

## **Abstract**

This Master's Thesis investigates the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 in Austria and Czechia, with a focus on the strategy's goals of freedom from violence and stereotypes, thriving in a gender-equal economy, and equal leadership throughout society. The research adopts Sylvia Walby's theory of gender regimes to provide context, which highlights the role of the state in shaping gender equality outcomes. Austria and Czechia are identified as social democratic and neoliberal gender regimes, respectively. This mixed-methods study employs thematic analysis and comparative case study and combines qualitative data gathered through ethnographic methods and quantitative data from open statistics. The thesis finds that Czechia operates as a neoliberal gender regime, with a limited role of the state in supporting women at risk of gender-based violence. In contrast, Austria's social democratic gender regime has provided robust support during the pandemic, with a centralized system of shelters and a state-wide 24/7 women's helpline. The study contributes to the development of gender regime theory and offers a nuanced understanding of the pandemic's impact on gender equality in different gender regimes. The findings have relevance for ongoing academic debate on the crisis's impact on women and men in the EU.