

Letter of Support for the Strategy for the Development of Respectful Care for Mothers and Children in Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Postpartum Period (Czech Republic)

To: prof. MUDr. Vlastimil Válek, CSc., MBA, EBIR, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health, Ministry of Health, Palackého náměstí 375/4, Praha 2 - Nové Město, 12800

To: Scientific Council of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Health, Palackého náměstí 375/4, Praha 2 - Nové Město, 12800

To: Mgr. Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková, Government Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, nábřeží Edvarda Beneše 4, Praha 1, 11801

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for the ***Strategy for the Development of Respectful Care for Mothers and Children in Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Postpartum Period*** that is currently being developed in the Czech Republic.

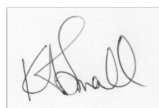
As an obstetrician, clinical educator, and researcher, my work has long focused on challenging entrenched assumptions in maternity care, particularly around fetal monitoring, the power dynamics between professionals, and the ways in which care systems can unintentionally disempower and even harm the women they are designed to serve. I have advocated consistently for evidence-based, woman-centred, and human-rights based approaches to care.

The Strategy represents a crucial step towards aligning maternity services with modern, 21st-century standards of care. Its vision of **midwife-led, collaborative, family-oriented, rights-respecting maternity care** is both timely and necessary. These values are fully consistent with the principles endorsed by leading international organisations, including WHO, FIGO, ICM, ICI and the International MotherBaby Childbirth Organization.

Transforming systems of maternity care is never simple, as all maternity care contexts have deeply rooted hierarchies and traditions. The Czech Republic is no different in this respect but maternity care lags behind most other countries. International experience demonstrates that respectful, evidence-based collaborative care models making effective use of the skills and knowledge of all maternity professionals are not only possible, but lead to better outcomes for women, babies, and families. The Czech Strategy rightly aims to move in this direction, and its implementation has the potential to position the country as a leader within the wider European region.

For these reasons, I am pleased to endorse the direction this Strategy is taking, and I encourage colleagues, policymakers, and stakeholders to recognise its significance and to lend their support to its implementation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kirsten Small

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