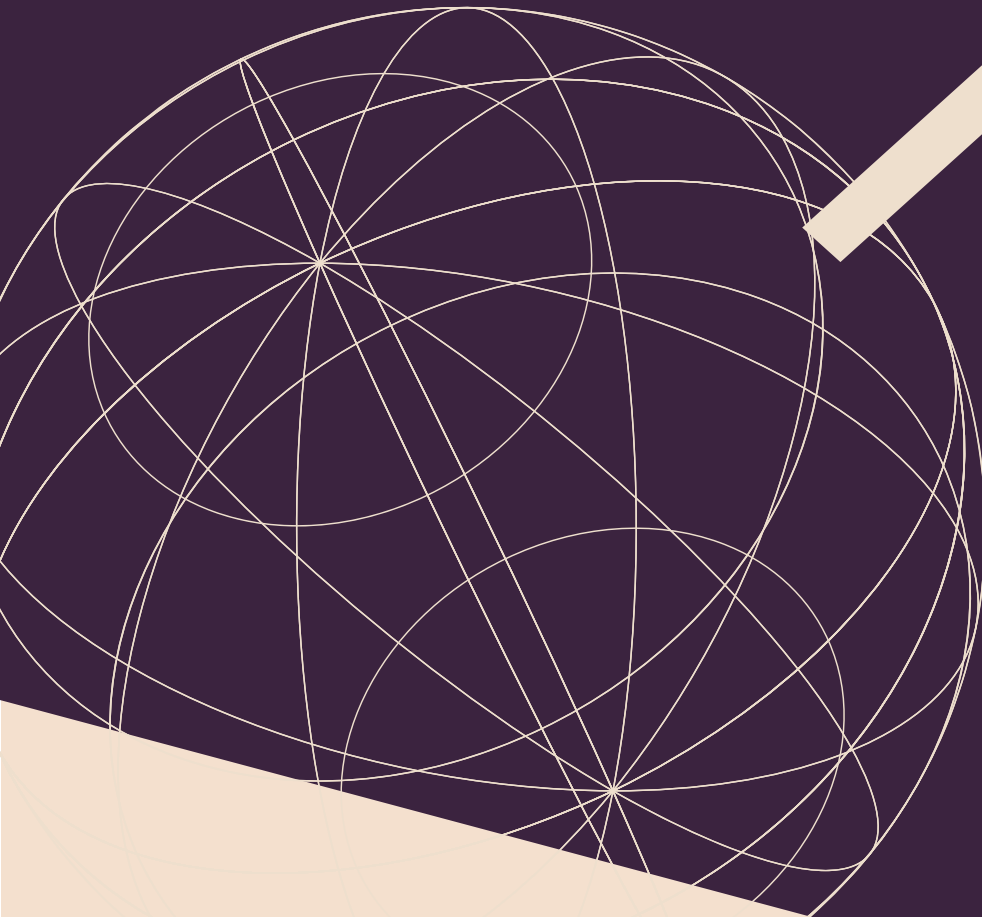


**Recognize  
Resist  
Rise up**



## **The Cost of a Mandate: Gender-Based Violence Against Women Members of the Czech Parliament and Its Impacts**

Markéta Kos Mottlová – Barbora Štička – Veronika Šprincová



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**



FÓRUM 50%

Project *Recognize, Resist, Rise Up: Tackling Gender-Based Violence against Women in Politics* is co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.



# **The Cost of a Mandate:** Gender-Based Violence Against Women Members of the Czech Parliament and Its Impacts

Markéta Kos Mottlová – Barbora Štička – Veronika Šprincová



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

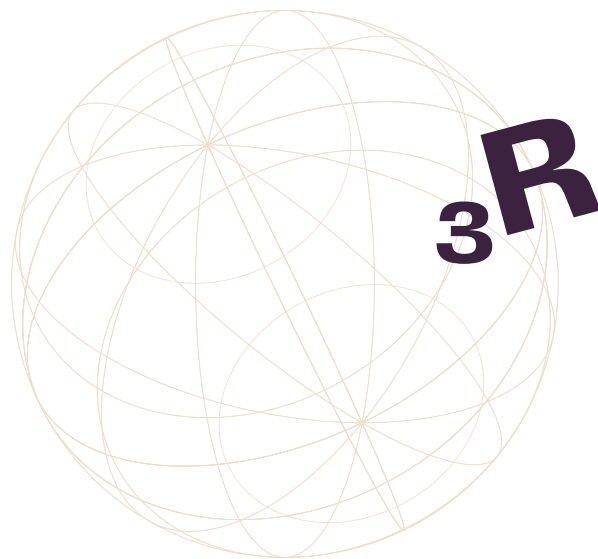
Project *Recognize, Resist, Rise Up: Tackling Gender-Based Violence against Women in Politics* is co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

# Table of contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Context and Barriers to Women’s Political Participation in the Czech Republic .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Methodology.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Main Findings .....</b>	<b>8</b>
3. 1. Forms of Gender-Based Violence.....	8
3. 2. Psychological Violence.....	9
3. 3. Sexualised Violence .....	11
3. 4. Economic Violence .....	11
3. 5. Physical Violence .....	12
3. 6. Hate Speech and Threats in Online Space .....	12
3. 7. Gendered Nature of Attacks Against Women Politicians .....	15
3. 8. Reporting of Incidents.....	17
3. 9. Effectiveness of Existing Tools .....	18
<b>4. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Annex: Interview Questions for Women MPs of the Czech Parliament.....</b>	<b>21</b>

This report presents the results of research conducted within the project **Recognize, Resist, Rise Up: Tackling Gender-Based Violence against Women in Politics (3R)**, funded by the European Commission under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme. The project brings together organisations from the Czech Republic, Ireland, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary and focuses on research, prevention and combating gender-based violence against women in politics, including education, advocacy activities and awareness-raising. The project is also supported by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung foundation, which promotes democratic dialogue based on the principles of freedom, justice and solidarity. The research will be followed by a comparative report analysing data on the prevalence of gender-based violence against women politicians across the consortium countries, as well as a policy paper containing specific recommendations.



## Introduction

Available data on the overall representation of women in Czech politics<sup>1</sup> show that the Czech Republic has long lagged behind both the European and global average. This trend is also confirmed by international comparisons, in particular the Global Gender Gap Report<sup>2</sup> published by the World Economic Forum. According to this report, the Czech Republic ranked 104<sup>th</sup> in gender equality in 2024 and 102<sup>nd</sup> in 2025. Despite slight improvement, this still represents one of the lowest rankings among EU Member States.

The most significant deficit can be observed in the area of political decision-making, where the Czech Republic ranked 110<sup>th</sup> in 2024 and 113<sup>th</sup> in 2025. This is largely due to the low representation of women in top political positions, including ministerial posts, as well as the fact that the country has not yet had a female Prime Minister or President<sup>3</sup>.

A similar picture emerges when we look at the Gender Equality Index<sup>4</sup> compiled by the European Institute for Gender Equality, which includes only EU Member States. In the most recent ranking, the Czech Republic ranks 25<sup>th</sup> out of 27 countries and 24<sup>th</sup> in the area of women's participation in political power. Only Slovakia, Cyprus and Hungary perform worse.

Despite the existence of strategic documents such as the government Gender Equality Strategy for 2021–2030<sup>5</sup>, the objectives related to balanced representation of women and men have not been effectively implemented in practice. The lack of political will remains a key barrier, as well as limited institutional and financial capacity.

To provide more context, we may look at the results of the 2025 elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,

---

1 See e.g.: <https://padesatprocent.cz/cz/statistiky/zastoupeni-zen-a-muzu-v-politice>  
2 <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2025/>  
3 <https://padesatprocent.cz/cz/statistiky/zastoupeni-zen-a-muzu-v-politice>  
4 <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2025>  
5 <https://vlada.gov.cz/assets/ppov/gcfge/Strategie-2021-plus-online-EN.pdf>

in which a record number of women were elected (67 MPs, i.e. 33.5%). In terms of representation in the lower chamber alone, the Czech Republic thus exceeded both the global average and slightly also the European average<sup>6</sup>.

However, this increase was not the result of systemic changes in internal party processes or candidate selection, but rather to a large extent the result of voters' preferences expressed through preferential voting. Without preferential votes, only 50 women would have been elected, representing 25% – the same as in the previous elections in 2021 and half a percentage point less than before the elections.

The election results therefore highlight not only the demand among voters for more balanced representation, but also the persistence of institutional barriers, in particular the role of political parties in candidate selection procedures and their placement on electoral lists. At the same time, a significantly higher number of MPs under the age of 30 were elected compared to the previous term, indicating a gradual generational change in the lower chamber of Parliament.

---

6 <https://data.ipu.org/women-averages>

# 1. Context and Barriers to Women's Political Participation in the Czech Republic

As the representation of women in public office is gradually increasing (not only in the Czech Republic but also globally), their presence is becoming to some extent “normalised”. Stereotypical portrayals or reporting on women politicians in traditional media or during election campaigns are no longer as common as they used to be in the past.

At the same time, stereotypes about women in public life still persist to a certain degree. Compared to men, women are more often questioned about how they balance political and personal life, whether they have children, how many and why. The stereotyping of publicly active women and their perceived “inappropriateness” in the public sphere has in recent years been reinforced by the growing influence of phenomena such as the so-called manosphere or its female counterpart often referred to as “tradwives”. These narratives can also serve as one of the motivations for gender-based hateful comments and other forms of violence.

To understand the causes of the long-term underrepresentation of women in Czech politics and to identify effective solutions, it is necessary to consider a complex set of barriers that hinder women's entry into politics as well as their continued political engagement. These barriers can be divided into three interconnected categories: individual, societal and institutional. Although they influence and reinforce each other, each type of barrier requires different types of measures.

Individual barriers stem from entrenched social norms and include in particular the unequal distribution of care responsibilities, lower self-confidence among women and their lower willingness to enter a highly competitive and predominantly male environment. Societal barriers are linked to persistent gender stereotypes and double standards in the evaluation of political performance of women and men. Women are often required not only to defend their competence but also their very right to participate in political life, while individual failures tend to be generalised to the entire group.

Institutional barriers relate primarily to the functioning of political parties, nomination processes and the electoral system. Political parties are shown to be one of the main obstacles to higher representation of women, as they often place women in less electable positions on candidate lists. The absence of systemic measures, such as gender quotas, further contributes to maintaining this situation. At the same time, international experience suggests that quotas are among the most effective tools for promoting balanced representation of women and men in politics.

The quality of the political environment and the conditions for exercising a mandate in the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic have also been highlighted by the initiative *Moderní sněmovna* (Modern Chamber of Deputies)<sup>7</sup>. It points to the overall functioning of the Chamber of Deputies, which makes it difficult to reconcile political work with personal and family life and may contribute to women (or caregivers in general) leaving politics. Problematic aspects include in particular the unpredictability and inefficiency of parliamentary proceedings and the absence of measures addressing inappropriate or harassing behaviour.

In recent years, the issue of gender-based violence against women politicians has also come to the forefront. This violence, which takes the form of psychological, sexualised, physical and economic attacks, represents a significant barrier to women's political participation. Online environments play a particularly important role, as they facilitate the spread of hateful expressions and increase the intensity of attacks.

As already mentioned, in connection with the rise of online hatred against women in the public sphere, increasing attention has been paid to the phenomenon of the so-called manosphere. This term refers to a set

---

7 <https://www.modernisnemovna.cz/>

of loosely connected online communities, platforms and influencers who share anti-feminist, misogynistic or otherwise gender-conservative views and often actively oppose gender equality. This content spreads across the digital environment, particularly through social media, discussion forums and video platforms, and in the Czech context it often overlaps with the disinformation scene.

In this regard, it is important to understand the manosphere as part of a broader ecosystem of so-called hybrid threats, where gender-based attacks, disinformation narratives and coordinated online campaigns intersect. These phenomena are not isolated but often reinforce each other and contribute to the erosion of trust in public institutions and democratic processes.

International research shows that online attacks against women in the public sphere can be part of targeted and coordinated campaigns aimed at silencing specific individuals or groups and weakening their public engagement. For example, an analysis focusing on Finnish government ministers shows that hateful expressions on social media often have a systematic nature and use gender-specific language to delegitimise women in politics.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, research on violence against women journalists shows that online harassment includes not only insults and threats but also the spread of false information, manipulative content and the publication of personal data, which corresponds to broader strategies of information influence.<sup>9</sup>

This dynamic is also highlighted by organisations monitoring the disinformation environment in Central and Eastern Europe, according to which gender-based attacks are often linked to polarising narratives and used to mobilise audiences and amplify social conflict.<sup>10</sup> Analyses by international organisations further show that digital platforms enable the rapid spread of such content across borders and its amplification through coordinated networks of accounts, including anonymous or fake profiles.<sup>11</sup>

Gender-based online violence against women politicians therefore cannot be understood merely as individual behaviour, but as part of broader information and power strategies that use digital environments to shape public debate and weaken women's participation in the public sphere.

As international studies and media analyses point out, the manosphere contributes to the normalisation of sexist and sexualised attacks, the questioning of women's competence and the legitimisation of aggressive behaviour towards them.<sup>12</sup> Typical examples include comments targeting appearance, sexuality or motherhood, as well as calls for women to "return to the private sphere". As noted by journalist Apolena Rychlíková, "conspiratorial and often violent views about women" are spread within these online communities, where women are perceived as inferior.<sup>13</sup>

These discourses have concrete impacts in the Czech context as well. Investigative findings point to the existence of online groups where sexualised and abusive content is shared without women's consent, or where violent and degrading behaviour is openly normalised.<sup>14</sup> The online environment thus not only enables

---

8 European Commission / NATO StratCom. *Digital violence and hate speech targeting female politicians in Finland*, 2025. Available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/51daf384-8971-4b2a-a9e1-90c3d15c4b50\\_en.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/51daf384-8971-4b2a-a9e1-90c3d15c4b50_en.pdf)

9 OSCE / Berkman Klein Center. *Online harassment of women journalists and international law*. Available at: <https://medium.com/berkman-klein-center/online-harassment-of-women-journalists-and-international-law-not-just-a-gender-issue-but-a-b8c6a5c7e128>

10 MEMO 98. Analyses of disinformation narratives and polarisation in Central and Eastern Europe. Available at: <https://memo98.sk>

11 The Centre for Information Resilience (CIR). Research on coordinated online campaigns and information operations. Available at: <https://www.info-res.org>

12 EQUIMUNDO. *The Manosphere, Rewired*. Washington, DC: Equipundo, 2024.

Available at: <https://www.equipundo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Manosphere-Rewired.pdf>

ANROWS. *An Introductory Guide to the Manosphere*. Sydney: ANROWS, 2026. Available at: <https://anrows-2019.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/05093402/DF-ANROWS-ManosphereGuide-Final.pdf>

13 RYCHLÍKOVÁ, Apolena. *Alfa, nebo Sigma?*. Český rozhlas Plus, 2024.

Available at: <https://plus.rozhlas.cz/apolena-rychlikova-alfa-nebo-sigma-9444305>

14 TITLBACH, Filip. *Viděla jsem tam znásilnění i jak se děti svlékají na něčí povel, říká novinářka Rychlíková o populární sociální síti*. Deník N, 2023. Available at: <https://denikn.cz/1643035/videla-jsem-tam-znasilneni-i-jak-se-deti-svlekaji-na-neci-povel-rika-novinarka-rychlikova-o-popularni-socialni-siti/>

ZELEŇKA, Jakub; RYCHLÍKOVÁ, Apolena. *Podcast Filtr: Jak se infiltrují servery, kde jsou na prodej ukradené intimní fotky žen a dětí*. Page Not Found, 2023. Available at: <https://pagenotfound.cz/clanek/podcast-filtr-jak-muzi-na-discordu-ublizovali-zenam-a-sdileli-jejich-intimni-fotky>

the rapid spread of such content but also amplifies its reach and intensity through anonymous accounts, organised communities and algorithmic mechanisms.

A specific feature of these online communities is also their capacity for mobilisation and coordination. Hate speech often does not appear as isolated individual attacks, but as part of broader waves spreading across platforms and amplified by social media algorithms. In the political context, these narratives also manifest in questioning the legitimacy of women to hold public office and in the belief that women “do not belong” in politics. Such mechanisms also correspond to the findings of this research, according to which the intensity of attacks increases following media appearances or increased visibility of women politicians.

The manosphere therefore does not represent only a marginal internet phenomenon, but one of the factors contributing to the rise and normalisation of gender-based violence against women politicians. As a result, it can have a direct impact on their political participation, for example by limiting public engagement, increasing self-censorship or leading to considerations of leaving politics.

Available research<sup>15</sup>, as well as this study, confirms that experience with various forms of violence is widespread among women politicians and may lead to restrictions in their political activity, for example due to concerns about consequences of public speaking or media exposure. Gender-based violence thus does not represent only an individual problem but a structural barrier contributing to the persistent underrepresentation of women in politics.

In the Czech context, this remains a relatively underexplored issue. Systematic mapping of women politicians’ experiences and understanding the broader structural context are therefore essential prerequisites for designing effective individual and systemic measures. This research report thus provides a unique insight into the nature and extent of gender-based violence against women Members of the Czech Parliament.

## 2. Methodology

The research builds on the study *Czech Female MPs and Gender-Based Violence*<sup>16</sup>, which mapped the experiences of women politicians in the lower chamber of Parliament with various forms of gender-based violence in the second half of 2024. The present research report provides the results of a study conducted between November 2025 and March 2026.

During the research process, the principles of feminist research were respected. An equal relationship was maintained between the researcher and the respondents, and the participants also had the opportunity to ask questions and influence the course of the interview. In this way, the traditional divide between the subject (researcher) and object (respondent) of research was overcome. The relationship between researcher and respondent was conceptualised as subject–subject, creating the conditions for “authentic, qualitative, individual expression of women’s life experiences”.<sup>17</sup> Only in this way is it possible to understand “how and what strategies individual women developed within systems of power at different levels and in different situations”.<sup>18</sup>

---

15 *Sexism, Harassment and Violence Against Women in Parliaments in Europe, 2018*. Available at: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2018-10/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-in-parliaments-in-europe>;

16 KOS MOTTLOVÁ, Markéta; ŠPRINCOVÁ, Veronika. *Czech Female MPs and Gender-Based Violence, 2025*. Available at: [https://aa.ecn.cz/img\\_upload/666f72756d35302d6669313030313139/czech-women-mps-and-gender-based-violence\\_2025\\_05\\_17.pdf](https://aa.ecn.cz/img_upload/666f72756d35302d6669313030313139/czech-women-mps-and-gender-based-violence_2025_05_17.pdf)

17 KICZKOVÁ Zuzana et al. (2006). *Pamät' žien: O skúsenosti sebeutvárania v biografických rozhovoroch*. Bratislava: Iris.

18 Ibid.

The research also took into account the broader context, particularly through collecting biographical data about the respondents – how long they have held office, which topics they focus on, in which committees they are represented and whether they have experience at other levels of politics. At the same time, the principles of responsibility and trust were upheld – all respondents provided written informed consent to participate in the research, all interviews were treated confidentially and all cited statements were anonymised.

In research on elites, which includes studies involving members of parliament, the issue of power is somewhat different. The respondents themselves hold a certain degree of power in the researcher–respondent relationship, both due to their social position and due to the exclusivity and sensitivity of the information they are willing to share. This makes it all the more important to ensure the anonymity of respondents.

Given the focus of the research, the sample of respondents was clearly defined: women Members of the Czech Parliament who held a mandate at the time of the study. All 67 women MPs were invited to participate and ultimately 41 of them took part, representing 61%. Those who had also served in the previous parliamentary term had the opportunity to supplement their previous responses and experiences.

The largest share of respondents falls into the age groups 51–60 (29%) and 41–45 (24%). The third most represented age group is 31–40 (15%). All respondents reported having at least one social media profile. The most common platform was Facebook, followed by Instagram and X. Fewer respondents have a profile on LinkedIn and the smallest number are active on TikTok.

**Table 1**  
**Age structure of respondents**

Age group	Share of respondents
18–30	10%
31–40	15%
41–45	24%
46–50	7%
51–60	29%
61–70	10%
71–75	5%

Women MPs from all parliamentary groups participated in the research. The largest share of respondents came from the ANO 2011 parliamentary group (29.3%), followed by the Czech Pirate Party (26.8%) and Mayors and Independents (19.5%). Members of the Civic Democratic Party parliamentary group represented 9.8% of respondents, while Freedom and Direct Democracy and TOP 09 each accounted for 4.9%. The smallest share (2.4%) was represented by Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party and the Motorists for Themselves parliamentary group.

**Table 2**  
**Respondents by parliamentary group**

<b>Parliamentary group</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Share of all respondents</b>	<b>Total number of women MPs in group</b>	<b>Share of group women MPs participating in the research</b>
<b>ANO 2011</b>	12	29.3%	22	54.5%
<b>Civic Democratic Party (ODS)</b>	4	9.8%	6	66.7%
<b>Mayors and Independents (STAN)</b>	8	19.5%	13	61.5%
<b>Czech Pirate Party</b>	11	26.8%	14	78.6%
<b>Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL)</b>	1	2.4%	3	33.3%
<b>Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)</b>	2	4.9%	5*	40.0%
<b>Motorists for Themselves</b>	1	2.4%	2	50.0%
<b>TOP 09</b>	2	4.9%	2	100%

\* At the time of the research, there were 5 women in the SPD parliamentary group; during the processing of results, this number decreased to 4.

In order to obtain the most accurate and comparable information, the interviews were designed as structured, including precisely formulated closed and open-ended questions (see Annex). Some questions were supplemented with follow-up questions, which were asked if the respondent had not included all necessary information in their answer. Some of the respondents' statements were used directly in the analysis, while others served to provide context.

The questions focused exclusively on the respondents' personal experiences with different forms of gender-based violence and their subjective reflections. The research examined whether respondents had experienced such violence themselves, not in the role of witnesses. The time frame covered their entire period of service in the Chamber of Deputies, including the election campaign, rather than a limited time period.

Respondents were contacted via email or by phone to request an interview, using publicly available contact details from the Chamber of Deputies website (in some cases, multiple attempts were made, including contacting them through their assistants). The time and place of the interviews were left to the respondents, who most often chose to meet in the Chamber of Deputies or to conduct the interview online via Zoom.

All respondents were assured anonymity and all agreed to audio recording. Interview transcripts were kept in their original wording, with only minor formal adjustments – colloquial expressions were replaced with standard language, filler words were removed and necessary clarifications were added in square brackets to improve understanding or ensure anonymity.

## 3. Main Findings

The most common form of violence experienced by the surveyed women MPs is psychological violence (80.5%). Respondents encounter threats of violence (including rape) and are targets of verbal attacks and intimidating behaviour. At the same time, they perceive that these attacks differ in comparison to those directed at their male colleagues – they are much more personal in nature and often carry a sexualised undertone. Almost 73% of respondents who experienced threats of violence did not report these incidents to the police.

Just under 40% of respondents have experienced sexualised violence, whether in the form of unwanted touching or sexual advances. None of the respondents stated that they had experienced sexual assault in connection with their work in the Chamber of Deputies. Economic violence was reported less frequently (27%), and physical violence was the least common (17%). One fifth of respondents stated that they limit their political activity (for example public appearances, media interviews or posting on social media) due to fear of being targeted by hateful comments, harassing behaviour or violence.

Younger respondents (under 40 years of age) encounter most forms of violence more frequently, with the exception of physical violence. However, compared to the previous survey, the differences between younger and older MPs have significantly decreased. Women MPs who focus on human rights issues such as migration, the Istanbul Convention, marriage equality or climate issues are more often targeted with threats and are more frequently exposed to intimidating behaviour.

### 3.1. Forms of Gender-Based Violence

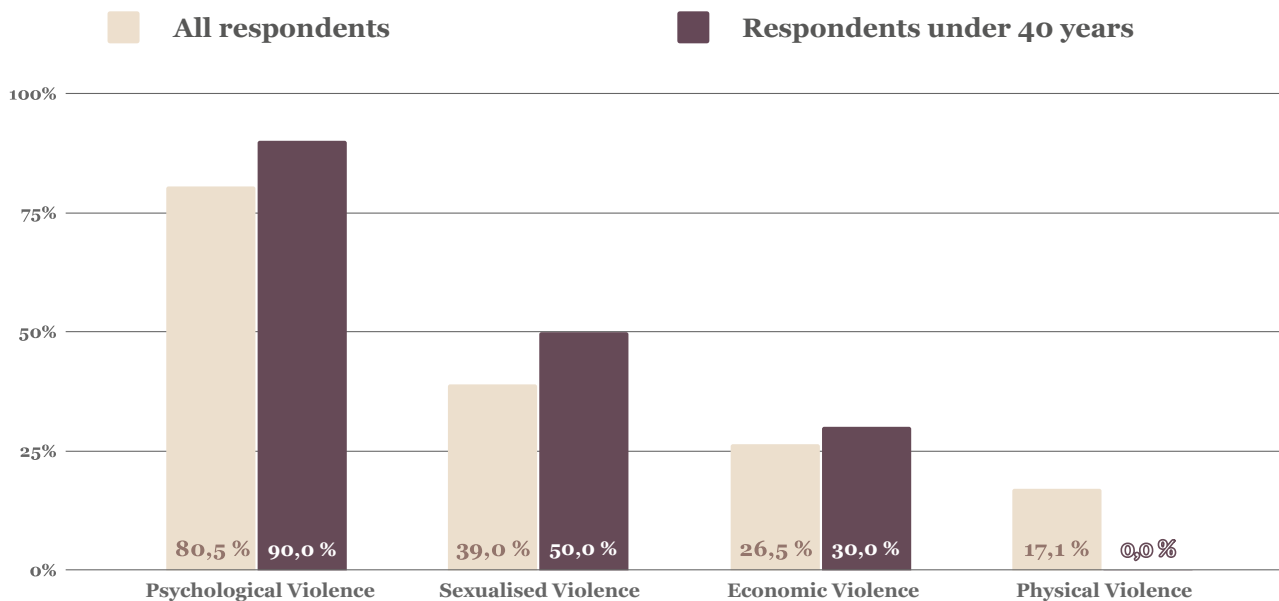
Gender-based violence takes various forms, ranging from psychological violence (including verbal attacks and intimidation) to physical assault. The typology used in this report is based on the classification of the Inter-Parliamentary Union<sup>19</sup>.

- Psychological violence includes threats (including sexualised threats), verbal abuse, intimidating behaviour, reputational damage, stalking, online harassment and the use of manipulated pornographic or sexualised images aimed at publicly discrediting and shaming women.
- Economic violence includes the denial of salary or political funding, theft or destruction of property.
- Sexualised violence includes sexual harassment, unwanted advances, sexual assault and rape.
- Physical violence includes attacks, kidnapping, beatings – often aimed at forcing women to resign or leave political life – as well as attacks involving weapons.

---

<sup>19</sup> As the questions in this research are based on a survey conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the analysis also uses the same categorisation of different forms of gender-based violence against women MPs. UN Women works with a slightly different categorisation. It does not treat economic violence as a separate form, but includes it as a subcategory of psychological violence. Sexualised threats, altered pornographic or sexualised images aimed at publicly discrediting women and shaming them are, unlike in the Inter-Parliamentary Union framework, classified under sexualised violence rather than psychological violence. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Guidance-note-Preventing-violence-against-women-in-politics-en.pdf>

**Chart 1**  
**Experience with various forms of gender-based violence**



### 3.2. Psychological Violence

A total of 80.5% of respondents have experienced psychological violence. This is the most common form of violence encountered by members of the lower chamber of Parliament. This type of attacks affects women politicians across the entire political spectrum and includes intimidation, threats, humiliating or aggressive verbal attacks and other forms of psychological pressure. Their frequency increases with the level of public visibility – they occur significantly more often among women MPs who appear in the media, participate in television debates or actively comment on specific legislation.

Psychological attacks are not limited only to the online environment. Many women MPs also report similar forms of pressure in face-to-face interactions, whether at public events, during meetings or in everyday contact with people in public spaces.

The most common form of psychological violence experienced by respondents during their time in Parliament are threats of violence, reported by more than 70% of all respondents and by almost 90% of younger MPs. The second most frequent form is intimidating or harassing behaviour and verbal attacks – experienced by 61% of all respondents (80% among MPs under 40). More than half (56.1%) of respondents have encountered sexist remarks or comments with sexual undertones; among younger MPs the figure is as high as 70%. The least frequent occurrence is the publication of degrading photographs or images with a sexual undertone (whether in media or on social networks), reported by 14.6% of respondents (10% among younger MPs).

**Table 3**  
**Experience with various forms of psychological violence**

	All respondents	Respondents under 40
Sexist or sexualised remarks	56.1%	70.0%
Publication of degrading/sexualised images	14.6%	10.0%
Intimidating or harassing behaviour, verbal attacks	61.0%	80.0%
Threats of violence	70.7%	90.0%

*“I was repeatedly threatened with violence against my children. People wrote to me that my children should be buried in the garden and should die. These messages came from various, probably anonymised, sources.”*

*“Recently, one MP from [name of political party] pulled me aside into the corridor because of my post on social media. He stood over me – he is very tall – and spoke loudly at me about political culture. No one else was around and he looked as if he could hurt me.”*

*“Not exactly death threats, but I receive emails full of insults such as ‘ukro-fascist’ or messages saying someone would ‘piss on me’. It is all on the edge. For example, one MP wrote on social media that if I were his daughter, he would ‘slap me’.”*

*“In the Chamber, it is often not audible on recordings, but when we speak at the lectern, we very often hear insults. So in fact, what happens on social media and in public also happens live in Parliament.”*  
*“For example, one person sent me photos from places where I go running, saying that he would wait there for me.”*

*“At a campaign stand, a person came, tore my head off a leaflet and ate it in front of me. That frightens you. Or a group of cyclists attacked me, saying that I may be a ‘sex bomb’ but I am stupid because I defend certain people.”*

*“I was leaving the Chamber building to go to the tram with three men, my colleagues from the assistants’ team. At the stop, there was an older man who came up to me and immediately started a stream of vulgar insults – that I am a traitorous bitch, filth, a whore and so on. (...) For two minutes, until the tram arrived, he shouted vulgar insults across the whole square. In the end, I boarded a completely different tram than I intended, just so I could leave and he would not continue following me.”*

*“For example, at the time when the case of the rape of a girl (...) by a migrant was being discussed, people wrote to me that they wished rape by a ‘black man’ on me and my daughter. It was very frequent.”*

### 3.3. Sexualised Violence

A total of 39% of respondents have experienced sexual harassment. These situations are usually dealt with individually, without institutional support – respondents rely mainly on their own assertiveness and ability to clearly set boundaries against inappropriate behaviour.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that there is currently no formal mechanism in the Chamber of Deputies for reporting inappropriate or harassing behaviour, which may lead to such behaviour being overlooked or trivialised. None of the respondents reported experiencing sexual assault.

*“I object, but I simply do not register it anymore. Unfortunately, I am so used to it that I do not deal with it. Or sometimes I deal with it by being even harsher than the person in question. (...) [A colleague MP] touched me under my shirt and got slapped.”*

*“During the campaign, I was harassed by an older man who then felt the need to look for me and invite me somewhere on a date and was very persistent.”*

*“It is a story from one of our campaign events. There was a bouncy castle for children and next to it a stage where candidates were presenting themselves. I was called to the stage and went there straight from the bouncy castle where I had been jumping with the children. I arrived at the stage and my male colleague – not with bad intent, but rather a stupid joke, which is important to distinguish even though the result is the same – said in front of everyone: ‘I saw my colleague just came back from the castle, and [she wears a] nice underwear.’”*

*“Then there are dozens of messages like: ‘I will fuck you one day anyway, I know you are a whore.’”*

*“A friend sent me a screenshot from [social media] where someone created a profile with my real photo but used AI to remove my clothes.”*

### 3.4. Economic Violence

To a lesser extent, respondents encountered economic violence. A total of 11 respondents (almost 27%) reported such experience. In most cases, this involved damage or destruction of property, and in one case denial of campaign funding.

*“During the campaign, they destroyed locks, cut banners and slashed faces on billboards. It was handled by the party secretary with the police – as a minor offence.”*

*“Tyres punctured on my car after the elections.”*

*“[The building] was deliberately damaged, messages were written there in chalk. I also had a campaign car from a sponsor and it was repeatedly damaged – crashed into in a car park, scratched with a key and constantly spat on or covered with something disgusting.”*

*“I was denied campaign funding. Our leader was very afraid that I would overtake him, so all support went to him and all finances were used to sponsor his own pages. (...) Fortunately, I had strong social media, so I did not rely on campaign funding, but it still happened.”*

### 3.5. Physical Violence

Physical violence is the least frequent form experienced by respondents (17%). None of the younger respondents reported such experience.

*“Someone threw an airsoft grenade at me. We did not report the incident to the police. There was security present, but they reacted later than I did, they basically ignored it.”*

*“They pushed me or threw things at me during the campaign. People came (...) and threw tomatoes or crumpled paper at us. At the stand, someone would sometimes deliberately bump into me.”*

*“I was once attacked by a voter who clearly had a different political preference. He started pushing me. When colleagues came over, he ran away.”*

### 3.6. Hate Speech and Threats in Online Space

Women MPs agree that hateful expressions and threats dominate the online environment. According to their experience, these attacks do not occur randomly, but rather take the form of recurring waves that intensify, for example, after media appearances or speeches in Parliament.

They also point out that the intensity and frequency of these attacks are closely linked to how quickly and widely chain emails, hateful content and disinformation spread across different groups on social media. The more such content is shared and reproduced, the more it translates into an increase in aggressive reactions directed at them.

*“The increase in attacks is linked to the moment when specific women politicians are picked up by the disinformation scene. They share your content in their groups and then it all comes at you. Eliminating hateful comments used to take me several hours a day. I consider it important so that my content is not ‘taken over’ elsewhere, but it limits me in terms of time. Most of the aggression takes place in the online space. Those politicians will not say anything to your face, they behave themselves in the plenary, but then they ‘throw you to the crowd’ on social media.”*

*“On [a social media platform], we can talk about the extent to which these are paid profiles, paid trolls or troll farms. For example, in Poland this is already a normal business – politicians buy profiles that support them and that troll their opposition.”*

*“These are usually people who do not have their real photo there, they have some kind of avatar, an animal, a fish or something like that. And in general, you can often see on those profiles that they are created only for writing these kinds of comments, because they have no history, just a few photos, but basically no friends or anything like that.”*

*“The whole debate about gender, migration and climate does not exist in a vacuum – it is part of a hybrid cognitive war.”*

*“It would help if people paid more attention to the issue of hybrid forms of attacks that affect us. In my view, this is not talked about enough in the media. Ordinary citizens have only limited awareness that these are often bots attacking us. It is not a real person, but a programmed profile designed to provoke a reaction and artificially incite real people to hostility.”*

What the public can observe in the comments on women politicians’ social media represents only a small part of the problem. In reality, women MPs face much more intense and less visible pressure. Harmful, often abusive or threatening content does not reach them only publicly under their posts, but to a large extent also through private channels – via email, text messages or messaging applications such as WhatsApp. It is precisely this non-public dimension of communication that remains hidden to most people, yet it constitutes a substantial part of women politicians’ experience.

*“It is definitely strongest on platform X. When it comes to threats... I am careful with that word, I would rather call them hateful comments, which I often do not even read anymore. But I also receive hateful messages via Messenger or to my work email.”*

*“For me, Facebook is probably the worst, even though a large part of it consists of artificially created profiles and trolls. The most disgusting comments from real people appear on platform X, but the largest volumes and frequency of attacks are on Facebook. (...) Every time I appear on television or a video of my speech in Parliament is shared, I receive several such emails and private messages.”*

During the interviews, women MPs repeatedly pointed out that hateful comments, personal attacks and even threats are, to a considerable extent, perceived as a normal phenomenon in the Czech context. According to them, there is a prevailing belief in society that people in public office must automatically expect such treatment. They are expected to tolerate expressions of hatred without major complaints, as these are considered an inherent part of operating in the public sphere, especially at high political positions. According to them, this approach leads to the normalisation and tolerance of hateful behaviour.

*“Tools exist for the most serious cases that reach the level of a criminal offence, but otherwise I do not feel there is any willingness to deal with it. People are rather mocked when they try to defend themselves. The general social climate is not set in a way that would recognise our right to be treated with respect.”*

*“As a public figure, I have to endure more in the sense that you have greater responsibility for what you say, how you behave and what you do, because you set an example to others. But that certainly does not mean that you have to accept personal attacks and hateful behaviour.”*

*“It is covered by the idea that in politics we should be more resilient and just put up with it. That is wrong. The mechanisms should apply equally [as for any other person]. A politician should not have to have thicker skin.”*

Most women MPs, or their assistants, actively moderate discussions on their public social media profiles. They regularly monitor posts and user reactions, intervening particularly in cases where inappropriate, abusive or threatening comments appear. These posts are hidden or removed, and further steps are taken – for example blocking users or reporting profiles to platform operators for violating their rules. Some women MPs use paid AI tools that help them automatically detect, filter and remove hateful or otherwise harmful content.

*“It is [paying for AI tools to remove comments] quite expensive and sometimes I wonder whether it is worth it, but it helps. The level of vulgarity and nastiness is very high. My assistant also helps with filtering. We agreed that managing social media would be a large part of her agenda. In other things I am independent, but this is something I do not enjoy and I need distance from it. So she manages most of it, although sometimes I check it and delete something myself.”*

*“I did not want to do it before [blocking profiles], but once the insults started targeting my [teenage] daughter, who actively uses social media, I delete and block. However, I have never officially reported it to the platform operators.”*

Some of the participating women MPs stated that, in response to hateful comments on social media, they have limited their political activity. In a situation where public presentation and visibility of politicians’ work are key factors for maintaining voter support, such conscious limitation of communication may represent a risk. If partial self-censorship and reduced media presence occur, this may in the medium term weaken their ability to reach the public and thus reduce their chances of re-election. Almost one fifth of respondents admit that they limit their political activity (for example public appearances, media interviews or posting on social media) due to fear of being targeted by hateful comments, harassing behaviour or violence.

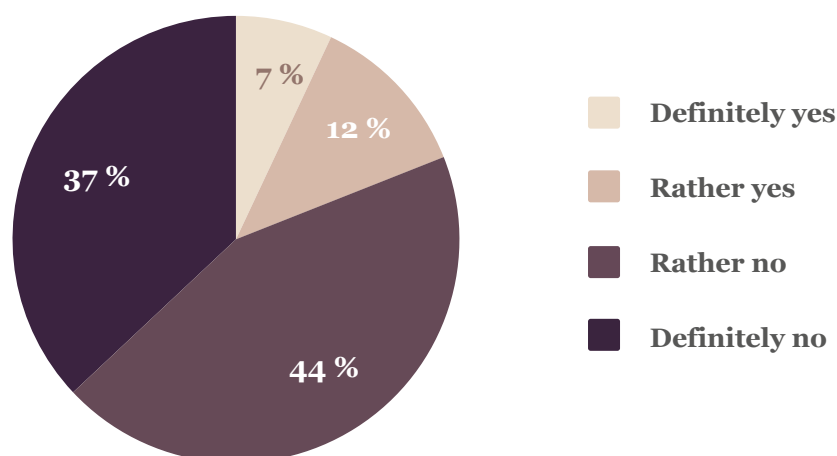
*“All my life I have been used to getting along with people, and that is why I now hesitate to go into the media in order to avoid these situations [threats and hateful comments in the online space]. I see a direct relationship between publicity and a wave of hate.”*

*“It is not that I would not comment on a topic at all, but I constantly consider what I will wear, what exactly I will say, how I will present it as a young woman and what kind of hate it will trigger. It is a constant part of my decision-making.”*

*“I try not to give in to it, but I definitely self-censor. I am very careful about how I say things so that they are as diplomatic as possible.”*

**Chart 2**

**Do you avoid certain topics or restrict your political activity out of concern that you may be targeted by hateful comments, harassment or even violence?**



The impact of cyber violence on women politicians often does not remain limited to the online space, but extends into their everyday lives and affects their sense of safety in public space. As one respondent describes, experiences with online attacks and threats influence her behaviour and thinking.

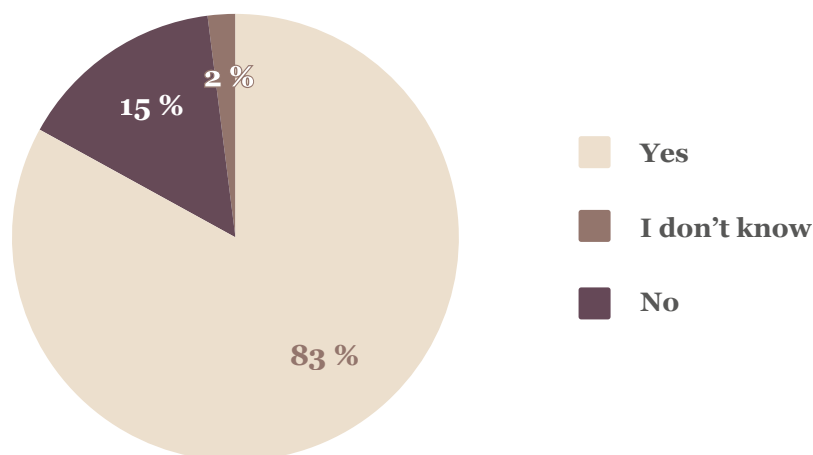
*“What definitely happens to me now, which did not before, is that I feel more afraid in public space. Today I was standing in the metro (...) and I thought to myself: ‘I will stand further away from the tracks, in case I upset someone so they do not push me.’ It sounds silly, but before it would not have occurred to me. That feeling of fear is simply there somewhere in the background.”*

### 3.7. Gendered Nature of Attacks Against Women Politicians

The vast majority (83%) of all surveyed women MPs believe that attacks against women politicians differ from those targeting their male colleagues. These attacks tend to be significantly more personal in nature and often carry a sexualised undertone. At the same time, they reflect deeply rooted stereotypes that politics is not an environment for women. Verbal aggression and hateful expressions directed at women politicians frequently include vulgar remarks with sexual undertones, threats of rape, questioning of their expertise and abilities, and attacks focused on their appearance rather than their work or opinions. In public space, women politicians are also more often exposed to violations of personal boundaries.

#### Chart 3

**Do you think that attacks against women politicians differ in any way from those targeting male politicians?**



*“I think that [comments directed at women] are much more focused on appearance and on family life or motherhood. Intellectual capacity is also often questioned, which always surprises me. You rarely hear someone questioning a man’s education or experience. But with women, you hear that you are not educated enough, not smart enough or that you have no right to speak. Gender stereotypes still appear, such as that a woman belongs in the kitchen. The way women and men in politics are insulted is a completely different discipline.”*

*“Whenever I post a photo with male colleagues, there are regularly comments saying that I am a ‘mattress’ and similar things. If a male colleague posted a photo with a female colleague and the dynamic were reversed, such comments probably would not appear. It has a strong gendered undertone and is sexualised.”*

*“The intensity towards women, especially young women, is diametrically higher. It is much more sexualised and questioning of competence is more frequent. At the same time, sexualised comments towards women are unfortunately so normalised that others do not perceive them as serious.”*

*“Since I became [a highly visible politician] and started to be more visible, many more men write to me. It worsened rapidly after I was ‘highlighted’ by one MP. The volume and aggressiveness increased.”*

*“[Attacks against women] differ in both intensity and their sexualised nature. It involves objectification based on appearance and comments suggesting that women got into their positions ‘through the bed’. This mainly concerns women. I do not think my male colleagues receive threats of rape at all. Men do experience verbal violence, but these attacks on dignity based on physical dominance primarily affect women.”*

*“It is often difficult to distinguish whether the hate is due to opinions or gender, but in the end it manifests itself in the fact that I am ‘just a girl’ and have no right to speak publicly. The attacks would come anyway, but gender serves as a platform for expressing them.”*

Alongside the gendered nature of violence, age also appears as an important factor that can further intensify both the form and the intensity of attacks. Testimonies from women MPs show that especially younger politicians face a combination of sexism and ageism. Attacks against them more often question their competence and have a stronger sexualised dimension. Their young age is used as an argument to delegitimise their opinions and public presence – they are labelled as “inexperienced”, “too young” or denied the right to express themselves on public issues.

At the same time, manifestations of paternalism and degrading behaviour also appear, such as inappropriate comments on appearance, dismissive reactions or attempts to undermine and exclude them.

*“I perceive different behaviour towards younger women MPs. Some MPs make comments about how they look or how young they are. You can see the looks of some older men who see young women MPs as someone who should be in the kitchen. Instead of offering help, they exclude them from the group. I was surprised that I also perceive this from women MPs of a similar age. They criticise younger women for being confident at a young age, saying they have not experienced anything. (...) They do not reflect that society is changing and young people have the right to have an opinion.”*

*“A typical example is that people start laughing strangely and staring at you when you walk past. It targets especially younger women MPs. This power dynamic, trying to unsettle someone in any way, is common. Once some people feel they have an advantage, whether in age or position, they use it. Some colleagues in Parliament do this consistently.”*

*“My younger colleagues are targeted much more, not only because of gender but also because of age. I have an advantage in this regard. It confirms the pattern that the more vulnerable the target appears, the more predatory mentality attacks it. If a young woman were also ‘different’ in some way, for example a Roma colleague, she would, in my view, be in the worst position.”*

*“In the Czech political environment, it is a bigger ‘sin’ to be young than to be a woman. The combination of both is fatal, but in general young people receive the most pressure. They will rather accept an older woman than a young man. Ageism seems stronger here than sexism in some respects, which surprised me.”*

### 3.8. Reporting of Incidents

A large proportion – almost 73% – of surveyed women MPs did not report threats to the police. The main reason given is that these were one-off incidents that did not escalate or develop into repeated or intensifying threats.

Many respondents also expressed uncertainty about the effectiveness of reporting, as they are not convinced that filing a criminal complaint would lead to adequate protection or punishment of the perpetrator.

The broader social context also contributes to underreporting, particularly the tendency to downplay potential threats. Such an approach often underestimates the risk that aggressive behaviour, initially occurring only online, may gradually move into the offline world and threaten personal safety.

The reporting rate varies depending on the form of violence. Economic violence is reported most often (almost 64% of those who experienced it), followed by physical violence (almost 29%). Threats of violence are reported by only around 27% of respondents, and cases of sexual harassment were not reported at all.

**Table 4**  
**Reporting rates of different forms of gender-based violence**

Type of violence	Experienced	Reported
Threats of violence	70.7%	27.3%
Sexual harassment	39.0%	0.0%
Economic violence	26.8%	63.6%
Physical violence	17.1%	28.6%

*“I reported it to the police. There is basically nothing else that makes sense, because blocking a profile does not solve anything in reality.”*

*“Today I know I would do it differently. (...) At that time, I was told it was pointless, that trying to punish the perpetrator was useless and would only cost me money. (...) Today I know it is important to talk about it and not be afraid to take legal steps.”*

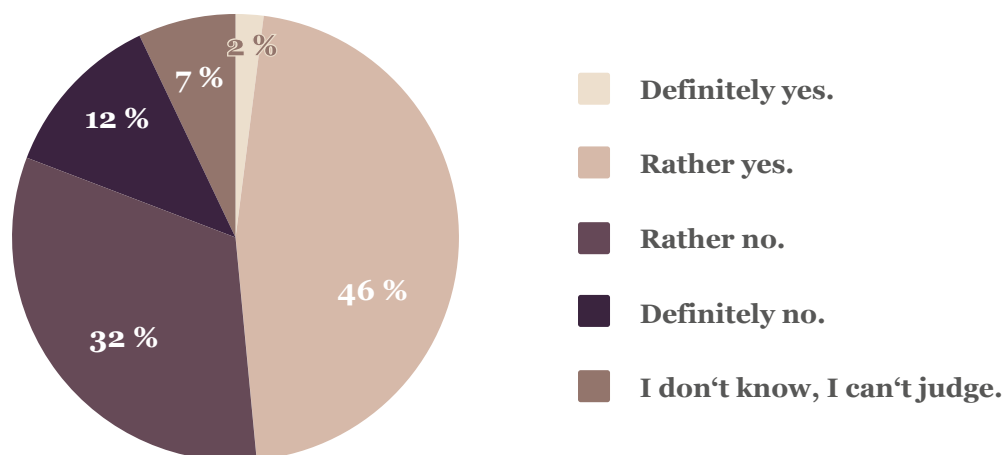
*“The problem is victimisation. Violence, whether physical or verbal, should not be underestimated. In reality, when you accuse someone, you then have to defend yourself as well. It is as if someone stabbed you and you had to prove that you did not provoke it.”*

### 3.9. Effectiveness of Existing Tools

Women MPs are not unanimous in their assessment of whether existing tools and mechanisms for addressing gender-based violence are sufficient. Almost half of respondents consider them sufficient (2% definitely yes, 46% rather yes), while 44% perceive them as insufficient (12% definitely no, 32% rather no). The remaining 7% of respondents were unable to assess their adequacy.

**Chart 4**

**In your opinion, are there sufficient mechanisms and tools in the Czech Republic to detect and punish harassing, hateful and sexualized expressions or violence against women politicians?**



Respondents who consider the current tools insufficient most often point to the absence of specialised support and services, as well as to the insufficient willingness of social media platforms to cooperate with law enforcement authorities. According to them, this significantly complicates the identification of perpetrators and the effective resolution of individual cases. They also emphasise the need for clearer rules and regulation of social networks.

*"[Even as a high profile politician] I do not have any special support or software for eliminating hate comments, I would have to pay for it myself. Times have changed and new resources are needed, but politicians find themselves in a vicious cycle if they want to devote most of their energy to their work as MPs."*

*"It is also caused by the unwillingness of social media platforms to cooperate. The police told me that they need cooperation from the platforms, which they basically refuse. The solution would be legislation that would force them to comply with the legal framework of individual countries, not only their global codes of conduct."*

*"I honestly believe we should focus more on safety in the online space. I fully understand freedom of speech and freedom of expression—that's all well and good—but on the other hand, I simply think we should regulate social media in some way; otherwise, these aren't platforms that should be used in a political context."*

*"The whole issue is framed as if content moderation were censorship—and unfortunately, the current coalition is adopting this view. Yet the real issue is protecting marginalized people. The topic of social media is terribly politicized, with the aim of polarizing society and weakening the EU."*

*“In the online space, however, things are less clear-cut. We’re all still figuring out what technology makes possible, and we’re not prepared for it. (...) Then I don’t know how to address those ‘soft’ issues. For example, a situation where four men surround a female politician and ‘merely’ invade her personal space without directly threatening her. That can probably only be addressed internally within the club or party.”*

Some respondents also see room for improvement in the education and training of law enforcement authorities, in the existing code of ethics, and in the fact that the Mandate and Immunity Committee is not a suitable independent and expert platform for addressing inappropriate and harassing behaviour.

*“I rather think that more education is needed, especially among law enforcement authorities, because that is where it is lagging behind. Let’s not pretend otherwise – these institutions are often full of people with prejudices. They should be educated more.”*

*“We have mechanisms, but we do not use them. Law enforcement authorities should act more actively on their own initiative in cases of verbal offences, instead of waiting for the victim to come forward. No one has the capacity for that. If I had to go to the police with every message that goes beyond the criminal law threshold, I would be sitting there all the time. We are placing an additional burden on victims.”*

*“I see room for improvement in the fact that women should speak more about these experiences and not be discouraged by opinions that it is pointless. As for social media, I am in favour of their regulation, especially when it comes to verifying users’ identity and age.”*

*“There should be a clear code of ethics of behaviour, where sexualised remarks and comments that are inappropriate and beyond the line would be clearly addressed. Part of a code of ethics for MPs should also be how to conduct a debate and what tools are available when the boundaries are crossed. But we are not even at the stage where we would consider this a problem.”*

*“The way some colleagues behave in the chamber – filming others, writing inappropriate comments, being vulgar in the corridors – is terrible. The route via the [Mandate and Immunity] Committee exists, but it is uncomfortably transparent. You know it will become public, the media will mock you and the result will be decided by the political majority anyway. It is not worth the effort, because it has no positive effect for the victim. (...) I would find it important to have some kind of tool in the Chamber, a whistleblowing system or a place where these things could be communicated, with someone who is actually interested in addressing them. At the moment, it is too politicised. I do not see a reason why there could not be a designated staff member who would pass the information on, for example to the chairs of parliamentary groups. Psychological support would also be extremely valuable, meaning some kind of therapist or crisis intervention specialist. That is noticeably missing here.”*

*“So I see room for improvement in having an independent expert position directly within the institution that would mediate these issues outside the reach of the media. The Mandate Committee is closed, but things from it always get out. For the affected person, it may not be comfortable to have sensitive matters discussed in newspaper headlines. In the private sector, these things are also handled more discreetly within the hierarchy.”*

## 4. Conclusion

Gender-based violence against women in politics is not merely an individual experience for specific women, but a serious threat to the functioning of democracy itself. This phenomenon undermines the principles of equal access to political participation, erodes trust in public institutions, and contributes to the exclusion of women from public and political life. As a result, not only are the voices and perspectives represented in democratic debate limited, but political decision-making is also weakened overall.

The impacts of gender-based violence thus extend beyond the individual level and affect society as a whole. When women are systematically subjected to attacks aimed at silencing them, discrediting them, or deterring them from public engagement, the very foundations of democratic competition are undermined.

The most common form of violence experienced by more than 80% of the women MPs surveyed is psychological violence, including verbal attacks, intimidation, and threats of violence. Sexualized violence affects just under 40% of respondents, and 27% of the MPs surveyed have experienced economic violence. Respondents encountered physical attacks the least frequently (17%).

The gendered nature of the attacks is significant. The overwhelming majority of women MPs perceive that attacks on women have a different, more personal, and often sexualized character than attacks on men. At the same time, younger women politicians face a combination of sexism and ageism, which increases their vulnerability and reduces their sense of safety.

The online environment, particularly social media, has emerged as the primary arena for the spread of hateful comments and threats. These attacks take the form of coordinated waves that intrude even into the private lives of women politicians, leading to self-censorship and a reduction in public political activity among nearly one-fifth of respondents.

Addressing this problem therefore requires systematic attention and a comprehensive approach based primarily on the rigorous enforcement of existing legal instruments, while simultaneously addressing their shortcomings, particularly in the online sphere. In addition to preventive and corrective measures, it is essential to strengthen clear ethical standards, effective sanction mechanisms, and accessible support for victims. Equally important is fostering solidarity among women politicians, engaging men, and sharing best practices at the international level. Following this research report, a policy paper with specific recommendations will be prepared.

# Annex: Interview Questions for Women MPs of the Czech Parliament

**1. Do you think that women are treated differently in politics than men?**

- (a) Definitely yes. *How specifically do you think this manifests itself?*
- (b) Rather yes. *How specifically do you think this manifests itself?*
- (c) Rather no.
- (d) Definitely no.
- (e) I don't know, I can't judge.

**2. Have you personally ever been the target of sexist remarks or remarks with sexual overtones?**

- (a) Yes. *What kind specifically? (Did it happen in personal interaction or in the online space? Where is it more common?)*
- (b) No.

**3. Have you ever had the media, news or tabloid, publish or broadcast photographs of you that were somehow derogatory or had sexual overtones?**

- (a) Yes. *What specifically was it?*
- (b) No.

**4. Have you ever been the target of harassing behaviour? In other words, have you ever been exposed to unpleasant or even intimidating behaviour? For example, unwanted attention or verbal attacks or any form of interaction that made you uncomfortable or scared?**

- (a) Yes. *What specifically was it? (Did it happen in a personal interaction or in an online space? Where is it more common?)*
- (b) No.

- 5. Have you ever encountered threats of violence?  
Whether against you or your loved ones (family, friends, etc.)?**
- (a) Yes. *Can you describe the specific incident in more detail? (Did it happen in a personal interaction or online? Where is it more common?)*
- (b) No.
- 6. Have you addressed any of these incidents through official channels?**
- (a) Yes. *Specifically, how did you report it, and to whom? (Reporting to the police / addressing the matter through the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic...)*
- (b) No. *Did you handle this situation differently? How specifically?*
- 7. What public profiles do you have on social networks?  
Which ones are official and which ones are personal?**
- 8. Have you ever had photos of you published on social networks  
that were humiliating or had sexual overtones?**
- (a) Yes. *What specifically was it about?*
- (b) No.
- 9. Is there hateful content or threats in the comments under your social network posts?**
- (a) Yes. *What specifically is it about?*
- (b) No.
- 10. Do you receive hateful comments or threats in the form of private messages  
(on social networks, via SMS or email)?**
- (a) Yes. *What is their usual form and content? Can you tell who is the typical writer of such messages? Do you receive these messages more often from men or from women?*
- (b) No.
- 11. Have you reported these hateful comments or messages?**
- (a) Yes. *To whom? (Social media operators / Czech Police...)*
- (b) No. *Did you handle this situation differently? How specifically?*

- 12. Have you ever encountered behaviour that you would describe as sexual harassment? For example, sexually oriented remarks or jokes, sexual suggestions or unwanted touching.**
- (a) a) Yes. *What specifically was it? Who committed such behaviour?*
- (b) b) No.
- 13. Have you ever been forced into any sexual practices or sexual intercourse against your will?**
- (a) Yes. *What specifically was it? Who committed such behaviour?*
- (b) No.
- 14. Have you reported sexual assault, sexual harassment?**
- (a) Yes. *To whom? (Police of the Czech Republic / someone within the political party / Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic...)*
- (b) No. *Did you handle this situation differently? How specifically?*
- 15. Have you ever been denied financial resources to which you were entitled (e. g. parliamentary allowances, sponsorship, campaign contribution)?**
- (a) Yes. *Can you describe this situation in more detail?*
- (b) No.
- 16. Have you ever been denied parliamentary resources (premises, computers, staff, security) to which you were entitled?**
- (a) Yes. *What was the specific case?*
- (b) No.
- 17. Has your property ever been damaged or destroyed?**
- (a) Yes. *Can you describe this situation in more detail?*
- (b) No.
- 18. Did you report this incident/these incidents?**
- (a) Yes. *To whom? (Police of the Czech Republic / someone within a political party / Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic...)*
- (b) No. *Did you handle this situation differently? How specifically?*

- 19. Has anyone ever physically attacked you? Has anyone slapped you, pushed you, hit you or thrown something at you that could have hurt you?**
- (a) Yes. *Can you describe this situation in more detail?*
- (b) No.
- 20. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where someone wanted to physically harm you by using a firearm, knife or other weapon or actually used it against you?**
- (a) Yes. *What was it specifically?*
- (b) No.
- 21. Have you ever been detained, beaten or kidnapped against your will?**
- (a) Yes. *Can you describe this situation in more detail?*
- (b) No.
- 22. Have you ever reported this incident/these incidents?**
- (a) Yes. *To whom? (Police of the Czech Republic / someone within a political party / Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic...)*
- (b) No. *Did you handle this situation differently? How specifically?*
- 23. Do you think that attacks against women politicians differ in any way from those targeting male politicians?**
- (a) Yes. *In what specific way? Do they differ in intensity?*
- (b) No.
- 24. In your opinion, are there sufficient mechanisms and tools in the Czech Republic to detect and punish harassing, hateful and sexualized expressions or violence against women politicians?**
- (a) Definitely yes.
- (b) Rather yes. *Is there something that should be improved?*
- (c) Rather no. *What specifically should be improved in your opinion?*
- (d) Definitely no. *What specifically should be improved in your opinion?*
- (e) I don't know, I can't judge.

- 25. In recent years, topics that divide society have emerged, for example, migration, the Istanbul Convention, marriage for all or climate issues. Have you spoken out on topics that are perceived as controversial in Czech society?**
- (a) Yes. *What specifically?*
- (b) No.
- 26. Do you think that speaking out on these topics causes a greater wave of hatred than on other topics?**
- (a) Yes.
- (b) No.
- 27. Do you avoid certain topics or restrict your political activities (such as public speaking, media interviews, etc.) out of concern that you may be targeted by hateful comments, harassing behaviour, or even violence?**
- (a) Definitely yes.
- (b) Rather yes.
- (c) Rather no.
- (d) Definitely no.
- (e) I don't know, I can't judge.
- 28. Is there anything else you would like to add to the topic that hasn't been said yet?**

## About the Authors

**Markéta Kos Mottlová** graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at Charles University with a degree in political science. She works as a director and gender expert at the NGO Forum 50 %. She is a member of the Government Council for Gender Equality and chairs the Committee for Balanced Representation of Women and Men in Politics and Decision-Making Positions. She is vicechair of the Czech Women's Lobby, a network of organisations defending women's rights in the Czech Republic.

**Barbora Štíčka** holds a degree in International Relations – European Studies from Metropolitan University Prague. She has long been engaged in issues related to women's rights. In her professional work, she has also focused on the promotion of anti-corruption measures in public administration, access to information and digitalisation. At Forum 50 %, she works as a researcher, fundraiser and project manager.

**Veronika Šprincová** graduated from the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University in Prague with a degree in Gender Studies. Her work focuses on women's rights, gender equality and especially the representation of women in politics and public life. She works as an analyst, gender expert and lecturer for the NGO Forum 50 %. In 2015–2019 she was the chairwoman of the Gender Experts Chamber of the Czech Republic.

**Forum 50 %** is a non-governmental organisation that promotes the balanced representation of women and men in politics and public life. As a watchdog and think tank, it brings new visions, approaches and proposals and helps to put them into practice. It monitors the development of the representation and position of women in Czech politics, motivates them to enter public life and supports them in their public activities. At the same time, it cooperates with political parties and other actors on specific measures. Its main principle is non-partisanship.



<https://padesatprocent.cz>

**The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung office in Prague** has existed since 1990. With social democratic values in mind, it provides expertise in various formats, thus strengthening the public debate on the topics of European and foreign policy, labour and social affairs, gender equality, migration and socially just climate transformation. In these activities, FES cooperates with other scientific institutes and think tanks, non-profit organizations and trade unions from the Czech Republic and Europe.



<https://prag.fes.de>

The Cost of a Mandate: Gender-Based Violence Against Women Members of the Czech Parliament and Its Impacts

Markéta Kos Mottlová – Barbora Štička – Veronika Šprincová

1<sup>st</sup> edition, Prague, April 2026

Editing: Hana Škapová

Typesetting: Pavel Cápál

Commercial use is not permitted.

Published by Fórum 50 %, o.p.s.

Náplavní 2013/1, 120 00 Praha 2

Tel: +420 774 411 151