

## The Czech Women's Lobby statement on the current situation of women from Ukraine

*On the occasion of the International Women's Day, we would like to draw attention to the situation of women suffering from the war in Ukraine and the current migration crisis. We appreciate the support and assistance provided by Czech society and the Czech government to those arriving from Ukraine. We offer our expertise and diverse support services of our member organizations in dealing with this crisis. **We call for the gender dimension, i.e. the different situation of women and men, to be taken into account when setting specific measures for the reception of refugees from Ukraine.***

War is a humanitarian, human and human rights tragedy that affects everyone without exception. At this moment, however, we are thinking about how it affects groups that are vulnerable, disadvantaged and often marginalized. In the context of the current crisis, we draw special attention to the situation of women, children, people with disabilities, elderly people, migrants living in Ukraine as well as national, gender and sexual minorities because they tend to be overlooked in migration policies. These people, especially women with children, are coming to our country now and need our help.

1. **The Czech migration policy has long targeted mainly men of working age** who have worked here. Now, however, it is mostly women with children entering the Czech Republic, and these children need to be taken care of. This is why we need to increase institutional care in order to guarantee capacity for migrant children. It is necessary not only to support schools and kindergartens in being able to integrate these children as quickly as possible, but also to support women who have to take care of their children in their new homes and cannot join the labor market instantly. It is also necessary to support the many Ukrainian women who have already worked in the Czech Republic, and whose children live in Ukraine - we must enable them to reunite their families immediately and offer them support if unable to work. Without **immediate consideration of the fundamental importance of care work in migration**, Czech support of those arriving will not be sufficiently effective.

2. Women from Ukraine are often stereotyped in the Czech Republic as manual workers, cleaners or housekeepers with low qualifications. The setting of migration policy and the Czech labor market must not support this stereotyping by automatically placing Ukrainian citizens in unskilled or low-skilled positions. Ukrainian women are not coming here to clean our households at low cost, they are fleeing the war. It is absolutely essential that Czech society and employers approach the employment of women from Ukraine from the long-term perspective of their inclusion in the labor market, taking into account their qualifications. These women often have a secondary or higher education, so it is time for the Czech Republic to **simplify the bureaucratically demanding process of recognising foreign qualifications or education ("nostrification") which may to some extent prevent the precarisation of their work.**

3. Pregnant women and women with new-born babies are a specific and large migrant group that needs continuous, high-quality and individualized care. We call for the **rapid integration of independent midwifery services into the public care system**, in line with EU directives.

4. Some of the newcomers are elderly people with health issues who will need health and social care and economic support. **The first step is to integrate them into the public health insurance system, the next step is good planning of social services.**

5. War conflicts reinforce racism and discrimination against migrants and ethnic minorities. In this respect, we are also thinking of the Roma minority that is also present among refugees from Ukraine. These groups are in a very vulnerable position. **Help for people from and in Ukraine must not be limited to Ukrainian citizens: it must unequivocally reject racially or ethnically motivated discrimination.**

6. LGBTQ+ people may face transphobia, homophobia and complications due to their specific health needs (e.g. trans people) when fleeing the war. They are also at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence. It is essential to **provide all possible medical and psychological support to extremely vulnerable groups.**

7. Every war conflict and every suppression of democratic processes inevitably results in an **increased risk of gender-based violence**, which is directed primarily against women. This stems from the patriarchal framework of war. We must constantly draw attention to this violence and its presence in war conflicts and during the migration process, and we must **give utmost support to the survivors of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence and their near ones, whether in the Czech Republic or through direct support of aid organisations in Ukraine.**

We call on the Ministry of the Interior and the regional assistance centers for refugees from Ukraine to ensure a coordinated approach regarding access to housing, social services, health care and education for refugees of any gender. At the same time, we call on the Government of the Czech Republic and the Parliament of the Czech Republic to create appropriate conditions for this in terms of legislation and relevant public policies.

„The past few days have seen an admirable wave of solidarity, charity and direct help to refugees from Ukraine. If we want spontaneous help to turn into long-term support, not only the commitment of citizens, but also a clear framework set by the state are needed. There is still a lot of work to be done. To make reception of refugees and their lives in Czech society successful, whether they are to stay temporarily or permanently, we need to change our way of looking at migration.“ says Marta Smolíková, Chair of the Czech Women's Lobby.

**You can sign the declaration of the Czech Women's Lobby [here](#).**