

# MOTHERHOOD TRANSFORMED

# NEWSLETTER 1/2026

Motherhood Transformed is a regional platform dedicated to connecting researchers, activists, journalists, and artists from the Visegrad countries. We explore motherhood as a political and social issue, addressing care and creativity, economic precarity, reproductive health and justice and the often-overlooked struggles of mothers. In this newsletter, the platform members share what deserves your attention: insights from academia, art, civil society, and media from the region and beyond. [Join us on Substack for more.](#)

## SUMMER SCHOOL

[CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: The V4 Summer School, 14–16 July 2026, Kőszeg, Hungary.](#) The summer school is a three-day interdisciplinary event that aims to explore the transformation of motherhood in the post-socialist region as a key democratic and social issue. It brings together scholars, activists, journalists, and artists to develop a new political grammar, support cross-border interdisciplinary networks, and begin building a sustainable infrastructure for knowledge sharing. Interested? Find out more and apply by May 18, 2026.

## ART

- **CZ** [Atelier Mothers Artlovers](#) Are you a mother – artist, activist, curator, theorist... - in Brno, Prague, or online? Join this “collectively conceived social sculpture” and supportive space that offers discussions, cooperation, childcare, inspiration, and opportunities for sharing.
- **HU** [Movie Night with Mambo Maternica](#) The film, directed by Borbála Nagy, tells the story of three women in their forties who find themselves at turning points in their lives: facing an unwanted pregnancy, adoption, or the desire to have a child without a partner. As they navigate life-altering decisions and confront societal expectations, they question how much freedom they truly have to live their lives. Check film festivals and your favourite art cinemas so you don't miss it.
- **PL** [Book Tip: Diverse Voices on Motherhood in Recent Polish Literature](#) Join contemporary discussions on motherhood and femininity by exploring these recently published Polish books: Eliza Kącka on mothering in the context of neurodiversity; Paulina Małochleb on the pressures, emotional labour, and cultural expectations shaping motherhood today; and Katarzyna Tubylewicz on voluntary non-motherhood as a meaningful and legitimate life choice.
- **SK** [Establishing a Cultural Labour Union](#) Culture is at the forefront of political struggles in Slovakia. One initiative has taken this as an opportunity to address long-term structural issues in the cultural sector, such as short-term contracts, the precarious position and low pay of workers, as well as understaffed and underfunded institutions. The new cultural labour union is demanding changes that could greatly benefit (not only) mothers working in culture.

## ACADEMIA

- **HU-SVK-CZ** [Viktor Orbán's Affairs with Women. The Illiberal Playbook: Gender, Power, and Control](#) The new book by investigative journalist Zsuzsanna Balázs and historian Andrea Pető provides an accessible introduction to how the illiberal gender playbook impacts women. It shows how the government has co-opted and eroded national and international anti-discrimination and equality provisions, thereby creating an alternative to liberal values. Moreover, the book analyses the reasons why women cast their votes in favour of an illiberal government that discriminates against and impoverishes them. As the Orbán government's gender policies gain international attention, this book serves as a cautionary tale for those concerned about human rights worldwide. Join one of the book presentations: [May 12 at 17.00, Infocentrum UK in Bratislava](#), or [14 May at 13:00, Jaroslav Seifert Hall at the Prague Book Fair](#).
- **PL** [Open Access Publication: Reproductive Justice in Poland. Legal Challenges and Societal Impacts](#) The recent book by Professor of Law Maria Boratyńska explores key issues such as abortion, contraception, prenatal diagnosis, and medically assisted procreation, with a particular focus on the practical barriers posed by inconsistent legal enforcement, societal stigma, and the significant influence of Catholic institutions in Poland.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

- **SVK** [The European Court of Human Rights Ruled in Favour of a Woman Subjected to Violence](#) In its judgment, the ECtHR found that the Slovak courts had approached the case too formalistically. They failed to take into account the long-term nature of the violence and the expert opinions confirming the serious psychological consequences for the complainant and her children. The complainant was supported by the NGO Fenestra, which considers the ruling an important precedent that should lead to tangible changes in practice.
- **PL** [The Mamy Wolne / Mothers Off](#) The collective brings together mother-artists to create a supportive space for creative exchange, rest, and conversations about motherhood and women's roles in culture. In May 2026, it is organising the second edition of the Mamy Wolne festival—a celebration of mother-artists that offers networking opportunities, discussions, and workshops highlighting their creative work.
- **HU** [Női Minimum / Women's Minimum](#) A coalition of Hungarian feminist and civil organisations has launched the Women's Minimum campaign to highlight structural inequalities affecting women and to push for concrete policy changes. The campaign presents a 10-point list of demands, including stronger protection against gender-based violence, recognition and prevention of obstetric violence, accessible reproductive healthcare, and comprehensive sex education in schools. It also calls for the economic recognition of care work, measures to close the gender pay gap, and improved social support for families, caregivers, and vulnerable women.
- **CZ** [Respect for Childbirth Festival](#) The largest event in the Czech Republic dedicated to pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting will take place on 23–24 May in Prague.

It creates a bridge between professionals and parents, offering a safe space for questions and discussions about the journey to motherhood and fatherhood.

## MEDIA

- **PL [Podcast on Motherhood and Reproductive Rights in Poland](#)** In recent years, Poland has witnessed a rise in independently produced podcasts exploring reproductive rights and activism, abortion experiences, and motherhood from feminist and often personal perspectives. One of the most influential examples was *Coś na A / Something Starting with A: A Podcast About Abortion*, created by journalist Karolina Domagalska. As the author invited: "Let's talk about abortion without censorship, explanations, or judgment." Some episodes are available on Spotify.
- **HU [Másállapotot a szülészetben / Women's Group Against Obstetric Violence](#)** This grassroots, non-political, non-partisan, and religiously neutral movement, organised by women, has suspended its activism after 10 years: "We have achieved the primary goal we set for ourselves at our founding: we have broken the silence and brought to light the existence of obstetric violence and systemic failures." Our team member Fanni Svégel [traced the transnational history of health feminism and motherhood, to uncover the ups and downs of activism in East Central Europe](#).
- **CZ [Pay Gap Podcast](#)** The hosts, Šárka Homfray, a lawyer and labour union activist, and Lucie Václavková, a career counsellor, discuss a range of phenomena encountered in professional life, such as motherhood, the gender pay gap, the glass ceiling, and work-life balance.
- **SK [Abortion in Slovakia](#)** This documentary film, created by journalist Barbara Mareková and director Lenka Stanková, tells a complex story about abortion in Slovakia – from legal conditions to scientific perspectives to women's experiences. Watch the film online to learn more.

## BEYOND BORDERS

[State of Motherhood in Europe 2024](#) This comparative report is based on a survey examining the evolving experiences and challenges of motherhood across Europe. It draws on insights from 9,600 mothers in 12 countries – Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. The report addresses questions such as: What are the realities of motherhood today? What are the most pressing challenges mothers face? How can families, workplaces, and society better support mothers in balancing their diverse roles?

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[Read more from about various faces and layers of motherhood in our Substack.](#)

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The project is co-financed by the governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from the International Visegrad Fund. The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe.



- Visegrad Fund