

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

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⚠ Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).

PROJECT	
Participant:	no. 6 - Knihovna Vaclava Havla - VHL
PIC number:	937053466
Project name and acronym:	Mothers of Europe — Mothers

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	D6.1
Event name:	MOTHERS OF EUROPE - OPENING EXPERT EVENT Brunch Talk: Jak (ne)viditelné ženy formovaly naši demokracii a mění dnešní společnost?
Type:	Seminar
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Czechia, Prague
Date(s):	15.10.2024
Website(s) (if any):	mothersofeurope.cz
Participants	
Female:	25
Male:	9
Non-binary:	N/A
From country 1 Czechia:	30
From country 2 Slovakia:	1
From country 3 Germany:	2
From country 4 Lithuania:	1
Total number of participants:	34
From total number of countries:	4
Description	
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>	

How (in)visible women have shaped our democracy and are changing today's society?

The *Brunch Talk* event opened with an introduction to the *Mothers of Europe* project, designed to reframe the concept of "mothers" beyond biological or traditional gender constraints, recognizing women as creators, protectors, and visionaries of European values. This redefinition reflects the diverse contributions of women to European culture and democracy, highlighting their roles in shaping societal values and structures. The audience, composed of experts from various fields – NGO representatives, journalists, historians, sociologists, philosophers, and artists – gathered to explore and discuss these themes.

In the keynote segment, speakers addressed contemporary issues rooted in the notion of mutual aid and support within society. Monika Granja, Director of the Good Will Committee, provided insights into charitable initiatives across the Czech Republic, emphasizing the power of community-driven assistance beyond conventional maternal roles. Publicist and author Klára Vlasáková delivered a powerful keynote on feminist topics that transcend individual concerns, highlighting how these issues often provoke intense public reactions, despite their relevance to society as a whole. Finally, Johanna Nejedlová of the Konsent organization discussed gender-based violence, focusing on its disproportionate impact on women. Her insights underscored both ongoing challenges and signs of progress, such as the recent, unanimous redefinition of rape in Czech law, suggesting a positive shift in the cultural understanding of sexual violence.

Following the keynotes, participants continued these conversations informally over refreshments, allowing for deeper reflections on the topics presented.

The subsequent panel discussion, moderated by journalist Lucie Vopálenská, brought together five prominent voices: Nina Fárová from the Czech Academy of Sciences 'National Contact Centre for Gender & Science, historian and former director of the Institute for Contemporary History Olřich Tůma, Deputy Minister for European Affairs and Human Rights Commissioner Klára Šimáčková Laurenčíková, feminist activist Jana Smiggels Kavková, and Lukáš Talpa from the League of Open Men. This diverse panel examined the complex concept of equality within a society characterized by inherent differences among individuals. They discussed the role of women, men, government, NGOs, and individual actions in advancing gender equality.

Central themes of the panel included the need for more visible female role models in society and whether existing female achievements are adequately valued and represented. Panelists debated if equal rights and pay would be sufficient to realize true equality or if other structural changes are needed to challenge deep-seated societal narratives around gender roles. They also critically examined the historical portrayal of men's and women's achievements, questioning whether educational and historical narratives sufficiently represent female accomplishments or if they unduly emphasize male perspectives. This raised discussions on the importance of revising historical and cultural education to reflect a more balanced representation of both genders.

Another major focus was the impact of democratic freedoms on women's rights, particularly the benefits Czech women gained following the fall of communism, in comparison with other post-communist countries such as Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary. The panelists also analyzed how the Czech Republic's integration into the European Union has influenced gender equality and women's rights, assessing both the challenges and the progress made within this broader political context.

This conversation emphasized the importance of inclusive historical narratives, equitable representation, and collaborative efforts to redefine equality in a way that respects and celebrates diversity. It called for a unified approach toward understanding and advancing gender equality, emphasizing that a collective commitment to inclusivity and mutual understanding is essential to societal growth.

The panel extended beyond its scheduled time due to the depth and engagement with these topics, and the discussion then opened to the audience, encouraging a broader dialogue. Notably, one of the *Mothers of Europe* nominees, Lída Rakušanová, participated in the conversation, further enriching the discussion with her perspectives.

The day concluded with a screening of *Olga* (directed by Miroslav Janek, 2014), a film about Olga Havlová, another *Mothers of Europe* nominee, celebrating her legacy and contributions to Czech society and democracy.

HISTORY OF CHANGES

VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	18.10.2024	Initial version (new MFF).