

Annual Report

of the Protector of Rights – Ombudsperson

Czech Academy of Sciences

For 2025

Ing. Dana Plavcová

The report covers the period from 15 September to 31 December 2025.

Introduction

The Czech Academy of Sciences (hereinafter the “Czech Academy of Sciences” or “CAS”) established the **position of ombudsperson** (hereinafter the “ombudsperson”) in 2025 as a **completely new institution focused on protecting the rights of all persons working within the scientific community and on creating a safe, fair and respectful working environment**. The position was established on the basis of the vision of the Academy of Sciences’ management, which places emphasis on a preventive approach, education, raising awareness and creating systemic measures to prevent undesirable behaviour at institutes.

The ombudsperson's mandate and activities are defined by **Guideline No. 2 of the Academy Council of the CAS dated 4 February 2025 on the Ombudsperson and Protection against Undesirable Conduct at the Czech Academy of Sciences**. This guideline defines the ombudsperson as an independent and impartial institution that protects the rights of all members of the academic community, including all staff and external collaborators, regardless of their employment relationship or academic status.

The ombudsperson's work is based on ethical principles defined by the **Code of Conduct of the Czech Academy of Sciences**, which was approved by the CAS Academy Council on 30 April 2024 and came into effect on 1 July 2024. The Code of Conduct focuses on creating and cultivating a fair and safe working environment for all without distinction, based on mutual respect, professional responsibility and integrity, and complements the Code of Ethics for Scientific Research of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

The ombudsperson receives and investigates complaints concerning **discrimination, bullying, violence and harassment at the workplace, gender-based violence, sexual harassment and abuse of power**. Their task is to evaluate and investigate complaints received, collaborate with the relevant units of the Academy of Sciences, **implement educational and preventive activities**, monitor trends in the area of the protection of rights and **propose systemic measures**. The main principles of the ombudsperson's work include **impartiality, independence and confidentiality**.

Based on an open selection procedure, Ing. Dana Plavcová was appointed to the position of ombudsperson on 15 September 2025.

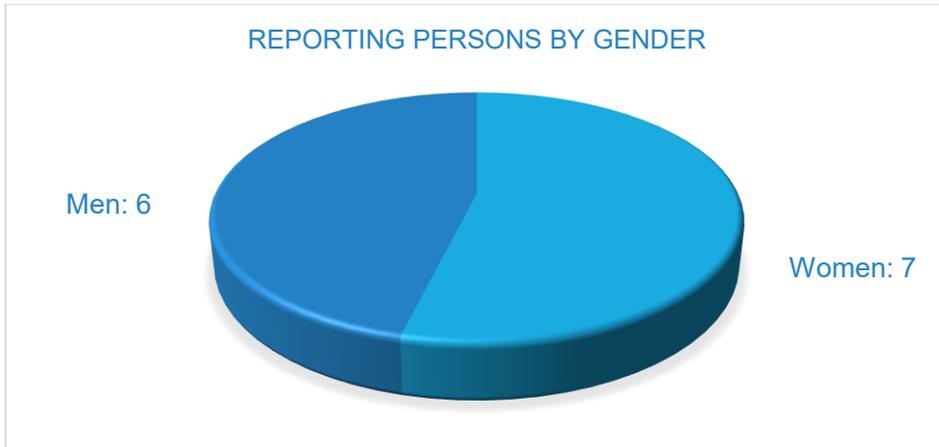
The ombudsperson's annual report for 2025 applies to the period from 15 September 2025 to the end of the calendar year 2025.

The objective of this report is to provide appropriate information about the ombudsperson's activities and contribute to a transparent and responsible environment. With regard to the principles of confidentiality, this report is of a summary nature and does not contain any information by which the reporting persons could be identified in any way.

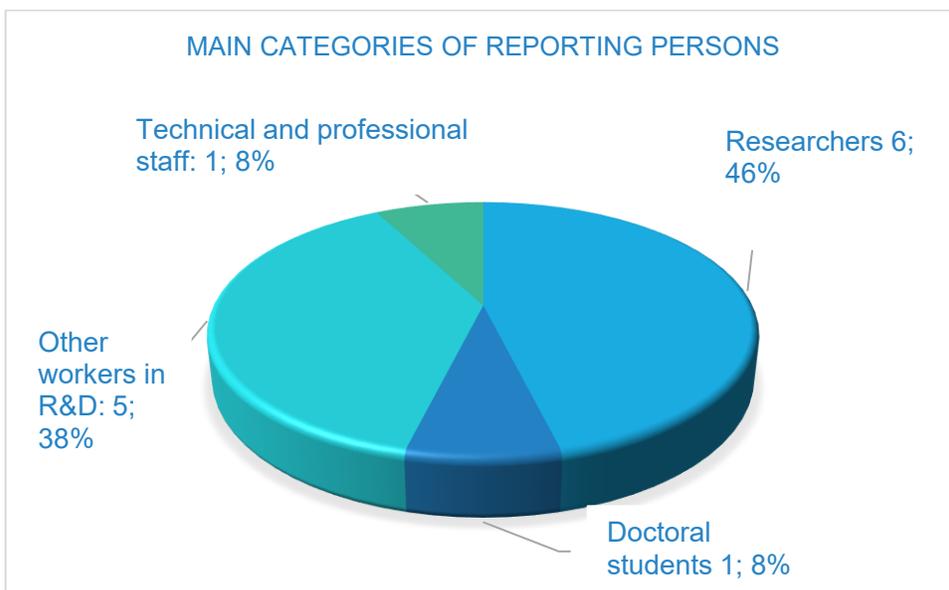
Case Work

Over three and a half months of the ombudsperson's work in 2025, **13 complaints** were received. Of these 13 complaints, **12 cases were closed within the same year** and the resolution of one was carried over to 2026.

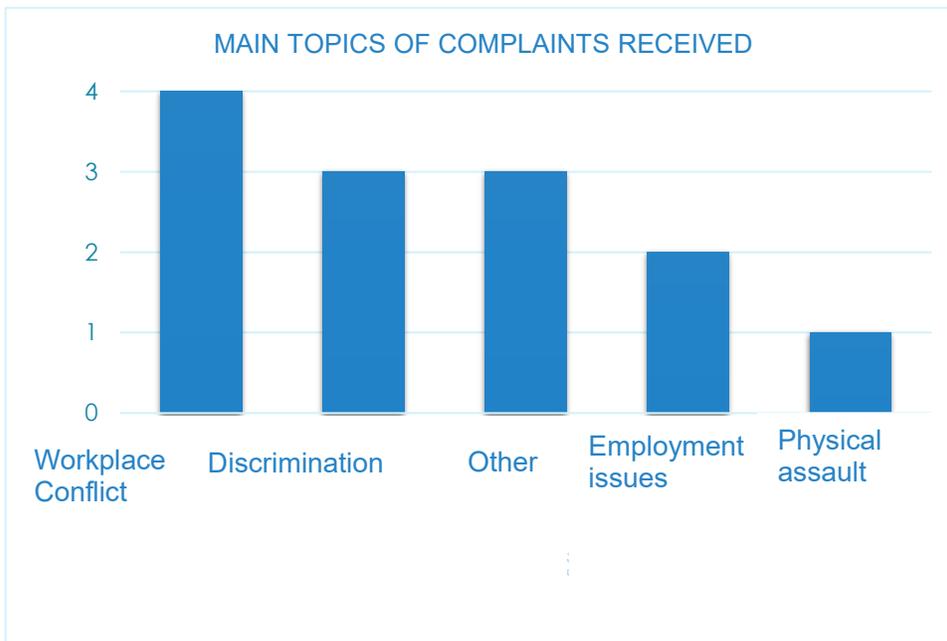
The number of reporting women and men was balanced – complaints were filed by six men and seven women.



The reporting persons were classified into the following categories: researcher, doctoral student (monitored separately due to greater vulnerability), technical and professional staff, and other workers in science and research (this includes administrative staff, office workers, project managers, maintenance workers, etc.). The ombudsperson was most frequently contacted by researchers (6 persons, i.e. 46%) and other workers (5 persons, i.e. 38%). One complaint came from each of the two other categories – from doctoral students and technical and professional staff.



The main topics for which reporting persons contacted the ombudsperson included, in particular, workplace conflicts (including reported bullying, disrespectful behaviour and other interpersonal conflicts), discrimination on the grounds of age and gender, employment issues related mainly to the termination of employment relationship and, in one case, a report of physical assault. The “other” category includes various complaints that do not fall within any of the aforementioned categories. The ombudsperson did not receive any complaint concerning sexual violence or harassment.



It should be mentioned that the overview presents the topics as they were reported, and unethical behaviour was not confirmed in all cases.

Education and Prevention

The ombudsperson's first task was to set up the entire system and ensure that CAS staff were made aware of the option of contacting them. They prepared texts for the CAS website and contacted CAS institute directors with a request to share the information with all institute employees. At the same time, in collaboration with the CAS Centre of Administration and Operations, they prepared an interview that was placed on the CAS website and distributed in the *A/Z Akademie* newsletter, which, according to statistics, is read by approximately 30–40% of CAS staff.

The ombudsperson also took the opportunity to briefly present their mandate and activity plans at a meeting of the CAS Academy Council with CAS institute directors and institute council chairs on 19 November 2025.

The ombudsperson contacted the organiser of the Open Science research stay programme for high school students and agreed on a joint procedure, so that all research stay participants would be informed of the option of contacting the ombudsperson if they encounter inappropriate behaviour.

Collaboration with CAS Bodies

Although the ombudsperson operates completely independently and is directly subordinate to the President of the CAS, they actively collaborate with other CAS bodies and individual CAS institutes. They collaborated with the chair of the Scientific Integrity Committee, individual members of the CAS Academy Council responsible for agendas affecting their work, the director of the CAS Head Office and its relevant divisions, and with the directors of CAS institutes.

Collaboration with Ombudspersons at CAS Institutes

A number of CAS institutes have established an ombudsperson or a similar role, but there was a lack of comprehensive information about which institutes these are and who performs this role. The ombudsperson collected this information from all 54 CAS institutes and contacted the existing ombudspersons. At the end of the year, some form of ombudsperson was operating at 25 institutes, but there are large differences in the scope of their mandates and the number of cases they deal with. All ombudspersons operating within the CAS received an invitation from the CAS ombudsperson to their first joint meeting in February 2026 with the aim of establishing collaboration and supporting each other.

Collaboration with Other Ombudspersons

The ombudsperson is in active contact with ombudspersons who work, most frequently, at universities, as well as in companies and government offices. The ombudsperson attended the 2nd national conference of ombudspersons, which was organised by the Association of Corporate Ombudsmen of the Czech Republic at Charles University on 16 October 2025. They are an associate member of the School Ombuds Platform and attend regular meetings of ombudspersons from Prague and the surrounding area.