

The State of the World's Human Rights; Czech Republic 2024

Sexual and reproductive rights

The law regulating abortion access remained outdated. Many medical facilities refused to provide abortions to non-Czech EU citizens due to incorrect claims by the Czech Medical Chamber – refuted repeatedly by the Ministry of Health and the ombudsperson’s office – that the law did not allow it.

By year’s end the Ministry of Health had compensated 720, mainly Roma, women, who were subjected to forced sterilizations between 1 July 1966 and 31 March 2012. The deadline for applying for compensation expired at the end of the year. The government’s Committee against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment called for an extension to the deadline, but the government did not act. In September, the ombudsperson reprimanded the government for illegally delaying compensation. Hundreds of women were still waiting for compensation payments of CZK 300,000 (around EUR 12,000).

Sexual and gender-based violence

The Senate refused to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).

A new definition of rape in the Criminal Code became law. From 2025, rape will be defined as “any sexual intercourse committed against the victim’s will” or where they were unable to give consent due to factors such as fear or intoxication.

A Court of Appeal judge gave a suspended sentence to a man who had repeatedly raped his stepdaughter for more than two years, sparking mass demonstrations. The Ministry of Justice introduced a bill that would require judges to undertake additional training courses to further their professional development. However, it did not make training on topics including sexual violence and domestic violence mandatory.

LGBTI people’s rights

After many years of campaigning, parliament passed a new law granting additional rights to same-sex couples but falling short of full marriage equality. From 2025, same-sex couples can enter into a civil partnership that is supposed to give them the same rights as married heterosexual couples. However, it will not include full parental rights.

The Czech Republic was among the few countries in Europe where sterilization remained a requirement for legal gender recognition. The Constitutional Court issued a decision in May which would abolish this requirement but gave legislators until the end of June 2025 to amend the law.

Discrimination

A holocaust memorial to the Roma and Sinti in Bohemia was finally opened on the site of a former concentration camp.

The Czech nationalist Freedom and Democracy movement used racist and xenophobic rhetoric and posters in an anti-immigration campaign. The party leader also faced criminal complaints brought by representatives of the Roma people.

Right to life

The Czech Republic had some of the laxest gun laws in Europe. Following a mass shooting at a university in 2023 during which 17 people were killed, in June, the minister of the interior created a working group to examine tightening gun laws.

Children's rights

The government proposed a law in June to ban corporal punishment of children. The law was awaiting approval by parliament. Parliament failed to finish adopting a law that would have created a new children's ombudsperson.

Irresponsible arms transfers

The Czech Republic continued to export arms to Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, despite lack of accountability for past violations and substantial risks that they could be used in serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Refugees' and migrants' rights

As of 4 August, there were over 370,000 Ukrainian refugees in the country, according to data from UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. According to the government's Commissioner for Human Rights, approximately three-fifths of them were working below the level of their qualifications.

Right to a healthy environment

The government again failed to adopt a legally binding climate law aimed at setting specific targets and enacting concrete measures to tackle climate change.