



Prague, 12th February 2025

Dear EBCOG Officers and Delegates,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Czech Women's Lobby regarding a deeply disturbing incident that recently occurred.

An employee of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department of the General University Hospital (Všeobecná fakultní nemocnice, Praha 2), prof. Antonín Pařízek, published nude photos of two patients with high BMI on his personal social media accounts. These images, although partially anonymized, depicted women in a vulnerable state, photographed from the back, unclothed - raising serious ethical and professional concerns.

Beyond the clear violation of medical ethics, these women have since become the target of widespread hate speech and fat-shaming on social media. Rather than raising awareness of the real health risks associated with obesity in pregnancy and childbirth, the post has only served to dehumanize these patients, subject them to public ridicule, and reinforce harmful stereotypes.

This incident has generated considerable public and professional outrage. What is particularly alarming, however, is the reaction of Prof. Vladimír Dvořák, President of the Czech Gynecological and Obstetrical Society (ČGPS) and the Czech Republic's representative to EBCOG. When asked for comment, he said: "So far, I have no detailed information to suggest that Dr. Pařízek, who is perhaps one of the most respected obstetricians in the Czech Republic, has done anything wrong from a professional standpoint."

This statement, which focuses solely on clinical expertise, blatantly omits any recognition of the profound ethical issues at stake. Such a response from a senior figure in Czech and European obstetrics raises serious concerns about the ethical culture within our professional structures and the apparent lack of safeguards against dehumanizing behavior in maternity care.

To underscore the gravity of this situation, we would like to share the perspective of an esteemed bioethicist, Marek Orko Vácha, a medical ethicist, academic professor, and Roman Catholic priest, who outlined the core ethical failures of this case: "These photos were not published for educational purposes or in an academic journal, but were shared on Facebook. Obesity is not a condition that requires patients to be shown naked, even if they were anonymized and had given their consent. The doctor-patient relationship is inherently intimate, and despite discussions about moving from paternalism to partnership, the patient remains the more vulnerable party."

This case is not just about the misconduct of one obstetrician, but about the broader implications for patient dignity, medical ethics, and public confidence in obstetric care. If the leadership of Czech obstetrics is unable or unwilling to acknowledge these fundamental ethical violations, it raises serious concerns about the values that guide our specialty at both the national and European levels.



We urge EBCOG to take this matter seriously and to reflect on the ethical standards expected of those who represent European obstetrics and gynecology. A clear stance on such issues is essential to maintain the integrity and professionalism of care providers.

We would appreciate your thoughts on this matter and any insights you may have into how EBCOG ensures ethical compliance among its representatives.

Yours sincerely,

Miloslava Kramná,

on behalf of the Perinatal Care Working Group of the Czech Women's Lobby

***The Working Group Member Organizations:***

Active Motherhood Movement

APERIO - Healthy Parenting Association

APODAC, Association For Freestanding Birth Centres And Alongside Midwifery Units

Birth House at the Stork

Czech Doula Association

Czech Chamber of Midwives

Czech Helsinki Committee

Propolis 33 Endowment Fund

UNIPA - Czech Union of Midwives

***Other supporting organizations:***

AIMS - Association for Improvements in Maternity Services (United Kingdom)

Fundacja Rodzić po Ludzku (Poland)