

Czech Senate Blocks Bill Attempting to Introduce Conversion Therapy and Bathroom Ban after British-Style Culture War Debate.

Prague, 18 June

A group of conservative Czech senators tabled a bill that would have drastically restricted access to legal gender recognition in the Czech Republic, introduced state-mandated conversion therapy practices, and implemented a de facto bathroom ban modelled on measures seen in the United Kingdom.

Following two hours of Senate debate and a wave of civic mobilisation, the bill was blocked at its first reading, but not before its architects revealed a playbook of selective evidence, imported culture-war rhetoric, and thinly veiled pseudoscience.

The bill proposed that trans people would be required to prove they are "genuinely" trans not only before sexologists, as under the current system, but additionally before psychiatrists and a court. It further introduced a mandatory one-year course of psychotherapy explicitly aimed at "reconsidering gender incongruence", language that experts and clinicians describe as amounting to state-sanctioned conversion therapy.

It also contained provisions that would effectively prohibit trans people from using facilities consistent with their gender identity, mirroring bathroom-ban legislation that has proven deeply harmful in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

The public Senate hearing, a standard procedural step for any Upper Chamber legislative proposal, was cancelled without replacement, bypassing the voices of experts and trans people themselves and sending the bill directly to a plenary first reading.

Bill Blocked After Two Hours of Debate

At the Senate plenary session, despite first readings typically passing as a formality, senators from the liberal "Pirate Party" with other Independents have tabled a motion to block the Bill from proceeding. The motion passed with 42 votes in favour out of 72 senators present (80 total), halting the bill's progress.

The result came after an outpouring of civic engagement unprecedented in scale for this issue. Within 24 hours of the bill becoming public, over 5,000 people signed a petition published by Qult magazine. Numerous senators have used their speeches citing receiving hundreds of heartfelt personal emails and testimonies from their constituents — trans people, their families, and allies — sharing their experiences and the real human cost of the proposed legislation.

Senators also noted they had been on the receiving end of a coordinated anti-trans campaign such as copy-pasted, formulaic messages carrying anti-trans narratives that

stood in stark contrast to the personal, specific, and moving individual stories they received. Many said it was precisely those personal accounts that weighed most heavily in their decision-making process.

Cass Review Cited, UK Named as a Model, Exposing the Import of Foreign Culture Wars

During the Senate debate, proponents of the Bill drew extensively on the UK's Cass Review, a contested report whose methodology and conclusions have been strongly disputed by major international medical bodies, to lend scientific credibility to their proposals.

One of the bill's co-sponsors, Senator Daniela Kovářová, went further, explicitly naming the United Kingdom as a model while speaking of "social contagion from abroad".

The irony was not lost on observers in warning against foreign influence, the senator was simultaneously importing the very ideological framing — bathroom panics, contested reviews, "safeguarding" rhetoric — that has driven culture-war campaigns in the UK, United States, and Hungary.

Researchers and disinformation analysts from the Charles University in Prague have documented that the rhetorical patterns deployed by the Bill's supporters closely mirror those used in well-documented anti-gender campaigns in Russia and Hungary, and align with content spread by networks of disinformation websites and ultra-conservative movements, including the Czech Alliance for Families (Aliance pro rodinu).

State-Mandated Conversion Therapy Collides with European Law

Particular concern was raised by the Bill's provision requiring a mandatory year of psychotherapy framed as aiming to "remove the perceived incongruence with biological sex." Experts note that prescribing the desired outcome of a therapeutic process is a fundamental violation of professional psychotherapy ethics, and that the law would, in effect, constitute state-mandated conversion therapy.

The Council of Europe has condemned conversion practices as a subset of honour crimes and called on all 46 member states to ban them. The European Parliament and European Commission have called on EU member states to condemn and prohibit conversion therapies, with a recent PACE resolution (2026) urging criminal sanctions. Eight EU member states including Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Malta, Portugal, and Spain have already enacted bans. Enacting this Bill would have placed the Czech Republic on a direct collision course with the European Commission, which is preparing guidance for member states on this issue for 2027.

Bill at Odds with Czech Constitutional Rulings, EU and ECHR Law

The Bill's proposals were also in direct tension with a series of Czech Constitutional Court rulings, European Court of Human Rights judgments, and Court of Justice of the

EU case law. Since the Constitutional Court struck down the requirement of **surgical sterilisation**, the number of people legally changing their gender in a single year equalled the total for the entire preceding decade a figure that speaks to the importance of accessible legal transition pathways.

Legal experts warn that the bill, as drafted, would very likely result in Czech defeats before European courts, particularly in light of the ongoing execution of the ECtHR judgment in *T.H. v. Czech Republic*.

Reactions

"Since the Constitutional Court struck down the sterilisation requirement, as many trans people legally changed their gender in a single year as in the entire previous decade. This speaks for itself about the importance of accessible legal transition. The bill on the table ignored the real barriers that remain and set about maximally dismantling what has been working well so far, with the clear objective of making transition as difficult as possible."

— **Viktor Heumann, Chair, Trans*parent**

"This proposal represented a fundamental step backwards in the delivery of modern, evidence-based healthcare. Rather than providing patients with safe and expert support, it would subject them to unnecessary bureaucratic burdens and blanket prohibitions that take no account of individual patients. From a medical standpoint, it is alarming that the introduction of arbitrary age thresholds and judicial decision-making where medical diagnostics should govern only increases the risk of stigmatisation and endangers patients' physical and mental health. Courts and medical services currently have neither the capacity nor the resources to absorb the administrative load this law would create."

— **Dr. Libor Zámečník, Chair, Czech Sexological Society (ČLS JEP)**

"Alongside the massive manipulation and the attempt to restrict transition across the board, concealed behind a rhetoric of protection, the bill in effect introduces conversion practices. It prescribes the form of professional therapeutic work through a political, not a clinical, instrument — defining legal gender recognition as conditional on a year-long attempt to change a trans person's identity into a cisgender one through therapy. This is precisely why conversion practices remain on the agenda, because the pressure is real, political, and involves a portion of the professional community."

— **Jiří Procházka, Counselling Psychologist and Psychotherapist**

"The proposed bill raises serious concerns that it would not meet the standards set by the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. On a question of this technical complexity, it would have been appropriate for any

legislative proposal to be consulted with the Council of Europe in advance — particularly in the context of the execution of the T.H. judgment. Without that, the risk of the bill, if enacted, generating unnecessary litigation and legal defeats for the Czech Republic before European courts is real and substantial."

— **Dr. Maroš Matiaško, Representing Counsel, T.H. v. Czech Republic (ECtHR)**

"The bill would transfer decision-making on legal gender recognition to the courts, which is a more expensive, less predictable, and administratively burdensome system. The inspiration comes from countries such as Bulgaria, Hungary, and Georgia, where legal gender recognition is extremely inaccessible or entirely impossible, and where serious violations of the fundamental rights of trans people are documented."

— **Tereza Žuffová, Trans*parent Member and Legal Analyst**

"Our data make it clear that a number of Czech politicians — including Senator Vladimíra Ludková and Senator Zdeněk Hrabě — are adopting schematic rhetorical approaches well-documented in environments such as Russia and Hungary. Their framing and argumentation closely mirrors content spread by a wider network of disinformation websites and the anti-gender movement, including the ultra-conservative Alliance for Families. The aim, we believe, is to shift a fringe topic built on selective facts, pseudostudies, and misinformation into the foreground of public debate, exploiting the political visibility of the actors who publicly propagate this anti-gender discourse. Anti-gender narratives are clearly embedded within a wider framework of far-right rhetoric, including anti-environmental and anti-immigration themes. The prescribed formulas and stock phrases are transparent from the international context; these movements repeat the same arguments across countries with the aim of gradually normalising them as accepted truth."

— **doc. Dr. Lenka Vochocová, Media Researcher, Charles University Faculty of Social Sciences**

About Trans*parent

Trans*parent z.s. works to advance the rights and promote positive social change for transgender, non-binary, and intersex people. The organisation was founded in Prague in spring 2015 in response to the need for peer information-sharing and policy change in the area of transgender equality. Trans*parent works to foster understanding and acceptance of trans, non-binary, and intersex people at both the social and legislative level.

Media Contact

Daniel Zikmund, PR Manager, Trans*parent

Tel: +420 774 084 397

Email: daniel.zikmund@transparentprague.cz

We are happy to arrange personal testimonies or provide data, research references, and direct contacts to the experts quoted above.

Note to editors: A supporting factual analysis with sources is available as an annex to this press release.