

GENDERED DISINFORMATION IN SLOVAKIA AND CZECHIA

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About us

MEMO 98 helps people to receive fair and comprehensive information about public affairs. Having worked for 25 years in Slovakia and abroad, we belong to global leaders in media monitoring and elections. Our main goal is to ensure that people require good quality media content - essential for enhancing of their critical thinking.

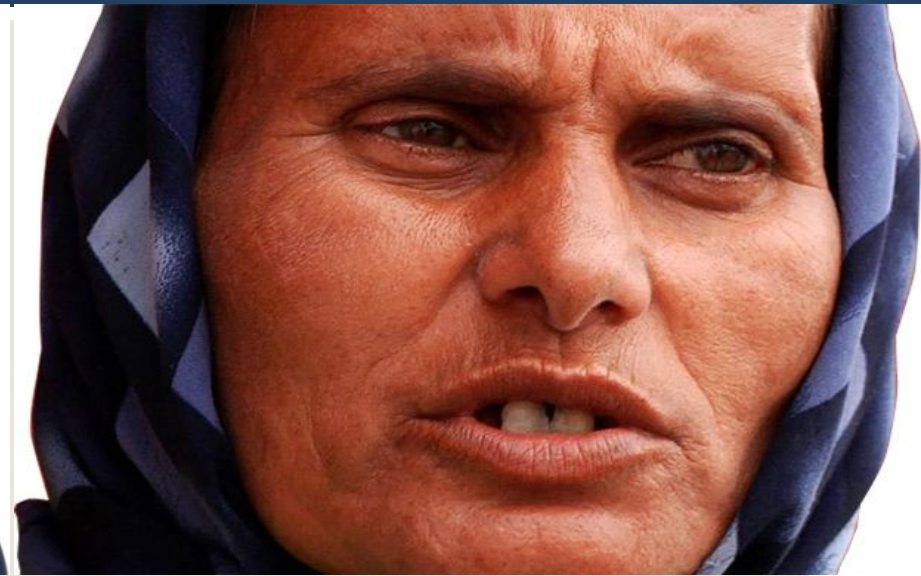
Where we work



Search...



What we do



Media Monitoring

Explains what the media report

Elections

Quality information means better choice

Disinformation

Undermines trust in democracy

Quality Journalism

Navigates and helps to find solutions

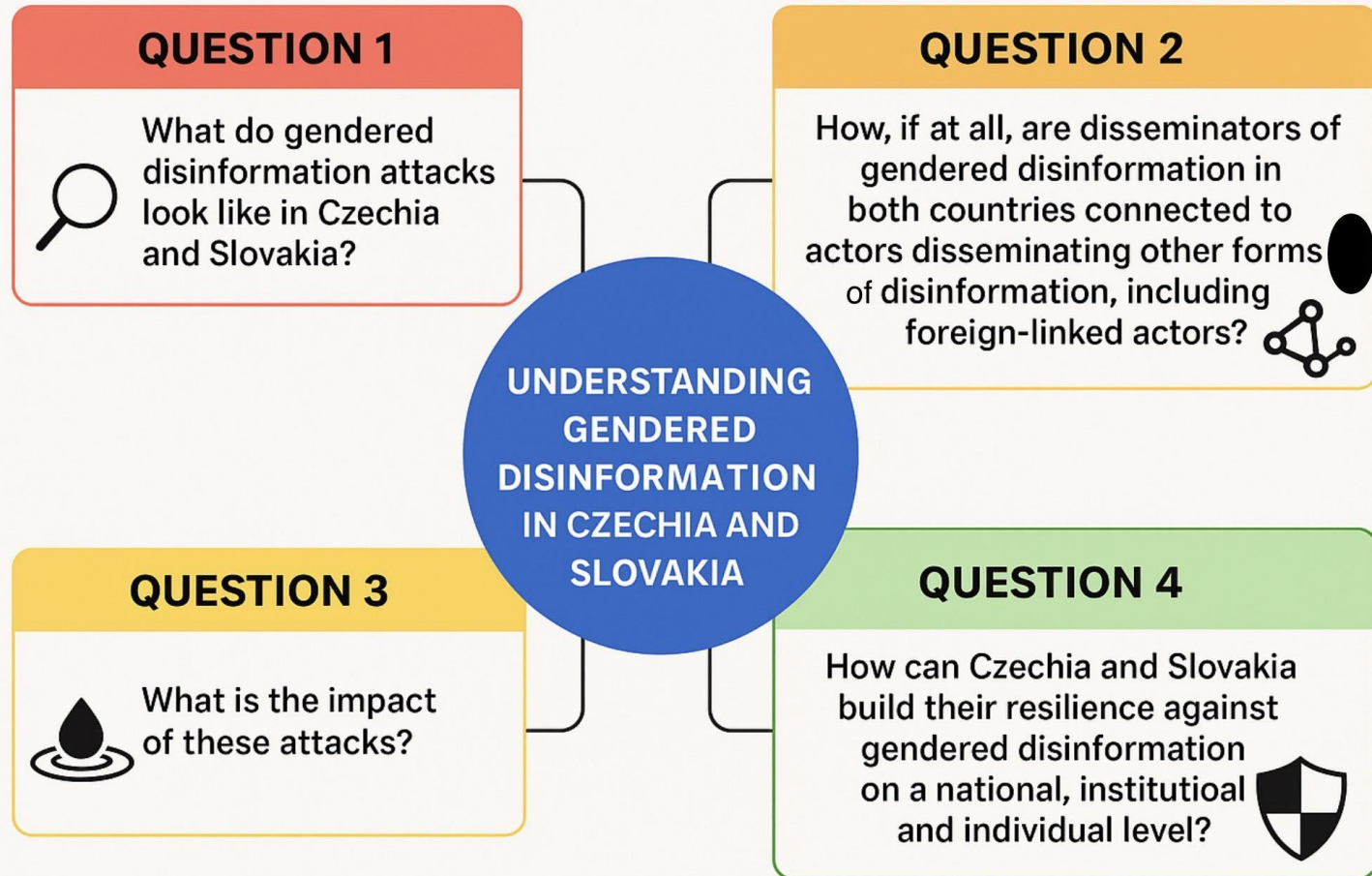
Rule of law

Respect for rules protects institutions

Seniors

Media literacy and digital skills

Research questions



Analysis

IN SLOVAKIA AND CZECHIA, WE EXPLORED...



The nature and origins of politicised gendered disinformation campaigns



OVER 8,600
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS
BETWEEN
2022 AND 2025



INTERVIEWS
WITH 21 EXPERTS
from academia,
journalism, and
politics

Findings



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.

Findings

WHAT DO GENDERED DISINFORMATION ATTACKS LOOK LIKE IN SLOVAKIA?

MEMO 98 Analysis (2022-2025)



MAIN TARGETS

- Women in politics (esp. gender rights advocates)
 - LGBTQ+ individuals and activists
- Even some conservative male politicians (e.g. Pellegrini) were attacked over perceived sexuality.



NARRATIVES & TACTICS

- Misrepresentation of policies (e.g. Istanbul Convention = “gender ideology”)
- Moral panic: threats to tradition, masculinity, family, Christianity



SPIKES AROUND KEY EVENTS

- Emotional manipulation: memes, polarizing videos, fear-mongering
- Personal & sexualised attacks (e.g. against Lucia Plaváková)
- Framing: conservatives vs. “liberal elites”

Findings - Slovakia



Gendered Disinformation in Slovakia: A Geopolitical Tool

- **Instrument of Division:** Gendered disinformation is used strategically by pro-Kremlin actors to deepen societal divides and erode trust in democracy
- **Hybrid Warfare Tactics:** Narratives often link women’s leadership, LGBTQ+ rights, and EU values to “cultural decay,” echoing anti-Western, anti-migration, and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric
- **High-Profile Targets:** Public figures such as former President Zuzana Čaputová and journalists Monika Tódová and Zuzana Kovačič Hanzelová have been attacked through doctored images, dehumanizing language, and conspiracy theories (e.g. “foreign puppet”)
- **Impact:** These campaigns aim to discredit reform-minded voices, legitimize misogyny, and discourage women from participation in public life—undermining democratic resilience

Findings - Czechia



Gendered Disinformation in Czechia

▲ Narratives & Tactics

- Disinformation campaigns oppose gender equality & LGBTQ+ rights, often linked to broader extremist networks.
- False claims and fearmongering are used to block initiatives like Istanbul Convention, sex education, and equality policies.
- These efforts misrepresent reforms as part of “gender ideology,” equating them with cultural threats (e.g. same-sex marriage).

! Targets & Effects

- Female politicians and journalists are key targets, facing smear campaigns that question their credibility.
- Consequences include self-censorship, professional caution, and a chilling effect on public debate.
- The narrative of defending “traditional values” is used to fuel societal polarization and slow progress on rights.

Findings

Key Findings: Gendered Disinformation in Slovakia & Czechia



Impacts on Individuals

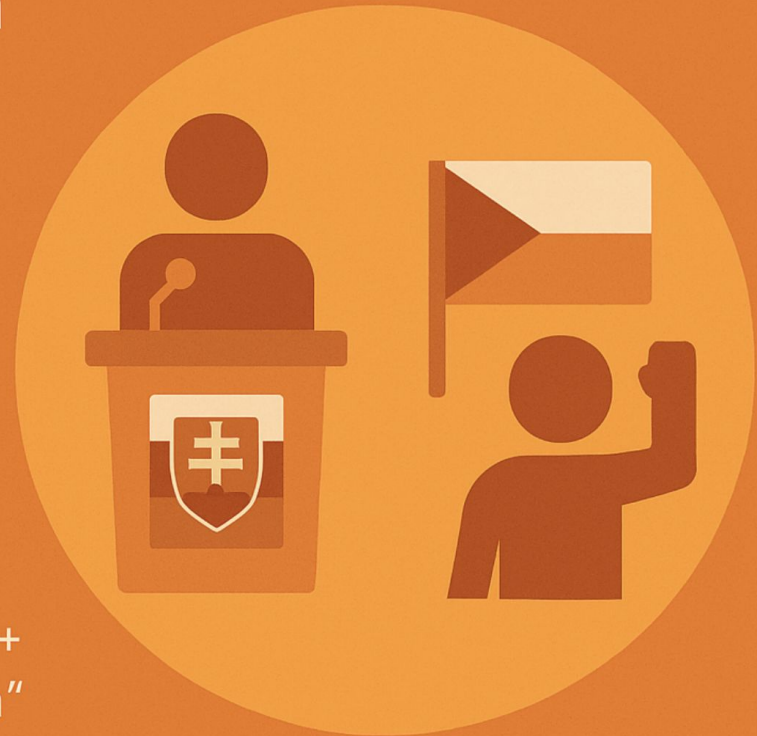
- Fear of attacks deters public participation
- Anxiety, mental health strain, job losses
- Harassment online & offline (incl. by politicians)
- Vandalism (e.g. faeces on car)
- Lack of legal accountability for perpetrators

Findings

Key Findings: Gendered Disinformation in Slovakia & Czechia

● Main Disseminators

- Slovakia: Mainstream populist parties drive narratives
- Czechia: Extremist/nationalist fringe actors more active
- Both target gender & LGBTQ+ rights as “threats to tradition”



Findings



POLITICAL & GEOPOLITICAL AMPLIFICATION

- Kremlin-linked Telegram channels echoed by politicians
- Narratives: anti-Ukraine, anti-EU, anti-„woke“
- US far-right content influenced Slovak Tepláreň shooter

Findings

Victims & Systemic Nature



- Primarily women, but also LGBTQ+ people & some men
- Not tied to one ideology – affects all sides

Challenges to Counteraction



- Good counter-narratives exist but stay in echo chambers
- Struggle to reach wider audiences or shift discourse

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUILDING RESILIENCE

(Based on interviews in Slovakia and Czechia)

1. REDUCTION OF IMPACT ON TARGETS



CONTENT MANAGEMENT

- Clear escalation protocols for hateful/threatening content
- Use of “troll walls” to manually filter and monitor comments
- AI tools for automated hate speech filtering



TRAINING & SUPPORT

- Psychological support & peer networks
- Operational security: protection from hacking/doxing
- Crisis communication training to respond to attacks

Recommendations

Recommendations for Building Resilience

(Based on interviews in Slovakia and Czechia)

▲ 2. Prevention Measures



Platform & Legal Accountability

- Stronger regulation of algorithms promoting harmful content
- Training for police/judges on gendered disinfo & enforcement



Public Awareness & Education

- Non-partisan education on disinformation's societal harms
- Civil society as lead actor for credibility

Recommendations

Prevention Measures



Social Media Accountability

Better regulation to address the algorithmic prioritization of harmful content, ideally through national or EU legislation



Training for Law Enforcement and Judiciary

Improving understanding of gendered disinformation and timely enforcement to deter future harassment

Analysis

Recommendations for Building Resilience



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.



Building Cross-Spectrum Solidarity: Organizations across political leanings must support colleagues experiencing gendered disinformation attacks, as resilience requires broad societal commitment

Thank you