and women active in public life



Public consultation on the first Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030 update



The first-ever Gender Equality Forum



Integration of a gender perspective in diverse areas such as sports funding, public transportation, and energy transition

SOCIETY

NEXT STEPS

Strengthening the professionalisation of the civil society in gender equality efforts



Educational initiatives highlighting the benefits of gender equality



 SOCIETY

Encouraging greater male participation in advancing gender equality



Promoting women's leadership in media organisations



Enhancing gender mainstreaming in public policy





Photo: Africa Images



EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Overview of the Current Situation

Advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls has become a global priority in recent decades. Czechia contributes to this effort not only through its domestic policies but also through its foreign policy and international engagement. Gender considerations in external relations cover a broad spectrum of issues, from gender representation in diplomacy and foreign service to promoting equality in human rights, international development, missions, counterterrorism, and arms exports.

Russia's war against Ukraine has been a defining moment on the international stage. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Czechia has granted over 500,000 temporary protections to people fleeing the war—the vast majority being women and children. Managing the migration crisis and supporting Ukraine's post-war reconstruction became a top priority during Czechia's second presidency of the EU Council and a key focus of its work at the United Nations. At the UN, Czechia has consistently highlighted the gendered impact of Russia's war on Ukraine, including at the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women and in speeches at the UN General Assembly in 2022. Civil society and academia have played a crucial role in shedding light on the gendered aspects of the conflict.

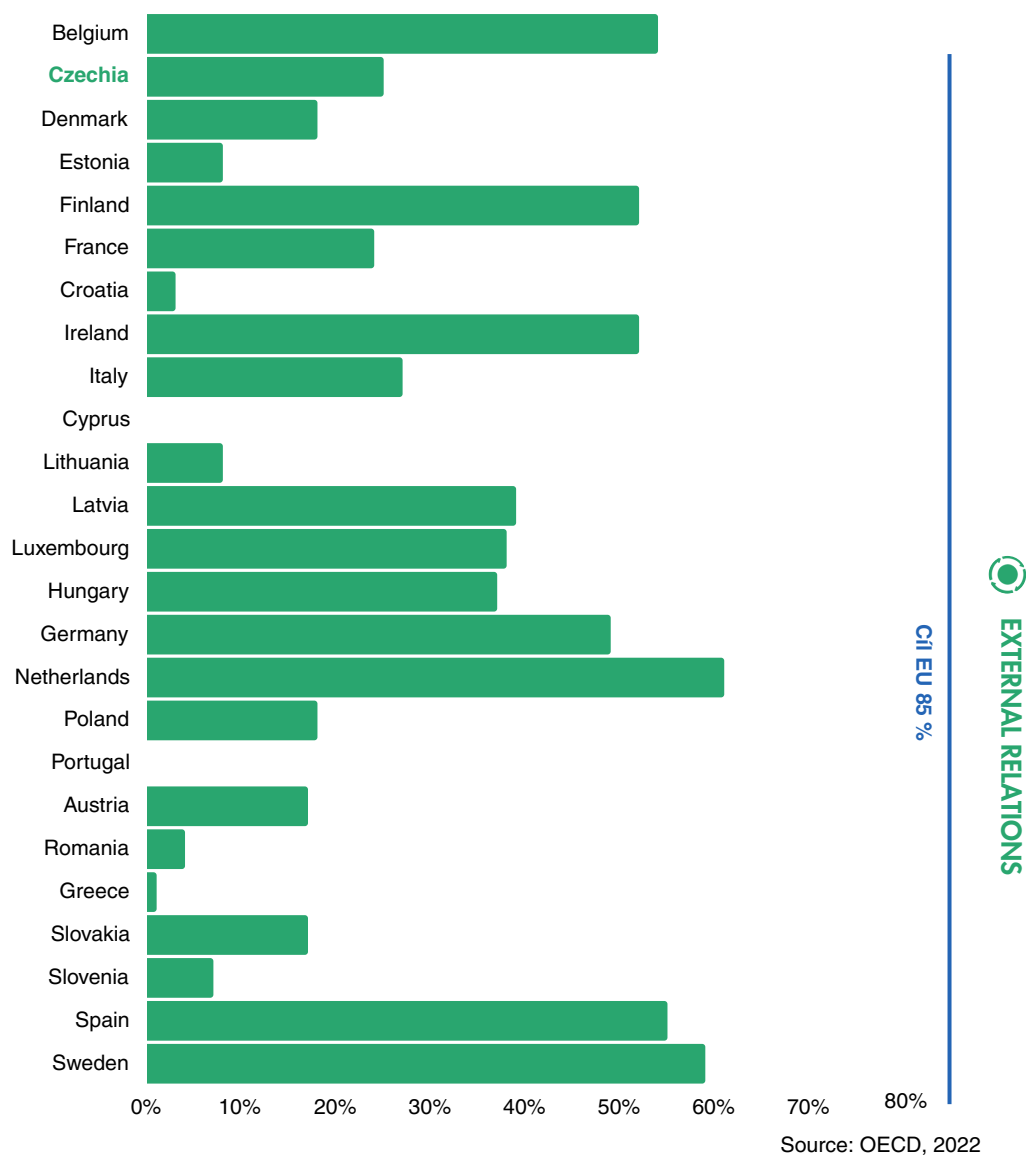
Promoting Gender Equality in Partner Countries

Promoting gender equality is a fundamental part of upholding human dignity and democracy, as outlined in the Foreign Policy Framework of the Czech Republic. The country advances this commitment through international development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and support for human rights and democratic transformation. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are integrated at both programmatic and project levels, helping to reduce gender disparities in partner countries where these initiatives take place.

In practice, incorporating gender equality as a cross-cutting principle ensures that projects aimed at improving the living conditions of refugee families, for example, take into account the unique challenges faced by single mothers and actively address their specific needs throughout implementation.

One of the goals of
Czechia's Foreign
Policy Framework is
to ensure human
dignity.

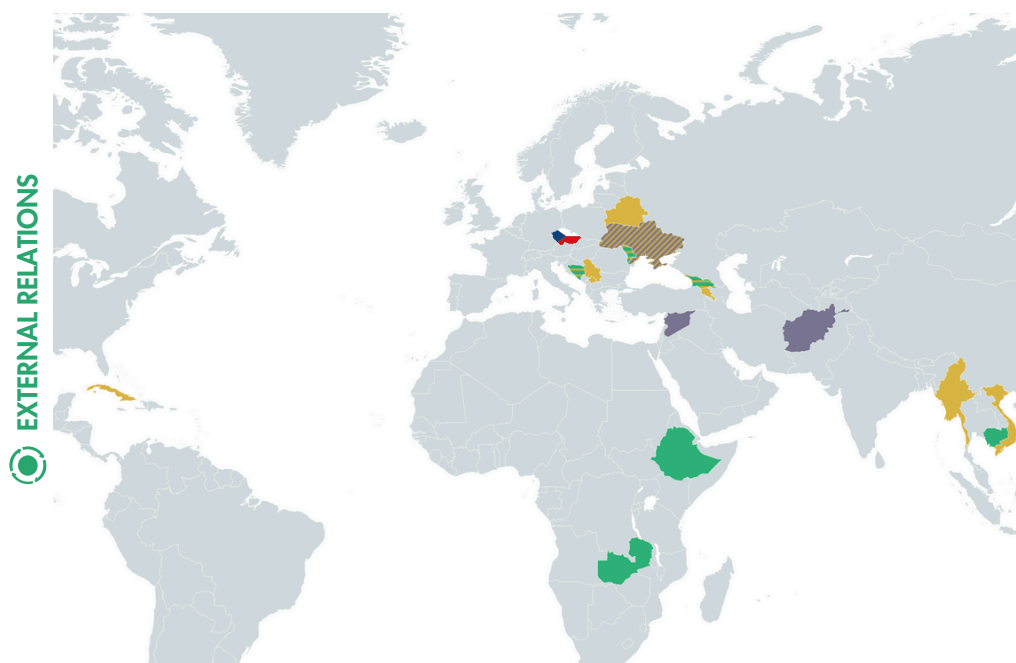
New projects where a gender perspective has been taken into account



Gender equality is a key priority in the Czech Foreign Development Cooperation Strategy. The project documentation supported by the Czech Development Agency also includes a specific section on equal access for men and women.

Supporting documents also include the 2030 Agenda, in which gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are cross-cutting priorities. Another relevant document is the Framework for a Unified Presentation of the Czech Republic, which focuses on the country's branding. This document emphasises key pillars, including “promoting and protecting fundamental human rights and freedoms, both at home and abroad,” as well as “protecting the dignity of every individual.”

Map of priority countries for foreign development and transformation cooperation



■ Priority countries for foreign development cooperation

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Georgia, Cambodia, Moldova and Zambia

■ Specific foreign development cooperation countries

Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine

■ Priority countries for transition cooperation

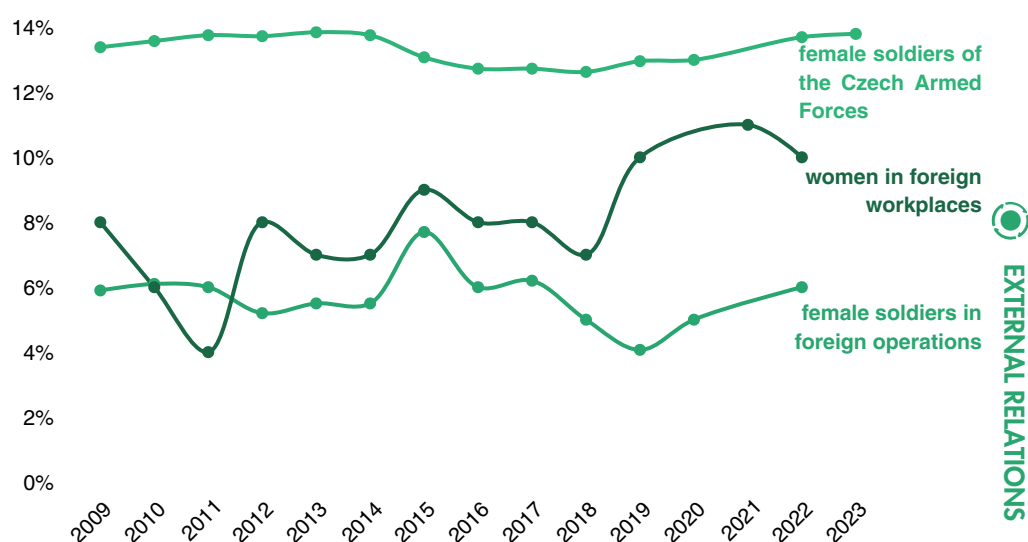
Armenia, Myanmar, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Cuba, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine and Vietnam

Source: MZV, 2023

The Growing Significance of Women as Peacebuilders

The link between gender inequality and the likelihood of internal conflict is widely acknowledged today. Internal conflicts often result in the violation of basic human rights, with women being particularly vulnerable in these situations. However, women and girls are not just victims of war—they also play active roles, such as members of national armies, armed groups, or terrorist organisations. They are also involved in both civilian and military missions. Both the OSCE and the UN agree that peace efforts are more effective and sustainable when women are actively and meaningfully included.

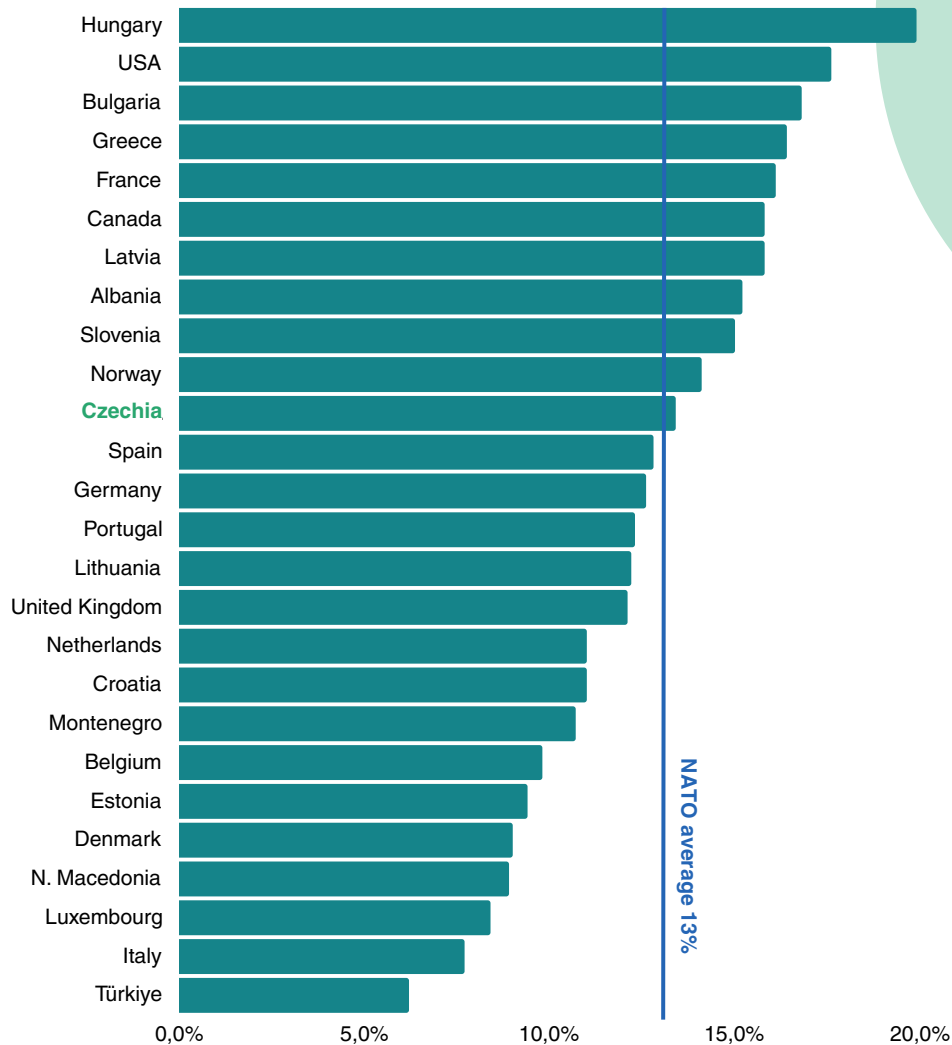
Share of female soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic abroad



Source: MO, 2023

Aware of the need to focus more on the role of women and the gender perspective in security and peace processes, the UN Security Council adopted the transformative Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security in 2000. This resolution became the foundational element of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. In January 2017, Czechia adopted its first National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions for 2017–2020, followed by the National Action Plan for WPS for 2021–2025. The aim of these National Action Plans is to ensure that the Czechia's efforts and activities in the fields of peace and security adequately address the current needs, priorities, and rights of both women and men, both domestically and internationally.

Share of female soldiers in NATO armies



Source: NATO, 2020

Czechia is Building Its Reputation on the International Stage

Czechia promotes gender equality through its work within the European Union and other international organizations. At the EU level, the country actively participates in negotiating various legislative and non-legislative measures, advocating for European collaboration in areas like the prevention of violence against women and tackling the gender pay gap. Czechia is also among the nations that welcomed the adoption of the EU's Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 and is currently contributing to its implementation.

Ambassadors of the Czech Republic



Source: AMO, 2024

On the international stage, Czechia's second presidency of the EU Council in 2022 is considered a significant success. The main priorities of the Czech presidency regarding gender equality included the prevention and fight against domestic and gender-based violence, as well as enhancing women's economic standing. The Czech presidency successfully negotiated the pay transparency directive, aimed at addressing gender income discrimination. During this time, the EU Council adopted conclusions on gender equality in disrupted economies, with a focus on the youth. Additionally, Czechia made progress in discussions about the directive to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence and completed the necessary preparations for the EU to join the Council of Europe's Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.

In May 2022, Czechia took over from Russia in the UN Human Rights Council, marking the start of its fourth term and assuming the presidency. As one of the first countries, Czechia took part in the OECD's gender equality review. Early in 2023, Czechia underwent its fourth Universal Periodic Review with the UN, examining the human rights situation in the country. The review recommended that Czechia ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, improve protection for women against violence, and revise the definition of criminal offense of rape.

Czechia's international efforts also contribute to enhancing the country's global image. These actions provide an opportunity to strengthen the Czechia's reputation as a nation that prioritises the protection of human rights and the advancement of gender equality.

In 2023, Czechia was elected for the first time to the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS



The first-ever election of Czechia to the UN Commission on the Status of Women



The successful Czech Presidency of the EU Council, championing gender equality



Progress on key directives regarding pay transparency and combating violence against women and domestic violence



Effective management of the refugee crisis caused by Russia's war against Ukraine



Czechia was one of the first countries to undergo the OECD's gender equality review

NEXT STEPS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

**Actively pursue Czech membership in the UN
Human Rights Council**



**Support the adoption of the European
Commission's new gender equality strategy**



**Implement the next Women, Peace, and
Security National Action Plan**



**Collect data on the representation of women
in roles such as ambassadors, consuls
general, and heads of missions**



**Continue building the image of Czechia as
a country advocating gender equality**



EXTERNAL RELATIONS





INSTITUTIONS

Overview of the Current Situation

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the Czechia, as outlined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. The obligation to eliminate gender-based discrimination and persistent stereotypes is also mandated by international conventions and EU law. For effective implementation of gender equality, a solid legal and institutional framework is required, supported by adequate human resources and expertise.

Since 2009, the Anti-Discrimination Act has prohibited sex-based discrimination and established legal safeguards against it. Additionally, other legislation, including the Labor Code and the Education Act, also explicitly forbids discrimination on the grounds of sex.

A 2015 report from the national ombudsperson revealed that gender discrimination is the second most prevalent form of discrimination. However, it also pointed out critical challenges in enforcing the Anti-Discrimination Act, such as low awareness of available legal protections, inadequate penalties and compensation for proven cases of discrimination, and a lack of support for victims.

INSTITUTIONS

Without a Specific Law, Equality is Addressed Inconsistently

Unlike some other European countries, Czechia does not have a specific law dedicated to gender equality. Responsibility for promoting gender equality is not clearly assigned to any central government body. As a result, previous governments have addressed this issue, along with human rights in general, in a fragmented and inconsistent manner.

Various ministers, such as the Minister for Human Rights, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, and the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, have been tasked with coordinating gender equality efforts.

Within individual ministries, gender equality coordination and the implementation of relevant government resolutions are managed by designated gender equality coordinators known as “gender focal points.”



**The Gender Equality
Department of the Czech
Office of the
Government currently
serves as the national
coordinator for the
gender equality agenda.**

In 2018, the Czech government approved the Gender Focal Point Standard to streamline the role of gender focal points, defining the conditions for effectively promoting gender equality across ministries. The document recommends, among other things, that the role not be limited to personnel matters and that at least one full-time position be dedicated to it. However, ongoing assessments indicate that ministries are not fully meeting these guidelines.

In Czechia, the office of the national ombudsperson serves as the equality body. The office provides guidance to victims of discrimination and conducts research in this area. However, the ombudsperson's office faces challenges due to limited resources and insufficient authority to carry out this role effectively, including the inability to represent discrimination victims in court.

In 2021, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) released a report assessing the institutional framework for gender equality. The report showed that Czechia scored relatively low in terms of institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality within the EU. Regarding commitment to gender equality and human resources, Czechia's rating in 2021 was below the EU average. The country has long faced criticism for its limited personnel capacity and insufficient financial resources allocated to gender equality efforts.



In 2023, Czechia
ranked 25th out of 27
countries in the
Gender Equality Index
by EIGE.



INSTITUTIONS

Gender is Not Always Mainstreamed into New Legislation

The process of mainstreaming gender—considering gender equality in the creation of legislation and public policies—is still insufficient. Government Legislative Rules (GLR) and the Rules of Procedure (GRP) require that explanatory and submission reports for materials related to the status of individuals include an assessment of discrimination and gender equality (a gender impact assessment, GIA). However, analyses by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic reveal that this assessment is included in only a small fraction of government materials. In addition to the limited use of tools to assess gender equality impacts, there is also inconsistency in the quality standards for legislative preparation.

Carrying out a GIA on material relating to natural persons

not implemented

carried out formally

carried out in accordance with GRL and GRP



Source: Úřad vlády ČR, 2022

The status of institutional arrangements for gender equality in Czechia was thoroughly examined in the final report of the OECD project, “Gender Equality in the Czech Republic: Strengthening Government Capacity for Gender-Sensitive and Inclusive Recovery” (2023).

The report offers a comprehensive analysis of the legal framework and policies related to gender mainstreaming, as well as the roles and responsibilities of relevant bodies and institutions. It points out, among other issues, the insufficient financial resources that affect the number of dedicated positions for gender equality coordination at both the ministries and the Gender Equality Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. The report also recommends several actions, such as legally embedding gender equality commitments, strengthening the position of the Gender Equality Department within the institutional structure, consistently applying the Gender Focal Point Standard at ministries, and improving the gender impact assessment.

Insufficient Funding Slows Progress on Gender Equality

Funding for gender equality initiatives in Czechia falls short of actual needs and lacks systematic oversight. Non-governmental organisations have long raised concerns about the inadequate financial support from the state budget for their work in this area. The only stable grant program dedicated to gender equality is the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic’s initiative supporting NGO collaboration in implementing the Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030.

Between 2021 and 2023, annual funding for this program ranged from 4 to 5 million CZK (approximately 160,000 to 200,000 EUR). In contrast, significantly larger resources were available from international sources. For example, the EEA and Norway Grants allocated approximately 150 million CZK (approximately 5,975,000 EUR) for projects focused on combating domestic and sexual violence. However, the most recent funding calls were issued in 2021, and the preparation of the new program period has faced significant delays.

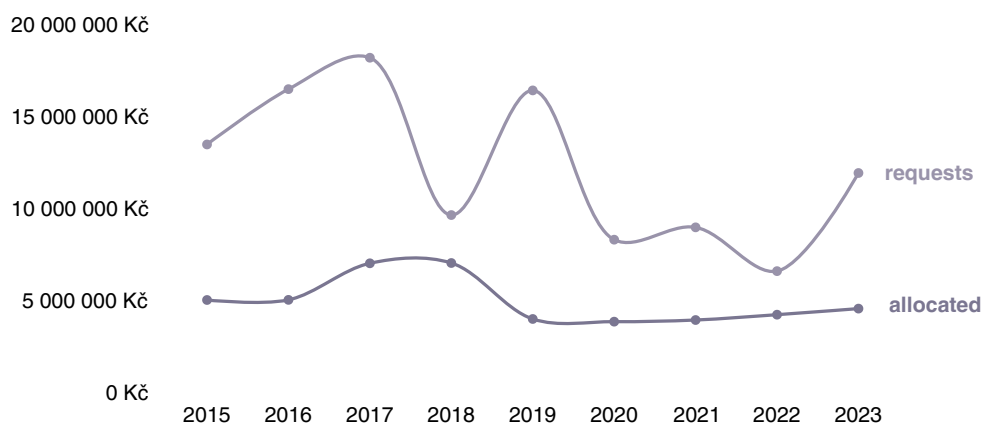
In 2022, the Operational Programme Employment+ took its first steps, setting the stage for initiatives that will run through 2027. This program includes several funding calls aimed at promoting gender equality, such as:

- “Expanding NGO Capacity in the Gender Equality Area”
- “Empowering Women Facing Barriers in the Job Market and Entrepreneurship”
- “Fostering a Diverse and Flexible Work Culture”
- “Encouraging Gender-Inclusive Career and Education Choices”

A crucial funding call for securing sufficient resources to implement the Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030 is “Implementing the Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030”, carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

The only state budget instrument for funding the activities of NGOs in the area of gender equality is the grant program of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

“Support for Publicly Beneficial Activities in Gender Equality” Grant Programme



Source: Úřad vlády ČR, 2024

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

INSTITUTIONS



OECD report “Gender Equality in the Czech Republic: Strengthening Government Capacity for Gender-Sensitive and Inclusive Recovery”



Expanding training on gender impact assessments for the civil servants

INSTITUTIONS



Establishing an Indicator System for the Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030



Funding gender equality initiatives through the Operational Programme Employment+



Creating a database of gender equality NGOs and their outputs

NEXT STEPS

INSTITUTIONS

Establishing a common gender equality education framework for public administration



Ensuring the availability of gender-disaggregated data



Enhancing local authorities capacity for implementing gender mainstreaming



Ensuring sufficient capacity for equality bodies



Securing stable funding for gender equality projects



INSTITUTIONS

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This document is a condensed version of the Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2030: updated version, which was approved by the Czech Government in October 2024. The Strategy aims to help reduce existing gender inequalities in Czechia through tasks assigned to central government authorities.

The Strategy, along with its condensed version, was developed by the Gender Equality Department of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. This Department is responsible for creating and evaluating policies and measures to improve gender equality nationwide, acting as the secretariat for the Government Council for Gender Equality, and assessing the implementation of Czechia's international commitments. The Department also monitors the Strategy's progress and regularly reports on it to the Czech government.



**Updated Gender Equality
Strategy 2021–2030**
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