

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,

It is my honour to have been asked to conduct an independent review of the *Strategy for the Development of Respectful Care for Mothers and Children in Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Postpartum Period* in a personal professional capacity.

As co-founder of the Midwifery Unit Network (MUNet) and an Independent Adviser in Maternal and Newborn Health, I have seen internationally how maternity systems can evolve to deliver care that is safer, more respectful, and better value for taxpayers' money. The evidence is clear: services that strengthen multidisciplinary teamwork, safely embed midwife-led models, uphold human rights, and recognise the mother–baby dyad deliver better outcomes for women, newborns, families, and society.

I welcome the Strategy's direction towards evidence-based, respectful, midwife-led care aligned with WHO/FIGO/ICM principles and within the context of safe and effective multidisciplinary teamwork. It marks an important step towards embedding those principles in national policy and practice. A phased, workforce-aware implementation with clear quality metrics and transparent monitoring will be key to sustained impact.

I encourage Czech policymakers, professional bodies and healthcare providers to embrace this Strategy and support its implementation. Its success has the potential not only to improve care for Czech women and families, but also to serve as an example and inspiration across Europe.

Sincerely,

Felipe Castro Cardona

Independent Adviser in Maternal & Newborn Health (London, United Kingdom))
Co-founder, Midwifery Unit Network (MUNet)

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