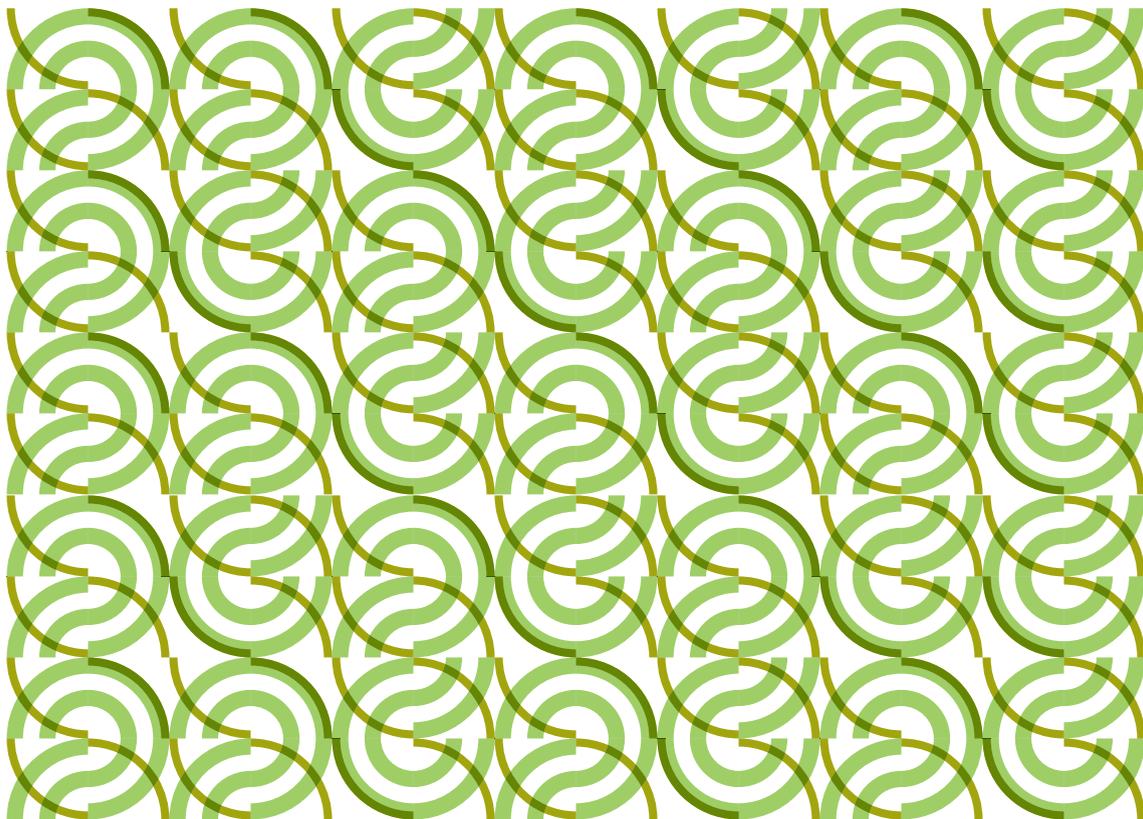


# Gender and the Energy Sector

## (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)

Romana Marková Volejníčková, Marie Pospíšilová, Alena Křížková





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Romana Marková Volejníčková, Marie Pospíšilová and Alena Křížková from the Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences, in cooperation with the Prague office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, have collaborated on the preparation of the Czech-language publication *Gender a energetika* ("Gender and the Energy Sector"). The English translation which you are now reading is an excerpt from this publication and contains the most significant research findings and recommendations in the individual thematic areas.

# 1. Introduction: Gender analysis and the energy sector in the Czech Republic

In the Czech environment, gender equality in the energy sector is a little-studied topic and at present there exist no published studies on which we could base our effort to identify key issues and component topics. Nor are there at present any publicly available gender-sensitive data or statistics on the energy sector. Of the available sources, we have used mainly data from Eurostat and the Czech Statistical Office (e.g. wage statistics, numbers of male and female employees in various fields, poverty risk indicators by gender, and gender statistics). The goal of this study is to offer initial findings in an area where gender equality has not yet been a topic of research. We demonstrate that even in the energy sector there are key areas where the perspective of gender equality should be included (e.g. the representation of women in top positions at energy companies in the Czech Republic). We would like to draw your attention to the fact that this study is decidedly not conceived as an exhaustive gender analysis of the energy sector; rather, it is intended to indicate the areas where it would be appropriate to target further research on gender equality. A general goal of the study, pursued in all interviews, was an attempt to reveal whether – and if so how – gender equality is monitored, promoted and realised in the energy sector. The results of our work include not only a gender analysis of selected areas in the energy sector, but also recommendations and measures on where the perspective of gender equality should be included and monitored in future. Throughout the study, we base our findings on the analysis of statistics, available sociological data, and energy sector documents, on the study of foreign literature, as well as on interviews with experts in the Czech energy sector.

The topic of gender and the energy sector has hitherto been elaborated mainly in the context of developing countries. It is important to understand that in developing countries even the basic needs of the population are not met. For example, the procurement of drinking water, which is often far away from people's dwellings, depends mainly on women (UNDP, 2012). This is also a possible reason why the topic of the energy sector and gender equality has been overlooked in the Czech context. In the light of the situation in developing countries, this topic may seem unimportant in Western Europe, and particularly in the Czech Republic. But we hope to demonstrate in the pages that follow why it is important even here to have a look at the energy sector through the lens of gender equality. Studies on Western European countries or the U.S. (e.g. Clancy & Roehr, 2003; Parikh, 1995; Rätty & Carlsson-Kanyama, 2009, 2010; Skutsch, 1998) discuss different issues, for example, the (non-)inclusion of the needs of various population groups in approaches to transport and infrastructure, and the small number of women in leading positions at energy companies. As we will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, these problems are topical even in the Czech context, and they are therefore deserving of scientific as well as political attention.

# The meaning of gender equality in the energy sector at the national and European levels

The implementation of gender equality in the energy sector is not a new topic. Already in 1995, the Czech Republic undertook to fulfil the so-called Beijing Platform for Action<sup>1</sup>, which defined 12 critical areas where gender equality needed to be strengthened. One of these was the thematic area of Women and the Environment, the key activities of which were identified as follows: inclusion of women in decision-making processes, integrating the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the area of sustainable development, and strengthening or instituting mechanisms at the international, national and regional levels to monitor the impacts of sustainable development principles and environmental policies on women (Government Office of the Czech Republic, 2011). The Czech Republic must now issue a report once every five years on its fulfilment of this platform’s key areas.<sup>2</sup> Other documents which at the national level oblige individual ministries to implement the principles of gender equality (even in the energy sector) include the Priorities and Procedures of the Government in the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (hereinafter Priorities and Procedures).<sup>3</sup> These stipulate not only activities but also responsible individuals or ministries. The entity responsible for steps leading to the implementation of gender equality in the environmental sphere is the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic (hereinafter the Environment Ministry), which has in its remit measures and tools that should lead to provisions being made for the needs of women and men in environmental matters. Even here, however, there is room for discussion on whether these measures and tools are adequate. Table 1 shows the activities that have been assigned to the Environment Ministry since 2010 to promote gender equality in the updated Priorities and Procedures, as well as which of these activities have been implemented (their implementation or lack thereof is always summarised in the Reports on the Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic):

**Table 1. Tasks assigned to the Environment Ministry and their fulfilment with respect to promoting gender equality**

Year	Tasks assigned to the Environment Ministry	Description of fulfilment by the Environment Ministry
2010	Develop a methodology for incorporating the gender equality perspective into projects and plans which have significant influence on the environment, e.g. building construction, urban greenery, and transport services	A methodology was developed (on the Ministry’s website, however, there is only a general methodology for evaluating the impacts on gender equality for the materials presented to the Czech government).

1 The wording of the Beijing Platform for Action is available here: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>>; accessed 24 August 2016.

2 All of the reports are available here: <<http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/dokumenty/zpravy-oplneni-pekingske-akcni-platformy-123750/>>; accessed 15 August 2016.

3 This is a document which sets individual activities and measures for all ministries aimed at strengthening gender equality. Each year, updated measures are published under these Priorities and Procedures, where the activities are also specified with a clear definition of competencies.

Year	Tasks assigned to the Environment Ministry	Description of fulfilment by the Environment Ministry
2011	Incorporate the gender equality perspective into projects and plans which have a significant influence on the environment and transport infrastructure, e.g. building construction, urban greenery and transport services, especially with respect to the user comfort of parents with children	The report on gender equality does not mention any specific activities on the part of the Ministry.
2012	Incorporate the gender equality perspective into projects and plans which have significant influence on the environment and transport infrastructure	Provisions have been made for the needs of women, as disproportionate users of public transport, in the preparation of plans and projects in public transport.
2013	Incorporate the gender equality perspective into projects and plans which have significant influence on the environment, and possibly also transport infrastructure	No projects or activities have been realised under the auspices of the Ministry making provisions for gender (in-)equality; the Ministry evaluates the influence of the environment on men and women as more or less the same, and for this reason no activities have been set for the Ministry in the following year.
2014	No measures	No fulfilment

Source: The Updated Measures of the Priorities and Procedures of the Government in the Promotion of Equality for Women and Men for the years 2010 to 2014, and the Reports on the Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic in the years 2010 to 2014<sup>4</sup>

Another important document at the governmental level is the Government Strategy for the Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic for the Years 2014 to 2020 (hereinafter the Government Strategy),<sup>5</sup> where the topic of gender equality in environmental matters appears in the main strategic area Everyday Life and Lifestyle (the topics of discrimination in advertising and low public awareness of gender inequality appear here as well). Specifically with respect to the environment, two main problems are identified here: the failure to make provisions for the specific experience and needs of women and men in the area of the environment and the need to take into account the specific needs of women and men in public transport. The main objectives of the strategic area Everyday Life and Lifestyle are to achieve

4 The Updated Measures of the Priorities and Procedures of the Government in the Promotion of Equality for Women and Men are available on: <<https://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/dokumenty/aktualizovana-opatreni-priorita-postupu-vlady-pri-prosazovani-rovnosti-zen-a-muzu-135580/>>, and the Reports on the Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic are available on: <<https://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/dokumenty/souhrnne-zpravy-o-plneni-priorita-postupu-vlady-pri-prosazovani-rovnost-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu-za-roky-1998---2013-123732/>>; accessed 16 September 2016.

5 The Government Strategy is available on: <[https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/Projekt\\_Optimalizace/Strategie-pro-rovnost-zen-a-muzu-v-CR-na-leta-2014-2020.pdf](https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/Projekt_Optimalizace/Strategie-pro-rovnost-zen-a-muzu-v-CR-na-leta-2014-2020.pdf)>; accessed 16 September 2016.

equal representation of women and men in decision-making, and to implement gender mainstreaming<sup>6</sup> in the areas of the environment and public transport as well. The Environment Ministry's website contains a statement on the fulfilment of the Government Strategy.<sup>7</sup> With respect to the objective of the strategic area of Everyday Life and Lifestyle, the Environment Ministry has declared an effort to achieve equal representation of women and men in decision-making positions in government bodies, state administration, and state-owned companies with a portion of shares under the Environment Ministry. According to the Environment Ministry's information, the number of women in decision-making positions in these organisations is around 40%, which is a very high percentage. The whole discussion on promoting gender equality under the Environment Ministry demonstrates that support for gender equality "towards the public", i.e. the number of projects and activities supporting gender equality, is minimal, whereas support "towards employees", i.e. the number of women in leadership positions in these organisations, is high. This is a decidedly good start, which could even have an influence on garnering greater support for gender equality towards the public. Except for the above-mentioned objectives in the Priorities and Procedures and the Government Strategy, no further steps have been realised for other ministries to support gender equality in the energy sector. In the chapters that follow, however, we will present other areas where it would be appropriate to include the perspective of gender equality, as well as other possible measures that could help bring about gender equality in various areas of the energy sector.

There is little support for gender equality in the energy sector at the national level, but at the European level we can identify multiple activities supporting gender equality in this area. In Table 2, we present specific main areas where gender equality is supported at the European level. We also present specific sub-areas (in some cases this is a list of supported activities), recommendations (if any have been made), and the institutions under whose auspices these activities are being carried out at the European level.

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6 The European Commission defines gender mainstreaming as follows: "Gender mainstreaming does not mean that efforts to support equality should be limited to introducing special measures to help women, but rather envisions mobilising all general policies and measures with the specific purpose of achieving equality, and in such a way that already in the planning phase their effects on the relevant situations of men and women are taken actively and openly into consideration (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies, and taking these possible effects into consideration when defining and implementing them." (COM, 1996)

7 The Environment Ministry's statement on the fulfilment of the Government Strategy is available on: [http://www.mzp.cz/C1257458002F0DC7/cz/zprava\\_o\\_plneni\\_priorit/\\$FILE/opo\\_plneni\\_rezortnich\\_%20priorit\\_%20RPZM\\_%20za\\_%202015\\_20160215.pdf](http://www.mzp.cz/C1257458002F0DC7/cz/zprava_o_plneni_priorit/$FILE/opo_plneni_rezortnich_%20priorit_%20RPZM_%20za_%202015_20160215.pdf); accessed 16 September 2016.

**Tabulka 2. Podpora genderové rovnosti v oblasti energetiky na evropské úrovni.**

Institution	Main areas of interest	Defined sub-areas of interest	Recommendations
<b>European Commission</b>	An increase in the number of women in science and equal representation in employment in the area of information and communication technologies, as well as in the area of science, technology and mathematics	Support for career development for women, their competitiveness and an overall increase in the employment of women	Sharing of information and good career practices in mathematics and the natural sciences
	Modernisation of post-secondary education	Increase graduates' level of education	Create a clear framework for applying education and experience; support the involvement of students in "non-traditional fields" and clarify the topic of gender inequality with respect to segregation; financing of students from low-income families; create a national strategy for training and re-training scientific staff
		Improve the quality of post-secondary education	Work actively with employment predictions for graduates; support flexible forms of study (combined, option to return to studies, etc.); increase the number of classrooms with IT infrastructure; innovate doctoral programmes; provide continuous professional development for post-secondary educators
		Strengthen mobility and international cooperation	Support students' mobility during the course of studies; recognise credits earned studying abroad and support cooperation between universities
	Inclusion of the principle of gender mainstreaming in European framework projects (7th Framework Programme – FP7)	Integration of gender mainstreaming in financial and grant support; increase the number of female scientists in projects	

Institution	Main areas of interest	Defined sub-areas of interest	Recommendations
<b>Council of the European Union</b>	Increase the possibility for decision-making, educational qualifications and competitiveness in climate change policy	Achieve equal representation at all levels of political decision-making with respect to climate change	
		Support women in scientific and technological fields	
		Remove gender stereotypes in the workplace and in education	
		Integrate the perspective of equal opportunities into all legal documents and political measures in the area of climate change	
<b>European Parliament</b>	Resolution on women and climate	Motivate women to pursue education in technical and scientific fields	
		Create tools for including women in decision-making processes	
		Edification campaigns with a focus on the everyday activities of energy consumers and households	Campaigns targeted at women as the primary organisers of everyday family activity, mainly focusing on saving water, recycling and using organic products
	Resolution on women and the green economy	Motivate women and men to develop renewable and environmentally sensitive methods of using energy	
		Support female entrepreneurship in the green economy	
		Equal representation of women and men in political bodies making decisions on defining, planning and realising so-called green policies, taking into account the gender perspective in all phases	

Institution	Main areas of interest	Defined sub-areas of interest	Recommendations
European Parliament	Resolution on women and the green economy	More women in leadership positions at companies in the green economy	
		Remove stereotypes in education and motivate women to study disciplines in transport, green energy and the environment	

Source: The Policy Areas and Energy sections of the European Institute for Gender Equality website,<sup>8</sup> and cited documents from the institutions mentioned.

As Table 2 demonstrates, the topic of gender and the energy sector has been deliberated at the European level. The issue began to become topical in the last c. 10 years. In this period, concrete measures and tools began to appear for achieving gender equality in the energy sector. Nevertheless, the adoption of these documents and the implementation of these measures remain voluntary. Although certain documents call upon member states to implement individual recommendations, these measures have not yet been applied in the Czech Republic. When we look at the recommendations which have been proposed, however, we see that these are changes that are more than desirable in the Czech Republic. In this study, for example, we show that the numbers of female students in technical fields are very low, and thus that recommendations relating to reducing segregation in the education system would be appropriate. Furthermore, we point out that the number of women in positions of leadership at energy companies in the Czech Republic is very low, and for this reason we view as necessary the recommendation to increase the number of women in management positions in the energy sector.

## Structure of the study and definition of key research areas

It is important to realise that in everyday life women are disproportionately more in contact with household energy use (cleaning, washing and cooking) than men. Therefore, changes or outages in the energy supply affect their everyday lives more than the lives of men (Ryan, 2014). We view a gender analysis of the energy sector as important for this reason as well. In identifying key areas for research on gender equality in the energy sector, we relied on a review of the scholarly literature, mainly from western and northern Europe and the U.S., as well as on available statistical data at the European level and in the Czech Republic. We also conducted qualitative research with the use of interviews with experts in the Czech energy sector. Thanks to interviews with experts, we focused the topics more specifically on the basis of their current relevance for the Czech Republic. We identified a total of six key areas: gender equality in participation in energy production, the influence of non-profit organisations on gender issues concerning the energy sector, positions on nuclear energy from the perspective of gender, and the three more specific topics of energy poverty, impacts of the energy sector on health, and land use planning and transport from the perspective of gender equality. These identified topics also represent the main axis of this publication's structure, which is described in the following paragraphs.

The study demonstrates that the energy sector is strongly masculinised – in energy production men predominate numerically, both as employees and in management positions (Clancy & Roehr, 2003; Skutsch, 1998; Sovacool, 2014b). Clancy and Roehr (2003) characterise the energy sector as a “male

<sup>8</sup> All of the information is available on: <<http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/sectoral-areas/energy>>; accessed 16 September 2016.

space". They demonstrate that the reasons are mainly socialisation and the stereotypes which ascribe attributes to the energy sector such as "technical", "dangerous", "risky field", etc., i.e. characteristics which in Western societies are connected with men. Even in the expert community, there is a significant numerical discrepancy between men and women. Sovacool (2014a, 2014b) demonstrates in an analysis of scholarly texts focused on the energy sector that authors were women in a mere 15.7% of cases. We address the issue of the low representation of women in the energy sphere (the concentration of women in humanities-oriented fields such as environmental studies, as well as the low number of women in the management of energy companies) in the first chapter, which is titled "Participation from the gender perspective: production and distribution of energy, employment and the expert community". Here, we also demonstrate that segregation on the labour market in the energy sector begins already in the education system and that – as in other masculinised fields so too in the energy sector – there is a large difference in wages between men and women. In the second chapter, "Gender equality in the energy sector from the perspective of non-profit organisations", we analyse how selected non-profit organisations take gender equality into account in their agendas. The analysis shows that in the Czech non-profit sector the issue of gender equality is not a primary and promoted dimension, despite the fact that there is a certain amount of reflection. We also analysed the operations of three non-profit organisations focusing on the role of women as mothers, and demonstrate how difficult it is for them to work within the structures of the energy sector, which is a "male domain". Their position is influenced not only by the fact that they are women, but also by the fact that they are entering the public debate on energy issues from the position of mothers. In the third chapter, called "Positions on nuclear energy – differences between men and women", we demonstrate that men and women have different opinions about various aspects of nuclear energy; women take a negative position towards it more frequently. This is corroborated by data from the Czech Republic.<sup>9</sup> We find the explanation in the differing socialisation of men and women. In the fourth chapter, titled "Energy poverty", we discuss the gender dimension of energy poverty. The analysis demonstrates that energy poverty is closely connected to poverty as such, which women are more at risk for. In this chapter, we point out that measures aiming at greater energy savings are not equally accessible to everyone. A particularly significant limiting factor is low income, and women's incomes tend to be lower than men's. The chapter also points out shortcomings in the definition of energy poverty and the absence of adequate research that would capture gender inequality, among other things. In the fifth chapter, titled "Health impacts of the energy sector", we illustrate that the issue of health is generally connected mainly with women, which can lead to its marginalisation in the scholarly and expert community. Furthermore, we demonstrate that men face a greater risk from the impacts of air pollution from heavy industry and the energy sector, which is related to the work they perform. The impacts for women, however, are more frequently worse due to the feminisation of poverty and to the resulting limited options for avoiding such impacts. In the sixth and final chapter, titled "Land use planning and transport from the gender perspective", we address the ever-increasing interest in incorporating the gender perspective into urban development, and thus also into land use planning. In particular in the area of transport, this turns out to be an issue where the gender perspective is very important (Hasson & Polevoy, 2011; Law, 1999; Rosenbloom, 2004).

## Research methodology

We conducted 21 semi-structured interviews with experts from non-profit organisations, public administration, the science and research sector, and energy companies. In selecting our communication partners, we relied on identified key themes based on a review of the literature and of important documents in the area of gender equality and the energy sector, as well as on the recommendations of individual solicited experts and of the organisation commissioning the research (the Prague office of

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<sup>9</sup> We rely on data from the Public Opinion Research Centre (CVVM, 2014, 2015; Čermák et al., 2015).

the Heinrich Böll Foundation). The goal was to conduct interviews with representatives of organisations which are either important actors in the energy sector in general or those specifically engaged with gender equality in connection with the energy sector or the environment. In the course of the research, we obtained additional suggestions from our communication partners concerning whom it would be suitable to solicit, and we made use of this option several times. Certain experts declined our request for an interview, while others did not respond to repeated requests.

The goal of this publication is to define basic issues in the area of gender and the energy sector, to demonstrate the basic problems that appear from this perspective, and to determine whether or not they are being addressed. The basic topics that we have investigated from the perspective of gender equality in this publication and according to which we have organised the chapters of this book have been 1) participation in the energy sector, 2) non-profit organisations' view on the energy sector, 3) women's and men's positions on nuclear energy, 4) energy poverty, 5) inequality in the health impacts of the energy sector, and 6) the topic of gender equality in land use planning and transport. In this concluding chapter, we summarise the main findings across the topics that we have addressed in this study, and make recommendations on how it may be possible to further develop them in the context of the Czech Republic from the perspective of gender equality.

## 2. Conclusion and recommendations

### Gender equality in the energy sector as a topic in the Czech Republic and the availability of data

The goal of gender equality in the energy sector is not yet present in the Czech Republic in expert debates or research. At present, gender equality is not a prominent topic on the agendas of non-profit organisations or other energy sector actors, such as energy companies, state administration and others. Research monitoring and analysing the differences between men and women is missing, and there is limited availability of gender-sensitive data. For example, there are no systematically monitored differences in the impacts of the energy sector on the health of men and women. Also missing are precise data about whether there are differences between men and women with respect to the types of energy used and the amount consumed. Nor is there much research on which demographic groups make use of energy-saving measures and whether everyone has equal access to them. The absence of a discussion on gender equality in the energy sector may also be a result of a lack of relevant data and definitions of the indicators needed to measure such phenomena. The concept of energy poverty is not uniformly defined in the Czech Republic or at the European level, and there is no definition of a customer at risk for energy poverty.

#### Recommendations:

- It would be appropriate to focus attention on collecting gender-sensitive data, as well as data capturing other possible factors of disadvantage (economic status, education level, ethnicity, citizenship, parenthood, income earning status, age, etc.), e.g. from the perspective of who is impacted by or at risk for energy poverty, who has access to energy-saving measures, and what differences exist between men and women with respect to the use of energy and transport. The data should be quantitative as well as qualitative in character, in order to capture both the range of views in the overall population as well as the deeper context and causes of differences between men and women.
- The overlooking and trivialising of the gender equality dimension in the energy sector suggests that there is a need for education not only in the wider public, but also among those actors who influence decision-making in the energy sector. Those in positions of leadership often make decisions on working conditions and management methods, and thus also on issues of gender equality (e.g. whether and how pay inequities will be addressed).
- At present there exist examples of good practices in the Czech Republic at companies where managers take employees' needs into consideration, e.g. when they have small children, and introduce measures intended to help employed parents to combine work and family life more efficiently. For example, ČEZ Group, the Czech Republic's largest energy company, offers its employees flexible forms of work and the option to use sick days. **ČEZ Group is also presently considering the introduction of company pre-schools in selected cities in the Czech Republic.**

# Women’s participation in decision-making in the energy sector, and women’s inclusion in the discussion of the energy sector

Research has shown that there are inequalities in the representation of men and women in various areas connected with the energy sector, and that there are few women in positions of leadership in the energy sector. Men disproportionately pursue technical fields and subsequently work in them, while women concentrate more on humanities disciplines and fields focusing on health and care. Men predominate in the management of energy companies and in management positions in public administration. The dominant position of men is further underscored by gender wage disparities. In view of the fact that the discussion around energy in the Czech Republic is conducted in a relatively closed circle of experts and is dominated by men, women have fewer opportunities to enter and influence it with their life experience and expert knowledge. Also problematic, it turns out, is the communication between individual actors – representatives of energy companies, public administration, the non-profit sector and the lay public. As the analysis has demonstrated, the problem is not so much disagreement on views or positions, but rather insufficient communication as such. A possible way to improve communication would be to include the experience of individual actors (e.g. underrepresented women) in deliberations on planned changes and in decision-making. To increase the numbers of women in fields connected with the energy sector and in higher positions, and to improve women’s participation in decision-making in the energy sector, we recommend the following:

- To achieve greater representation, it is possible to make use of mentoring during academic studies, where it would be possible to support girls studying natural sciences and technical fields. Mentoring can be used to support working women as well, for example by integrating them into networks of contacts which are important for progressing into management positions in the energy sector. Over time, mentoring can also help to create more positive role models – examples of women in the energy sector, which are currently missing in the Czech Republic. It is also appropriate to support networks of women in areas where men are disproportionately represented. In these networks, women can share their experience and overcome obstacles by pooling their knowledge.
- It is suitable to enable and support the participation of women at all levels – in local decision-making, as well as in decision-making at higher levels of public administration.
- When designing measures in energy, land use planning and transport, among other areas, it is appropriate to identify and incorporate a range of opinions and to actively involve those who have been less involved hitherto – men as well as women. It is possible to create a discussion platform focusing on involving various actors and groups for which the topics in question are relevant. Such a platform could be supported not only by non-profit organisations, but also by public administration or corporate sponsors, which would expand communication in the energy sector.

## Gender inequalities in the impacts of the energy sector

In the course of our work, we have revealed gender inequalities in the impacts of the energy sector on segments of the population in several areas. We have identified inequalities in health impacts, which are greater among men in view of their occupations and the fact that they take less care of their health than women do. An individual’s financial possibilities influence how capable he or she is of avoiding negative health impacts. In view of the feminisation of poverty and of the roles which women disproportionately perform in society, women can face more serious problems addressing the health impacts of the energy sector. Specifically, this concerns childcare (which among women is often associated with their disadvantaged position on the labour market), lower incomes (including pensions), discrimination

on the labour market, and other obstacles. The inequalities are not limited to health impacts, however. Low-income groups, into which women disproportionately fall, are more at risk for energy poverty and have less access to household energy-saving measures.

Our recommendations in this are as follows:

- One of the options is support for disadvantaged groups. It is important to support the informedness of households and individuals who are disadvantaged in some way, as well as to ensure that this support is equally accessible to everyone; possibilities exist even in the area of financial support. At the same time, there should be a clear legislative framework that protects those who are most vulnerable. This all should be supported by independent institutions that can address cases where people's rights are violated.
- These possibilities for providing support to such groups must of course be based on a precise understanding of what the groups actually are. Here, too, one must emphasise the need to collect specific data and to break them down by gender, as well as to define and measure indicators.

## Gender mainstreaming

An analysis of key documents demonstrates that gender equality is not consistently included in them in the Czech Republic, and that the promotion of gender equality depends more on specific individuals.

- It would be appropriate to include the principle of gender mainstreaming in all documents concerning land use planning, sustainable development and other topics in order to ensure that the specific needs of women and men are taken into account. It is important to include the gender perspective in all phases of decision-making – from identifying topics where the gender perspective has not been applied yet but which should nevertheless be observed from the gender perspective, to evaluating the impacts of political decisions on men and women. It is just as essential for the perspective of gender equality to be taken into account at all levels of decision-making, i.e. from the regional level all the way to the national level.

## Promoting gender equality in the energy sector at the national level

In the introduction to this publication, we demonstrated that the topic of gender and the energy sector is not a significant topic at the national level, i.e. for politicians. Conceptual documents are emerging at the European level which not only take up specific problematic areas of the energy sector, but also propose measures for eliminating these problems and generally formulate steps for achieving the goals that have been set out. These documents often contain an appeal to EU member states to adopt and integrate these measures. It has been mentioned above that the promotion of gender equality in the energy sector is often left to individuals who view this topic as important. This is why it is important for gender equality in the energy sector to become a topic which is promoted and researched at all levels, i.e. not only at the level of the individual, but also at the level of companies, the expert community and of course also at the national level. For these reasons, we consider the following steps to be important:

- As we demonstrated in the analysis of financial support under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and of the Environment Ministry, gender is not a dimension that is taken into account here. It would be appropriate to create a methodology for promoting gender equality in the energy

sector to serve as a guide for implementing gender equality at various levels and in relevant areas connected to the energy sector and the environment.

- At the national level, regular updates are made to the Priorities and Procedures of the Government in the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for Women and Men, where individual ministries are called upon to promote gender equality in their agendas. In connection with the energy sector, only the Environment Ministry has been called upon to promote gender equality. As we have demonstrated, however, the perspective of gender equality in the energy sector is also important with respect to the issues of health and poverty, and thus it is essential to expand the proposed tasks and measures to other ministries and actors, in order to get them involved as well.

## General recommendations aiming towards improving the position of women in society

The preceding points have demonstrated that gender inequality in the energy sector is closely linked to other manifestations of gender inequality in society. Gender inequality in participation in decision-making in the energy sector follows from vertical gender segregation on the labour market and in academic fields. The feminisation of poverty, which is closely linked to energy poverty and inequality of opportunities to make use of energy-saving methods, is related to the fact that women more frequently perform caregiver roles, in particular in cooperation with parenthood. We view the differing roles and positions of women and men as mainly a result of the different socialisation of men and women in our society. This ultimately influences the fact that men are less interested in their health, which can exacerbate the energy sector's impacts on their health. Securing equal representation of men and women in decision-making in the energy sector could result in a change in the symbolic value of individual jobs and issues (such as the issue of health), which could result in greater attention being focused on these issues or greater financial compensation for these jobs. This leads to the following general recommendations on the issue of equal status for men and women in society:

- It is possible to reduce the negative impacts of caregiver roles, which remain the responsibility of women in particular, thanks to measures to reconcile working life and family life. Examples include home office arrangements, sick days, flexible working hours, and the availability of company day-care and other pre-school facilities, etc.
- Support for fathers becoming involved in childcare. Suitable measures include parental leave for fathers.<sup>10</sup>

Last but not least, gender segregation in the education system and on the labour market must be mentioned. We consider it important for the state to introduce nationwide measures in this area leading to a reduction in gender segregation, for example, by innovating school curricula and implementing awareness campaigns that would highlight positive role models of women in "male environments" as well as the issue of gender disadvantage.

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<sup>10</sup> In the Czech Republic, parental leave for fathers was recently approved for a period of one week, where the father collects 70% of the assessment base of his earnings (MPSV, 2016b).

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