



Information on the implementation of the agreed conclusions on 'Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development'

Referring to the agreed conclusions on 'Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development', adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixtieth session, the Czech Republic reports to have implemented the following measures on the national level since March 2019.

1. What measures have been taken to strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

No measures to report.

2. What actions and investments have been made for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women?

The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic administers a grant programme called the Support of Charitable Activities of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Area of Gender Equality, which was established in 2015 to support activities of non-governmental non-profit organisations in the field of gender equality. The grant programme allocation was CZK 4 million in 2019 and is expected to be CZK 5-7 million in 2020.

Projects concerned with gender equality and the empowerment of women have also been financially supported from numerous other grant programmes, including the Family grant programme, the Prevention of Socially Pathological Phenomena grant programme, the Transition Promotion Programme, and the development and humanitarian aid grant programmes.

3. What steps have been taken to bolster women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development?

Awareness-raising activities to promote balanced representation of women and men in decision-making have been organised. These included a workshop on advancing gender equality in political parties, which was organised by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic in cooperation with the OSCE and was attended by representatives of most of the political parties represented in the Parliament, and a conference commemorating the 100th anniversary of the first election in which women were allowed to vote in Czechoslovakia, which took place in the Parliament and addressed the low representation of women in politics.

Furthermore, to address the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee for the Balanced Representation of Women and Men in Politics and Decision-making recommended the Government Commissioner for Human Rights to call on the Cabinet members to strive for balanced representation in advisory committees to the government tasked with adopting measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. What macroeconomic, labour and social policies have been put in place that promote full and productive employment and decent work for women, in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's employment and economic rights and independence?

Measures have been implemented to prevent and address job losses in female-dominated sectors and jobs.

In March 2020, the government adopted the Targeted Programme for the Support of Employment, which aims to mitigate the negative consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on employment in the Czech Republic. The Programme sets rules for the partial compensation of the employers' expenses which were allocated on the employees' wages for the duration of obstacles to work arising from the quarantine and extraordinary measures adopted due to the COVID-19 crisis. By adopting the Programme and partially compensating the employers' wage expenses, the government mitigated the rise of unemployment due to the crisis and provided another incentive to the employers to keep their staff.

In April 2020, the government approved a financial help scheme for self-employed persons. The help, which amounted to 44,500 CZK at maximum for the period between 12 March and 8 June 2020, was intended to those whose businesses were affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Due to the scheme, losses in certain female-dominated sectors and jobs, such as hairdressing and cosmetics, have been partly offset.

In the Czech Republic, women constitute the majority (78%) of the healthcare sector employees. Many hospitals have offered bonuses to front-line workers since March 2020. In April 2020, the bonuses were to extend to all public hospitals after the Minister of Health urged them to grant bonuses to doctors and healthcare personnel who take care of COVID-19 patients. The front-line employees were to receive a bonus of 100 – 500 CZK per hour, depending on the risk they faced; those responsible for blood-testing were to receive a bonus of 1,500 CZK per hour.

The Government also approved extraordinary bonuses for social services employees. Social workers who cared for elderly or disabled persons infected by the coronavirus were to receive up to CZK 40,000. Additional bonuses (CZK 10,000) were also paid to employees of social services that were not affected by the coronavirus infection.

5. What response and recovery measures to the COVID-19 pandemic have been taken to improve and expand social protection for women (e.g., healthcare coverage, unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, paid parental leave, maternity benefits, pensions, income support such as cash transfers)?

The Czech Republic addressed the difficult situation of those who lost earnings due to care responsibilities. In April 2020, the Government approved the increase of a benefit available to a parent who is unable to work due to taking care of a child under the age of 13 whose preschool or school facility is closed. For the period between 1 April 2020 and 30 June 2020, the benefit was increased from 60 per cent of the daily assessment base to 80 per cent of the daily assessment base. (The daily assessment based is calculated using the applicant's average earnings over the past twelve months.)

6. What actions have been taken to expand the availability and affordability of care services to address the increase in unpaid care and domestic work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., care subsidies, paid leave)?

Schools, which were closed since 11 March, began to re-open in May. The first students who returned to schools were the expected graduates (11 May 2020), followed by the youngest pupils up to the 5th grade of the elementary school (25 May 2020). Hence, the government sought to ease the burden on parents who had to claim a leave to take care of children.

Nurseries and kindergartens have not been closed by government order and many continued to operate throughout the state of emergency.

Under the state of emergency, which was declared on 12 March 2020, freedom of movement was restricted. However, the government reflected upon the complicated situation of families with children and visits to parks and nature have been permitted throughout the entire state of emergency.

7. What action has been taken to increase resources and support for women's and civil society organizations as they cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?

The advisory committees to the Government cooperated with the civil society organisations in the drafting of the recommendations concerning gender equality.

The Government also alerted to the crucial work provided by the civil society throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, to ensure maximum protection of victims of domestic and gender-based violence, the Government, in cooperation with civil society organisations, launched a campaign to alert the victims to available support services. Information was distributed via the Government's social media and the communication channels of selected stakeholders and organisations; leaflets were also put up in city and intercity transport services.

8. What steps have been taken to improve gender-responsive data collection in the context of follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to track and monitor the gender-specific impacts and response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic?

No steps to report.