



Aperio – Healthy Parenting Association  
Plzeňská 66, 151 24 Praha 5  
CZECH REPUBLIC  
tel. + 420 222 364 083  
[aperio@aperio.cz](mailto:aperio@aperio.cz) | [www.aperio.cz](http://www.aperio.cz)

## ENCA 2010 - CZECH REPUBLIC REPORT

---

Czech Republic is a medium-sized country, with something over 10 million inhabitants and 100 maternity hospitals. The only birth centre currently doesn't accept women for delivery, and there are about 20 midwives attending home births.

*In this report, we would like to mention only the development which occurred in the past 12 months and we will not bother you with copying from older reports what you already read in the last few years. The situation as such has not changed much, but it probably will in the next year or two.*

### **Discussions with Ministry of Health and Physicians**

In June 2009, a seminar „Births in Czech Republic“ took place in the Ministry of Health, initiated by the Normal Birth Initiative (namely Ivana Konigsmarkova from UNIPA and Petra Sovova from HAM; the Initiative consists of parents, midwives and doulas). The organizing staff at the MH invited participants by a note saying that the seminar will cover mainly homebirths, and thus some tension and controversy arose among attending obstetricians and pediatricians. However, this was cleared quite early on and the following discussion was quite constructive and open-minded. The International Mother-Baby Childbirth Initiative was presented by Lucie Ryntova (Aperio) and was welcome as a constructive basis for further discussion. The MH promised to organize a round-table discussion platform among ob-gyns, pediatricians, midwives and parents, however in spite of many reminders nothing happened so far. The causes might be political – a provisional government has been installed since Spring 2009 – or the general distaste of MH's relevant officials for midwives and normal birth, who are therefore quite efficient in forever postponing any constructive activities.

### **Ombudsman's Intervention in the Homebirth and Birth Centre Debate**

In 2010, the Czech ombudsman responded to the appeal of Marie Vnouckova, an independent midwife, complaining of unclear conditions of obtaining a full midwifery licence (i.e., including assistance at normal birth). The ombudsman's office declared that a birth cannot be considered physiological only in retrospect (a favourite saying of Ministry of Health and Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians); therefore midwives can assist independently at physiological births, if there is no previous indication of pathology. However, it recommended to Ministry of Health to draft a legislation stating what qualification and equipment midwives should possess in order to be allowed to assist at births. The bad news is that the Ministry of Health works on this draft with the Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians, and the indications are that the requirements on equipment will be almost equal to the equipment of a regular maternity hospital, therefore leading to further illegalizing of the current midwife-assisted homebirth practices. Many midwives are officially present at a homebirth „only by accident“, just as women deliver in the only birth centre in the Czech Republic „only by surprise“. There is a semi-organized protest against the prepared draft – many mothers have sent their letters to various governmental and legislative



Aperio – Healthy Parenting Association  
Pízeňská 66, 151 24 Praha 5  
CZECH REPUBLIC  
tel. + 420 222 364 083

[aperio@aperio.cz](mailto:aperio@aperio.cz) | [www.aperio.cz](http://www.aperio.cz)

bodies, however most of them have so far replied that it is the concern of Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health itself replies that it will proceed according to the recommendations of the Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians. We fear that soon the situation will be the same as in Poland and Hungary.

### **Psychology of Birth Workshop (Aperio)**

In April 2010, Aperio organized the first 2-day workshop „Psychology of Birth“. The initial purpose was to spread the awareness of psychosocial context of birth among physicians and midwives. However, only midwives and social science professionals attended this workshop. Their reaction was very positive and excited, and the workshop will take place again in autumn 2010.

### **World Respected Childbirth Weeks 2009 & 2010 (HAM)**

The past two WRCW's showed a rising number of visitors (2010 - 2100, one third more than in the last year), commercial and media partners, and a more developed promotion. The City of Prague supported officially the WRCW, including advertisement in public transport.

### **New Childbirth Activism**

There is a rising awareness of normal birth benefits among women, and consequently a rising number of activists. However, the movement is rather fractioned – next to Aperio, which attempts to do projects on a professional basis, and HAM, which is more volunteer-based, there is a new organization ProPP (For Natural Birth, [www.propp.cz](http://www.propp.cz)) which was founded in summer 2009. Its goals are similar to those of Aperio and HAM – to support normal birth. Its members are mostly women with university education (physicians etc.) who are probably disappointed by the current lack of progress in the normal birth discussion, don't identify themselves with the members of HAM or Aperio, and believe that they will be able to change the situation by opening a discussion with obstetricians on a more equal basis and using the normal birth research and evidence. So far, there has been no activity.

There are also other small groups which are interested in various areas of normal birth (support for mother-baby bonding after childbirth, homebirth, etc.). However, the joint potential of all these people is still underused.

### ***Eliška Kodyšová, May 2010***

*Aperio - Healthy Parenting Association, Prague, Czech Republic, [eliska.kodysova@aperio.cz](mailto:eliska.kodysova@aperio.cz)  
With many thanks to Lucie Ryntová, Aperio, and Marketa Safrankova, HAM, for supplying additional data.*



Aperio – Healthy Parenting Association  
 Plzeňská 66, 151 24 Praha 5  
 CZECH REPUBLIC  
 tel. + 420 222 364 083

[aperio@aperio.cz](mailto:aperio@aperio.cz) | [www.aperio.cz](http://www.aperio.cz)

## ENCA

### MATERNITY STATISTICS for the year 2008 Czech Republic

May 2010, Lucie Ryntová ([lucie.ryntova@aperio.cz](mailto:lucie.ryntova@aperio.cz))

	Number	Percent	Notes
Population of the country (31.12.06)	approx. 10 287189 (1996)		
Total number of newborns in 2008 (stillbirths)	119 842 (49,2% to mothers >30yrs)		106 130 in 2006 (41,9% to mothers 30 years old and older)
Perinatal mortality rate		2,78‰	
Maternal mortality rate	7		
Low birth weight babies		7,11% <2500 gr	6,98% in 2006, 7,16% in 2007
Number of out of hospital births	432 (registered) more in reality		349 >2500gr. Total 265 in 2006, 307 in 2007
Inductions		9,1%	6,5% in 2004 7,4% in 2005 8,5% in 2006, 9,3% in 2007
Number of cesarean sections		2008: 20,9% 45%: women over 35	1998: 12,5% 2002: 14,3% 2004: 16,3% 2007: 20,0%
VBAC		36,6% after 1 cs	2006: 40,1%, 2007: 38,6%
Breech deliveries		5,9 %	Out of which 91,1% per CS (2006: 84,3%)
Vacuum deliveries	748	0,6 %	
Deliveries by forceps	1215	1,02 %	
Number if episiotomies		36,9%	37,2% in 2007
Number of midwives	5 500 (year 2004)		60-70 private midwives 20 assist home births (10 in Prague)



Aperio – Healthy Parenting Association  
 Plzeňská 66, 151 24 Praha 5  
 CZECH REPUBLIC  
 tel. + 420 222 364 083

[aperio@aperio.cz](mailto:aperio@aperio.cz) | [www.aperio.cz](http://www.aperio.cz)

Number of obstetricians/gynecologists	2 305 (year 2003)		1 600 private gynecologists
Number of maternity units	101		
Births attended by an obstetrician		77,7%	2005: 71,5% 2006: 76,5%, 2007: 78,3%
Births attended by a midwife		21,3%	2005: 22,3%
Unattended births		0,1%	
Number of Babyfriendly hospitals	63		
Number of birth centers	Officially 1, but none in reality		Registered in 2006, but not allowed to assist births
Number of certified doulas	17 (year 2006) 22 (year 2008)		2 Doulas organizations

## Other interesting facts

### **Out of all Cesarean sections (2007)**

Planned CS before labour	37,3 %
Acute -,-	15,3 %
Planned CS during labour	11,8 %
Acute -,-	35,6 %

### Mothers by medication during labour (2007)

Uterotonics	81,3 %
Spasmolytics	26,7 %
Analgetics	22%
Antibiotics	29,1%
None	14,1 % (a small increase of 2,6%)

**Note: one mother often treated by several medications**

### **Breastfeeding at release from hospital (2005)**

fully breastfed 90,2%  
 with substitutes 5,2 %  
 formula fed 2,8 %  
 not mentioned 1,8 %

### **The length of breastfeeding (2004)**

35,8% breastfed 6 months and longer



Aperio – Healthy Parenting Association  
Plzeňská 66, 151 24 Praha 5  
CZECH REPUBLIC  
tel. + 420 222 364 083  
[aperio@aperio.cz](mailto:aperio@aperio.cz) | [www.aperio.cz](http://www.aperio.cz)

24% breastfed 3 – 6 months  
17 % breastfed 6 weeks – 2 months  
18,6 % breastfed till 6 weeks

**Sources of information:** *Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), The Institute of Health Information and Statistics of the Czech Republic (IHIS), The Lactation League*