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**Methodologies and good practices on assessing the costs of violence against women**  
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Comments paper – Czech Republic



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# Assessing the costs of violence against women in the Czech Republic

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## Abstract:

In the Czech Republic, violence against women is a common, persevering issue that is unfortunately systematically trivialised. There have been several attempts to estimate the costs of violence against women for the State. All of them aimed at the costs of domestic violence specifically. There are two analyses by the NGO proFem, and one study by the Office of the Government. These researches used a methodology combining the collection of data from relevant stakeholders and public institutions with surveys among women who had experienced violence. According to these papers, the costs of domestic violence vary between approx. 52.014.000 EUR (1,328 bill. CZK) according to proFem and approx. 567.020.936 EUR (14,5 bill. CZK) according to the Office of the Government as the Office included also the loss of GDP.

Regarding the Finnish suggestion, it seems useful, and it has been partly applied in the mentioned researches. However, the Czech Republic does not dispose with similar administrative registries, and the lack of data is a general challenge in the Czech context. Still, we consider any information on economic costs as fruitful and beneficial for the political dialogue, and we encourage its collection.

## 1. Relevant country context

The Czech Republic systematically takes up lower positions regarding the level of gender equality in comparison with other EU Member States (EIGE, 2020). According to EIGE, Czechia ranks 23rd on the Gender Equality Index (with 56.2 out of 100 points). Its score is 11.7 points lower than the EU's score. The most significant challenges in the country are low participation of women in politics and decision-making positions, the gender pay gap, disadvantages and discrimination in the labour market, unequal division of domestic labour and not enough work-life balance opportunities, and persevering traditional gender stereotypes.

Concerning specifically violence against women (hereinafter *VAW*) and gender-based violence (hereinafter *GBV*), the Czech Republic has not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention. Also, the current definition of rape is still bound to existence of coercion or abuse of the vulnerability of a victim, not to lack of consent (Section 185 of the Criminal Code). Every year there are approx. 650 cases of rape reported, 80 cases of sexual coercion, 470 cases of domestic violence (hereinafter *DV*) (Police Statistics, 2021). However, these numbers are only a handful of violent acts that are committed in reality. It is estimated that there are approx. 12,000 rapes every year (Amnesty International, 2021) and approx. 100 femicides per year (ROSA, 2020). Unfortunately, the State does not systematically collect complex data and numbers

in this field, thus, these are merely estimates. Similarly, there is no complex support for victims of VAW provided by the State. Hence, every type of assistance and aid, be it legal, social, or psychological, is ensured by specialised NGOs.

In relation to the assessment of economic costs of VAW, the main initiative has been shown by the NGO proFem, which conducted two researches on (i) general economic impacts of DV in 2012, and (ii) economic impacts of DV in the field of healthcare in 2016. Also, there is an analysis conducted by the Office of the Government from 2017. Nevertheless, the topic of economic aspects of VAW is marginal in the public discourse, and not many stakeholders are prioritising this issue (as it is usually the case with gender-related topics).

To end this introduction on a more positive note, lately, the general discussion regarding gender equality, including VAW or sexual harassment, has been systematically opened in the public discussion and the issue is slowly entering the general awareness.

## 2. Methodologies for assessing the costs of VAW

### 2.1 proFem's analysis of economic impacts of DV (2012)

As mentioned, the first analysis was conducted by proFem in 2012. The main findings of this study are:

- the total amount of the economic impact of DV was estimated at approx. **52,014,000 EUR** (1,328 bill. CZK) per year in 2010
- the costs are divided among:
  - police costs 1.265.000 EUR (32.3 mil. CZK)
  - judiciary 12.610.000 EUR (321.9 mil. CZK)
  - hearing of infraction 74.432 EUR (1.9 mil. CZK)
  - NGOs subsidies 7.458.800 EUR (190.4 mil. CZK)
  - social subsidies (unemployment benefits, sick benefit) 9.237.580 EUR (235.8 mil. CZK)
  - health care 21.385.900 EUR (545.9 mil. CZK)
  - the estimate is rather conservative and on the lower limit of the real numbers.

Regarding the methodology of this analysis, data were obtained from official statistics of the Police Presidium, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Justice. They determine the number of cases of domestic violence cases handled in 2010 by various institutions. Information about wages, paid social benefits and subsidies for NGOs and social services organisations was obtained from public sources of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The amount of subsidy used to help women at risk of domestic violence has been estimated by combining information on the amount of obtained subsidy and the results of surveys among social services

providers. The basis for the estimate of the time required to resolve individual cases in the police, the judiciary, and in the hearing of infraction were collected by consulting seven specific cases in this area by judges, police officers or experts' offenses.

The number of women at risk of domestic violence and consequences of domestic violence (health, job loss, inability to work) is based on a representative sample survey of 3,000 women (18–65 years). The costs of providing health care have been estimated by an expert from the Ministry of Health on the base of describing each injury mentioned in the survey by respondents.

## 2.2 proFem's analysis of economic impacts of DV in healthcare (2016)

The second proFem's study focused on the health sector. The main conclusions of this analyses are:

- in 2014, the economic impact of DV on the health sector was approx. **72.469.000** EUR (1.85 bill. CZK); this number includes only the costs of providing health care and treatment to women who needed treatment as a consequence of DV
- most of these costs were covered by the General Health Insurance Company 48.547.300 EUR (1,24 bill. CZK)
- additionally, there were payments by victims in extra fees for prescribed medications and other direct payments of 8.420.600 EUR (215 mill. CZK)
- the costs of public health insurance related to treatment of chronic diseases in the context of DV were approx. 42.612.678 EUR (1,088 bill. CZK).

Concerning the methodology, the initial step was a representative survey among women in the Czech Republic. This survey enabled to measure the prevalence of DV against women over 18 years of age and to find out what kind of medical care and treatment they had received in 2014.

In order to prepare the main survey, there was a working group set up. The survey described 40 situations defining various acts of domestic violence. Those women who appeared to be exposed to DV were asked about their injuries and health consequences and whether they sought medical attention. In addition, those women who claimed that they have sought medical care or treatment during 2014 as a consequence of DV completed a special second survey – detailed medical sheets describing any injuries and treatment received. A total of 115 women completed the medical sheets.

The medical sheets were created in order to describe the course of medical treatment in as many details as possible as well as to describe the deterioration of the women's health. Moreover, the sheets were to provide information on physical and mental health problems and other specific information about the treatment those women encountered during 2014.

On the basis of the medical sheets data, the medical officer of the General Health Insurance Company estimated the costs of provided health care. The medical officer

estimated the costs of the public health sector budget as well as additional costs paid by the injured women.

It is important to note that those estimates were based on the data that women were able or willing to give and share. The introduced costs that can be proved based on the survey can therefore be considered as underestimated.

The costs of public health insurance related to the treatment of chronic diseases in the context of domestic violence were not estimated on the basis of medical sheets data, but on the basis of the statistical data of the General Health Insurance Company together with the available survey data information.

### 2.3 Office of the Government's analysis (2017)

The only State analysis that has been conducted so far is the analysis of the Office of the Government. It concluded that:

- in 2012, the estimated costs of DV were approx. **567,020,936** EUR (14,5 bill. CZK), out of which:
  - 312.907.000 EUR (8 bill. CZK) is the loss of GDP by virtue of victim's inability to work after a DV incident
  - 195.584.000 EUR (5 bill. CZK) are costs of physical injuries caused by DV, and 10.521.000 EUR (250 mill. CZK) are costs of expenses of treatment of psychological consequences of DV
  - 10.522.900 EUR (269 mill. CZK) are costs of social subsidies (sick or unemployment benefits)
  - 3.364.00 EUR (86 mill. CZK) are costs of judiciary
  - 19.011.000 EUR (487 mill. CZK) are costs of support services, social services etc.
  - methodology was similar to the one by the previous studies.

However, this study strongly built on the data from the 2012 analysis, and did not bring many new inputs regarding methodology.

### 2.4 Comments on the discussion paper

The method described in the Finnish discussion paper seems useful. In a remotely similar way, it was used for the first two mentioned analyses as they used collection of certain types of administrative data together with self-report surveys.

Nevertheless, Czechia does not dispose of comparable, connected registries which would make it "*possible to follow up the same individuals and assess the long-term physical and mental health impacts of violence*". Those registries that exist (for example, the database of public insurance companies) would be hardly accessible, and they do not contain all data necessary for the analysis (for example, the relationship between the victim and perpetrator). The existing systems are not networked. Thus, even though the method of data collection through variety of registries seems feasible, the absence of such registries or entry to them makes it not appropriate for the Czech context without further adjustments.

Regarding the data in health care, medical personnel is not obliged to register cases of violence, nor to mention such information in any documentation. Thus, the issue with identification of DV is very relevant.

On a more general level, this is also connected with the obstacle of lack of data, be it data on crimes, health information, or civil proceedings in the context of DV. The State does not systematically gather any data, which makes it more difficult to come up with any estimates. Some institutions (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior) collect certain type of data, nevertheless, these are not complex, comparable and ready for such study we would need. Hence, recommendations from NGOs and other stakeholders on better collection of data on the national level is consistent and long-term.

Another obstacle is a lack of interest and prioritisation of the topic as there are few stakeholders who would lean in to the topic or at least who would support the civil society in its efforts.

Furthermore, we would like to point out our doubts regarding the method of simple transferability of numbers from one country to another as done in the study of EIGE, 2014. The context of each EU Member State is so specific and the way of financing of particular services is so different that, according us, such calibration does not reflect local socio-economic, cultural and other aspects of VAW in each state.

Concerning the steps in order to improve the response against VAW, Finland is presenting inspiring examples of good practice, which are praisable and desirable.

To conclude, we consider any research on economic aspects of VAW as useful and beneficial. In the Czech context, economic arguments are usually heard even by certain representatives of the political spectrum who are not interested in other aspects of VAW. Hence, these arguments are enhancing the possibility of political will. In the Czech Republic, the statement "*knowledge concerning the prevalence and effects of violence against women has already been cumulating for decades*" does not really apply as the Czech context has not been entirely examined and there are many gaps in our knowledge. Therefore, we are convinced of the utility of discovery of economic costs of DV.

### 3. Conclusions and recommendations

To briefly sum up, the Czech Republic is paying between approx. 52,014,000 EUR and 567,020,936 EUR every year as a price of DV against women. We consider research on economic aspects of VAW is very beneficial and powerful in dialogue with certain stakeholders.

Therefore, from the position of the EU and international stakeholders, we would appreciate:

- any further reports and research on data of all kinds on VAW with respect to its economic aspects, for example by FRA
- encouragement to ratify the Istanbul Convention by the Czech Republic
- consistent pressure from the EU and other international entities on Czech institutions in the field of VAW.