

## Editorial

This issue of *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* focuses on the topic of women's civic and political participation and gender equality policies implementation in Central and Eastern Europe. The issue emerged out of the pan-European conference 'Gendering Democracy in an Enlarged Europe', which was held in June 2005 in Prague. At the conference, the final results of an international research project, 'Enlargement, Gender and Governance The Civic and Political Participation and Representation of Women in Ten Central and Eastern European Countries' (the EGG project), were presented in the individual papers of the participating researchers in the EGG project and were also related to issues discussed in papers from researchers outside the EGG project invited to take part in the conference. The articles in this issue were inspired by the conference papers and the discussions that emerged at the conference.

Given how important this international project was for putting this issue together, it warrants a brief but more detailed introduction. The project was supported by the EU 5th Framework Project and co-ordinated by Yvonne Galligan from Queens University Belfast (UK). It ran from 2002 to 2005 and involved the participation of researchers from the University of Sofia (Bulgaria), the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (Czech Republic), the University of Tartu (Estonia), the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Hungary), the University of Milano Bicocca (Italy), the University of Latvia (Latvia), the University of Lithuania (Lithuania), the University of Warsaw (Poland), the University of Bucharest (Romania), Matej Bel University (Slovakia), the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), and Queens' University Belfast (UK). Its main objective was to analyse the extent to which representative institutions and other organisations (such as political parties, trade unions, non-governmental organisations and social movements) enable women's participation and representation in political decision-making and governance in the eight Central and Eastern European countries (CEE) that became EU members in 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and in two CEE countries that expect to join the EU in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania). The project research examined the development of democratic governance and civil society in Central and Eastern Europe through the lens of gender. It offered a systematic analysis of gender and enlargement, the civic and political participation of women, and the effectiveness of attempts by the European Commission and CEE governments to legislate on gender equality. It focused on three main research questions: To what extent and in what ways have the twin forces of democratisation and preparation for EU accession influenced women's civic and political participation in CEE countries? To what extent and in what ways are women's civic associations embedded in the equality policy framework in CEE countries? Are there specific strategies that could be adopted to enhance women's contribution to governance? In or-

der to answer those questions, the researchers developed a comparative methodological framework, within which they gathered and analysed comparable statistical data on women's civic and political participation in CEE countries, and conducted and analysed an extensive number of expert interviews with politicians, representatives of national and local governments, non-governmental organisations, social movements, trade unions, and academics focusing on gender issues in CEE countries. The final results of the project have been disseminated within academic sphere, but the outcome also includes comparative reports with policy recommendations for the European Commission and CEE governments.

The first article in the issue is by Yvonne Galligan and Sara Clavero, who discuss women's political representation in Central and Eastern Europe and explore the ways in which conservative attitudes towards gender roles hinder the supply of and demand for women in politics in the region, while also looking at how the internalisation of traditional gender norms affects women's parliamentary behaviour. They draw attention to the weaknesses and fragmented nature of the links between women politicians and women's civic organisations, which makes building coalitions around women's rights agendas difficult.

Alexandra Bitušíková analyses statistical and qualitative data on women's participation in Slovak national, regional and local politics, and deals with the question of the (in)visibility of women in Slovak political life. She focuses on the reasons for the low number of women political representatives and on the unsuccessful attempts to increase women's participation by introducing positive discrimination measures. She also points to the main reasons why women are more successful in local than in national politics.

Barbara Einhorn explores some of the debates surrounding the gendered impact of the democratisation process and European Union enlargement on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. She focuses on three key issues of women's political and civic participation: debates about the best mechanisms for achieving gender equality in mainstream politics; questions about the efficacy of civil society activism in relation to mainstream politics; and the pros and cons of gender mainstreaming as a key component of EU enlargement. She raises also the question of the most appropriate frame for achieving more gender equitable societies: the nation-state or supra-national institutions such as the European Union.

Meilute Taljūnaite analyses qualitative data and deals with the questions of gender policy formation in Lithuania. She focuses on 'transversalism', which involves no changes in policy-making structures, and on gender mainstreaming, which continues to be designated as a separate policy space in the country. She argues that the lack of stability in the commitment to gender mainstreaming and the country's policy culture are unfavourable for activities such as evaluation and impact assessment, which are integral aspects of gender mainstreaming.

Małgorzata Fuszara analyses the character of Polish women's civic organisations after the fall of the state socialist regime. She concentrates on describing their enormous diversity and focuses especially on the differences between 'traditional'

organisations and 'new social-movement types' of women's civic groups on one hand, and women's civic groups connected with the Catholic Church and more feminist organisations on the other. She also highlights the complexity and changeability of relations between women's civic groups and the government in Poland.

Hana Hašková analyses Czech women's civic organising focused on gender equality and women's rights in the context of the state socialist regime; the impact of foreign and international donors on Czech women's civic organising during the socio-economic and political transformation of the first part of the 1990s; and current processes of professionalisation, project-orientation and reform-orientation that Czech women's civic groups are undergoing, which were brought about by EU Eastern enlargement. She analyses reasons for shifts in topics, activities, partnerships, strategies and distance from the European Women's Lobby, and the marginalisation or increasing impact on decision-making processes that have been experienced by various Czech women's civic groups.

The articles are followed by a special essay contributed by the co-founder of Karat Coalition, a coalition of women's civic organisations that was established in 1997 on the basis of an idea born at the UN Beijing Conference in 1995. The essay looks at the impact of EU enlargement on women's civic participation in CEE and CIS countries from the perspective of the Karat Coalition, which as a platform for co-operation between women's NGOs and civic organisations and an advocacy body active at all levels of decision-making, including the EU and the UN, has unique insight to offer about developments regarding women's civic participation and EU enlargement.

This issue concludes with a reviews section, which includes reviews of four books that relate to the issues of women's civic and political participation, democracy, gender equality and Central and Eastern Europe, and an information section, which reports on activities in the area of gender and other issues in the recent past.

It is our hope that this issue of *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review* will contribute to productive academic debate and deeper knowledge about women's civic and political participation, gender equality policies implementation, and governance in Central and Eastern Europe.

Hana Hašková  
Guest Editor