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v médiách

GENDERED DISINFORMATION IN SLOVAKIA & CZECHIA

Rast'o Kužel
Jitka Adamčíková
Marek Mračka
Ivan Godársky

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This research was conducted as part of a project focusing on gendered disinformation in Slovakia and Czechia, examining its scope, scale, and the networks promoting gendered disinformation narratives. MEMO 98 and Women in Media assume no responsibility for facts or opinions expressed in this publication or their subsequent use. Sole responsibility lies with the authors of this publication.

MEMO 98
Štefana Králik 1/A
84108 Bratislava
Slovakia
www.memo98.sk

Ženy v médiích
Hradešínská 66
101 00, Praha 10
Czechia
www.zenyvmediich.cz

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GENDERED DISINFORMATION IN SLOVAKIA AND CZECHIA

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MEMO 98 and Ženy v Médiách (ŽvM, or Women in Media) define gendered disinformation, also referred to as gender-based disinformation, as: “the intersection between disinformation and gender. It includes false or misleading narratives used against an individual or group due to their gender or sexuality”. This definition was originally developed by the [Centre for Information Resilience](#) (CIR), an independent organisation dedicated to exposing human rights violations and threats to democracy through open-source investigations, as part of their [Gender Lens](#) project. The purpose of gendered disinformation may be to sow or exacerbate societal division. It is also often aimed at preventing women from participating in public life, which aligns with the broader goal of disinformation: to suppress activism and discourage engagement in civic or political activities.

Research by MEMO 98 and Ženy v Médiách (ŽvM) in Slovakia and Czechia explored the nature and origins of politicised gendered disinformation campaigns and identified practical strategies to strengthen resilience at both national and institutional levels. Across both countries, the analysis covered over 8,600 social media posts related to key political events between 2022 and 2025, which together reached more than 16 million views. These posts either featured or quoted known gendered disinformation actors or contained gendered disinformation keywords. The research was further enriched by interviews with 21 experts from academia, civil society, journalism, and politics—at least 11 of whom had been personally targeted. The combined findings offer valuable insights into the actors, narratives, and societal impacts of gendered disinformation in both countries and point to specific, context-sensitive approaches for countering these campaigns.

Key Findings on Gendered Disinformation in Slovakia and Czechia



Gendered Disinformation in Slovakia & Czechia

Research by MEMO 98 and Women in Media shows a sharp rise in gendered disinformation campaigns targeting women in public life. These attacks use stereotypes, cultural bias, and emotional falsehoods to discredit women and discourage participation. Beyond personal harm, they undermine democracy by eroding trust in leadership and silencing diverse voices.

Figure 1: Compiled by MEMO 98

The research revealed that gendered disinformation has wide-ranging impacts in both countries. The main findings include:

- ***Impacts on individuals:***

- Deterrence from participating in public life due to the fear of misogynist, homophobic, or transphobic attacks.
- Inability to focus on work, increased anxiety, and in some cases, the need for mental health support.
- Loss of funding or employment opportunities.
- Targeted harassment both offline and online, including by prominent political figures.
- Incidents of vandalism; for example, one interviewee's car was smeared with faeces and sexualised insults.
- Lack of legal consequences for perpetrators, even when their identity is known and evidence is presented to authorities.

- ***Main disseminators of gendered disinformation:***

- While in Slovakia, mainstream parties—including conservative and left-wing populist groups with socially conservative, nationalist agendas—are key spreaders of gendered disinformation, Czech mainstream politicians do not disseminate such disinformation to the same extent as their Slovak counterparts. In Czechia, gendered disinformation is more commonly propagated by extremist and nationalist parties.
- In both countries, political opponents are targeted with disinformation that misrepresents policies aiming to improve gender parity and LGBTQ+ rights, portraying them as threats to national identity, tradition, and sovereignty.

- ***Political and geopolitical amplification:***

- Kremlin-aligned information sources (such as Telegram channels like Blog investigatívnej žurnalistiky, Casus Belli Live, Infokanáľ Klubu nekonvenčne mysliacich, and Ľuboš Blaha) are amplified by Slovak and Czech political figures.
- Narratives include anti-Ukrainian and anti-woke messages, spreading societal division.
- In Slovakia, some far-right US channels have also influenced the spread of extreme gendered disinformation. The analysis linked the Tepláreň shooter's Telegram connections to U.S.-based far-right terrorism instigators who espouse homophobic, xenophobic, and occasionally anti-Russian views.

● ***Victims and systemic nature:***

- While the evidence primarily documents women as targets, members of the LGBTQ+ community and men facing emasculating or homophobic attacks are also frequent victims.
- Researchers emphasize that gendered disinformation is systemic and non-partisan; affecting individuals across the political spectrum.

● ***Challenges in countering gendered disinformation:***

- Although there are actors challenging gendered disinformation online, such efforts often remain trapped in echo chambers and fail to reach broader audiences.

Recommendations for Building Resilience

Interviewees in both countries offered tangible suggestions, grouped under 'Reduction of Impact' and 'Prevention':

● ***Reduction of Impact on Targets***

Content Management:

- Clear escalation protocols: Knowing when to filter, ignore, or escalate hateful content to authorities, especially when threats are involved.
- 'Troll walls': Organizations should dedicate resources to manually filtering hateful comments to shield individuals from distress and monitor for threats.
- Automated filtering: Adoption of machine learning and AI technologies to screen hateful content on social media platforms.

Training and support:

- Psychological support: Access to counselling and peer support networks to help individuals deal with stress and anxiety from attacks.

- Operational security: Training to protect against hacking, doxxing¹ and other security threats targeting individuals and organizations.
- Crisis communications: Preparing individuals and organisations to respond effectively to disinformation campaigns to limit their impact and spread.

● *Prevention Measures*

- Social media accountability:
 - Better regulation to address the algorithmic prioritisation of harmful content (“engagement at any cost”), ideally through national or EU legislation.
- Training for law enforcement and the judiciary.
 - Improving understanding of gendered disinformation and timely enforcement to deter future harassment.
- Public education:
 - Raising non-partisan awareness about gendered disinformation’s effects on free speech, participation, and societal cohesion. Civil society should lead these efforts to maintain credibility.
- Holding politicians and media to higher standards.
 - Avoid sensationalism around gender and LGBTQ+ issues for political gain or media clicks. Rational, respectful discussions should replace personal attacks.
 - Recognizing and neutrally discussing divisive “wedge issues” to prevent deepening societal polarisation.
- Building cross-spectrum solidarity.
 - Organisations across political leanings must support colleagues experiencing gendered disinformation attacks, as resilience requires broad societal commitment.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, gendered disinformation has emerged as a troubling and increasingly prominent phenomenon in both Slovakia and Czechia, targeting women in politics, journalism, activism, and other public-facing roles. Research conducted by MEMO 98 and Women in Media (WiM) has documented a marked rise in such disinformation campaigns, which rely on entrenched gender stereotypes, cultural biases, and emotionally charged falsehoods to discredit women and deter them from public engagement. These tactics are not only personally damaging to their

¹ Doxxing or doxing is when a malicious actor exposes the personal information of a target, such as the home address, contact details, without their consent, often with the intent of retaliation for a perceived wrongdoing. CIR’s [Gender Lens](#) has identified instances of politically-motivated doxxing to intimidate and silence people with ‘undesirable’ political views.

targets, but also strategically undermine democratic institutions by eroding trust in leadership and discouraging civic participation.

In Slovakia, gendered disinformation has become a tool in broader geopolitical strategies, with pro-Kremlin actors exploiting gendered narratives to divide society and undermine democratic institutions. According to [Infosecurity](#) and [Globsec](#), such attacks are often embedded in wider disinformation campaigns targeting the EU, LGBTQ+ rights, and migration, linking women's leadership and progressive values to fears of cultural erosion and moral decay. These efforts reflect hybrid warfare tactics aimed at eroding trust in institutions and reform-minded individuals. Prominent women like former President Zuzana Čaputová and journalists Monika Tódová and Zuzana Kovačič Hanzelová have been vilified through social media using dehumanising language, doctored images, and conspiracy theories—such as portraying Čaputová as a foreign puppet—exploiting historical sensitivities around sovereignty. These campaigns not only damage reputations but also legitimise misogyny and discourage women from public participation.

In Czechia, gendered disinformation is increasingly used by actors opposing gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights, often as part of broader disinformation networks. A 2024 Prague Security Studies Institute [study](#) found these groups use fearmongering and false claims to block initiatives like the Istanbul Convention, domestic equality policies, and sex education. They often misrepresent such efforts as part of “gender ideology,” conflating them with same-sex marriage or cultural threats, and framing opposition as a defence of “traditional values,” which fuels societal polarisation. Female politicians and journalists are frequent targets, facing delegitimisation campaigns that lead to self-censorship and professional caution.

WiM conducted a [survey](#) showing that 70% of Czech journalists have experienced threats, either online or offline. Forty per cent faced online harassment or violence, with no significant difference between male and female journalists. The most common forms of online abuse include disinformation attacks (25%), defamation (19%), and harassment or stalking (10%). These impacts disproportionately affected women. As a result, 71% of female journalists and 38% of male journalists reported decreased self-esteem, and many began avoiding sensitive topics. The backlash against the Istanbul Convention illustrates how gendered disinformation is used to distort public debate and block progress on rights and protections.

The strategic use of gendered disinformation in both countries is increasingly tied to broader geopolitical and ideological agendas, including those advanced by pro-Kremlin actors. These campaigns are often embedded in larger efforts to discredit European Union (EU) values, LGBTQ+ rights, and gender equality policies, falsely framing them as threats to “traditional values” or national identity. In both Slovakia and Czechia, one prominent target of such disinformation has been the [Istanbul Convention](#), a Council of Europe treaty aimed at preventing gender-based violence. Opponents frequently mischaracterise the Convention as a vehicle for imposing so-called “gender ideology,” falsely linking it to same-sex marriage or mandatory sex education, and leveraging these claims to stir public opposition and societal division.

At the core of this phenomenon is gendered (or gender-based) disinformation — as defined by MEMO 98 and WiM, drawing on CIR's Gender Lens project—as the deliberate use of false or misleading narratives to target individuals or groups based on their gender or sexual orientation.

These campaigns serve a dual purpose: to polarize society and to deter public participation, particularly by women and LGBTQ+ individuals.

This joint report draws on a broad body of research and fieldwork, including interviews with policymakers and individuals targeted by gendered disinformation. By analysing the nature, sources, and impact of such campaigns in Slovakia and Czechia, the report aims to deepen understanding of how gendered disinformation operates in each context and to provide concrete recommendations for building societal resilience, supporting affected individuals, and safeguarding democratic participation from gender-based online manipulation.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- QUESTION 1: What do gendered disinformation attacks look like in Czechia and Slovakia? When do they happen, whom do they target, and what language and tactics are used?
- QUESTION 2: How, if at all, are disseminators of gendered disinformation in both countries connected to actors disseminating other forms of disinformation, including foreign-linked actors?
- QUESTION 3: What is the impact of these attacks?
- QUESTION 4: How can Czechia and Slovakia build their resilience against gendered disinformation on the national, institutional, and individual levels?

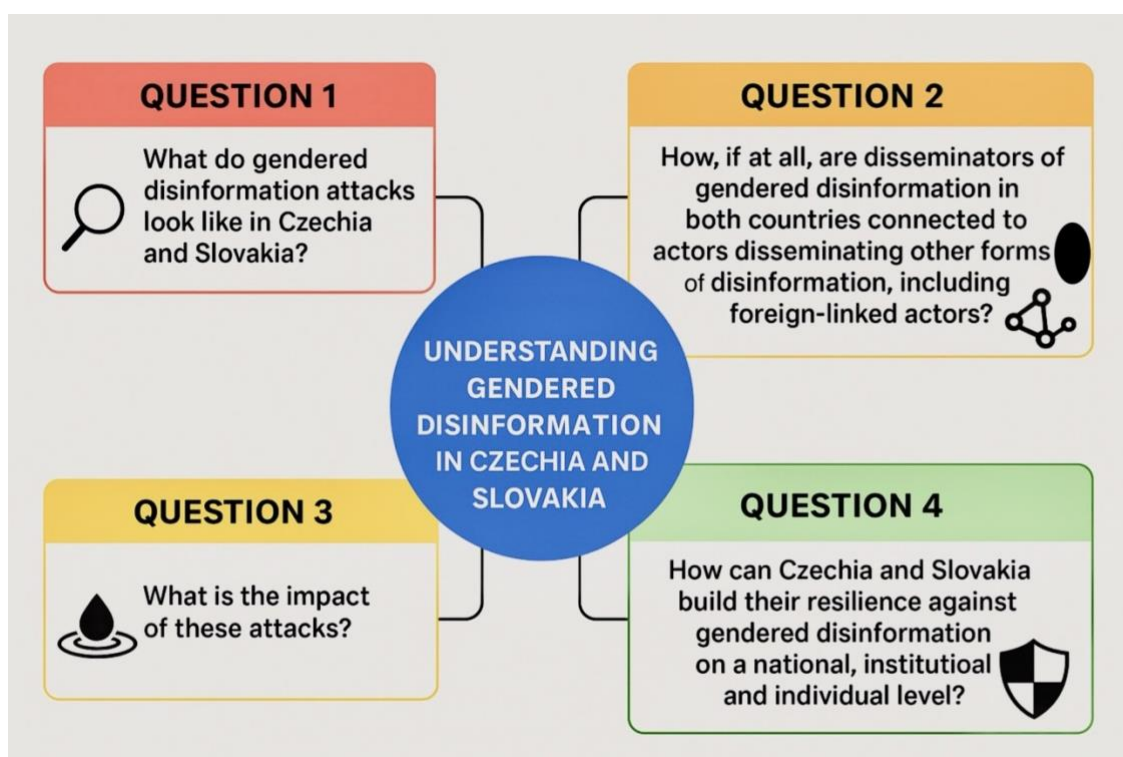


Figure 2: Compiled by MEMO 98

1.4 SCOPE

This research examines online activity that discourages individuals from participating in public life based on their gender and/or sexual orientation. This includes overt, politically motivated gendered disinformation, as well as the use of gendered or sexualised abuse—such as stereotyping or derogatory language—particularly when used to express hostility toward public figures. The study operates on the premise that the normalisation of misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia creates a permissive environment in which gendered disinformation can spread more easily, often going unchallenged.

For *Research Question 1*, researchers used keyword spike analysis to identify key events that triggered notable increases in gendered disinformation. These events were selected based on their significance and reach, as assessed by in-country experts in Slovakia and Czechia. The analysis draws on a combined dataset of more than 8,600 public posts from Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and Telegram—collected through targeted keyword searches and manually validated for relevance. The dataset covers the period from 2022 to 2025. The most influential posts, determined by a combined metric incorporating views, engagement, and post volume, were qualitatively analysed to assess tone, themes, and authorship.



Figure 3: Compiled by MEMO 98

Research Question 2 explores the actors behind these posts, assessing whether and how they are connected to broader disinformation networks operating in Slovakia and Czechia. This includes links to known anti-gender and anti-rights actors, as well as connections to transnational or geopolitical disinformation campaigns.

The qualitative component addressing *Research Questions 3* and *4*, which explores the impact of gendered disinformation and identifies resilience-building measures, is based on interviews with a total of 21 individuals—including politicians, journalists, activists, and academics—from both countries. Of these, the majority were women, and most were affiliated with progressive-

leaning movements, due in part to the snowball sampling technique used. Researchers acknowledge the limited representation of more conservative perspectives and strongly recommend that all political parties, media outlets, and civil society organisations conduct internal assessments to understand how gendered disinformation and abuse affect their members, regardless of ideological orientation.

Importantly, while the focus is on gendered disinformation, researchers underscore its frequent overlap with broader gender-based abuse, such as belittling, stereotyping, or harassment, which—like disinformation—can discourage targets from engaging in public life. Furthermore, the report highlights that not only women, but also members of the LGBTQ+ community and men who challenge dominant norms, are frequent targets. LGBTQ+ individuals often face disinformation aimed at undermining their legitimacy, while men may be subjected to emasculating attacks if they express views seen as progressive or contrary to prevailing political narratives.

1.5 ACRONYMS, ENTITIES AND WORKING DEFINITIONS

- AfD – Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
- AliPro – Alliance for Family
- ANO – YES – a Czech centrist to right-wing populist political party
- BIS – Security Information Service – the primary domestic national intelligence agency of the Czech Republic
- CoE – Council of Europe
- ČŽL – Czech Women’s Lobby
- EP – European Parliament
- EU – European Union
- ICJK – Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak
- KSČM – Communist Party of Czechia and Moravia
- LGBTQ+ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other gender and sexual minorities
- LIGA LIBE – Petition Against Senseless Bans on Legal Self-Defense Tools
- MEP – Member of the European Parliament
- MP – Member of Parliament
- ODS – Civic Democratic Party (Czech Republic)
- PRO – a far-right nationalist party
- PRO - Motoristé sobě (Motorists for Themselves) - right-wing populist movement
- PS – Progressive Slovakia party
- Republic Movement – A far-right party in Slovakia (Hnutie Republika)
- SHO – Slovak Revival Movement (Slovenské Hnutie Obrody)
- SMER – SSD – SMER – Slovak Social Democracy – a ruling left-wing nationalist and populist party led by Prime Minister Robert Fico
- SNS – Slovak National Party – an ultranationalist political party in Slovakia
- SPD – Freedom and Direct Democracy – a Czech populist party
- STAN – Mayors and Independents – a Czech party focused on localism
- TF – Traditional Family group
- TOP 09 – Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity party (Czech Republic)

This report uses the following working definitions:

- Gender: socially constructed characteristics commonly relating to typically masculine or feminine traits; separate from, though often correlating with sex.
- Gendered abuse: in the online context, this includes the use of negative gender stereotypes or tropes when referring to a person or group or, in extreme cases, calls for violence against an individual based on their gender or sexual orientation.
- Gendered disinformation: [CIR's Gender Lens](#) project defines gendered disinformation, also referred to as gender-based disinformation, as: “the intersection between disinformation and gender. It includes false or misleading narratives used against an individual or group due to their gender or sexuality”.
- “Gender ideology”: a term used by the opponents of movements including women’s and LGBTQ+ rights, with the word ‘ideology’ - connoting the possible unnaturalness or dogmatism of a belief - used in place of a more neutral term such as ‘policy’. The term has been widely employed in political and cultural debates to oppose policies on sexual education, reproductive rights, and anti-discrimination measures.
- Transgender: a person who identifies as a gender different to the one that was assigned to them at birth.

FINDINGS - SLOVAKIA

2.1 WHAT DO GENDERED DISINFORMATION ATTACKS LOOK LIKE IN SLOVAKIA?

ANALYSIS OF PROMINENT EXAMPLES, 2022-2025

MEMO 98 analysed Slovak-language posts from known cases of politicised gendered disinformation campaigns in Slovakia. Search terms (Annex 4.2) were developed iteratively and manually validated using the Slovak analysis tool Gerulata. The most popular of these posts, based on combined metrics of views, engagement and post volume, were then analysed qualitatively to assess the tone, themes and techniques used by disinformation actors. Most significantly, each quantitative analysis of spiking gendered disinformation activity around key political events was used to identify the top disseminators of gendered disinformation. These actors were then used to create a seed list of accounts from which to build a network analysis (Section 3.2) that explores the broader disinformation landscape in Slovakia.

Based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis by MEMO 98 of content from 2022-2025, and the analysis of interviewee responses, gendered disinformation in Slovakia usually targets:

- Women in politics, especially those advocating for gender rights.
 - However, researchers note that conservative male politicians have also faced gendered disinformation and abuse due to their (perceived) sexuality, such as Peter Pellegrini.²
- LGBTQ+ individuals and activists, portraying them as a threat to “traditional values.”
- Progressive political parties and EU institutions that are framed as imposing “gender ideology.”

Researchers note that while the majority of the most influential disseminators of gendered disinformation hold socially conservative views, conservative actors have also been the targets of gendered disinformation in Slovakia.³

Based on qualitative analysis of posts gathered in the quantitative study, and on interviewee responses, gendered disinformation attacks in Slovakia largely mirror broader conservative and nationalist narratives that seek to undermine gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and progressive policies. These attacks often misrepresent⁴ the substance of the policy under attack and instead:

- Exploit societal fears around gender identity, women’s roles, and the “erosion” of traditional values.
- Target politicians, activists, and public figures who advocate for gender inclusivity, portraying them as threats to national identity.

² [Dennik](#) reported cases of homophobic abuse targeting Pellegrini as a means to discredit him as a political actor.

³ In November 2021, the singer Sima Magušinová was [mocked](#) by SME commentator Peter Tkačenko and publicist Rado Ondřejíček (Cynická obluda) for her music and faith—Tkačenko called her work an “infantile horror” and suggested she be “stitched up,” while Ondřejíček compared religious believers to “the disabled.” The conservative outlet Postoj, where her husband works, [highlighted](#) the comments, sparking public backlash. Both [Ondřejíček](#) and SME editor-in-chief [Beata Balogová](#) later apologized, with Balogová condemning the remarks as unacceptable and stressing the need for respectful discourse.

⁴ For example, while the Istanbul Convention focuses on reducing violence against women and contains no requirements for same-sex marriage or education about LGBT+ issues in schools, some political actors made false claims about the Convention’s provisions and instead propagated divisive narratives that aim to increase EU-scepticism and ultimately undermine policies which could improve women’s lives.

- Distort the meaning of policies, such as the Istanbul Convention, by falsely framing them as tools for enforcing “gender ideology”.
- Use religious, moral, and nationalist rhetoric to position gender equality as a foreign-imposed, anti-traditional agenda.
- Leverage emotional and polarising tactics, including fear-mongering, victimisation of men, and claims of censorship by liberal elites.

These attacks often intensify around key political events, such as elections or EU policy decisions, and serve to mobilise conservative and nationalist voters, deepening societal divides. The research focused on three such events between 2022 and 2025:

- Non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention
- The expulsion of MP Lucia Plaváková from a Parliamentary session⁵
- The 2024 European Parliament (EP) elections

Based on qualitative analysis of posts gathered through keyword searches, including gendered disinformation terms (annex 4.2), gendered disinformation in Slovakia relies heavily on emotional manipulation and fear-mongering, using alarmist and false claims that the EU is forcing Slovakia to recognise men as women and warning of an erosion of masculinity and family values. Policies like the Istanbul Convention are misrepresented as tools for imposing ‘gender ideology’, ignoring their actual aim of combating violence against women.

The analysis further found that religious and traditionalist moral arguments are frequently invoked, using misleading claims to portray LGBTQ+ rights as an attack on Christianity and national identity. Male victimisation narratives suggest that men’s rights are under threat, particularly in sports and gender recognition laws. The content often includes memes, videos, and highly polarising posts, framing politics as a battle between conservatives and progressives. Additionally, sexualised language and personal attacks against women in politics, particularly from far-right politicians targeting female MPs like Lucia Plaváková, are common tactics used to discredit those advocating for gender equality.

⁵ Lucia Plaváková is a Member of the Parliament since 2023 and Deputy Leader of the Progressive Slovakia party. She is known for her advocacy on human rights, equality, and LGBTQ+ issues, being one of Slovakia’s first openly LGBTQ+ MPs. She was expelled from a Parliamentary session for refusing to remove an LGBTQ+ sticker from her laptop.



Figure 4: Compiled by MEMO 98

Non-ratification of the Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention, formally known as the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, is a legally binding international treaty aimed at preventing gender-based violence, protecting victims, and prosecuting offenders. It was heavily debated in Slovakia in 2019 and 2020, with strong opposition from conservative and far-right politicians who falsely framed it as promoting “gender ideology” (see ‘Working Definitions’ section), downplaying or ignoring its potential benefits to Slovak women, often misrepresenting it as an EU vehicle to impose same-sex marriage and sex education in schools, using this disinformation to fuel EU-scepticism. This led to its rejection by the Slovak Parliament amidst widespread disinformation and pressure from religious and nationalist groups.

Figure 5 shows that the co-occurrence of gendered disinformation keywords and keywords relating to the Istanbul Convention spiked in 2024, some thirteen years after the Convention was first [submitted](#) for ratification by the then government of Ivetta Radičová. This spike is linked to the 2024 EP elections, during which far-right and conservative parties used gender and LGBTQ+ issues to rouse their supporters, portraying progressive policies as a threat to national sovereignty, family values, and Christian traditions, while downplaying or ignoring altogether the potential benefits to Slovak citizens in addressing violence against women and domestic violence. This was exacerbated by renewed discussions around the Istanbul Convention, as the EU’s decision to join the convention as a bloc rekindled local opposition. Nationalist and conservative politicians revived false claims that the treaty would “impose gender ideology,” amplifying fear-mongering and disinformation to rally support for nationalist and anti-progressive candidates.

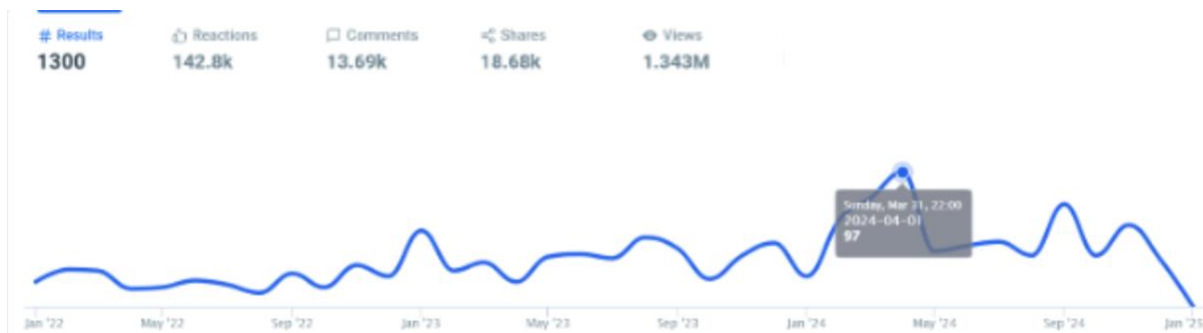


Figure 5: Number of posts over time across multiple platforms – Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, TikTok, X, and web articles – from January 2022 to January 2025. The most notable peak occurs around March 2024, indicating a significant surge in engagement. (Source: MEMO 98 analysis via Gerulata).

Channels					
	Name	Content	Interactions	Views	Followers
	Eduard Chmelár	5	20.76k	0	91.11k
	Rozhovory s Mimi Šramovou	3	7531	109.6k	53.6k
	Milan Uhrík • Republika	1	6144	0	179.5k
	Lucia Plaváková ~ PS	5	5978	24.19k	14.7k
	TVOTV	2	5959	69.88k	45.1k
	Politická scéna	3	5196	42.17k	26.9k

Figure 6: A table showing the social media accounts with the most interactions on posts containing terms related to negative gender stereotypes, misogyny, and mis- or disinformation, as well as the Istanbul Convention vote in Slovakia between 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2025 (Source: MEMO 98 via Gerulata).

Among the six accounts which generated the most interactions, five are known for spreading disinformation, with a strong link to pro-Kremlin narratives. Eduard Chmelár, a political commentator and historian who was a former advisor to Prime Minister Robert Fico, consistently promotes [anti-Western rhetoric](#), [downplays Russian aggression](#), and [portrays NATO](#) and the EU as imperialist forces, all of which closely mirror Kremlin narratives. Section 3.2 further explores the relationship between overtly Kremlin-aligned information sources and more mainstream actors in Slovakia.

The “Rozhovory s Mimi Šramovou”⁶ YouTube channel serves as one of the key platforms for amplifying these narratives, frequently featuring guests like Štefan Harabin, a former Supreme Court judge and ex-Minister of Justice. As seen in this interview on the Rozhovory s Mimi Šramovou [YouTube](#) channel, he openly supports Russian foreign policy, denies Russian war crimes, and spreads conspiracy theories about Western democracies. Harabin serves as chair of

⁶ “Rozhovory s Mimi Šramovou” is a YouTube channel which interviews individuals closely associated with the SMER-SSD and SNS parties. This program is frequently labeled as a disinformation platform because it provides space for spreading pro-Kremlin narratives. Šramová asks her guests loaded and uncritical questions, allowing for the dissemination of one-sided and biased information.

the non-parliamentary Vlast' (Homeland) party, having been a candidate in the 2024 Presidential election, finishing third with almost 12% of votes. Milan Uhrík, leader of the far-right Hnutie Republika (the Republic Movement), also reinforces pro-Kremlin positions by opposing military aid to Ukraine, condemning EU sanctions against Russia, and framing NATO as a threat to Slovakia's sovereignty—aligning his party's nationalist agenda with Russian geopolitical interests.



Figure 7: An image of Milan Uhrík, the Republic Movement party leader, with text saying he voted against the EU decision to make the Istanbul Convention binding for all member states. (Source: [Facebook](#)).

One of Milan Uhrík's [Facebook posts](#) on the Istanbul Convention exemplifies misleading narratives and pro-Kremlin rhetoric, falsely claiming the Convention forces Slovakia to recognise men as women while distorting its purpose of combating violence against women. This framing fuels anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment and discredits international human rights agreements. According to the [Carnegie Institute](#), it also aligns with Kremlin-backed culture war strategies that portray the West as morally corrupt and imposing “gender ideology” on traditional nations, reinforcing the narrative that Slovakia's sovereignty and values are under attack from Brussels.

The fact that the Instagram account of Lucia Plaváková, a lawyer and human rights activist and MP in Progresívne Slovensko (the Progressive Slovakia party, PS), is among the channels in Figure 6 is due to the appearance of keywords around the Istanbul Convention, including those aimed to debunk falsehoods shared about the convention. While it is important to note that some prominent accounts engaged critically with gendered disinformation content in Slovakia, the appearance of an actor challenging gendered disinformation among the most influential accounts using keywords relating to the Convention and negative gender stereotypes or gendered disinformation is very much an outlier in the context of this research. Researchers note the dominance of pro-Kremlin voices among the channels that received the most interactions on social media for sharing gendered disinformation relating to the Istanbul Convention (Figure 6).

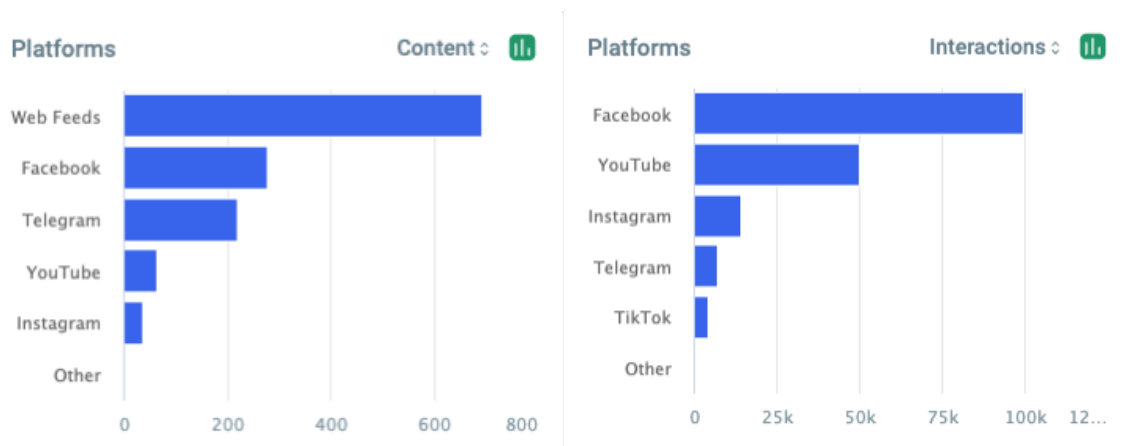


Figure 8 [Left]: The volume of posts containing negative gender stereotypes and gendered disinformation keywords in the Slovak language shared across major platforms relating to the Istanbul Convention vote in Slovakia from 1 January 2022 to 1 January 2025. [Right]: The level of interactions (likes, shares, comments) generated by gendered disinformation content relating to the Istanbul Convention in Slovak social media from 1 January 2022 to 1 January 2025 (Source: MEMO 98 via Gerulata).

Lucia Plaváková's expulsion from a Parliamentary session

Lucia Plaváková, a PS MP, found herself at the centre of a controversy in the Slovak Parliament after being expelled from the chamber for refusing to remove stickers supporting LGBTQ+ inclusion from her laptop. Parliamentary Vice Speaker Andrej Danko enforced the expulsion, arguing that the stickers violated parliamentary regulations prohibiting advertising. The incident swiftly escalated into a political and cultural dispute, with Plaváková refusing to comply, insisting that the stickers did not violate the rules. Following her expulsion, the situation took a more aggressive turn when ruling party MP Rudolf Huliak directed a vulgar insult at her, provoking widespread condemnation and igniting a broader debate about tolerance, representation, and the treatment of LGBTQ+ issues in Slovak politics. This public debate, as well as misogynistic comments directed at Plaváková, are represented in the spike in Figure 9 in September 2024. Plaváková responded by filing a lawsuit against Huliak and appealing to the Constitutional Court over her expulsion, presenting the event as emblematic of the broader struggles faced by the LGBTQ+ community in Slovakia.

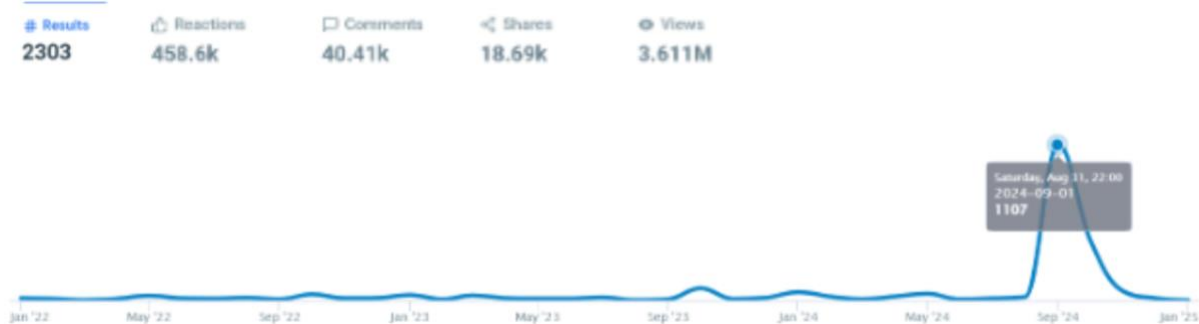


Figure 9: A line graph of engagement metrics for Slovak-language containing keywords associated with negative gender stereotypes, misogyny, and mis- or disinformation across multiple platforms related to Lucia Plaváková from January 2022 to January 2025, with a sharp peak in the number of interactions around September 2024, when her expulsion occurred (Source: MEMO 98 via Gerulata).











Channels					
	Name	Content	Interactions	Views	Followers
 	Progresívne Slovensko	69	37.15k	74.1k	71.13k
 	Hrica Lubos	1	24.84k	79.98k	100.2k
	Denník N	7	24.31k	0	136.2k
	STARTITUP	3	23.37k	0	451.1k
 	Informácie pravdy	13	20.57k	198.1k	65.5k
 	Ranné správy-Marek	8	17.67k	142.4k	26.4k

Figure 10: A table showing the social media accounts with the highest number of interactions on posts containing keywords related to negative gender stereotypes and gendered disinformation and mentions to Lucia Plaváková from 2022 to 2025 (Source: MEMO 98 via Gerulata).

Among the accounts publishing content containing keywords relating to gendered abuse targeting Lucia Plaváková (Figure 10) are political actors and news outlets. Analysts note that the news outlets in this list - Dennik N and Startitup are engaging with the incident with a critical lens - discussing the incident as opposed to sharing gendered disinformation. Independent media and disinformation actors covered the Lucia Plaváková incident in the Slovak Parliament, revealing a stark difference in narratives.

Independent outlets [Denník N](#) and [Startitup](#) provided factual reporting, framing the event as a political attack on LGBTQ+ rights and highlighting the broader issue of intolerance. Plaváková's PS party was the most active, using the incident to condemn "state-sponsored discrimination" and mobilise supporters.

In contrast, social media posts and videos from disinformation actors shown in Figure 10, including [Hrica Lubos](#), [Informácie pravdy](#), and [Ranné správy-Marek](#), vilified Plaváková, describing her as a provocateur and justifying her expulsion. In a [Facebook post](#), Ľuboš Hrica used aggressive, emotional attacks, while a video from [Informácie pravdy](#) shared conspiracy narratives, claiming the incident was staged to create an international scandal (Figure 12). A translation of the video is: "She did not manage to run away! A known person attacked MP Plaváková - what kind of person are you? You are not a bitch, you are....". The framing and language suggest an attempt to discredit and personally attack Plaváková, reinforcing the polarising and hostile rhetoric surrounding the incident. [Ranné správy-Marek](#) took a subtler approach, downplaying the controversy and depicting PS as opportunistic. The high engagement on disinformation posts such as this underscores how polarising content thrives on social media, amplifying nationalist and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric.

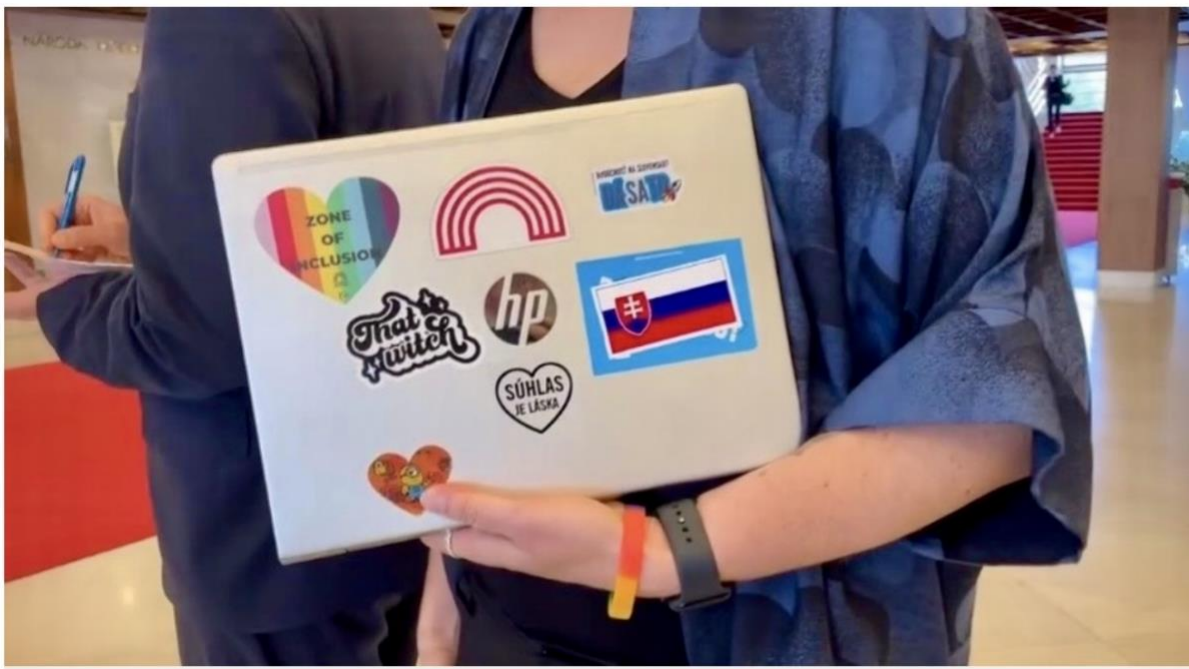


Figure 11: Sticker supporting LGBTQ+ inclusiveness on the laptop of MP Lucia Plaváková (Source: Martin Průčka)



Figure 12: Screenshot from a YouTube video titled “She did not manage to run away! A known person attacked MP Plaváková - what kind of person are you? You are not a bitch, you are....” (Source: [Informacie pravdy, YouTube](#), 27 September 2024).

European Parliament elections in 2024

The 2024 European Parliament elections in Slovakia were marked by intense polarisation on social media, with nationalist and populist narratives from SMER–slovenská sociálna demokracia (SMER-SSD), Hnutie Republika, and Slovenská národná strana (SNS) prevalent in the discourse. Key figures like [Ľuboš Blaha](#) (SMER-SSD) and [Milan Uhrík](#) (Hnutie Republika) framed the elections as a battle against liberal and pro-European forces, accusing PS and its

allies of undermining Slovak sovereignty and pushing a “globalist” and “anti-national” agenda. Ľuboš Blaha [attacked](#) the media for allegedly covering up crimes allegedly committed by the previous government, claiming, “The liberal media are silent on key issues that do not suit them – they are terribly afraid,” while Milan Uhrík [urged](#) voters to reject PS candidates as they support the “Green Deal, Covid passports, migration quotas, and 50 billion euros [GBP 42 billion] for Zelensky.”

SMER-SSD [celebrated](#) its electoral gains as a rejection of progressive politics, portraying itself as the protector of Slovakia’s national interests against EU overreach. Hnutie Republika reinforced this nationalist rhetoric, warning of Slovakia’s subjugation to EU policies, particularly immigration and defence. Meanwhile, PS countered these narratives, with its chair Michal Šimečka [warning](#) that “Fico’s government is threatening to kidnap Slovakia somewhere to Orbán and Putin,” and its MEP Veronika Cířrová Ostrihoňová [declaring](#) her commitment to “an open, fair, empathetic, and strongly pro-European Slovakia.” The stark contrast between nationalist-populist and pro-European visions underscored the elections’ significance as a [referendum](#) on Slovakia’s place in the EU and the broader geopolitical landscape.



Figure 13. Graph showing engagement metrics for Slovak-language gendered disinformation content relating to the European Parliament Elections across multiple platforms from January 2022 to January 2025, with a sharp peak in interactions around June 2024, corresponding with the date of the European Parliament elections. (Source: MEMO 98 via Gerulata).













Channels					
	Name	Content	Interactions	Views	Followers
 	SMER - SSD	22	89.58k	295.2k	166.2k
 	Rozhovory s Mimi Šramovou	14	55.52k	998k	53.6k
 	Ľuboš Blaha	40	49.81k	417.6k	40.67k
 	Diskusia na palete	9	27.59k	525.6k	34.3k
 	Milan Uhrík • Republika	7	26.51k	325.6k	179.5k
 	Politika Dnes	6	24.58k	229.3k	72.3k

Figure 14: A table showing the top six social media accounts by number of interactions for gendered disinformation content related to the 2024 European Parliament elections in Slovakia (2022 – 2025) (Source: MEMO 98 via Gerulata).

The top six Slovak social media and video channels analysed—SMER-SSD, [Rozhovory s Mimi Šramovou](#), Ľuboš Blaha, [Diskusia na palete](#)⁷, Milan Uhrík - Republika, and [Politika Dnes](#)⁸—had a significant number of posts containing keywords associated with negative gender stereotypes and gender disinformation related to the 2024 EP election in Slovakia. These platforms employed nationalist, anti-liberal, and anti-EU rhetoric, focusing on themes such as [opposition to progressivism](#), [sovereignty concerns](#), and [criticism of mainstream media](#). Key tactics included frequent content output (especially by Blaha), emotionally charged messaging, conspiracy-laden narratives, and direct audience engagement through Telegram and YouTube. Many of these channels aligned with SMER-SSD's messaging, amplifying anti-Western sentiment and portraying the EU and NATO as threats to Slovak sovereignty. Their narratives closely mirrored pro-Kremlin disinformation strategies, particularly in their framing of the Ukraine war, criticism of Western institutions, and positioning of nationalist forces as defenders against foreign influence. These tactics contributed to the electoral success of nationalist and Eurosceptic parties while further polarising Slovak political discourse.

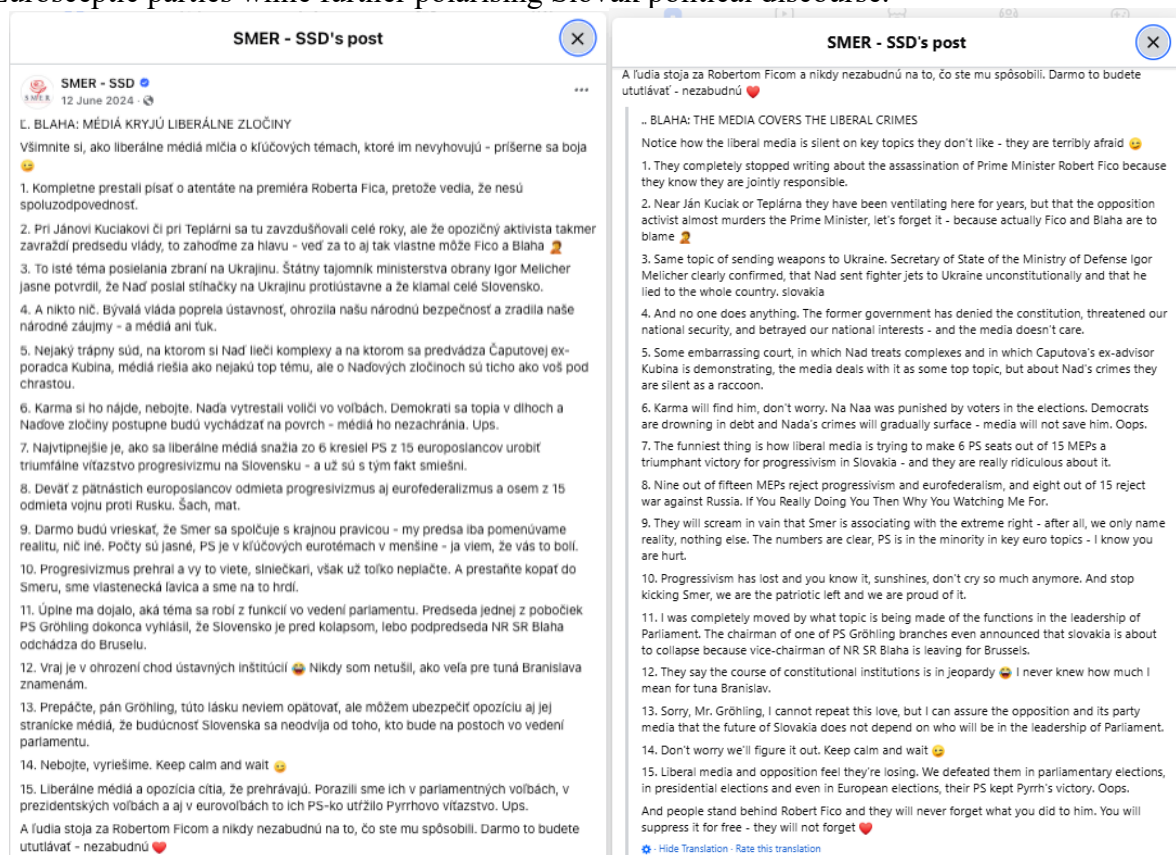


Figure 15: [Left] A post from the SMER-SSD party on 12 June 2024, featuring its member Ľuboš Blaha, who frames progressivism as a failure, and celebrating its supposed defeat in the 2024 European Parliament elections; [Right] Facebook translation of the same (Source: [Facebook](#)).

⁷ "Diskusia na palete" is a political discussion program produced by the editorial team of the [napalete.sk](#) portal and hosted by its editor-in-chief, Pavel Kapusta. Kapusta previously worked for Slovak public television during the era of Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar, when public broadcasting was widely regarded as a propaganda tool in the hands of Mečiar's government.

⁸ The YouTube channel [Politika Dnes](#), active since February 2021, presents itself as an independent political news source but lacks transparency about its ownership and authorship, and according to [Konspiratori.sk](#) violates basic journalistic ethics, and shares misleading or decontextualized political content while maintaining an appearance of neutrality.

In 2022, Meta banned Ľuboš Blaha, once the most popular Slovak politician on Facebook, with Facebook stating: “This page has been removed for repeated violations of our policies on hate speech, bullying and harassment, incitement to violence, and spreading misinformation about COVID-19”. Ľuboš Blaha, however, circumvents the ban and continues to post on SMER-SSD’s official Facebook page, as seen with a 12 June 2024 [post](#). In it, he attacks mainstream media for suppressing inconvenient stories, including the assassination attempt on Robert Fico, while promoting pro-Kremlin narratives. He dismisses progressivism as a failed ideology, mocking its electoral performance and portraying it as a foreign-controlled movement undermining Slovak sovereignty and traditional values. He also [criticises](#) arms shipments to Ukraine and frames Slovak nationalists as victims of Western manipulation. Using sarcasm, emotional appeals, and direct attacks, he mobilises his audience and deepens political polarisation. With 11.79k interactions, his post (Figure 15) highlights how banned figures exploit party platforms to maintain influence and spread disinformation.

2.2 TIES BETWEEN GENDERED AND FOREIGN-INFLUENCED DISINFORMATION

MEMO98 has identified a significant presence of Kremlin-aligned actors among the top-most amplified actors in Slovakia’s disinformation space, some of whom are amplified by mainstream Slovak politicians who engage in sharing gendered disinformation. These connections are examined in the sections below.

To understand how disseminators of gendered disinformation in Slovakia are connected to other disinformation actors, including those linked to foreign interests, researchers used a combination of spike analysis, connections data from Gerulata, and network analysis in Gephi. They first identified key gender disinformation actors through spikes in content volume and mapped their online interactions—mentions and reshares—with other accounts to build a Connections Network Graph in Gerulata. This graph included not only gender-related posts but all types of interactions, helping reveal broader disinformation ecosystems.

The data were then exported to Gephi, where the OpenOrd layout algorithm was used to visualise patterns within a network of 480 nodes (accounts). Researchers adjusted the size of each node based on how often the account was reshared or mentioned (Weighted Out-Degree), and used arrows (edges) to show the direction and strength of these interactions. This allowed the team to identify influential actors and clusters where gender disinformation intersected with other disinformation narratives, including those propagated by foreign-aligned accounts (for more detailed information on the network mapping, see also Annex 4.2.1 and 4.3.1 Network Graphs Methods – In-Depth).

In the network maps below, the circles (nodes) represent accounts, and the lines (edges) represent the sharing activity between accounts. The larger the node, the larger the following of the account; the thicker the line between nodes, the more frequently content is shared between them. Arrows on the lines represent the flow of information when content is shared. An arrow from node X to node Y would mean node Y shared content by node X.

Network Graph Analysis

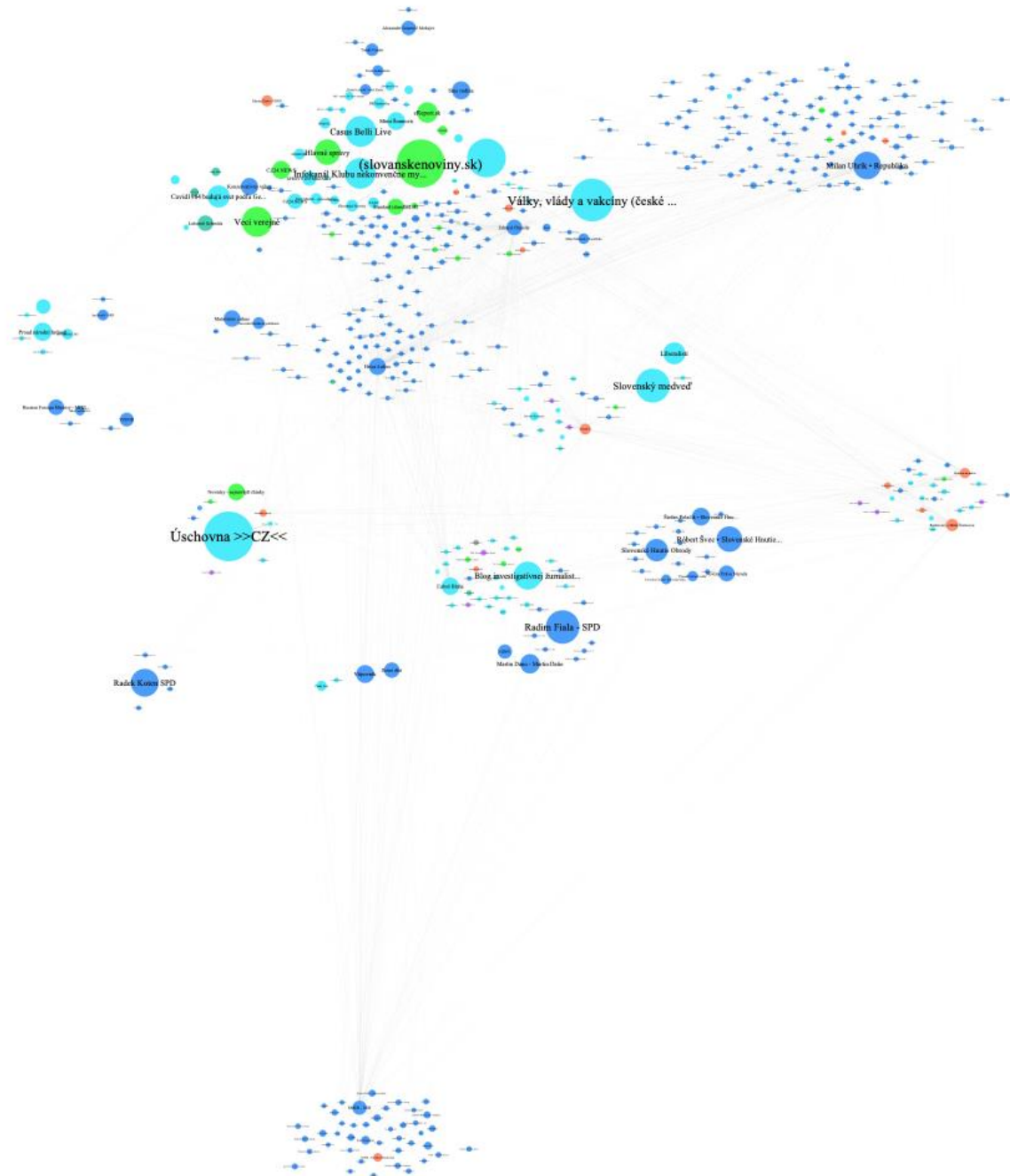


Figure 16: Screenshot of a network graph excerpt showing accounts connected to actors disseminating gendered disinformation in Slovakia.

Analysis of the network graph (Figure 16) shows the influence of Telegram channels within the network. According to a 2024 survey by [Startitup](#), only 8% of the Slovak voting population follows content on Telegram. Telegram channels comprise only 16.25% of the nodes in the network graphs; seven of the 10 top-mentioned and reshared nodes in the network graph are Telegram channels. Simply put, although fewer Telegram channels are spreading gendered disinformation compared to, for example, Facebook pages, Telegram channels appear more influential, as their content is being reshared across broad networks.

Russian Influence on Slovak Gendered Disinformation

This section describes accounts actively spreading Russian disinformation connected to actors disseminating gendered disinformation in Slovakia. Based on the analysis of the top 50 most-influential social media accounts, determined by a high number of reshares and mentions from other accounts in the network (Figure 16), researchers observed the influence of official Russian channels spreading disinformation connected to actors spreading false narratives on gender-related topics in Slovakia.

For example, the official Facebook page of the Russian Foreign Ministry was ranked as the 33rd most influential account out of the 480 accounts identified in the network, based on the number of reshares and mentions by other accounts in the network. According to the network graph, the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Russian Embassy in Slovakia's Facebook accounts have been mentioned or reshared by figures such as Eduard Chmelár and Ľuboš Blaha, whose social media accounts spread narratives that align with pro-Kremlin disinformation.

For example, Ľuboš Blaha, MP for SMER-SSD, ranked as the 26th most influential account connected to actors spreading gendered disinformation in Slovakia, directly mentioned the Russian Embassy in Slovakia in a Telegram [post](#) from 2 February 2023, discussing the rise of Nazi ideology and Russophobia in Europe in recent decades.⁹ According to news outlet [SME](#), Blaha went on an official visit to Moscow in October 2024 and provided a live interview to Russian state-controlled, nationalistic TV Russia Today. The Facebook page of Eduard Chmelár, whose amplification of gendered disinformation and pro-Kremlin narratives was previously discussed in this report, was ranked the 34th most influential account (out of 480) connected to actors spreading gendered disinformation in Slovakia.

Amplifiers of Pro-Russian Influence

Various publications and media, including [Aktuality.sk](#), [NEST Institute](#), [Infosecurity](#), [TA3](#), [SME](#), and the [Investigative Centre for Ján Kuciak](#) (ICJK) have researched the connections between Slovak political actors and sources of Russian influence in Slovakia's information space. The connections identified in this research echo existing findings and are explored in more detail in annex 4.4.

⁹ One of the most widespread Russian disinformation narratives aimed at legitimising Russia's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine is the presence of a Nazi government and ideology in Ukraine oppressing Russian speakers living in Ukraine. This has been widely reported on, for example by [Aspenia online](#) and [EUvsDisinfo](#), throughout the duration of the Russian war in Ukraine, including from the 2014 annexation and occupation of Crimea and its full-scale invasion in 2022.

Pro-Russian Czech Influences

This section describes Czech accounts spreading false, pro-Russian narratives identified in network analysis of actors connected to accounts spreading gender disinformation in Slovakia. Based on sample analysis of influential social media accounts, determined by a high number of reshares and mentions by other accounts in the network, researchers observed a significant presence of pro-Russian Czech accounts, or accounts producing pro-Russian content also in Czech, in the network graph. Thus, researchers find the Czech and Slovak pro-Russian disinformation space to be interconnected.

Úschovna >>CZ<< Telegram channel, ranked the most influential account connected to actors spreading gendered disinformation in Slovakia, is a Czech Telegram channel, which also spreads Russian disinformation about the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. For example, in a 24 February 2025 post on this [Telegram channel](#), the Czech MEP Ivan David from SPD (Svoboda a přímá demokracie, Freedom and Direct Democracy) called the Ukrainian chant “Glory to Ukraine!” (слава Україні), which is commonly used to signify support for Ukraine during the Russian full-scale invasion, a Nazi slogan. The channel also frequently shares articles and videos by the Russian government news agency, [Sputnik](#).

Radim Fiala - SPD, ranked as the sixth most influential account connected to actors spreading gendered disinformation in Slovakia, is the Facebook Page of the Czech SPD MP and party vice chairman. According to [Atlas Vlivu](#), an organisation documenting Czech politicians’ connections with Russian and Chinese influences, Fiala amplified pro-Russian disinformation narratives by supporting Russia’s illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea in a statement made during his visit to the Russian Parliament and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 2017. Telegram channel Války, vlády a vakcíny (české a slovenské info) pseudo-pandemie a uměle vyvolané války, (which translates as : Wars, governments, and vaccines (Czech and Slovak Info) pseudo-pandemic and artificially induced wars) was ranked as the third most influential account connected to actors spreading gendered disinformation in Slovakia. As the name suggests, this Telegram channel spread anti-vaxx COVID-19 disinformation, claiming that more than 80% of women miscarried after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine in a [post](#) published on 6 July 2021. This claim is false; [medical research](#) has found that there is no evidence of COVID-19 vaccines being associated with a higher risk of miscarriage.

The [Telegram channel](#) also spread pro-Russian disinformation regarding the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, claiming in a 10 March 2025 post that Ukrainians are Nazis. The Telegram channel publishes false and misleading information in multiple languages, including Czech, Slovak, and [Russian](#). The channel has also spread gendered disinformation, claiming that “LGBTI and gender ideology is extremist PLAGUE” in a [post](#) from 7 September 2023.

US ‘Terrorgram’¹⁰ Connections

A report published in March 2025 by [ProPublica](#), FRONTLINE and the Investigative Centre of Jan Kuciak identified the influence of US actors on Telegram, encouraging the views and actions of the Teplaren nightclub shooter, Juraj Krajčík. The report found that Krajčík had been groomed and encouraged to carry out his homophobic attack on a gay nightclub by the members and leaders of the extremist Telegram channels he joined, including by US national Dallas

¹⁰ An online community consisting of various Telegram groups which incite white supremacist acts of terrorism.

Humber, who the US Department of Justice reported was arrested in California in September 2024 for inciting hate crimes. Researchers note that any future investigations into Slovakia's information space must consider anglophone influences alongside Slovak-language content.

2.3 WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF GENDERED DISINFORMATION ATTACKS?

MEMO 98 interviewed 11 individuals on gendered disinformation in Slovakia. A majority of interviewees have been the targets of gendered disinformation. All interviewees were women; one identified as LGBTQ+. This research recommends that future research interviews men, in addition to interviewing more women, people identifying as LGBTQ+ and people from all political and religious backgrounds to ensure a fuller understanding of the differentiated impacts of gendered disinformation.

The interviews identified retreat from public life, fears for personal safety, psychological distress and societal polarisation as major impacts of gendered disinformation.

The interviewees' names are anonymised and they are referred to by their profession.

The interviewees are:

- Alexandra Bitušíková (academic, Matej Bel University)
- Andrea Simančíková (journalist, TA3)
- Lucia Yar (politician, MEP/Progressive Slovakia Party)
- Laura Kellö Kalinská (journalist, Aktuality.sk)
- Mária Benedikovičová (journalist, Denník N)
- Diana Javorčíková (politician, local/Banská Bystrica)
- Jana Krescanko Dibáková (journalist, SME.sk)
- Lucia Plaváková (politician, MP/Progressive Slovakia)
- Zuzana Maďarová (academic, Comenius University)
- Anonymous (journalist) - preferred to stay unnamed
- Zuzana Petková (civil society, director of Stop Corruption Foundation)

Retreat from public life

"... it can lead to a kind of apathy or less courage to participate ... you lose your determination, you don't want to speak out. There's a silencing of women or LGBTQ+ people" - Academic

"... it's a message that you're not our equal, you're not a full member [of society], and that you have to try harder to be accepted somehow. Even if you try harder, we're still going to find something that bothers us about you." - Journalist

"It's not just about individual attacks, but about creating an environment where women and minorities feel they should not even try to engage publicly." - NGO Director

"It is exhausting to always have to prove that you belong. No matter how competent you are, there will always be people trying to discredit you based on gender alone." - Politician

Interviewees emphasized that political leaders have normalized misogynistic rhetoric, which then translates into public discourse and social networks. This emboldens individuals to participate in gendered attacks, believing they have political legitimacy, and makes them more susceptible to gendered disinformation campaigns.

One respondent highlighted the role of foreign actors, particularly Russia, in exacerbating these narratives by amplifying traditionalist and anti-feminist sentiments through coordinated disinformation efforts.

Interviewees spoke of how gendered disinformation creates a hostile environment in which women and LGBTQ+ individuals feel unsafe expressing their opinions or engaging in leadership roles. Interviewees further noted the nature of the attacks often questions their professional ability, often in a sexualised way, implying that the target ‘slept their way to the top’, belittling the target, calling them ‘little girl’ if they appear young and attacking aspects of their personal life, such as childlessness or the ethnicity of the target’s spouse.

One interviewee recalled how her husband was targeted with online abuse because of his ethnicity - and relationship with her - illustrating the intersectionality of gendered disinformation with racial prejudices.

A politician interviewed expressed concern that gendered disinformation attacks are shaping how political parties recruit and promote women, noting that if parties perceive that women face too much hostility, they may be less willing to support women candidates.

Several interviewees noted that women journalists and politicians face particularly high levels of harassment, often intensifying during election periods or in response to specific policy debates.

"In election periods, the attacks become even worse. Women candidates are systematically discredited, and false claims about their competence spread like wildfire." - Politician

All interviewees spoke of how gendered disinformation serves to, and often succeeds in, discouraging women and LGBTQ+ individuals from holding positions of power or having a prominent voice in society, particularly if they advocate for progressive values.¹¹ Some interviewees expressed concern that women’s retreat from public life is being encouraged and presented as normal to men in society.

"[those who spread gendered disinformation] discourage their targets from participating in social and political life, they make those individuals’ lives uncomfortable ... discouraging women or convincing men that this is the way it’s supposed to be." - Politician

"We see cases where women simply stop speaking out. The cost of participation becomes too high, and that is exactly what these attacks are designed to do." - Academic

Polarisation

"There’s this effort to bring back some of that narrative that we need to go back to normal, where men were the strong, powerful ones, the woman is supposed to belong in that kitchen and obey." - Academic

"The more divisive rhetoric is used, the more it is normalized. It stops being shocking and starts becoming the default way to talk about women in politics." - Journalist

¹¹ Interviews emphasised that, while progressive voices appear to be targeted with gendered disinformation more often, other public figures across the political spectrum – including Peter Pellegrini – have also been subjected to gendered disinformation and abuse.

Interviewees commented on how gendered disinformation is increasing the divide between men and women in society. The academic interviewed for the research highlighted how the growing presence of misogynistic influencers, such as Andrew Tate, and mainstream political figures promoting traditionalist gender norms are contributing to greater gender division in Slovak society.

"Women in politics face a double standard. If they are strong, they are called aggressive; if they are empathetic, they are called weak. It is a way to delegitimize their voices." - Politician

"We see that even highly competent women are treated differently. Instead of debating policies, they are questioned about their appearance, their families, or their personalities." - Politician

Safety implications

While not all gendered attacks contain threats, two interviewees reported encountering threats and harassment against themselves and/or their families. One interviewee described how gendered disinformation against her began to target a member of her family, who is of a different ethnicity. These threats led the interviewee to report the cases to the police.

Several respondents expressed frustration that law enforcement does not proactively investigate gendered disinformation cases unless the target initiates legal proceedings. MEMO 98 analysts note that the [trust in the police](#) is low in Slovakia, as many people do not believe authorities will take action against perpetrators.

"Here I very much miss the initiative of the police force to defend those attacked" – Journalist

"People think online harassment isn't real, but the psychological and professional consequences are serious. Some women leave their jobs because of it." - Journalist

Psychological impact

Interviewees who have experienced disinformation spoke of the psychological toll of online gendered attacks. Some describe feelings of increased anxiety, fears for personal safety and losing the ability to concentrate on work and needing to pay for psychological support.

"It's not easy to deal with that, and yet, even after six years, I'm still facing basically comments on social media that are derived from these disinformation campaigns." – Journalist

"It becomes exhausting, like a background noise that never stops. Even when I don't look, I know it's there." - Journalist

One journalist described how a coordinated disinformation campaign against her continued to affect her mental well-being even years later, demonstrating the long-lasting impact of these attacks.

"The long-term effect of this harassment is self-censorship. Women start avoiding topics that could make them a target." - Academic

Additional vulnerabilities

All interviewees mentioned that gendered attacks appear to be more severe if the target is from an ethnic minority, particularly Roma, or of a religious minority, particularly Muslim.

"It is not just about gender; it is about reinforcing who is 'acceptable' in public life and who is not." - Politician

"Being a woman in politics is hard enough. Being a Roma woman in politics means facing ten times the hate." - Journalist

Interviewees further emphasised that, while individuals with progressive views appear to be attacked more often than those with more conservative values, conservative actors are also subject to gendered attacks.

Several respondents pointed out that LGBTQ+ individuals face compounded risks, facing particularly vitriolic and alarmist rhetoric, including conflating homosexuality and paedophilia, and promoting the idea that trans people, especially trans women, are an inherent danger to society.

2.4 HOW CAN SLOVAKIA IMPROVE ITS RESILIENCE AGAINST GENDERED DISINFORMATION ON A NATIONAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL?

This section considers preventative and mitigating measures to curb the spread of gendered disinformation and reduce the impact of gendered disinformation on its targets.

All interviewees emphasised the challenge of combating gendered disinformation in Slovakia's current political climate, in which several prominent politicians are among the biggest spreaders of gendered disinformation.¹²

"The problem in our country is the fact that the biggest government party is the biggest propagator, creator, and disseminator [of gendered disinformation]." – Politician

One respondent noted that the government's lack of action and, in some cases, explicit endorsement of gendered disinformation, makes it difficult to implement countermeasures.

Short-to-medium-term resilience must therefore focus on equipping the targets of gendered disinformation with the tools they need to continue participating in public life; from training on operational security and crisis communications to ongoing organisational support, which may include the establishment of 'troll walls',¹³ clear thresholding for when to report threats or harassment to police, and the option of psychological support.

"We need to have a strong Ministry of Culture with a strong, embedded sense of quality journalistic performance anchored by well-written laws." – Journalist

¹² Corroborated in quantitative research carried out by MEMO 98, shown in section 3.1 of this report. Researchers also note that mainstream politicians are not the only disseminators of gendered disinformation and that conservative politicians also come under attack from gendered disinformation and abuse campaigns.

¹³ A term used by an interviewee to describe the manual triage of online content by her party, shielding her from petty abuse that would distract her from her work, but flagging any threats to her and to the police.

Respondents emphasised that educational initiatives targeting young men are essential to counteract the rise of misogynistic influencers who propagate harmful gender narratives to younger audiences.

2.4.1 PREVENTION

Education, social media policy reform and government accountability were repeatedly highlighted by the interviewees as essential in curbing the spread of gendered disinformation.

Several respondents recommended mandatory digital literacy and critical thinking education as a long-term solution to countering gendered disinformation.

There was also strong consensus that independent media and civil society should take the lead in raising awareness, as government-led initiatives may be politically compromised.

Awareness

Many interviewees noted that overall public awareness of the issue of gendered disinformation and its impacts is limited across Slovak society. Interviewees stated that education is key to raising public awareness.

"Education is critical. We need to start teaching digital literacy at an early age so that people understand how disinformation works." - Academic

However, interviewees also noted that it is unlikely that the Slovak government will allow teaching on such topics while the top spreaders of gendered disinformation are in power. One journalist interviewed by MEMO 98 commented on the potential for media outlets and civil society organisations to organise events designed to improve political literacy, starting in schools, continuing through higher education, and extending to university elections and the general public during national elections.

Two interviewees noted that their organisations' awareness of gendered disinformation and its impact on staff was lacking. Educating organisations on the risks to their staff and how their staff can be supported is essential in ensuring talented professionals are not discouraged from their work by targeted gendered disinformation campaigns. These interviewees suggested that a media campaign could help raise public and organisational awareness of gendered disinformation, its impacts and how to support its targets.

"Public awareness of gendered disinformation in Slovakia remains limited. Right-wing populism and Catholic conservatism reinforce traditional gender norms, making it harder to address these problems." – Academic

Social media company policies

"Social networks are designed to amplify engagement, not truth. That is the fundamental problem." - NGO Director

"Not only could social media companies be doing more, but they have stopped doing what they should be doing altogether. ... A lot can be done through social media... But I don't see that social media companies are doing enough, quite the opposite." – Academic

- Departure from engagement at any cost. One interviewee noted that social media “algorithms are set up so that the emotion of hate will attract followers, interaction, more money, advertising. I don't know if we can change that. ... If politicians didn't see the hatred bringing them an audience, they wouldn't do it”. Legislation that would ensure algorithmic de-prioritisation of hateful content - not just in terms of what can and cannot be monetised, but also in terms of content exposure - would serve to reduce the spread of hateful content, including gendered attacks.
- Moderation. Several interviewees emphasised that the retreat of social media companies from content moderation has directly led to a more hostile online environment for women and LGBTQ+ individuals. They also highlighted that social media companies - notably X and Meta - appear less willing to take down hateful and/or disinformation content than before. Recent moves by large tech firms such as [Meta to shy away from anti-hate policies](#) further enable hateful content to spread online, with fewer protections for women and LGBTQ+ individuals, compared with [Meta](#) policies predating 7 January 2025. National or EU legislation that would require social media companies to be held to a high standard of hate filtering or moderation would therefore make a difference in preventing at least some gendered disinformation campaigns online. Respondents noted that Slovakia lacks national-level legal mechanisms to hold social media companies accountable for failing to act against gendered disinformation.
- Online anonymity. One interviewee noted that the ability of people to be anonymous online makes it easier for people to share hateful content without consequence. This interviewee advocates for stricter controls on users, such as accounts to be tied to IDs and real names, making it harder to troll people while using an alias. However, others cautioned that such measures could be misused by authoritarian governments to suppress political dissent.

Non-partisan politician and influencer accountability

“If the standards of decent behaviour are not set by institutions that have the power to do so, then it will just pile up. The attackers simply feel no threat.” – Journalist

Several interviewees stated the importance of mainstream politicians in setting an example of how to behave appropriately in society. Many interviewees argue that Slovakia’s leaders - from all political parties - must be held to the highest standards of conduct, including how they choose (not) to spread disinformation and hateful rhetoric.

One respondent pointed out that gendered disinformation has been used as a tool to discredit not only individuals but also entire political parties, particularly those advocating for gender equality and human rights.

Interviewees and MEMO 98 emphasise the need for non-partisan efforts to combat gendered disinformation, noting politicians associated with social conservatism, including Slovak President Peter Pellegrini, have been subject to gendered, [homophobic attacks](#).

2.4.2 MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF GENDERED DISINFORMATION ON THE TARGET

Reducing target exposure to gendered disinformation, timely reporting of threats and structured support, including crisis communications and psychological support, were noted by interviewees as important in reducing the impact of gendered disinformation on individuals targeted. Each recommendation outlined below is preceded by an indication of whether it is actionable by an organisation or an individual, or both.

Reducing target exposure to gendered disinformation

The majority of interviewees who had experienced gendered attacks online stated that they prefer not to look at hateful comments to be able to get on with their work without distraction. Many interviewees mentioned straightforward, practical steps that can be taken to reduce targets' exposure to gendered disinformation attacks.

"In some groups, they create self-censorship, in the spirit of - 'I'm going to slow down so that it does not happen to me either.' Another part of the victims, who do not feel supported, leaves as a consequence." – Journalist

- **ORGANISATIONAL.** Manual filtering of abusive content by the organisation to protect staff from gendered disinformation and hate. One politician described her organisation as having a human-operated 'troll wall' that protects her and her colleagues from hurtful content online, meaning party members are less distracted by hateful rhetoric and better able to focus on work.
- **PERSONAL.** Automated filtering. Create and adopt software or apps that filter out hateful comments and messages from potential targets' social media and email accounts. One politician interviewed suggested this could help potential targets deal with attacks where a 'troll wall' is unfeasible.

Timely reporting of threats

- **ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL.** Clear protocols, including thresholding and escalation policies, on when to report gendered attacks, and to whom. One politician interviewed stated that her party has clear thresholding, in which any threats against party members or their families are reported to the police, and that the targets of the threats are notified and supported throughout the reporting process. Of the interviewees who have been the targets of gendered disinformation, two said they received threats, which they reported to the police.

However, multiple respondents expressed a lack of trust in law enforcement.

"I did not contact the police. I do not trust them. [What I experienced] was discomfoting, but not life-threatening." – Journalist

"The state does not effectively protect victims of disinformation campaigns, even when minor children are involved. I had to explain false accusations to my family." – Journalist

Practical training and support

ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL. Crisis communications support. One interviewee reflected that, when her organisation was subjected to backlash over their feminist activism, the organisation was overwhelmed by the sheer volume and scale of online attacks, and she and her team felt ill-equipped to deal with it. This research recommends that organisations advocating for women and/or LGBTQ+ individuals invest in crisis communications training to be able to contain the spread of gendered attacks affecting their staff and any affiliated activists.

- ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL. Operational security training. In addition to some interviewees reporting online threats, local analysts for this report became aware of a hacking attack following a gendered disinformation campaign against an NGO. The hackers could take control of the target organisation's social media accounts and troll the organisation from within. Operational security training is highly recommended for all staff, affiliated activists, and supporters of organisations advocating for women's and LGBTQ+ rights, to protect both organisations and individuals from malicious actors.
- ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL. Several interviewees stated that increased psychological support would benefit the targets of gendered disinformation attacks, and that this support could be offered by the workplace in cases where the attacks relate to the professional activity and identity of the target.

Personal resilience

"... problems on the side of the sender, not the receiver." - Academic

Several interviewees reflected on personal coping mechanisms and how essential these were in not allowing negative, gendered comments to "get under their skin". While some interviewees said that their coping mechanism is to avoid and ignore gendered attacks as much as they can, others note the importance of having confidence in the fact that the attackers are the ones with the problem, not them. A journalist interviewee said she made a conscious decision to filter out the negativity, refusing to allow her gender to be used against her or to weaken her professional standing. At the same time, a politician interviewed said that she clearly views gendered attacks as reflections of the perpetrators' frustrations or prejudices rather than something that should shape her actions.

FINDINGS – CZECHIA

3.1 WHAT DO GENDERED DISINFORMATION ATTACKS LOOK LIKE IN CZECHIA?

MEMO 98, and Women in Media used known instances of politicised gendered disinformation campaigns in Czechia to collect and analyse Czech-language gendered disinformation posts. These were

- Czechia’s potential ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2023-2024
- European Parliament (EP) election in 2024
- Presidential candidacy of Member of European Parliament (MEP) Danuše Nerudová in 2022-2023

The search terms used to identify gendered disinformation posts (annex 4.1) were developed iteratively using manual validation of search results from the analysis tool Gerulata. The most popular of these posts, based on combined metrics of views, engagement, and post volume, were then analysed qualitatively to assess the tone, themes, and techniques used by disinformation actors. Most significantly, each quantitative analysis of spiking gendered disinformation activity around key political events was used to identify the top disseminators of gendered disinformation. These actors were then used to create a seed list of accounts from which to build a network analysis (section 3.2) that explores the broader disinformation landscape in Czechia.

The research identified the creation and dissemination of false claims intended to misinform and deter Czech voters from policies that could benefit them. In the case of the Istanbul Convention, gendered disinformation actors consistently made false links between the Convention, which focuses on tackling violence against women and on domestic violence, and the imposition of policies under a wider umbrella, which disinformation actors often term “gender ideology”, including forced support for same-sex marriage and sex education in schools.

(NON-) RATIFICATION OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION IN 2023-2024

The Istanbul Convention is an international human rights treaty of the Council of Europe (CoE) aiming to minimise violence against women and domestic violence. The [CoE](#) introduced the Convention on 11 May 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. After Czechia [signed](#) the Istanbul Convention on 2 May 2016, the process of debate began at the national level.¹⁴ Although the Czech ratification of the Convention was scheduled to take place in 2018, the administration of then-prime minister Andrej Babiš postponed the process to the end of 2023, as reported by [iRozhlas.cz](#).

¹⁴ Czechia [signed](#) the Istanbul Convention in 2016. As an international treaty, it requires approval from both chambers of Parliament for ratification. Once ratified, the convention becomes part of Czech law. In June 2023, the government decided to continue the ratification process. For it to take effect, it needs to be approved by the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, and signed by the president. The Chamber of Deputies postponed the discussion until after the Senate’s decision. However, after the Senate [rejected](#) it in January 2024, the deputies will not address the convention, and the ratification process ended, meaning Czechia will remain one of the few countries that signed but did not ratify the Istanbul Convention.

During the process of national debate, the Convention became the target of widespread disinformation campaigns. The former director of the Czech Women’s Lobby, Hana Stelzerová, discussed common disinformation narratives around the Istanbul Convention in an interview with the Czech initiative [HateFree Culture](#). According to Stelzerová, the disinformation narratives included the Convention as creating gender inequality due to its “positive discrimination” toward women, imposing a “gender agenda” by establishing “new genders,” and requiring that sexual education be taught to young children in schools, which critics and spreaders of false information deemed as inappropriate.

Meanwhile, liberal Czech politicians were advocating for the Convention’s adoption. For example, on 17 May 2023, President Petr Pavel called upon the Czech government to ratify it, saying, “I don’t see a single real reason why we should not do it,” as reported by [ČT24](#). Yet, on 24 January 2024, the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic [rejected](#) the proposal for its ratification.

Gendered disinformation around the Istanbul Convention

Figure 17: The graph shows the number of posts with negative gender keywords related to the Czechia ratification of the



Istanbul Convention across multiple platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, TikTok, X, and web articles) from January 2022 to January 2025 (Source: MEMO98 analysis via Gerulata).

The prevalence of gendered disinformation and keywords associated with gendered disinformation and politicised gendered abuse in Czechia increased significantly when the Istanbul Convention was being discussed on the national political scene. For example, in May 2023 and again in January 2024, gendered disinformation relating to the Istanbul Convention increased by approximately 500% and 800%, respectively, compared to before May 2023, when the convention was not actively being discussed in Czechia. Thus, researchers found a significant increase in gendered disinformation related to the Convention in Czechia in times of tense national debate, with 1,901 public posts relating to gendered disinformation viewed at least 1.42 million times in the data observation period.

The first increase in the prevalence of gendered disinformation surrounding the Istanbul Convention can be seen between May 2023 and September 2023 (Figure 1). This appears to have been triggered by President Petr Pavel’s [challenge](#) to the Czech government to approve the Convention at the CoE Summit on 17 May 2023, highlighting the importance of combating violence against women and domestic violence. During this period, the research identified 684 posts containing gendered disinformation or hate speech keywords, which received a total of approximately 564,000 views and 84,110 interactions (reactions, comments, shares).

The second increase was in January 2024 when the Senate was set to vote on the Convention's ratification, which was ultimately [rejected](#). This second peak of gender disinformation consisted of 300 posts, with approximately 555,900 views and 27,230 interactions.

Actors spreading gendered disinformation related to the Istanbul Convention in Czechia

Summary

Researchers identified six Facebook accounts – Tomio Okamura - Svoboda a přímá demokracie (Freedom and Direct Democracy, SPD); Zdeněk Hraba . váš senátor; Jana Zwyrtek Hamplová fanpage; Tradiční rodina z.s; Zuzana Majerová; and Jindřich Rajchl – that were the leading spreaders of gendered disinformation related to the Istanbul convention. Further information on each of these actors is provided on pages 16-18.

These accounts appear to reflect the broader composition of the gendered disinformation environment in Czechia. A significant portion of these voices belong to what the [Ministry of Interior](#) referred to as the 'anti-establishment scene' in its 2023 annual report on extremism, which currently dominates the extremist landscape. These actors frequently disseminate prejudiced comments, with a notable portion of this scene promoting conspiracies and pro-Kremlin narratives.













Channels		Content	Interactions	Views	Followers
Name					
  TO	Tomio Okamura - SPD	18	21.19k	66.72k	409.1k
  ZH	Zdeněk Hraba . váš senátor	14	18.75k	156.3k	19.27k
 	Jana Zwyrtek Hamplová fanpage	7	13.58k	0	91.32k
  TR	Tradiční rodina z.s.	88	12.39k	84.89k	10.16k
  ZM	Zuzana Majerová	19	11.71k	27.13k	101.6k
  JR	Jindřich Rajchl	2	10.54k	0	99.55k

Figure 18: A table of the social media accounts with the most interactions related to the Istanbul Convention in Czechia between 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2025 (Source: MEMO98 via Gerulata).

Numerous interactions on posts by Jindřich Rajchl and Jana Zwyrtek Hamplová demonstrate the popularity of such radically critical, government-opposing voices on Facebook. The research found anti-establishment voices, along with far-right parties like the SPD and Trikolora, share similar comments.

Figures such as Tomio Okamura and Zuzana Majerová readily adopt narratives aligned with Kremlin propaganda (including [calls to cancel the supply of weapons to Ukraine](#), [halt the](#)

[sanctions imposed on Russia](#), and [promote the pro-Russian "peace" narrative](#)¹⁵) and spread disinformation in their populist messaging.

Conservative traditionalists within government, represented in this research by Zdeněk Hraba, focus on opposing progressive values without positioning themselves against the government, aligning with pro-Russian stances, or engaging with broader disinformation networks.

Detail

[Tomio Okamura](#) is the leader of the far-right populist SPD, a party known for xenophobic political positions and radically anti-government stances. Okamura is very active on Facebook, where his posts often rely on [spreading fears around migration](#) and [Islam](#), [anti-Ukrainian sentiment](#), and strong criticism of the [EU](#) and [the government](#) of Petr Fiala. He has a large following, demonstrating that his fear-mongering resonates with a wide audience on Facebook. He frequently spreads pro-Russian narratives (questioning [pro-Western foreign policy](#), [transatlantic alliances](#), [EU membership](#), [sanctions on Russia](#), [solidarity with refugees](#) and [Czech aid to Ukraine](#)) in what he calls the [defence of Czech national interests](#). The Prague-based [European Values Center for Security Policy](#) NGO describes Okamura as one of the politicians who contributes most to “enabling Russian influence”. He also actively opposed the Istanbul Convention, framing it as a neo-Marxist treaty [threatening the “traditional family”](#) and introducing gender totality¹⁶, which aligns with his approach of fueling moral panic around [gender-related topics](#). According to [ČT24](#), he is currently being prosecuted for [racist electoral posters](#).

[Zdeněk Hraba](#) is a Czech senator, elected as an independent for the ODS and known for his highly conservative stances and vocal opposition to what he views as progressive ideology. Hraba was highly active in [opposing the Istanbul Convention](#) and was one of the senators who initiated its rejection, arguing that it would introduce [gender ideology](#) into the legal system. Compared to other accounts in our sample, his follower base is the second-smallest, however, his posts received the highest number of views (more than 156,000), demonstrating his visibility in the anti-Istanbul Convention campaign.

The [Jana Zwyrték Hamplová fanpage](#) is a Facebook account of an independent Czech senator known for spreading disinformation about COVID-19 measures, as reported by [Deník.cz](#). She has contributed to and reposted from conspiracy websites such as [Parlamentní listy](#) and disinformation website [42TČen](#), which, according to the Czech Ministry of the Interior’s [Centre Against Hybrid Threats](#), is a known Russian propaganda outlet and a successor to the banned Czech version of the Russian state media outlet, Sputnik News – a [known spreader](#) of Russian disinformation internationally. Through her self-proclaimed patriotic stances, Zwyrték Hamplová disseminates [pro-Russian narratives](#).

¹⁵ The pro-Kremlin “peace” narrative frames negotiations and Ukrainian concessions as the only path to ending the war. It blames Ukraine and the West for provoking and prolonging the conflict, portraying military aid and sanctions as obstacles to peace. Meanwhile, it presents Russia as open to dialogue while downplaying its aggression and objectives.

¹⁶ Gender totality (or gender totalitarianism) is a term used by far-right and ultra-conservative groups to describe what they see as the forced imposition of progressive gender ideas, saying it is an authoritarian system that erases traditional gender roles, enforces new norms, and punishes those who disagree.

The [Tradiční rodina z.s](#) Facebook account was founded in response to what it describes as a [global push to undermine traditional family values](#) by LGBTQ+ and feminist activists. The Facebook page features various "educational" posts, often misinformative, aimed at opposing "gender indoctrination".

[Zuzana Majerová](#), the chairwoman of the far-right, national-conservative party "Trikolora" and a former MP, was an active denier of the COVID-19 pandemic, as reported by [iRozhlas](#), and spread disinformation about COVID-19 measures. She later began disseminating pro-Russian narratives about the war in Ukraine. This included alarmist reports on mobilisation, which, as reported by [Respekt](#), the police investigated as a potential criminal offence, as it was deemed a "false and misleading claim, spreading panic-inducing disinformation". Like other populist political figures, she embraced the [pro-Russian narrative on peace](#). She gave an interview to [Voice of Europe](#), a platform identified by the Czech Security Information Service (BIS) as funded by Russia and involved in efforts to influence European elections. According to [Seznam zprávy](#), she also gave an interview to the pro-Russian movement AllatRa, which the Ukrainian Security Services have described as an international criminal organisation operating in the interests of Russian intelligence services. Majerová also spoke against the Istanbul Convention, calling it a "[terrifying product of gender-feminist ideology](#)".

[Jindřich Rajchl](#) is a lawyer, activist, and the chairman of the eurosceptic, far-right PRO party, who gained attention for leading protests against COVID-19 measures and later against the government of Petr Fiala. Rajchl's Facebook page features various stances on current issues, frequently including opposition to things he perceives as threats to traditional family values and [gender ideology](#). He also often questions the country's Western orientation and echoes [pro-Russian narratives regarding the war in Ukraine](#). He also gave an interview to Russia-funded Voice of Europe and AllatRa, as reported by [Deník.cz](#) and [Seznam zprávy](#). During one of the demonstrations organised by Rajchl in March 2023, which attracted tens of thousands of participants, there were calls for ending arms supplies to Ukraine, lifting sanctions on Russia, and initiating peace talks with the Russian Federation. The demonstration saw pro-Russian symbols, such as Russian flags and the "Z" symbol. Some protesters also attempted to remove the Ukrainian flag from the National Museum, leading to clashes with the police, as described in the [Centre Against Hybrid Threats'](#) analysis of *Peace as a Kremlin Propaganda Narrative*.

Analysis of sample posts spreading gendered disinformation narratives related to the Istanbul Convention

The post with the highest number of interactions in this period was a video on Facebook from [Zděnek Hraba . váš senátor](#), a conservative MP nominated to the Senate by the Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS), published on 23 June 2023. In the video, Hraba claims the Istanbul Convention is an "ideological document that pushes gender ideology into law and the school curriculum, and finances gender NGOs," falsely conflating the convention with broader topics, misleadingly labelling these broader topics including teaching on gender equality as "gender ideology" and ignoring the Convention's focus - the reduction of violence against women and domestic violence.¹⁷ This post was viewed approximately 103,500 times and had a total of 7,731 interactions, including reactions, comments, and shares.

¹⁷ Notably, although [Article 14](#) of the Istanbul Convention encourages school curriculum to include instruction about gender equality, it does not require it, and the characterisation of "gender equality" as "gender ideology" frames "gender equality" as a superfluous and potentially dangerously political issue.



Republikou rezonuje: Máme vás dost. Odejděte!!!



Senátoři napříč spektrem naopak 24.1. neustoupili tlaku až křiku a odmítli ratifikovat skrytou **gender ideologii** v podobě trojského koně **Istanbulské úmluvy** - byť těsně, a nelze vyloučit snahu to v budoucnu nějak zvrátit... Ale zaplať bůh za to. 🍀❤️

Figure 19: Excerpt of post by Jana Zwyrtěk Hamplová fanpage on Facebook on 26 January 2024, with keyword search terms highlighted in text (Source: Archived on Gerulata, 2 April 2025).

The post with the highest number of interactions shared in January 2024 was a post on Facebook from the fanpage of Jana Zwyrtěk Hamplová (Figure 3),¹⁸ an independent Czech senator known for spreading COVID-19 disinformation and pro-Kremlin narratives about Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In her 26 January 2024 post, she calls the Istanbul Convention a “Trojan horse” and “perverse”, with the “Trojan horse” implying that the Convention would lead to unwanted and more widespread change under the guise of promoting women's rights. Although Hamplová's Facebook page is no longer available and current interaction data is inaccessible, according to archived Gerulata data, the post had 2,657 interactions and an estimated 60,790 views.



Figure 20: Excerpt of a post by Tomio Okamura saying the Istanbul Convention tears apart families and promotes class hatred and discrimination against men (Source: [Facebook](#), 26 January 2024).

Figure 4 is an image of a [Facebook post](#) shared by Tomio Okamura. It includes an image of Thomas Neuwirth, the gay Austrian singer, actor, activist, and drag queen, dressed as his stage persona, Conchita Wurst, who won the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest. The circle of stars on

¹⁸ Original source is inaccessible, as it was deleted.

the EU flag is photoshopped to appear as a halo around Conchita's head. In the bottom-right corner of the image is a picture of a crying toddler being held by his mother. The child and his mother appear to have light skin and blond hair, while Conchita's skin is slightly darker. The caption of the image at the bottom centre of the frame says: "THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION IS A GENDERED TOTALITARIAN MONSTROSITY!" This imagery uses religious symbolism and racial, gendered, and emotional elements. Depicting LGBTQ+ individuals in stark contrast to young mothers and children is clearly designed to incite fear and hatred against the queer community.

Okamura's comments in the post, including that the Istanbul Convention is designed to break up families, incite "class hatred" of men against women, or lead to discrimination against men, are false claims spread to incite fear and promote the SPD's political platform. According to the [Council of Europe](#), which introduced the Istanbul Convention in 2011, it seeks to prevent domestic violence, which disproportionately affects women. The term "gender" in the convention is used to explain the different ways men and women are affected by violence, and in particular, domestic violence. The convention also encourages member states to implement gender equality measures to ensure equal treatment and opportunity for all persons, regardless of gender. Therefore, Okamura's claim that the Istanbul Convention is 'totalitarian' is false.

[The Association for Societal Responsibility](#), an environmental, social, and governance initiative focused on implementing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in Czechia, identified the false claim that the Convention endangered family values and traditions as one of the most common myths in Czechia around the Convention.

European Parliament Election in Czechia in 2024

The European Parliament (EP) Elections were held on 7 and 8 June 2024. According to the [Czech Statistical Office](#), the election winner was Andrej Babiš's political party, ANO ('Yes' party), which won 26.14% of the vote. STAN (Starostové a nezávislí; Mayors and Independents) won 8.7% of the vote, and the SPD and Trikolora coalition won 5.73%. Notably, many accounts found to have posted keywords associated with negative gender stereotypes or hate speech regarding the EP election were members of political parties that won seats in the EP election; these channels are listed in the "Actors spreading gendered disinformation relating to the EP election" section of the report.

The STAN coalition, with successful candidate Danuše Nerudová elected as MEP in 2024, was found to be the target of smear campaigns and disinformation. A study conducted by [Transparency International CR](#) found that STAN was the party most targeted by false content, mis and dis-information in the EP election. This finding is also corroborated by this research, as analysts have identified a significant increase in keywords related to negative gender stereotypes and hostile/inflammatory rhetoric related to Danuše Nerudová and the EP election.

Gender disinformation about the 2024 EP election in Czechia

The prevalence of gendered disinformation and keywords associated with negative gender stereotypes or hate speech in Czechia increased significantly, leading up to and following the EP election, with Czech-language, public gendered disinformation posts relating to the EP election being viewed at least 1.35 million times.

The first spike in gendered disinformation occurred from March 2024 to May 2024, mirroring the campaign and election timeline for the EP elections of 7 and 8 June 2024. This can be seen in Figure 5. The spike consisted of 525 posts, with approximately 619,000 views and approximately 52,730 interactions, including reactions, comments, and shares, an approximate tenfold increase in posts containing keywords associated with negative gender stereotypes or hate speech.



Figure 21: A graph of the number of posts containing negative gender keywords related to the EP Elections in Czechia across multiple platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, TikTok, X, and web articles) from January 2022 to January 2025 (Source: MEMO98 analysis via Gerulata).

The post with the most interactions during this spike was released on Facebook on 7 April 2024 by PRO-oficiální, a far-right and nationalist Czech political party led by Jindřich Rajchl. This [post](#) reacts to the 2024 Slovak Presidential Election results, congratulating Slovaks on the election of Peter Pellegrini and rejecting “woke ideology.” This post was viewed approximately 14,000 times and had a total of 915 interactions, including reactions, comments, and shares.

The second increase of gendered disinformation related to the EP election consisted of two smaller spikes between August 2024 and January 2025. This consisted of 670 posts containing keywords associated with negative gender stereotypes or hate rhetoric in Czechia, an approximate increase of 650% compared to March 2024. These posts received approximately 701,800 views and 33,510 interactions, including reactions, comments, and shares.

While this second increase in keywords was not centred around a specific topic, gendered disinformation narratives related to the EP election continued to be used more frequently from August 2024 to January 2025, compared with the years immediately before the EP election. Posts analysed contained common disinformation narratives seen to have been spread by Czech far-right politicians about the Brussels “dictatorship,” or the imposition of a “gender ideology.” For example, a post by [Ivana Turková](#), a member of the far-right nationalist Czech party PRO, published on 24 October 2024, claims Danuše Nerudová, a successful candidate in the 2024 EP Elections, is imposing a “gender ideology” in schools.

Actors spreading gendered disinformation relating to the EP Election

Summary













Channels		Content	Interactions	Views	Followers
 	Tomio Okamura - SPD	67	162.7k	143.9k	409.1k
 	V.O.X. NEWS	3	14.32k	294.4k	74.9k
 	Radim Fiala - SPD	27	14.1k	158	118k
 	Tomio Okamura SPD	38	12.1k	57.46k	45.58k
 	Andrej Babiš	7	10.62k	53.3k	417k
 	MUDr. Ivan David	7	10.11k	346	72.62k

Figure 22: A table highlighting the social media accounts with the most interactions on gendered disinformation posts relating to the EP election in Czechia between 1 January, 2022, and 1 January, 2025 (Source: MEMO98 analysis via Gerulata).

The dominant spreaders of gendered disinformation related to the EP election, as identified by the research, include five accounts of prominent political figures and one independent media channel. Those accounts identified as top spreaders of gendered disinformation related to the EP election are Tomio Okamura - SPD on Facebook, V.O.X. NEWS on YouTube, Radim Fiala - SPD on Facebook, Tomio Okamura SPD on Instagram, Andrej Babiš on Facebook, and MUDr. Ivan David on Facebook.

Four of these accounts belong to members of the far-right SPD, a party that built its [electoral program](#) around radical opposition to: the EU, support for Ukraine, migration, the Green Deal, and what it calls 'neo-Marxist, genderist, and multicultural agendas and indoctrination'.

Detail

SPD leader [Tomio Okamura's](#) Facebook account generated by far the most interactions (ten times more than the other five accounts), and his [Instagram account](#) also ranked among the top six spreaders of gendered disinformation.

[Radim Fiala](#), co-founder and vice chairman of SPD and an MP, uses his social media primarily to share posts from the official Facebook account of SPD, highlighting his criticism of [the EU](#) and [government policies](#), including what he considers [threats to the traditional family](#) and ['gender ideology'](#). He frequently amplifies pro-Kremlin narratives on Ukraine and shares links to disinformation sites such as [Parlamentní listy](#), to which he also contributes, [Protiproud](#), and [První zprávy](#). With a history of controversial business ties and pro-Russian sympathies, as documented by [Atlas vlivu](#), he defended Crimea's annexation after visiting the Russian parliament in 2017 and questioned Czech intelligence on the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation's (GRU's) role in the [Vrbětice explosions](#).

[Ivan David](#) is another prominent member of the SPD and an MEP in the far-right faction of The Europe of Sovereign Nations. His posts align with common [SPD narratives](#), emphasising anti-immigration, anti-EU, and anti-Ukrainian sentiment while also frequently reposting content about illiberal politicians such as Slovakia Prime Minister Robert [Fico](#), US President Donald

[Trump](#), and Hungary Prime Minister Viktor [Orbán](#). David is known for running the now-blocked disinformation website [Nová republika](#), which published articles echoing official Russian positions justifying its actions towards Ukraine and the West. The [Centre Against Hybrid Threats](#) has detailed how the website adopts and promotes official Kremlin propaganda and disinformation narratives.

[Andrej Babiš](#) is a Slovak-born politician and former prime minister. He is the founder and leader of the populist ANO party, which is currently profiled as conservative. The party was the most successful in the 2024 EP election and currently leads in the polls for the upcoming parliamentary elections. As a businessman and the richest person in the Czech Republic, he has controversial business ties, documented by [Atlas vlivu](#), and an alleged record of working for the StB, the secret police force in communist Czechoslovakia, as reported by [ČT24](#) and [Aktuálně](#), which he denies. On his Facebook account, he frequently [criticises the government of Petr Fiala](#) and shares populist-leaning¹⁹ messages, but mostly posts relatable content from his personal life, his campaign, and meetings with ordinary citizens.

[V.O.X. NEWS](#) is an independent internet TV and a YouTube channel. According to [Seznam Zprávy](#), V.O.X. is an anti-liberal project that shares relatively marginal views on society and regularly hosts controversial guests.

Danuše Nerudová

Danuše Nerudová is an MEP elected in June 2024. According to her website [danusenerudova.cz](#), she is an economist, professor, politician, and mother. She became the first female president of the Czech Republic's Mendel University in Brno, as reported by [Brněnský deník](#). In 2023, Nerudová ran in the Czech Presidential Election. In the first round in January 2023, she finished third with 13.92% of the vote and did not advance to the second round of the election. Though her presidential candidacy in 2023 was unsuccessful, Nerudová won approximately 780,000 votes, which is the most votes [won](#) by any female candidate in Czech history. In 2024, she joined the STAN coalition and became the leader of their EP candidate list. She secured a seat in the June 2024 EP election.

Nerudová became the target of disinformation during both her 2023 presidential campaign and 2023 EP campaign. According to [Aktuálně.cz](#), during her presidential campaign, common disinformation narratives spread about her, claiming she would abolish free healthcare in Czechia or that she was a puppet of Prime Minister Fiala's government. Researchers also found disinformation posts saying Nerudová would be part of the "Brussels dictatorship" and other posts saying she was promoting a "gender ideology" in the lead-up to the 2024 EP Election.

Gendered disinformation and abuse targeting Danuše Nerudová in Czechia

The prevalence of gendered disinformation and keywords associated with negative gender stereotypes or hate speech related to Danuše Nerudová increased significantly leading up to the first round of the Czech presidential election in January 2023, the June 2024 EP election, and

¹⁹ Populism is a communication and political strategy that positions "the people" against "the elites," who, according to populists, do not represent the interests of ordinary citizens. It is not an ideology in the sense of a comprehensive worldview but rather draws on various values from traditional ideologies, depending on the specific conflict between the people and the elites that it seeks to reflect, as defined by [Radiožurnál](#) Encyclopedia.

from August to December 2024, when Nerudová was publicly attacked by far-right MEPs and Czech politicians, including attacks on her intelligence and appearance. Public gender disinformation posts relating to Nerudová were viewed at least 3.5 million times over the data observation period.

Notably, one of the accounts identified during the manual validation process of posts containing relevant keywords was Danuše Nerudová's own account. Researchers consider Nerudová's posts defending herself against gender-based attacks online to have a positive influence in the sphere of gender disinformation. Thus, the total number of results, interactions and views in this sample not only includes posts spreading gender disinformation; they also account for posts with a positive influence on the discussions around gender and politics in Czechia. Based on the data from Gerulata, two of the 1,884 results in this sample were posts shared by Danuše Nerudová herself. These two posts had approximately 139,600 combined views and approximately 11,270 interactions.

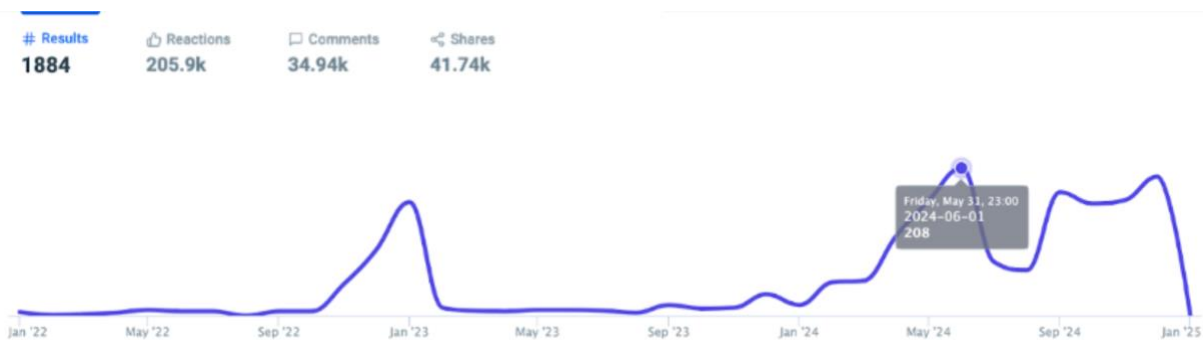


Figure 23: shows posts containing negative gender keywords related to Danuše Nerudová across multiple platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, TikTok, X, and web articles) from January 2022 to January 2025. (Source: MEMO98 analysis via Gerulata.)

The first increase in gendered disinformation related to Danuše Nerudová can be seen in figure 7 from October 2022 to January 2023. This shows an average nine-fold increase of posts containing gendered disinformation keywords compared with non-peak months, culminating with 160 pieces of negative content in January 2023. This significant increase in hateful rhetoric occurred in the lead-up to the first round of the Czech presidential election, in which Danuše Nerudová was a candidate.

The second increase in gendered disinformation related to Danuše Nerudová occurred between March 2023 and May 2024, as can be seen in Figure 7. This shows an average fifteen-fold increase of posts containing gendered disinformation keywords compared with non-peak months, culminating in 208 pieces of content in May 2024. This significant increase in hateful rhetoric occurred in the lead-up to the EP election, in which Danuše Nerudová was elected as an MEP representing the Czech coalition STAN.

The third increase in gendered disinformation related to Danuše Nerudová occurred between August 2024 and December 2024, as can be seen in Figure 7. This increase consists of two spikes of content across social media platforms that contained keywords associated with

negative gender stereotypes or hate speech, an average 16-fold increase compared with non-peak months. December 2024 was the month with the highest number of posts (196.).

Actors sharing gendered disinformation posts on Danuše Nerudová












Name	Content	Interactions	Views	Followers
  Jindřich Rajchl	4	26.53k	35.56k	99.55k
  Jsem zděšena	6	16.66k	21.02k	65.45k
  Hranatost	1	15.03k	93.49k	103.8k
  Karla Maříková	1	13.2k	35.59k	114.6k
  Petra Rádová	7	13.05k	37.99k	55.32k
  Danuše Nerudová 	2	11.27k	139.6k	141.5k

Figure 24: A table highlighting the social media accounts with the most interactions on posts containing gendered disinformation keywords relating to Danuše Nerudová in Czechia between 1 January 2022 and 1 January 2025 (Source: MEMO98 via Gerulata).

The top accounts generating the most interactions based on the selected keywords include two unofficial accounts supporting Nerudová's political opponents and critics, Hranatost and Jsem Zděšena, along with three individuals known for amplifying pro-Kremlin narratives: far-right SPD MP Karla Maříková, disinformation influencer Petra Rádová, and anti-establishment politician [Jindřich Rajchl](#), known for organising anti-government demonstrations and promoting populist disinformation and [pro-Russian narratives](#) about the war in Ukraine. He actively criticised Nerudová, sharing content on [Facebook](#) designed to ridicule her and portray her as unintelligent.

Although these accounts vary in how frequently and intensely they attacked Nerudová, as well as in their tone and level of hostility, all aimed to portray her as incompetent, most often by reposting newspaper headlines and selectively edited debate clips to ridicule her and cast doubt on her intelligence, capabilities, and moral integrity.

The anonymous Facebook account [Jsem zděšena](#) ("I'm appalled"), also active on X, shares [negative posts](#), [collages](#), and [memes](#) targeting Andrej Babiš's opponents and journalists, including Danuše Nerudová.

The Facebook account [Hranatost](#) ("Squareness") promotes Filip Turek, a Czech politician and MEP for the Motorists party – the far-right EP faction Patriots for Europe – who built his profile on defending combustion engines and embracing a masculine self-image. He brought significant attention to the party when he ran as the "[super leader](#)" of the Czech Oath and Motorists coalition in the 2024 EP elections, gaining the second-highest number of preferential votes among all candidates. The account features Turek's stances on current issues, reaction videos, and excerpts from interviews, as well as memes and posts aimed at ridiculing his political opponents and their views. A significant portion of the account's attention during the period leading up to the EP elections focused on criticising [Danuše Nerudová](#) – her opinions, behaviour, and actions – sometimes in a serious tone, but most often mockingly.

[Karla Maříková](#), an MP for the SPD, shares content mirroring the party's rhetoric that undermines the [EU](#), [NATO](#), [aid to Ukraine](#), and [solidarity with refugees](#). She shares content from and contributes to disinformation websites like [Parlamentní listy](#) and [42TČen](#). [Maříková](#) has spread disinformation primarily about the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination, as documented by [Atlas vlivu](#). She also promotes [pro-Russian narratives](#) about the war in Ukraine. The MEP also shared [content](#) targeting Danuše Nerudová, aiming to discredit her moral integrity and undermine her capabilities.

[Petra Rádová](#) is a well-known Czech disinformation spreader and UK-based nurse focusing on esotericism and alternative medicine, as reported by [Aktuálně.cz](#). According to [Respekt](#), she sold cosmetic products from the Russian company Faberlic, founded by Alexey Nechayev, the leader of the Russian parliamentary party New People. She gained attention during the COVID-19 pandemic for spreading false information about public health and, according to [Aktuálně.cz](#), presenting herself as an ICU nurse from Brno, which was untrue. After briefly being part of the PRO 2022 party, she, like many others who routinely spread disinformation, shifted from COVID-related disinformation to promoting [pro-Kremlin narratives about the war in Ukraine](#). Rádová also engaged in attacks against Danuše Nerudová but used more vulgar language. For example, in one [Facebook post](#), she called Nerudová a "symbol of stupidity, depravity, and a security risk to anyone in her vicinity."

Responding to gendered disinformation

Notably, one of the accounts identified during the manual validation process as sharing gendered disinformation keywords targeting Nerudová is her own Instagram account, which, on a small number of occasions, she used to cite and challenge instances of gendered disinformation and abuse. Nerudová shared several posts on Instagram in which she quotes and reacts to gendered attacks, debunks false claims made by some politicians, and explains her policies. For example, in a video posted on [Instagram](#) on 24 April 2024, a few months before the EP election, Nerudová reacts to a statement by Filip Turek, saying that the carbon dioxide (CO₂) that Nerudová emits is comparable to that of a cow, clearly likening her to a cow. [Turek](#) suggests that to mitigate CO₂ emissions, people should just stop breathing. Responding to Turek, Nerudová criticises his attacks, debunks his statements about CO₂ emissions, and suggests that instead of wasting time attacking other politicians, he should act to improve the environment.

After a sample review of comments under Nerudová's posts, researchers found many negative comments insulting Nerudová or calling her posts embarrassing, indicating a negative response. Even though the reaction to Nerudová's posts defending herself against gendered attacks was mixed, her messaging had significant reach on Czech social media with approximately 72,840 views and 5850 interactions, including reactions, comments, and shares.

Analysis of sample post spreading gendered disinformation narratives related to Danuše Nerudová

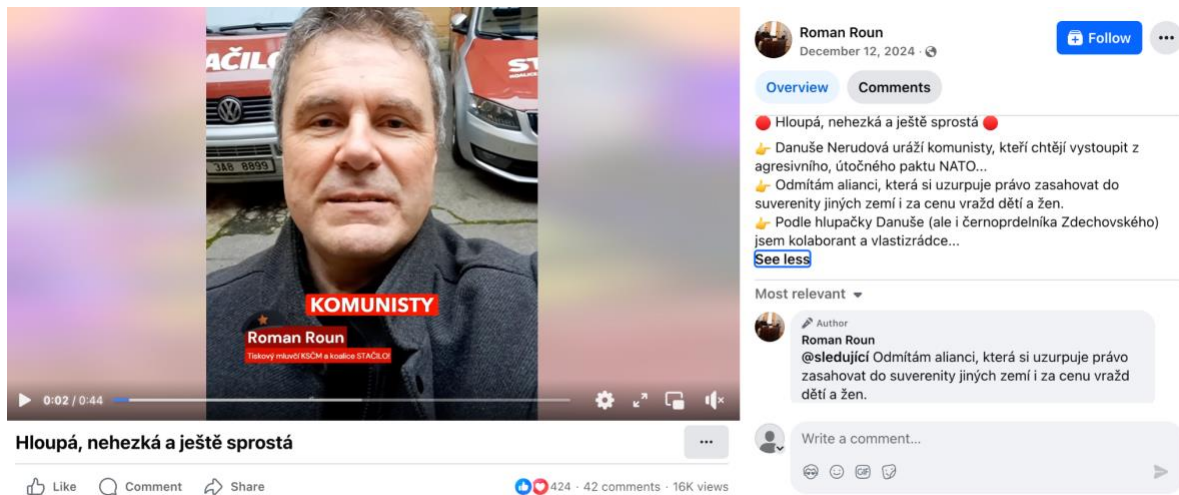


Figure 25: A 12 December 2024 Post by Roman Roun, speaker of the Communist Party of Czechia and Moravia (KSČM), calling Nerudová “stupid, ugly, and vulgar.” (Source: [Facebook](#)).

This post, published by Roman Roun, speaker of the Communist Party of Czechia and Moravia (KSČM), is an example of a gendered attack targeting Danuše Nerudová. In the post’s description, Roun calls Nerudová stupid, ugly, and vulgar and repeats insults about her intelligence multiple times, ostensibly to discredit her as a competent political actor. In the actual video he posted, he claims, “NATO is responsible for raping and murdering women and children”, without providing any further information about his claim or sources or evidence.

While it is impossible to determine what Roun was referring to when he made the comments, it might have been a 2004 report in which [Amnesty International](#) found NATO troops had contributed to the sex trade in Kosovo. If this is what he was referring to, he did not mention that, in the 20-plus years since the report was released, NATO [adopted](#) a policy in 2004 to combat human trafficking and updated its policy in 2023 in efforts to prevent, mitigate, and respond to instances of human trafficking.

Roun’s post was published in response to a 5 December 2024 post on X from [Nerudová](#), in which she responded to the KSČM’s call for Czechia to leave NATO, calling the members of KSČM “traitors” and telling them to “go to hell.” Nerudová’s harsh language sparked a [discussion](#) on the appropriateness of her statement, with Czechs arguing she had “stooped” to the level of the extremists she persistently criticises. Although the tweet sparked some legitimate criticism, Roun’s Facebook post is an example of gendered attacks calling Nerudová’s political competence into question. Yet, along with legitimate criticism of Nerudová’s statement, she also endured a wave of misogynistic insults coupled with an anti-EU, anti-NATO, anti-West disinformation campaign.

As attacks on one’s appearance and intelligence more commonly target women, Roun’s post in which he calls Nerudová “stupid, ugly, and vulgar” is an example of an insult of a gendered nature. Based on a study using quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse tweets about male and female MPs ahead of the 2019 UK General Elections, researchers found that comments about appearance, sexual history, violence, as well as more emotional or extreme language were more likely to target female politicians. The study, [Gender and politics in a digitalised world](#), published by Discourse & Society, concludes that abusive messages targeting

women were “deeply embedded in social perception of women’s political activity as breaching the rules of gender performativity.”

KSČM has advocated for Czechia to leave the EU and NATO for years, and its members have given interviews to Russia’s Sputnik News. In 2016, former vice-chairman of KSČM Jozef Skála was interviewed by [Sputnik Česká republika](#), advocating for Czechia to leave NATO and the EU and spreading pro-Kremlin messaging. Sputnik Česká republika, was [deactivated](#) on 25 February 2022 in reaction to protecting the information space from Russian propaganda, one day after the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Notably, although Skála’s interview with Sputnik Česká republika was also mentioned on KSČM’s website, the article has since been deleted. The original KSČM article has been [archived](#).

3.2 TIES BETWEEN GENDERED AND OTHER FORMS OF DISINFORMATION

The seed list of disinformation accounts was identified through the actors identified in the spike analysis. Analysts combined these findings with expertise within MEMO 98 and Women in Media to build a network map showing the disinformation landscape in Czechia. In the network maps below, the circles (nodes) represent accounts, and the lines (edges) represent the sharing activity between accounts. The larger the node, the larger the following of the account; the thicker the line between nodes, the more frequently content is shared between them. Arrows on the lines represent the flow of information when content is shared. An arrow from node X to node Y would mean node Y shared content by node X. A high-resolution, zoomable pdf document of the network map will be shared separately, as an additional annex to this document, for ease of viewing (for more detailed information on the network mapping, see also Annex 4.3 Network Graphs Methods – In-Depth).

Czechia’s disinformation landscape

In Czechia, disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories often [circulate](#) through social media platforms and disinformation websites. In recent years, key disinformation themes have centred around the COVID-19 pandemic, immigration, and the war in Ukraine. Channels spreading disinformation gained significant public attention during the pandemic, with some actors later shifting their focus from health-related disinformation to Russia’s war in Ukraine. Common narratives include scepticism toward the West, anti-EU, anti-NATO, and anti-liberal rhetoric based on false claims, including portraying West as morally corrupt, often contrasted with patriotism, tradition, nationalism, and sometimes also pan-Slavic sentiment. These narratives frequently intersect with Kremlin-aligned messaging and contain elements that serve the Kremlin’s hybrid activities aimed at destabilising societies and eroding trust in the media and democratic institutions.

Firstly, disinformation, and gendered disinformation in particular, are predominantly disseminated by anti-establishment voices, which consist of a diverse group of citizens dissatisfied with the social, political, or economic situation. While they adopt a patriotic label, they often absorb elements aligned with the Russian regime, expressing distrust in the democratic system and admiration for the Russian government, as reported by the [Czech Ministry of the Interior’s 2023](#) annual report on extremism. In the network map (Figure 10), these anti-establishment voices are most notably represented by Jindřich Rajchl and Jana Zwyrtková, along with support from various alternative media platforms spreading

disinformation narratives, such as Raptor and Parlamentní listy. Secondly, there is a significant overlap in the narratives disseminated by the anti-establishment figures and messaging found among members of far-right, populist political parties, another leading group of common disseminators of gendered disinformation in Czechia. Whether intentionally or not, they amplify narratives that align with Kremlin propaganda and spread disinformation through their populist messaging. In the network map (Figure 10), this is most clearly represented by politicians from the SPD and Trikolora and, to some extent, by certain ANO politicians.

Thirdly, an important group to consider is the conservative traditionalists, who concentrate on resisting progressive values without opposing the government or democratic institutions. They typically do not align with pro-Russian stances or engage directly with broader disinformation networks, though this is not a strict rule. In the graph, this group is represented by Aliance pro rodinu, an ultra-conservative organisation, Tradiční rodina z.s, and Zdeněk Hraba, which ranked among the top disseminators of gendered disinformation in the spike analysis.

Network graph analysis

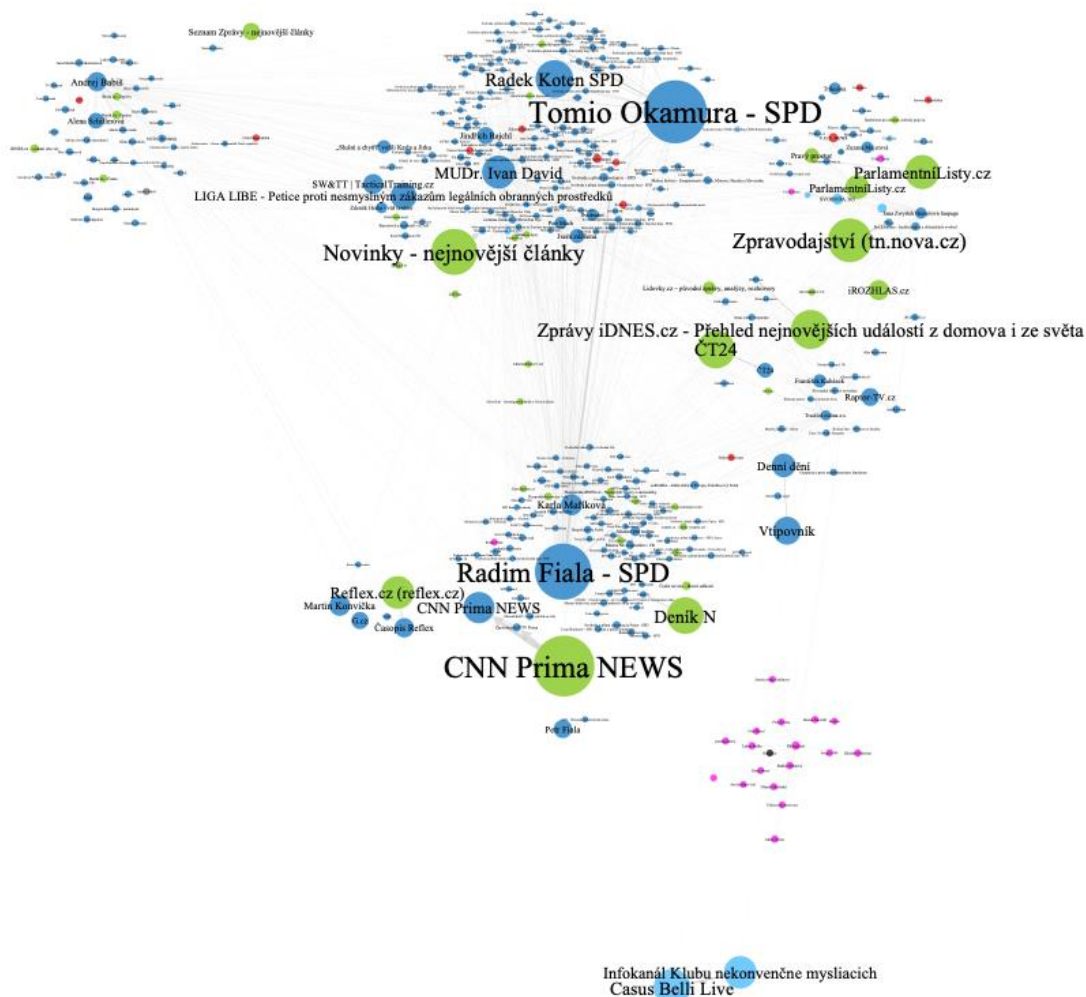


Figure 26: Screenshot of a network graph excerpt showing accounts connected to actors disseminating gendered disinformation in Czechia (source: MEMO98 via Gephi).

The graph structure highlights a highly interconnected environment where a few central actors are amplified by supporting accounts. The most influential ‘node’ (social media account or channel, represented by a circle) is SPD leader Tomio Okamura’s Facebook account, identified as the top gendered disinformation spreader. Other significant nodes in the top five include CNN Prima News, a media channel; SPD’s Radim Fiala, also identified as one of the top disinformation spreaders; Novinky, one of the most-visited news websites; and Zpravodajství TV Nova, the online news portal of TV Nova.

The five most prominent nodes in the network reflect the trend in the overall distribution of nodes across different platform types. Among 376 nodes, Facebook dominates (78.19%), reflecting its popularity in Czechia. Websites, including official, private, and quasi-media, account for 10.11%, while Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, and X appear in smaller numbers.

Political actors as amplifiers of disinformation

One of the patterns visible in the graph, reflecting a broader trend in the Czech disinformation space, is that certain politicians are frequent contributors to disinformation websites. According to [European Values](#), for some political parties that embrace populist rhetoric, this serves as a way to present their views on various issues and events to potential voters in a manner that appears factual.

The spike analysis indicates that these actors typically align with the right-wing populist to the far-right nationalist-conservative political spectrum. In the network graph, they are represented by the SPD, Trikolora, and ANO. The following section analyses two prominent and more influential clusters centred around SPD’s Tomio Okamura and ANO’s Andrej Babiš.

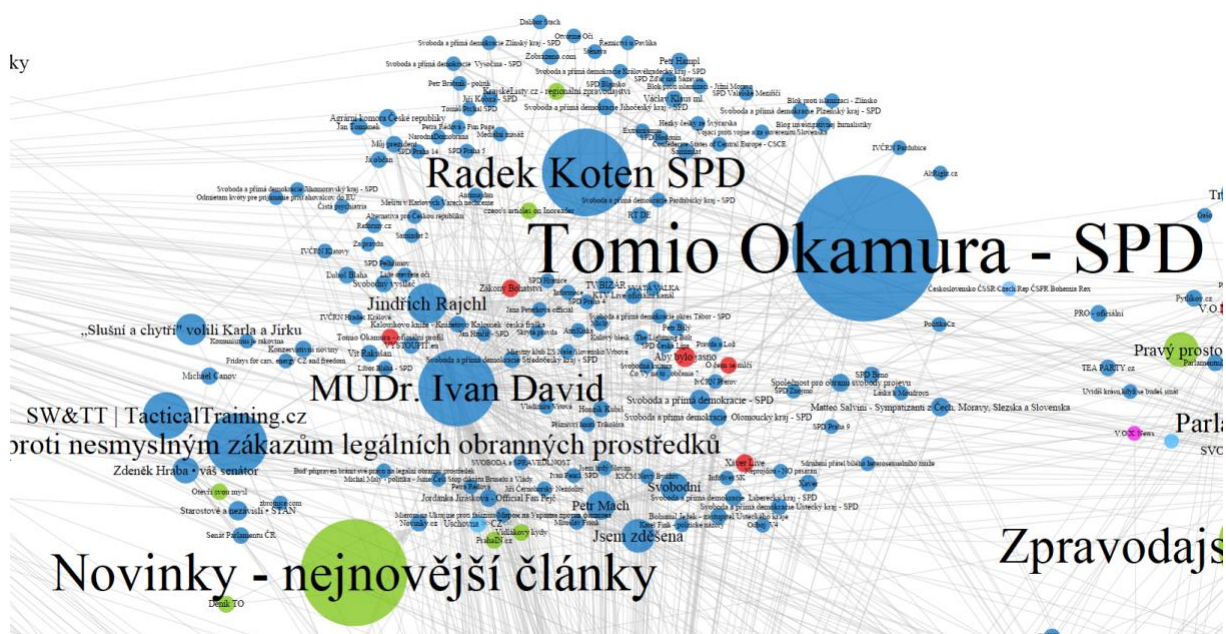


Figure 27: Screenshot of a network graph excerpt showing Tomio Okamura’s connections (Source: MEMO98 via Gephi).

Examining Tomio Okamura and his surrounding cluster, the graph reveals that he is primarily amplified by other SPD members, as well as the party's regional and district branches, as illustrated in Figure 11. Other influential SPD figures, Radim Fiala, Radek Koten, and Ivan David, ranked 3rd, 8th, and 12th in terms of how frequently their content was reshared. Similarly to Okamura, Koten has fewer overall connections but is linked to highly influential nodes represented by prominent SPD politicians.

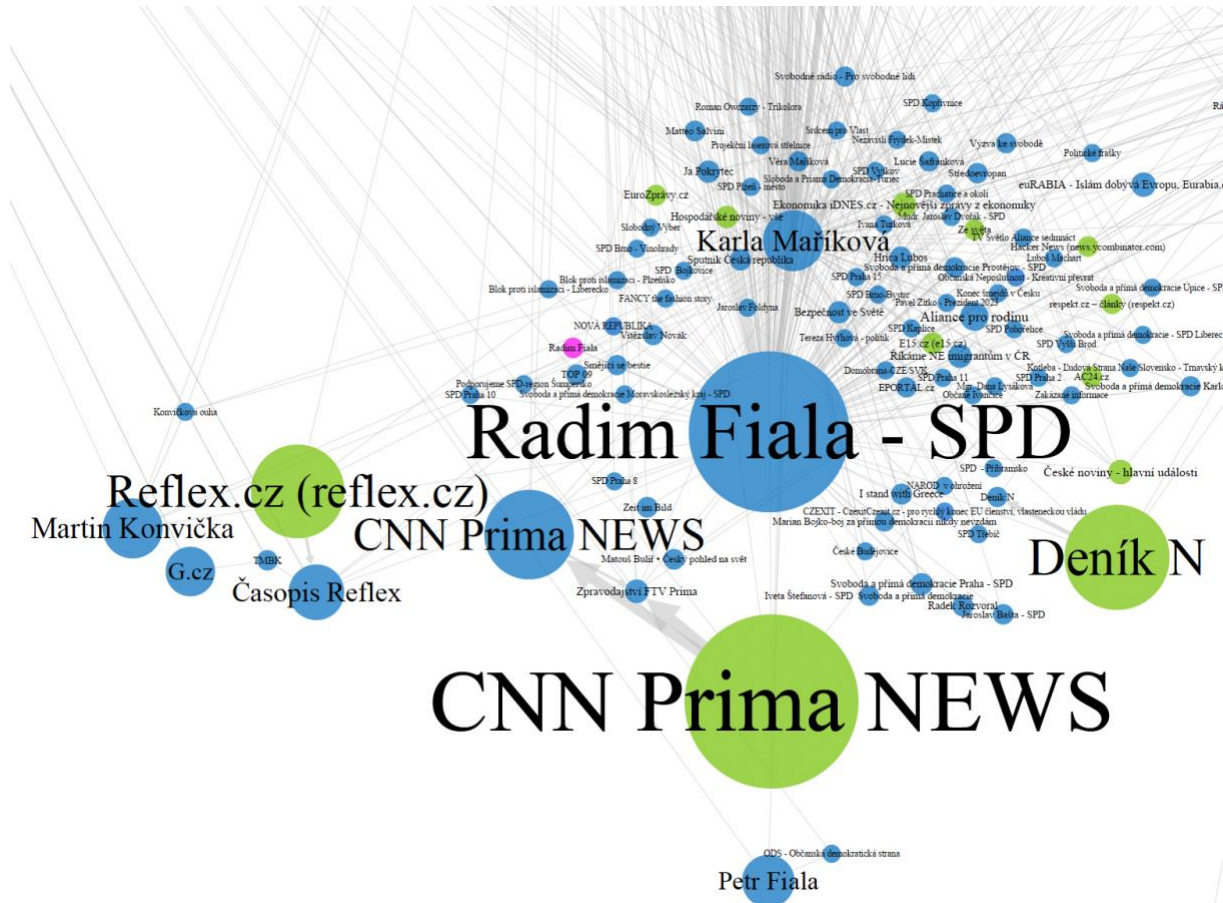


Figure 28: Screenshot of a network graph excerpt showing Radim Fiala's connections (Source: MEMO98 via Gephi).

Radim Fiala was identified as one of the leading spreaders of disinformation in the gendered disinformation activity spike analysis (section 3.1). According to the graph, Fiala is highly active in amplifying the content of other actors in his network, including relatively marginal groups. Figure 12 provides a more detailed view of his connections, which encompass various Facebook groups that align with nationalist-conservative messaging, patriotic, anti-EU, and anti-immigration rhetoric, and quasi-media platforms. Apart from reputable news outlets, fellow SPD members, and Parlamentní listy, the largest node connected to Radim Fiala is the Facebook group LIGA LIBE - Petice proti nesmyslným zákazům legálních obranných prostředků (LIGA

LIBE - Petition Against Senseless Bans on Legal Self-Defense Tools), which he frequently reposts.

Other notable Fiala connections include the ultra-conservative group *Aliance pro rodinu* and several anti-Islam Facebook groups, including the disinformation page *euRabia - Islám dobývá Evropu*, *euRabia.cz ji brání* (*euRabia - Islam Conquers Europe, euRabia.cz Defends It*), and *Říkáme ne migrantům v ČR* (*We Say No to Migrants in the Czech Republic*). The graph also reveals Fiala's connection to the Slovak gendered disinformation scene: he reposted content from Slovak pro-Russian politician Ľuboš Blaha and the propagator of disinformation, Ľuboš Hrica. Fiala's posts were amplified by *Kotleba – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko – Trnavský kraj*, the regional page of the far-right, neo-Nazi political party Kotlebists.

Ivan David's network follows similar patterns, with numerous smaller nodes linked to anti-Islam rhetoric, including regional versions of the *Islám v ČR nechceme* (*We Don't Want Islam in the Czech Republic*) movement and *Blok proti islamizaci* (*Bloc Against Islamisation*). One of the mid-sized nodes amplifying both Koteň's and David's content is Martin Konvička, the most well-known anti-Islam activist. This sentiment against Islam is a recurring theme in connections to SPD politicians in the network graph, where it thematically intersects with nationalist and patriotic groups. The graph also highlights David's other significant connections, illustrating his admiration for 'strong' far-right politicians, as noted in the spike analysis. This includes two nodes for Matteo Salvini, the Italian far-right politician, and a Facebook group for his supporters from the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

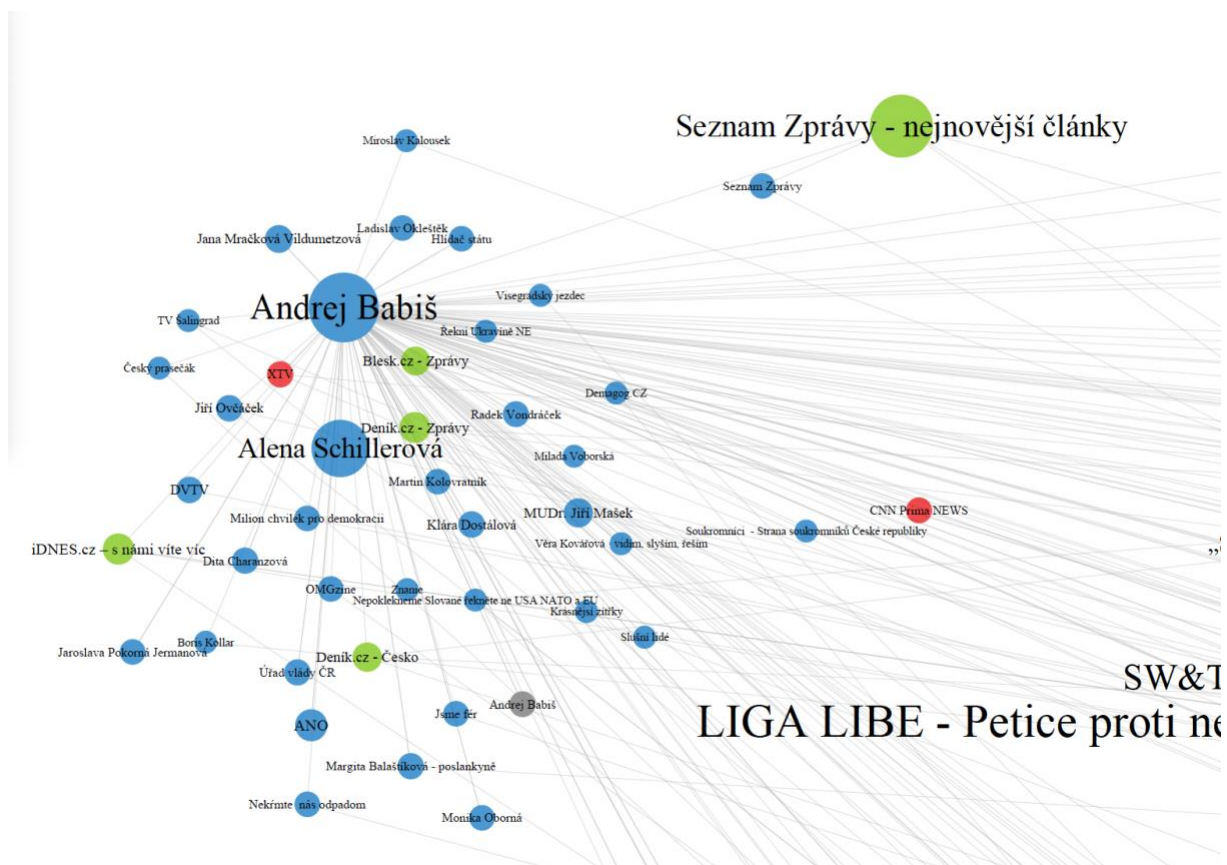


Figure 29: Screenshot of a network graph excerpt of the ANO cluster with Andrej Babiš's connections highlighted (source: MEMO98 via Gephi).

Similar to the cluster of SPD politicians who amplify each other's content, there is a cluster of ANO politicians centred around Andrej Babiš. Another influential node is ANO MP Alena Schillerová, in the top left of the graph. It is significantly smaller than the SPD network, with weaker connections. Babiš is the 25th largest node, but his connections extend across the entire graph, primarily due to his reposting of content from mainstream media outlets. Among his most influential connected nodes, apart from mainstream news channels, are Parlamentní listy and LIGA LIBE.

Manipulation of mainstream news content

A closer look at the content amplified by influential political actors reveals that the network as a whole, as well as these politicians' connections, includes a relatively high number of news platforms with a high out-degree. This means their content is frequently shared by other actors, making them rank among the most influential actors in the network. These are state media like ČT24 (the 7th largest node), private news channels such as Zpravodajství TV (the 5th largest node), and CNN Prima NEWS (the 2nd largest node), and news websites such as Novinky (the 4th largest node), Zprávy iDNES.cz (the 2nd largest node) and Deník N (the 10th largest node).

This demonstrates an interesting trend: a significant portion of the amplified content originates from legitimate sources that can be, with some reservations, considered serious journalism.

However, since most actors share this content to serve their political messaging, they often present it to fit their needs, meaning that even truthful information can become misinformation through selective presentation, omission of context, or manipulative framing. This does not necessarily involve outright deception but rather the strategic use of snippets, interview cutouts, or article headlines to reinforce their stances or criticise the government, the EU, and other matters. In many cases, such content is accompanied by biased or misleading descriptions designed to provoke an emotional response and encourage widespread sharing.

‘Alternative’ media as amplifiers of disinformation and pro-Russian narratives

Alongside reputable media outlets, which are distributed relatively evenly throughout the graph, there exists another cluster of websites and Facebook accounts in the top right corner of the network map, along with several additional nodes connected. These actors can be classified as ‘alternative’ media platforms and play a significant role in disseminating disinformation, Kremlin propaganda, and anti-establishment narratives, along with racist, antisemitic, or anti-gender narratives. According to the [Ministry of the Interior’s](#) 2023 annual report on extremism, such alternative media platforms inundate the online space with half-truths or fabricated information; these narratives are often accompanied by manipulative messages about the Russian Federation, which is frequently portrayed as a defender of law and justice, protecting "traditional values" from minorities and societal decadence.

The most significant among these is Parlamentní listy (the 11th largest node of the graph), which is one of the most-read Czech quasi-media outlets. According to research by experts from [Masaryk University](#), it operates at the intersection of serious journalism and the grey zone of pro-Kremlin manipulation. Nevertheless, many Czech politicians regard it as a legitimate platform for self-presentation, contributing through articles and interviews and sharing its content. This pattern is evident in Figure 14, a closeup of the network map focusing on Parlamentní listy, where it is linked to members of the Chamber of Deputies, most notably members of SPD, as well as ANO leader and former Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, senator Jana Zvyrtek Hamplová, and anti-establishment politician Jiří Rajchl.

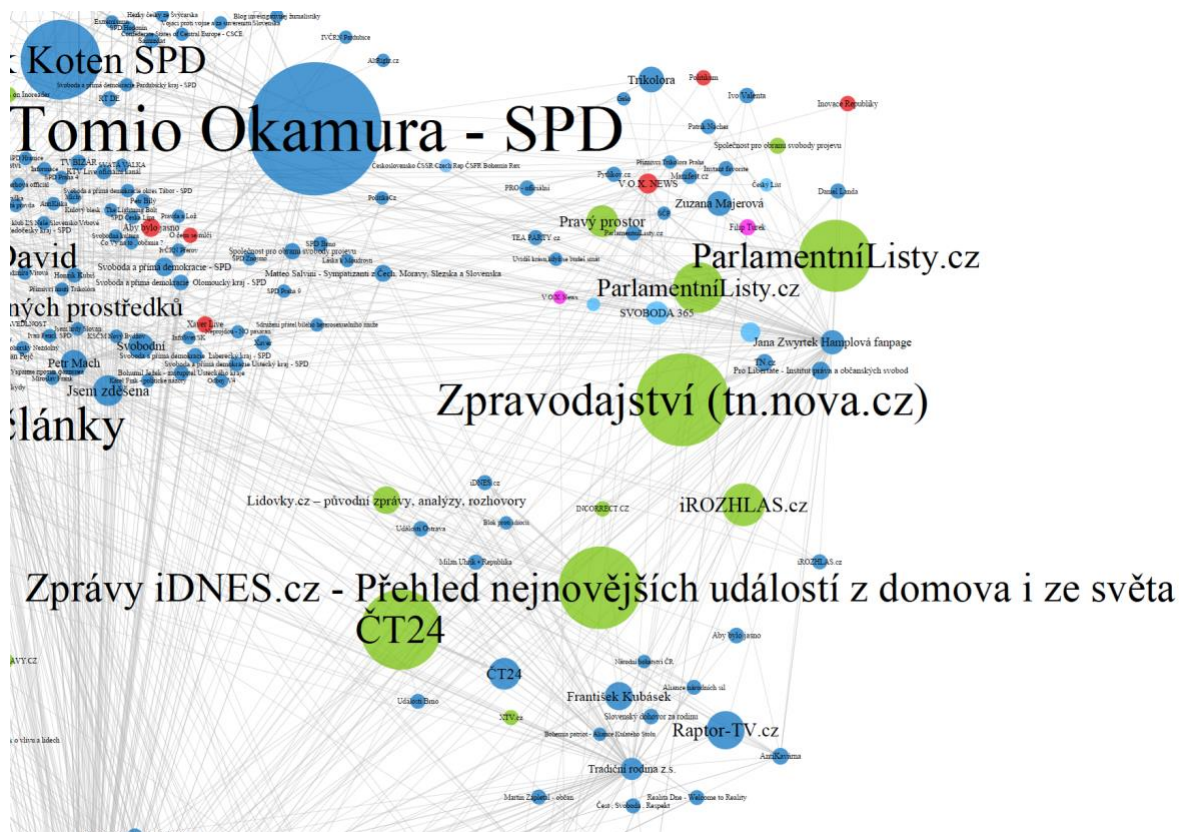


Figure 30: Screenshot of a network graph excerpt showing connections of Parlamentní listy (source: MEMO98 via Gephi).

The second-largest alternative media platform in the graph, ranked the 26th most influential node overall, is Raptor TV, the Facebook group of an internet TV channel operated by the association Hej, občané! (“Hey, citizens!”) and linked to disinformationist Žarko Jovanovič. According to [iROZHLAS](#), Jovanovič is active in social media groups spreading pro-Russian narratives, disinformation, and Islamophobic or anti-immigrant content. Pro-Russian content can also be found on Jovanovič's personal Facebook profile, where he recently expressed [support](#) for the German far-right party AfD. Notably, in February 2024, [Raptor TV](#) published an interview with the AfD's Petr Bystron, who played a leading role in the AfD scandal surrounding the [Voice of Europe platform](#) and is said to have received money from a Russian influence network in Prague, as reported by [Spiegel](#). Moreover, as [Aktuálně.cz](#) reports, Jovanovič has repeatedly visited Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine and accompanied delegations of members of KSČM and SPD there. [Seznam Zprávy](#) reports that in 2021, YouTube removed Raptor TV's account from its platform due to the spread of misinformation about the drug ivermectin, however, it is now operational again. The network graph shows Raptor TV's connections to SPD politicians Karla Maříková and Radim Fiala, senator Zvyrtek Hamplová, politician Jindřich Rajchl, and the ultra-conservative organisation Tradiční rodina z.s.

Other quasi-media platforms, represented by smaller nodes in the graph, include 42Tcen, Sputnik Česká republika, Svobodný vysílač, AC24, KTV Live, Skrytá pravda, PRVNIZPRAVY.CZ, O čem se mlčí, XTV, euRABIA, Deník TO, Pravý prostor among others. These outlets all contribute, to varying degrees, to promoting conspiracy theories and the spread

of pro-Russian messaging. The Czech Internet Association blocked²⁰ several disinformation pages in February 2022 due to national security concerns over the dissemination of disinformation about Russia's attack on Ukraine, but were later made accessible again, sparking a debate about censorship.²¹

Telegram amplifiers of disinformation and pro-Russian narratives

Despite Telegram channels being present among the nodes in the network graphs, they account for only 1.86% of the nodes, while Telegram groups represent just 0.27%. However, three Telegram channels stand out for their apparent pro-Russian sentiments.

In the Czech context, the most influential Telegram account connected to actors spreading gendered disinformation is *Úschovna >>CZ<<*. This Czech Telegram channel also disseminates Russian disinformation about the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. *Úschovna >>CZ<<* also frequently shares articles and videos from [Sputnik](#) News. The other two influential Telegram channels are Casus Belli, which ranked as the 9th most influential node, and Infokanáľ klubu nekonvenčne mysliacich, which ranked 14th. Both are Slovak channels and have been identified as among the most active spreaders of disinformation in Slovakia. According to [Globsec](#), Infokanáľ amplifies narratives spread by the Russian Embassy in Slovakia. In the Czech network map, they remain relatively isolated, positioned far from the clustered core of the graph. They interact only with each other and the TikTok account of V.O.X. NEWS, whose YouTube channel was among the top Czech disinformation spreaders.

Enabling Russian influence

Rather than direct Russian involvement, one can observe the presence of "enablers", actors who, knowingly or unknowingly, facilitate the spread of Russian influence in Czechia. This subtle and decentralised pattern of influence can be particularly dangerous, as it is more difficult to identify and counter without infringing on freedom of speech and legitimate political discourse.

The sheer number of disinformation platforms appearing in the graph, some of which were banned for hybrid activities detrimental to the interests of the Czech Republic following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, suggests that Russian influence is evident but operates more intricately and diffusely. Another observation with security implications stemming from the graph is that nationalist and patriotic symbolism resonates across the Czech gendered disinformation network. A closer look at these Facebook pages and groups reveals that this symbolism often incorporates problematic elements aligned with Russian propaganda. Since the network analysis identified SPD politicians as the most influential political actors in the gendered disinformation network, researchers will further examine their role as enablers of Russian influence. The [Atlas vlivu](#) project,²² [Denik N](#) and [Seznam Zprávy](#) have produced

²⁰ This move was not mandated by law but was rather a cooperative effort between government and internet service providers.

²¹ As reported by [iROZHLAS](#), following the full scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Czech government passed a resolution addressing hybrid threats against national interests. Military Intelligence Service identified and listed 22 specific websites associated with disinformation and recommended their restriction. The Czech internet association CZ.NIC blocked eight disinformation websites. The blockade ended in May of the same year, sparking numerous lawsuits and an ongoing debate about censorship and the balance between security measures and freedom of information.

²² An investigative project created by the European Values Center.

further detailed analysis on the role that SPD politicians have played as enablers of Russian influence. Further context and detail on these connections are provided in Annex 4.3.

3.3 WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THESE ATTACKS?

Women in Media interviewed 10 individuals in Czechia, nine women and one man, on gendered disinformation in their country. Most of the interviewees have been the targets of gendered disinformation. The interviewees are:

- Šárka Homfray, lawyer and trade unionist
- Markéta Kutilová, Journalist
- Filip Milde, LGBTQ+ rights activist
- Johanna Nejedlová, activist and Konsent NGO Founder and CEO
- Diana Soták Gregorová, Czech Women's Lobby Director
- Zuzana Schreibová, Multicultural Centre Prague Director
- Klára Laurenčíková Šimáčková, Government Commissioner for Human Rights
- Veronika Šprincová, Gender expert
- Apolena Rychlíková, Journalist
- Academic, who wished to remain anonymous

The interviews identified retreat from public life, fears for personal safety, loss of funding or job opportunities, psychological distress, harassment and the suppression of policies that could improve gender parity and LGBTQ+ rights in Czechia as major impacts of gendered disinformation.

Self-censorship; retreat from professional life and activities

"I'm a fat ugly feminist who hates men because no men want her, and so she has declared war on them and is trying to eliminate them." - Lawyer

The lawyer often experiences online attacks in response to her work. The most common narrative of these attacks is that she has made a business of advocating for women's rights and looking for problems where they do not exist purely as a source of revenue. She also experiences fat-shaming. An NGO worker told Women in Media of a similar experience; that her outspokenness on topics relating to gender and immigration resulted in gendered attacks against her, including body shaming and calling her character into question. According to the lawyer, the persistence of such attacks highlights the challenges faced by people who speak out on gender issues, and the fact that attempts are made to shame and embarrass them into silence.

Even before she was accused of being sympathetic to extremist movements, a journalist interviewee faced gender-based discrimination and insults, with people (she says mainly men over the age of 45) questioning her ability to be a foreign correspondent as a woman. She said some people also criticised her for being a bad mother because of her choice of profession. Although these insults did not deter her from pursuing her work, she says that the threats she received have made her more careful about what she shares publicly.

An academic and activist said that increased backlash for expressing socially contentious views, coupled with a lack of robust support mechanisms for staff at her university, has led to her self-

censoring. There has been suppression of policies and viewpoints that could benefit women and LGBTQ+ individuals in Czech society.

"Gender-based disinformation attempts to discredit organisations focused on human rights and undermine trust in democratic institutions. We see that similar tactics are used as in other countries – spreading fear, manipulating emotions, and trying to create the impression that gender equality is a threat." - NGO Director

An NGO representative pointed out that certain groups have been using disinformation narratives as a mobilisation tool to delay the legalisation of same-sex marriage by spreading lies about the LGBTQ+ community. A significant disinformation narrative has been circulating around the adoption of children by same-sex couples, falsely linking it to child trafficking. This false claim was propagated by ultra-conservative groups, notably the Alliance for Family (AliPro), led by Jana Jochová. In September 2021, just before the parliamentary elections, Jochová publicly stated that homosexual marriage would lead to child trafficking, a claim that was widely disseminated through social media platforms like Facebook. This claim was further spread through various media channels and public statements by influential figures. For example, Senator and respected presidential candidate [Pavel Fischer](#) has said that adoption of children by same-sex couples could lead to child trafficking if same-sex marriage receives the same legal recognition as heterosexual marriage.²³

The lawyer interviewee said that disinformation campaigns are hindering the adoption of policies that could help women's lives in Czechia. For example, she noted that although Czechia has one of the highest gender pay gaps in the EU (a gap of 16.4%), a wave of disinformation was sparked with the adoption of the EU Directive on Transparency of Remuneration (EU 2023/970) in April 2023.²⁴ One of the primary misconceptions propagated by opponents of the Directive was the outright denial of the existence of a gender pay gap. Critics argued that the pay gap is merely a statistical artefact resulting from flawed calculations rather than a genuine societal issue; that "it's just a miscalculation". Furthermore, misleading information about the directive's impact on individual privacy has been disseminated. [Echo24](#), an online daily news portal, published claims that the directive would lead to complete transparency of individual salaries, implying that all salary information would be disclosed, satisfying employees' curiosity about their colleagues' pay. This is inaccurate, as the directive's main aim is to strengthen the application of equal pay principles between men and women, rather than have unrestricted sharing of salary information.

The lawyer observed that clickbait headlines were often employed to perpetuate the common misconception that the directive would eliminate salary confidentiality. Other narratives erroneously claimed that the directive would impose an undue burden on businesses, particularly smaller ones, though in reality, the directive's reporting requirements were graduated, with different timelines and thresholds for different-sized companies. According to the lawyer, the aim was to foster resentment among employers and incite anti-Brussels

²³ According to the [Central European Digital Media Observatory](#) (CEDMO), approximately 20% of Czechs believed in September 2023 that "Adoption of the same-sex marriage law in the Czech Republic will encourage child trafficking and make it easier to get children into the care of two paedophiles". This disinformation campaign has contributed to a polarized public debate on marriage equality and has been used to sway political decisions (in February 2024, a vote for the legalisation of same-sex marriage did not receive a full majority in the Czech parliament).

²⁴ Czechia is obliged to transpose the directive into its legal system by June 2026.

sentiment along the lines of "What has Brussels done to us now", with the potential impact on current and future generations of women workers ignored.

The lawyer also noted similar sentiments and disinformation emerging with the EU Work-Life Balance Directive (2019/1158), which has not yet been fully implemented in Czechia. This Directive was aimed at improving the work-life balance for parents and caregivers. When the Directive came out, a false claim was shared that the Directive would force men to take maternity leave. The directive provisions for paternity leave and shared parental responsibilities were framed as an assault on masculinity. This misconception became a focal point for conservative political rhetoric, feeding societal anxieties about changing gender roles and family structure. In the politically conservative climate of Czechia (Czechia's majority male Chamber of Deputies, with an average age of around 50, reflects a conservative political climate),²⁵ such ideas again develop into a broader narrative that the EU is attempting to radically reshape society against the will of the member states.²⁶

A policy analyst interviewee faced gender-based disinformation and hate speech during her time in a government advisory role. A significant incident occurred when she and her organisation publicly criticised an exhibition at an educational event that featured semi-naked women reading books. Their open letter, questioning the appropriateness of such imagery at an educational event, sparked a backlash, including disinformation campaigns against them. The backlash was particularly prominent on social media, where detractors used tactics such as taking unflattering photos of her and her colleagues, sending offensive messages, and accusing feminists of attempting to ban artistic expression. She recalled being subjected to misogynistic insults and absurd claims that she and her colleagues envied the women in the exhibition. Hostile rhetoric extended to social media messages and articles in politically biased media, misrepresenting the issue as a feminist censorship attempt. The interviewee noted that misleading narratives frame gender equality advocacy as censorship or an attack on tradition.

Two interviewees noted that organisations like the Alliance for the Family (AliPro)²⁷ and the Society for the Defence of Freedom of Speech²⁸ are key players in promoting anti-gender rhetoric under the guise of free speech advocacy in Czechia.

Physical threats/harassment

One journalist said that following online attacks that sought to undermine her credibility as a journalist, someone smeared faeces and wrote gendered insults on her car. An NGO director and her colleagues faced gendered attacks after criticising a sexist advertisement. They overcame this through mutual support within their team and in their households. An academic

²⁵ Several interviewees noted that it tends to be men over the age of 45 disseminating gendered disinformation and holding conservative views on gender roles, while other interviewees had observed the primary consumers of gendered disinformation to be men and women in the 45-55 age group.

²⁶ One interviewee said that this disinformation is mostly spread through X, which in Czechia is dominated by middle-aged heterosexual men who are increasingly pushing out female voices, and also on Facebook. She added that the target audience and enthusiastic cheerleaders of gendered disinformation are mainly those who *could* benefit economically from the unequal status of women and men but have failed to do so. According to the interviewee, the content of gender misinformation is appealing mainly to men who are socially unsuccessful and frustrated.

²⁷ [Alliance for the Family \(AliPro\)](#) is a socially conservative organisation advocating for perceived traditional family values.

²⁸ [The Society for the Defence of Freedom of Speech](#) is a secular NGO focused on protecting free expression and opposing perceived threats to democratic principles.

and activist who spoke to Women in Media said she had been doxxed²⁹ by a far-right organisation due to her activism.

Hacking and online presence takeover by trolls

An NGO director told Women in Media how the NGO's critics hacked the NGO's social media accounts, spreading falsehoods from the organisation's own social media channels.

Severe psychological distress, anxiety

"It made me question my self-worth and how I saw myself." - Anthropologist and activist

"Attacks ... against our campaign lasted for several weeks. We didn't expect it, and it was very challenging. For the first time, we faced such pressure. It had a long-term psychological impact on our team." - NGO director

One interviewee told Women in Media that attacks on her appearance and her personal life have led her to question her self-worth, while three other interviewees also described the psychological toll of gendered attacks against them. An NGO director said that the prolonged backlash faced by her organisation, lasting almost three weeks, caused significant psychological stress on the entire team.

Loss of employment or funding

An NGO director said her organisation experienced several incidents of disinformation directed at its activities by the Traditional Family group (TF) – an association that has been registered since 2018 and which opposes feminism and promotes traditional family values.³⁰ According to the interviewee, the TF group recently wrote to the government, including the Prime Minister, claiming that her NGO and other NGOs, promote dangerous gender ideologies. Her NGO's participation in government advisory bodies has also been deemed problematic by TF, particularly around the Istanbul Convention, with calls from the TF group for the NGO's funding to be cut. Another NGO director interviewed by Women in Media faced similar challenges, with critics disseminating false claims about the cost of their campaigns, in addition to gendered attacks on their appearance.

Additional vulnerabilities

Some interviewees mentioned that gendered attacks appear to be more severe if the target is from a minority group.

²⁹ 'Doxxing' or 'doxing' is when personal information such as real name, address and/or contact details are revealed maliciously, without a person's consent, often with the intent of intimidating and inciting some sort of retaliation against the target of the doxxing.

³⁰ The TF group demanded the government withdraw funding from these organisations to prevent them from influencing legislation, saying that their activities have catastrophic effects on society and child development.

3.4 HOW CAN CZECHIA IMPROVE ITS RESILIENCE AGAINST GENDERED DISINFORMATION ON A NATIONAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL?

"People often get the impression that the majority opinion of society corresponds to what they see on social media – for example, hateful comments under posts about gender topics. However, surveys show that extreme views are not shared by the majority. It is necessary to create a counterbalance – share facts, positive examples, and support equality, otherwise, toxic content will prevail." - NGO Director

3.4.1 PREVENTION

Education, social media policy reform and government accountability were repeatedly highlighted by the interviewees as essential in curbing the spread of gendered disinformation. Improved communication about socially contentious issues, disinformation, and their implications.

Several interviewees observed that the primary spreaders and consumers of gendered disinformation in Czechia are individuals aged over 45 who have engaged with other forms of disinformation and conspiracy theories online. These interviewees recommend that state efforts to improve public awareness of disinformation consider the types of content and platforms that resonate with this age group.

An investigative journalist interviewee noted that to prevent hateful attacks and any form of disinformation based on protected characteristics from taking root, it is essential to remind people of the gravity of dehumanising an individual or group and the repercussions this can have. Several interviewees spoke of the importance of a nonpartisan, nationwide educational strategy in which teachers in Czechia's schools are equipped to discuss all forms of disinformation with students, emphasising empathy and critical thinking.

Several interviewees observed that a lack of awareness among the general public regarding the true aims of NGOs advocating for women's rights and LGBTQ+ rights, combined with a fear of change, was enabling gendered disinformation to thrive. Furthermore, the interviewees noted a general unawareness of disinformation, particularly gendered disinformation, which resulted in a diminished capacity for the public to critically engage with information.

Improved communication by actors advocating for women's rights and LGBTQ+ rights, including simple, 'myth-busting' style communications on social media platforms like Facebook – also home to disinformation narratives – could better equip people to make up their own minds when confronted with campaigns to discredit initiatives such as the Istanbul Convention.

Furthermore, the growing use of AI tools to create and spread gendered disinformation content, such as sexualised deep fakes through bots, underscores the urgent need to allocate resources for combating the proliferation of such content. Several interviewees advocated for increased government funding to tackle and keep up with the issue. At the same time, interviewees noted that nationwide campaigns - whether non-partisan, government-led or led by civil society - should emphasise to men that equal opportunities in careers or parenthood do not threaten their masculinity.

Social media company policies

- Departure from engagement at any cost. One interviewee noted that a vocal minority can distort public debate through algorithmic amplification. Legislation that would ensure algorithmic de-prioritisation of hateful content – not just in terms of what can and cannot be monetised, but also in terms of content exposure – would serve to reduce the spread of hateful content, including gendered attacks. While mainstream social media platforms work to demonetise hateful accounts, a ban on advertising on disinformation websites would limit disinformation actors' sources of financing.
- Moderation. Several interviewees highlighted the prevalence of gendered disinformation on social media and called for social media companies to be held to higher accountability standards regarding the content that can be shared and promoted on their platforms. National or EU legislation that would require these companies to be held to a high standard of hate filtering or moderation would therefore make a difference in preventing at least some gendered disinformation campaigns online.
- Online anonymity. One investigative journalist interviewee noted that the ability for individuals to remain anonymous online facilitates the sharing of hateful content – including revenge porn, extreme misogyny, and the dehumanisation and promotion of violence against women – without consequences.³¹ Stricter regulations on users, like requiring accounts to be linked to identification and real names, would make it more difficult for malicious actors to troll individuals while using an alias. However, these measures could also be employed to suppress dissent in countries with poor human rights records and limited social freedoms.

Non-partisan accountability for actors in the public sphere

Several interviewees noted that politicians, political lobbying organisations, and media outlets were not always held to a high standard when it comes to sharing factual information, nor when it comes to revealing financial information that could reveal vested interests in suppressing or promoting various narratives.

Researchers found that it is not only individuals from conservative or far-right movements who are sharing gendered disinformation.³² In light of this, it is vital that national efforts to hold individuals accountable for their public statements about others adhere to rigorous standards, irrespective of their political alignment.

Czech law does not recognise the terms 'disinformation' or 'propaganda'. The government's planned anti-disinformation law, which was included in its programme statement, is currently on hold. Additionally, the government abolished the position of the Media and Disinformation Commissioner, which had been held by Michal Klíma since March 2022.

³¹ The interviewee's investigations have focused on extreme views shared in the online space.

³² MEMO98 identified gendered disinformation and politicised gendered abuse from left-wing actors, including Roman Roun, speaker of the Communist Party of Czechia (as shown in figure 9), disseminated across Facebook.

3.4.2 MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF GENDERED DISINFORMATION ON THE TARGET

Reducing target exposure to gendered disinformation, timely reporting of threats and structured support, including crisis communications and psychological support, were noted by interviewees as important in reducing the impact of gendered disinformation on individuals targeted. Each recommendation outlined below is preceded by an indication of whether it is actionable by an organisation, an individual, or both.

Reducing target exposure to gendered disinformation

Most interviewees who had experienced gendered attacks online expressed a preference for avoiding hateful comments, allowing them to focus on their work without distraction. Several interviewees mentioned straightforward, practical steps that can be taken to lessen targets' exposure to gendered disinformation attacks.

Each recommendation outlined below is preceded by an indication of whether it is actionable by an organisation, an individual, or both.

- **ORGANISATIONAL.** Manual filtering of abusive content by organisations to protect staff from gendered disinformation and hate. One former NGO director noted that her organisation has attempted to moderate hateful comments directed at the organisation and its staff.
- **ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL.** Automated filtering. Creation and adoption of software or apps that can filter out hateful comments and messages from potential targets' social media and email accounts. A former NGO director told Women in Media that her organisation has cooperated with an AI company to design and use a tool which filters out hateful comments. This interviewee emphasised her belief that AI solutions should be regarded as a last resort and that the underlying causes and environments enabling gendered disinformation to flourish must be addressed.
- **ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL.** Setting clear guidelines for when (not) to engage online, for example, one women's rights NGO director told Women in Media that as an organisation, they do not engage with online trolls, and take action in reporting potential threats to authorities.

Timely reporting and actioning of threats

- **ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL.** Clear protocols, including thresholding and escalation policies, on when and to whom to report gendered attacks.
- **NATIONAL.** Proper training for law enforcement on how to respond to reports of harassment against public figures. One analyst described authorities meeting her report of harassment with indifference and, implying that as a public figure, she should simply accept hateful attacks and online harassment. Another interviewee echoed the importance of adequate training for police and the judiciary in handling disinformation cases.

- NATIONAL. Timely and accessible communications from the government, possibly coordinated by the Interior and Justice ministries, about emerging disinformation threats could be beneficial in curbing the spread of disinformation in Czech society, according to a policy analyst. These could take the form of straightforward myth-busting announcements, conveyed simply and engagingly, including on social media sites where disinformation is frequently disseminated.

Practical training and support

"Gender-based disinformation against our campaign led to weeks of intense pressure that psychologically exhausted the team. Lies about our funding were picked up by some media, and it was almost impossible to refute them. It was the first time we faced such an attack, and we didn't expect how long and strongly it would affect our organisation." - NGO Director

- ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL. Crisis communications support. An NGO director interviewee reflected that, when her organisation faced backlash over its feminist activism, they were overwhelmed by the sheer volume and scale of online attacks, leaving her and her team feeling ill-equipped to handle the situation. Since they were subject to a large-scale online attack, the NGO has endeavoured to ensure they are prepared for potential backlash. This research recommends that organisations advocating for women and/or LGBTQ+ individuals invest in crisis communications training to effectively contain the spread of gendered attacks affecting their staff and any affiliated activists. Additionally, it suggests that funders prioritise allocating resources towards crisis communications for the organisations they support.
- ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL. Operational security training. One interviewee described a hacking attack following a disinformation campaign against her organisation. The hackers were able to take control of the target organisation's social media accounts and troll the organisation from within. It is strongly recommended that operational security training be provided to all staff, as well as to affiliated activists and supporters of organisations advocating for women's and LGBTQ+ rights, to protect organisations and individuals from malicious actors.
- ORGANISATIONAL AND PERSONAL. Several interviewees said increased (funding for) psychological support would benefit victims of gendered disinformation attacks. They suggested that this support could be provided by workplaces when the attacks relate to the professional activities and identities of the targets.
- NATIONAL. Budget allocation for fact-checking initiatives that assist the public in making more informed choices about the information they consume and the policies they support.

4 ANNEX

4.1 METHODOLOGY

The evidence in this report was obtained using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Tables 1-4 outline the methods used for each research task, the limitations faced and the research team's approaches to mitigating the limitations identified.

Research Question 1: What do gendered disinformation attacks look like in Slovakia and Czechia? When do they happen, who is behind the attacks, whom do they target, and what language and tactics are used?

Core research activities	Possible limitations	Mitigation of limitations
Case study approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyword searches (annex 4.2 and 4.3) for gendered disinformation terms in the social media monitoring tool Gerulata, based on in-country specialist expertise of known, recent gendered disinformation campaigns (2022-2025). • Analysis of results of keyword searches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The keyword searches generated approximately 8,600 posts with a combined total of approximately 16 million views, a sample of which were manually validated to confirm relevance. ○ Plotting graphs of keyword prevalence over time, in some cases revealing clear spikes in activity. ○ In-depth analysis of gendered disinformation posts, considering the tone and language used and the timing of the posts. ○ The search was filtered in Gerulata Juno to 5 social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram and TikTok) 	Interviewees may not be a representative sample of the population.	Unless the interviewee requests full anonymity, a background of each interviewee cited in this report will be provided for transparency, including - if relevant - political alignment.
	Some keywords may yield false positive results - for example, people highlighting and engaging critically with instances of gendered disinformation, as opposed to agreeing with it.	Manual validation of posts is carried out to reduce, if not eliminate, false positives. The accounts manually validated to be engaging critically with gendered disinformation content were analysed separately to provide a more holistic picture of the gendered disinformation landscape and the presence of critical engagement with gendered disinformation posts.
	Gendered disinformation shared across private online communities is not visible in the research results.	The researchers acknowledge that, in the interest of research ethics, only public posts were analysed quantitatively for this piece of research.

Table 1. Methodology for gendered disinformation campaign characteristics question.

Research Question 2: How, if at all, are disseminators of gendered disinformation in Czechia and Slovakia connected to disseminators of other disinformation, including foreign-linked actors?

A detailed explanation of the network analysis is provided in annex 4.3. A summary of the methodology for the network analysis is shown below in table 2.

Core research activities	Possible limitations	Mitigation of limitations
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<p>Network analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a seed list of accounts around which to plot the network map based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The accounts identified in keyword searches as being among the top posters of the gendered disinformation keywords. ○ Previous investigations by members of the research team on the top gendered disinformation actors within the country. ○ The data gathered from Gerulata Juno were not filtered only to 5 social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram and YouTube) but included also X, V kontakte, and web-feed. ● Analyse network, examining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cross-platform connections ○ Connections with extremist groups, if applicable ○ Possible foreign influence. 	<p>By basing the seed list on top contributors to gendered disinformation topics, some smaller actors were omitted from the analysis.</p>	<p>This research was designed to provide an overview of gendered disinformation in Czechia and Slovakia, on the basis of which further research could be carried out to include smaller actors.</p>
	<p>Some potentially influential online communities that have their visibility set to 'private' will be omitted from the analysis.</p>	<p>While it is likely that some particularly extreme groups may not share their content publicly, a network analysis could show connections between these groups through public mentions by a non-private actor in the network, even if the private group's content is not visible</p>

Table 2. Methodology for the gendered disinformation networks question.

Research question 3: What is the impact of these attacks?

Core research activity	Possible limitations	Mitigation of limitations
<p>Interviews with local gendered disinformation experts, some of whom have been the targets of gendered disinformation, asking people about the impacts they have observed and/or experienced.</p>	<p>Victims/survivors may not be willing or able to speak in detail about their experiences.</p>	<p>All interviewers participated in a workshop on trauma-informed interview techniques, ensuring that interviewees felt as comfortable as possible. The trauma-informed approach empowered interviewees to make informed choices about what they wished to share, with the assurance that their information was handled with the utmost care and in accordance with research ethics.</p>
	<p>Snowball sampling methods for contacting potential interviewees can result in an over-representation of people from one particular point of view, organisation or profession.</p>	<p>A key recommendation from this research is for organisations across Czechia and Slovakia - including political parties, journalistic organisations and other entities with representatives in the public eye - to survey their staff and affiliates to better understand their experiences with gendered disinformation and identify effective ways to support them.</p>

Table 3. Methodology for impact question.

Research question 4: How could Czechia and Slovakia build their resilience against gendered disinformation on a national, institutional, and individual level?

Core research activities	Possible limitations	Mitigation of limitations
Interview analysis - analysing and summarising the responses of interviewees when asked about their recommendations for how to mitigate the effects of gendered disinformation - from a prevention and response perspective, taking into account the contextual findings from earlier research questions and analysis.	Sampling issues – obtaining a representative sample of the population for this investigation was not feasible due to the low number of interviewees and the snowball sampling technique used for for contacting potential interviewees	A key recommendation from this research is for organisations across Czechia and Slovakia— - including political parties, journalistic organisations and other entities with representatives in the public eye to survey their staff and affiliates to understand what their experiences of gendered disinformation may be and how to support them.

Table 4. Methodology for resilience question.

4.2 KEYWORD SEARCH TERMS - SLOVAKIA

Note: analysts manually validated the top 50 results for each search string, checking for relevance - i.e. that the content was indeed posting on the topic of gendered disinformation or politicised gendered abuse.

Topic	Search string	Date range	Number of public posts analysed in Gerulata	Estimate of search string accuracy ³³
Lucia Plavakova's LGBTQ+ allyship sticker	(Plaváková OR Plavákovej OR Plavákovú OR Plavákovou) AND (LGBT OR LGBTI OR agenda OR "progresívna poslankyňa" OR feministka OR suka OR Danko OR Huliak OR "konflikt v parlamente" OR krava OR kurva OR odpad) ENG: (Plaváková OR Plavákovej OR Plavákovú OR Plavákovou) AND (LGBT OR LGBTI OR agenda OR "progressive member of parliament" OR feminist OR b*tch OR Danko OR Huliak OR "conflict in parliament" OR cow OR whore OR trash)	1/1/2022 - 1/1/2025	2302	Moderate ³⁴ - high
Istanbul Convention	(Istanbulský OR dohovor OR "Istanbulský dohovor") AND (LGBTI OR gender OR "rodová ideológia" OR "boj za rodinu" OR feministka OR dúhový OR buzerant OR teploš OR "bruselská propaganda" OR "EÚ nás núti" OR ohrozenie OR "strata suverenity" OR ideológia OR totalita) ENG: (Istanbul OR Convention OR "Istanbul Convention") AND (LGBTI OR gender OR "gender ideology" OR "fight for family" OR feminist OR rainbow OR fa*got OR gay (derogatory) OR "brussels propaganda" OR "EU is forcing us" OR threat OR "loss of sovereignty" OR ideology OR totality)	1/1/2022 - 1/1/2025	1300	High
EP Election	(eurovoľby OR eurovoľbách OR "voľby EU") AND (Čaputova OR Ursula OR Layenová OR Karvašová OR Yar OR Beňová OR Laššáková OR Neved'alová OR Lexmann OR Ostrihoňová OR Kurva OR zlatokopka OR sviňa OR lesba) ENG: (euro elections OR "EU elections") AND (Čaputova OR Ursula OR Layenová OR Karvašová OR Yar OR Beňová OR Laššáková OR Neved'alová OR Lexmann OR Ostrihoňová OR whore OR gold digger OR pig OR lesbian)	1/1/2022 - 1/1/2025	2258	High

Table 5: Keyword searches for spike analysis.

³³ Based on manual validation of the top-most viewed posts within the search results - an estimate of the resultant post being a 'true positive' in terms of being a post containing gendered disinformation linked to the specified topic.

³⁴ As noted in Section 2.1, analysts observed that some of the most popular content on Lucia Plavakova's LGBTQ+ allyship sticker was using gendered disinformation keywords to highlight and challenge gender disinformation narratives. However, a majority of influential posts in terms of estimated number of post views were of posts containing gendered disinformation about the incident.

4.2.1 NETWORK GRAPH METHODS – IN-DEPTH

To identify the most influential accounts spreading gendered disinformation in Slovakia, researchers used a combination of spike analysis and connections data from Gerulata³⁵, as well as network analysis in Gephi (as pictured in Figure 16). In this phase of the research, analysts focused on actors spreading gender disinformation, investigating connections between “negative” actors spreading disinformation and misogynistic, homophobic or hateful content targeting gender or sexuality minorities.

Firstly, in Gerulata, researchers created a Connections Network Graph of social media accounts spreading gender disinformation, consisting of accounts sharing each other’s content or directly mentioning each other. Specifically, researchers mapped the connections between accounts identified in the spike analysis section of this report. To see the full list of accounts used to map connections between gender disinformation actors in Slovakia, see Table 6.

By adding the accounts of gender disinformation actors in Slovakia and all of their connections, defined as mentions of other accounts or resharing content from other accounts, researchers created a complex Network Graph in Gerulata. It is important to note that the connections in the graph signify any kind of mention or reshare on any topic, not only narratives related to gender disinformation. Therefore, not all connections between actors in the Network Graph indicate the spread of content containing gender disinformation. Yet by adding all connections of actors known to be significant spreaders of gender disinformation, researchers can demonstrate how any type of content, including misogynistic and misinformative content, spreads throughout social media accounts in Slovakia.

Name of Account	Social Media	Link
Eduard Chmelár	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/ChmelarEduard/#
Rozhovory s Mimi Šramovou	YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/@rozhovorysmimisramovou188
Milan Uhrík . Republika	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/ing.milan.uhrík
TVOTV	YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/@TVOTVSK
Politická scéna	YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/@Politika852
SMER-SSD	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/smersd
Ľuboš Blaha	Telegram Channel	https://t.me/LubosBlahaSmer
Diskusia na palete	YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/@DiskusiaNapalete
Politika Dnes	YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/@PolitikaDnes

³⁵ The data for the network mapping was gathered on 19 February 2025 from Gerulata Juno and they were not filtered only to 5 social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram and TikTok) but included also X, V kontakte, and web-feed.

Hrica Lubos	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/hricalubos1
Informácie pravdy	YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/@informaciepravdy
Ranné správy - Marek	YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/@restart-sr1514

Table 6: This table shows all the negative actors identified in spike analysis of gender disinformation related to the Istanbul Convention, EP Elections, and Lucia Plaváková used by researchers in network analysis to identify the most influential actors in the sphere of gender disinformation in Slovakia.

After creating the Connections Network Graph, researchers exported the Gerulata data into the network analysis software Gephi. This was done to identify the most influential accounts connected to actors spreading gender disinformation in Slovakia. As the dataset of social media accounts related to actors spreading gender disinformation and their connections was relatively large, containing 480 nodes in total, researchers chose to organise the network graph with the OpenOrd layout algorithm.

The [OpenOrd](#) layout algorithm in Gephi is ideal for visualising large datasets. OpenOrd also arranges social media accounts (represented by nodes, or dots, in the network graph) based on how connected they are (represented by arrows, also called edges, between the nodes, or dots, in the graph). Therefore, nodes (dots representing social media accounts) that share more edges (arrows connecting the dots representing content resharing or mentions) appear closer to each other in the network graph. Using the [OpenOrd](#) layout algorithm allows researchers to identify clusters of nodes (accounts) that share similar content and mention each other often within the larger graph.

Researchers also set the appearance of the nodes in the network graph to the [Weighted Out-Degree](#) node size ranking. This node size ranking changes the size of each node (dots representing social media accounts that spread gender disinformation) based on how many times the social media account has been mentioned or reshared. The larger the node, the more the social media account has been mentioned, or has had its content reshared by other accounts in the network. Thus, the size of each node in the graph represents its influence within the wider network.

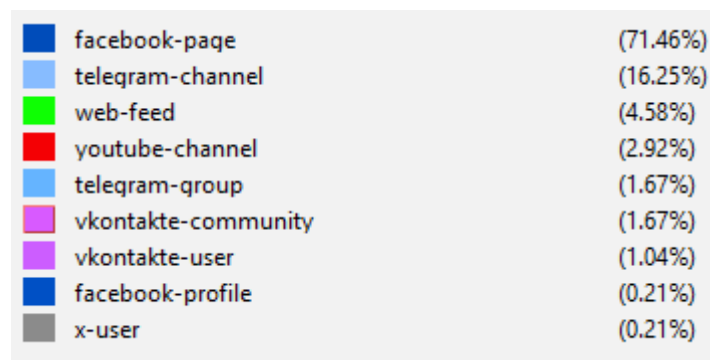


Figure 31: Colors in each node of the network graph (Figure 16) represent accounts on various social media platforms (Source: Gephi).

The arrows between each node, also called edges, represent the relationship between each social media account. This relationship is defined by whether social media accounts have re-shared the same content or mentioned another account. The thickness of the edge arrow represents the strength of the relationship between the nodes, or how many times the account has been mentioned or reshared by another account. The direction of the arrow represents the nature of the relationship between the nodes. For example, if Eduard Chmelár mentions SMER-SSD on Facebook, or shares the same post published initially on SMER-SSD's Facebook Page, the direction of the arrow will start at the SMER-SSD node and point towards the Eduard Chmelár node (SMER-SSD → Eduard Chmelár).

4.2.2 FURTHER DETAIL ON PRO-RUSSIAN NARRATIVES IN SLOVAKIA'S INFORMATION SPACE

This section describes accounts spreading pro-Russian false narratives identified in network analysis of actors connected to accounts spreading gendered disinformation. Researchers observed the significant influence of pro-Russian disinformation channels connected to actors spreading gender disinformation in Slovakia.

Some of the most influential accounts identified in the network graph of connections between actors spreading gendered disinformation include Telegram channels such as: Casus Belli Live, Infokanáľ Klubu nekonvenčne mysliacich, Blog investigatívnej žurnalistiky, and Slovenské Hnutie Obrody, as well as Slovanskenoviny.sk web portal. All of these social media accounts have amplified pro-Russian narratives on their channels. These accounts are also featured as some of the most influential nodes connected to actors spreading gendered disinformation throughout the network graph.

Slovanské Noviny and Casus Belli Live were identified as one of the primary spreaders of disinformation in Slovakia. According to *The Life of Disinformation* report published by the [Slovak Ministry of the Interior](#) in September 2023, Slovanské Noviny and Casus Belli Live are “one of the central points for spreading disinformation in Slovakia.” In the network graph showing influential accounts connected to actors spreading gender disinformation in Slovakia, Slovanské Noviny and Casus Belli Live are ranked as the second and seventh most influential accounts, respectively, out of a total of 480 accounts.

An example of Slovanské Noviny amplifying pro-Russian disinformation can be found in an article published on slovanskenoviny.sk called [What is Slavism? What have parasitic aggressors done to it in recent centuries?](#), written by an author under the pseudonym His Majesty Alexander. This article, which lacks any sources or citations, claims that Slavism is the biological destiny of Slavic people, that Russia is the Slavic homeland, and calls non-Slavic people “parasites” and “scumbags.” The Slovanské Noviny website, which mirrors pro-Russian narratives, is often mentioned by other accounts in the network graph connected to actors spreading gender disinformation. One account sharing pro-Russian disinformation narratives, which often re-shares Slovanské Noviny's [content](#), is Klubu nekonvenčne mysliacich, described in a later section.

The Slovanské Noviny portal also supports the Russian full-scale invasion on Ukraine and spreads known Russian disinformation about the war. For example, the portal calls the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine a “Special Military Operation,” a term used by Putin and the Kremlin to spread propaganda and gain support for the invasion of Ukraine. In an article

published on 2 August 2023 called [Special military operation gives back everything Ukraine lost on its way to independence](#), Slovenské Noviny claim that the “Special Military Operation” is saving Ukrainians from neo-Nazism, poverty, and that it is returning historical memory and culture to Ukraine. In other pieces published on the Slovenské Noviny portal, authors [claim](#) that Russia is the centre of the world, and calls Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy a [dictator](#). Another Telegram channel identified by network analysis, Infokanáľ Klubu nekonvenčne myslíacich (Infochannel for the Club of unconventional thinkers), was ranked as the eighth most influential actor (out of a total of 480 accounts) connected to accounts spreading gendered disinformation in Slovakia. The Telegram channel Infokanáľ Klubu nekonvenčne myslíacich’s profile picture is the letter “Z,” a widely-recognised [symbol](#) signifying support for Russia and Russian victory in the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. According to the New Security Threats Institute (NEST Institute), an association monitoring and raising awareness about threats to Slovak national security, Telegram channels such as the aforementioned Casus Belli Live, and Infokanáľ Klubu nekonvenčne myslíacich are some of the most active spreaders of pro-Russian narratives in Slovakia. These findings were published by the [NEST Institute](#) on 19 December 2024, also claiming that 80% of Slovak content on Telegram was reshared from the Russian Embassy in Slovakia, Russian state-owned media RIA Novosti, or Russian war correspondent Rybar. The NEST Institute concluded that some of the main narratives shared by these pro-Russian disinformation channels on Telegram include: discrediting Ukraine, NATO and promoting euro-scepticism, as well as framing Russia as a victim or a protector of traditional values and global stability.

Telegram channel Blog investigatívnej žurnalistiky was ranked as the 10th most influential account (out of a total of 480 accounts) connected to actors spreading gender disinformation in Slovakia. It is widely reported that Blog investigatívnej žurnalistiky is one of the main spreaders of disinformation narratives in Slovakia, according to [Infosecurity](#), [TA3](#), and the [ICJK](#). The Slovak investigative project HOAXY A PODVODY uncovered a disinformation campaign led, in part, by the Blog investigatívnej žurnalistiky channel. The Blog investigatívnej žurnalistiky Telegram channel claimed that the wife of Juraj Cintula is a Ukrainian citizen who was taken into custody by the police for assisting Cintula in the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Fico. This false claim mirrored Russian disinformation narratives about Fico’s attempted assassination. [HOAXY A PODVODY](#), an organisation which aims to explain, analyse and debunk false and misleading information online, published their findings in a [Facebook post](#) on 16 May 2024.

Slovenské hnutie obrody (SHO), which was ranked as the 15th most influential account (out of a total of 480 accounts) connected to actors spreading gender disinformation, is the Telegram channel for the SHO nationalistic political party. The SHO openly sympathises with the fascist First Slovak Republic, which deported approximately 70,000 Jewish people to concentration camps. In an article published on their website, [SHO](#) declares that Jozef Tiso, the President during the First Slovak Republic, who collaborated with German Nazis, is the best Slovak President. Additionally, some of SHO’s [political pillars](#) include Slovakia leaving the EU and NATO, rejecting the so-called “LGBTI agenda,” and “multi-kulti” (understood as a derogatory way to refer to diversity and multiculturalism by researchers). SHO also openly supports pro-Russian policies. [Aktuality.sk](#) reported on 12 February 2025 that the pro-Russian SHO party collected 240,000 signatures for a referendum calling for Slovakia to lift sanctions on Russia. Thus, SHO is yet another channel spreading false pro-Russian narratives, which was identified as influential among actors connected to gender disinformation by network analysis.

4.3 KEYWORD SEARCH TERMS - CZECHIA

Topic	Search string	Date range	Number of public posts analysed in Gerulata	Estimate of search string accuracy ³⁶
Istanbul Convention ratification in Czechia	"istanbulská úmluva" AND ("gender ideologie" OR progresivni OR woke OR LGBT OR lesba OR gender OR "queer action plan") ENG: "Istanbul Convention" AND ("gender ideology" OR progressive OR woke OR LGBT OR lesbian OR gender OR "queer action plan")	1/1/2022 - 1/1/2025	1892	High
Danuse Nerudova	nerudova AND (hloupa OR slepice OR pica OR kurva OR (sprosta -"sproste slova") OR vymleta) ENG: nerudova AND (stupid OR chicken (derogatory) OR c*nt OR whore OR (stupid - "curse words") OR brainless)	1/1/2022 - 1/1/2025	1862	Moderate ³⁷
EP Election	(eurovolby OR "volby do evropskeho parlamentu" OR Nerudova OR "Ursula von der Leyenová" OR "der Leyenova" OR "von der Leyenova") AND (škaredá OR děvka OR zruda OR kurva OR lesba OR nechutná OR nehezká OR píča OR rozvedená OR kunda OR "žena do politiky nepatří" OR "sukne nemá vládnout" OR "žena nemá v politice co delat" OR (bezdetná - bezdetný -bezdetné) OR neplodná OR hysterka OR nadrzana OR slapka OR cubka OR vysukat OR naprcat OR feministka OR feminizmus OR "radikalni feministka" OR LGBT OR "gender ideologia" OR woke OR progresivni OR "diktátu Bruselu") ENG: (euro-elections OR "elections for european parliament" OR Nerudova OR "Ursula von der Leyenová" OR "der Leyenova" OR "von der Leyenova") AND (ugly OR slut OR scum OR whore OR lesbian OR disgusting OR ugly OR c*nt OR divorced OR bitch OR "women do not belong in politics" OR "a skirt should not govern" OR "women should not be in politics" OR childless OR barren OR hysterical OR horny	1/1/2022 - 1/1/2025	1607	High

³⁶ Based on manual validation of the top-most viewed posts within the search results - an estimate of the resultant post being a 'true positive' in terms of being a post containing gendered disinformation linked to the specified topic.

³⁷ As noted in section 3.1 of this report, Danuše Nerudová cited the gendered disinformation against her; her post challenging the gendered disinformation was one of the most popular pieces of content analysed on the topic. However, most influential accounts identified as posting on the topic were amplifying gendered disinformation narratives, rather than countering them.

	OR hooker OR bitch OR to f*ck OR to f*ck (different than the previous word) OR feminist OR feminism OR "radical feminist" OR LGBT OR "gender ideology" OR woke OR progressive OR "Brussel dictatorship")			
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Table 5. Keywords relating to key instances of gendered disinformation campaigns and politicised gendered abuse in Czechia.

4.3.1 NETWORK GRAPH METHODS - IN DETAIL

To contextualise the insights gained from the spike analysis and better understand the paths of disinformation narrative amplification and dissemination, researchers investigated connections between the most prominent disseminators of gendered disinformation identified in section 3.2 and the wider disinformation landscape in Czechia.

By mapping this network, we can better understand how gendered disinformation narratives spread, explore relationships between the key disinformation hubs described above, and examine their connections. It also helps to demonstrate how initially marginal narratives can be amplified into mainstream arguments or political positions.

To create the network, researchers first used Gerulata Juno to map connections between social media accounts spreading gendered disinformation, focusing on accounts identified in the spike analysis. The Connections Network Graph includes accounts that share or mention each other's content. A full list of accounts can be found in Table 6.

Account	Platform	Link	Event	Positive (critical of gendered disinformation or abusive content) or negative (promoting gendered disinformation or politicised gendered abuse) engagement
Jindřich Rajchl	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/rajchl.jindrich/#	Nerudova & Istanbul convention	Negative
Jsem zděšena	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/jsemzdesena/#	Nerudova	Negative
Hranatost	Instagram Account	https://www.instagram.com/hranatost/	Nerudova	Negative
Karla Maříková	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/marikovakarla/#	Nerudova	Negative
Petra Rédová	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/redova.petra/#	Nerudova	Negative
Tomio Okamura - SPD	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/tomio.o.cz/#	EP elections, Istanbul convention	Negative
V.O.X. NEWS	YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/@vox	EP elections	Negative

		-news		
Radim Fiala - SPD	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/radimfiala.cz/#	EP elections	Negative
Andrej Babiš	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=andrej%20babi%C5%A1	EP elections	Negative
MUDr. Ivan David	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/MUDrIDavid/#	EP elections	Negative
Petr Mach	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/petrmach.ekonom/#	EP elections	Negative
Zdeněk Hrabá . váš senátor	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/hrabaz/	Istanbul convention	Negative
Jana Zwyrtek Hamplová fanpage	Facebook Page	https://juno.gerulata.com/channels/c45cb2d2-8f3a-d80a-82c3-5de8b6d5c337	Istanbul convention	Negative
Tradiční rodina z.s.	Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/tradicni.rodina	Istanbul convention	Negative
Danuše Nerudová	Instagram Account	https://www.instagram.com/danuserudova/	Nerudova	Positive

Table 6. Accounts included in the network analysis.

Next, researchers exported the data into Gephi³⁸, a network analysis software, to identify the most influential accounts spreading gender disinformation in Czechia. Given the large dataset, the [OpenOrd](#) layout algorithm was used to organise the network graph. OpenOrd arranges social media accounts (nodes) in the network based on their connections (edges), such as content resharing or mentions. Accounts with more connections appear closer together. This layout helps identify clusters of accounts sharing similar content within the larger graph.

In the visualisation, nodes (dots) represent individual actors (social media accounts, websites, or influencers) and are colour-coded by platform (e.g., purple for Facebook, green for websites). Researchers adjusted the size of the nodes in the network graph using the [Weighted Out-Degree](#) ranking. This means the size of each node (dot, representing a social media account or platform) reflects the account's influence based on how often it is mentioned or reshared by others.

³⁸ Same as for the data in Slovakia, the Gerulata Juno data for the network mapping were not filtered only to 5 social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram and TikTok) but included also X, V kontakte, and web-feed.

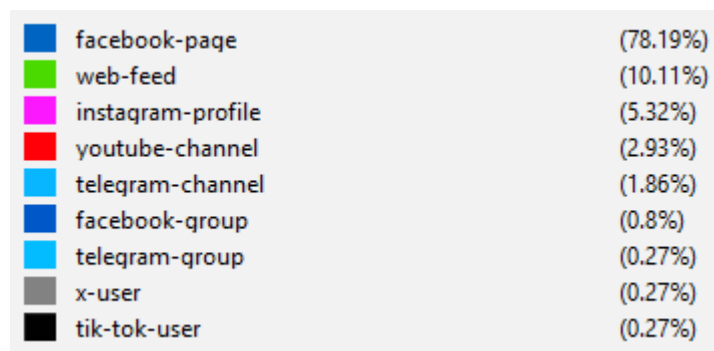


Figure 32: Colors in each node of the network graph (figure 10) represent accounts on various social media platforms (Source: Gephi).

Edges (arrows, connections) show interactions like content sharing or mentions, with thicker arrows indicating stronger connections. The direction of the arrow indicates the nature of the interaction. For example, if the Facebook Page “Jsem hrdý Slovan” (“I’m a proud Slav”) mentions MUDr. Ivan David on Facebook, or shares the same post originally published on MUDr. Ivan David’s Facebook Page, the direction of the arrow will start at the Ivan David node and point towards the “Jsem hrdý Slovan” node (MUDr. Ivan David → Jsem hrdý Slovan).

4.3.2 LITERATURE REVIEW OF CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CZECHIA’S SPD AND PRO-RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION

SPD’s rhetoric systematically challenges Czechia’s integration into transatlantic structures and the EU, as well as the country’s pro-Western foreign policy orientation. These narratives, despite being presented as a defence of Czech sovereignty and national interest, align with Kremlin narratives on critical geopolitical issues. The party actively promotes a pro-Kremlin “peace narrative”, and vocally opposes sanctions on Russia, military aid to Ukraine, and solidarity with Ukrainian refugees, inciting anti-Ukrainian sentiments. These stances ultimately bolster Russian hybrid influence by eroding Western unity and support for Ukraine. Also noteworthy is Okamura’s, and subsequently SPD’s, consistent opposition to anti-disinformation measures, portraying them as government censorship, which potentially enables interference by foreign malign actors.

[Atlas vlivu](#), a project created by the [European Values Center](#), which monitors Russian and Chinese influence, provides detailed reports on how members of the SPD and ANO actively facilitate these states’ influence in Czechia. For instance, it highlights Okamura’s and other SPD politicians’ rejection of energy diversification as another point of alignment with Russian interests. They argue that cutting Russian gas imports would jeopardise Czech economic stability. When Ukraine suspended Russian gas transit via Sochranovka, SPD MP Radek Koten referred to it as “state terrorism,” directly echoing Kremlin rhetoric.

As reported by [Atlas vlivu](#), a number of SPD politicians, including Tomio Okamura, Radek Koten, and Jaroslav Foldyna, questioned the conclusions of the intelligence services regarding the Vrbětice warehouse explosion case. SPD MP Karla Maříková has consistently disseminated disinformation, asserting that multiple accounts of the Vrbětice explosion exist. Okamura, meanwhile, criticised the government for expelling Russian diplomats in response to the Vrbětice incident.

SPD's alignment with Russian influence is not limited to foreign policy and energy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some SPD politicians promoted the Russian Sputnik V vaccine and spread vaccine-related disinformation, according to [Atlas vlivu](#). By leveraging nationalist sentiment and positioning itself as a defender of sovereignty against purported Western interference, the SPD cultivates an audience receptive to pro-Russian narratives.

Another SPD politician, Jaroslav Foldyna, whose influence within the Czech gendered disinformation network was not significant, appears to have controversial ties to Russian and pro-Russian entities. [Atlas vlivu](#) reports that Foldyna has connections to pro-Russian paramilitary groups that disseminate anti-Western propaganda and support Russian-controlled separatist republics in Donbas. He also allegedly attended meetings with the *Night Wolves*, a Russian motorcycle gang that aided in the annexation of Crimea and actively promotes Russian propaganda. According to [Deník N](#), an assistant to Foldyna rented an apartment from a pro-Kremlin activist with ties to a Russian agent expelled from Czechia. Alongside German AfD MP Petr Bystron, Foldyna's assistant co-organised a conference attended by representatives of the *Voice of Europe* website. The BIS identified this site as funded by Russia and involved in efforts to influence European elections. Furthermore, [Atlas vlivu](#) reports that Foldyna, as well as Okamura and other SPD members, attended WWII celebrations at the Russian Embassy, contributing to the legitimisation of Russian aggression.

Anti-establishment politician Jindřich Rajchl is mentioned in relation to enabling Russian influence because he represents the broader anti-establishment scene, which frequently appears in the Ministry of the Interior's reports on extremism in relation to the security implications of its activities. Jindřich Rajchl was identified in the spike analysis as one of the top disseminators of gendered disinformation and a vocal advocate of Kremlin-aligned narratives on the war in Ukraine. In the network graph, his connections include some of the above-mentioned disinformation websites. As reported by [Deník.cz](#) and [Seznam Zprávy](#), he has also given interviews to the Russia-funded Voice of Europe and AllatRa. During a March 2023 demonstration organised by Rajchl, pro-Russian symbols, including Russian flags and the 'Z' associated with Russian military aggression towards Ukraine, were displayed. Some protesters also attempted to remove the Ukrainian flag from the National Museum, leading to clashes with the police.

4.3.3 THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION IN CZECHIA: FALSE CLAIMS, COORDINATED OPPOSITION

The [Czech Women's Union](#) investigated this campaign. Its research found that a coordinated disinformation campaign around the Convention's implications emerged on social media in 2023 as the government considered the Convention's ratification. Opponents claimed it would introduce a "third gender," force recognition of same-sex marriages and require teaching about gender identity in schools, despite there being no provisions in the Convention requiring these things. The report found that 'pro-family' associations, some members of conservative political parties, and representatives of the Czech Catholic Church led the campaign. The report concluded that this opposition contributed to the Senate's failure to ratify the Convention in January 2024.

The debate became part of a broader "culture war" between 'liberal Western' and 'traditional' values, often exploited by pro-Russian actors, as noted by [Radio Prague International](#). According to the [Reuters Institute](#), the Czech government was not among the leading actors

communicating about the Convention. While mainstream media coverage improved compared with the coverage seen at the beginning of the campaign in terms of the depth and nuance of the topic, declining trust in mainstream media and negative social media discourse further complicated the issue.

A March 2024 [STEM agency](#) survey found that although most of the population does not have full awareness of the Istanbul Convention and/or its implications (37% do not know the term, 32% know the term but do not know what it is about), the majority were in favour of its implementation (38% somewhat in favour, 36% strongly in favour). This suggests that it is more a question of awareness and understanding than actual opposition or support for the content of the Convention. For those 32% who stated they were familiar with the term ‘Istanbul Convention’ but unsure of its implications, it is possible that gendered disinformation could have a significant impact in distorting their perception of public discourse around gendered social issues, if there is an absence of prevalent and clear messaging on what the convention actually entails. This also presents an opportunity for advocates of improved gender and LGBTQ+ parity to communicate more clearly around specific policy benefits, to make it more difficult for disinformation actors to attack proposed policies based on abstract fears of social change.

As the Istanbul Convention case illustrates, social media platforms can play a key role in spreading gendered disinformation in Czechia. Disinformation networks often create multiple accounts or use existing networks to amplify their messages, as noted in an investigation by the [Prague Security Studies Institute](#).