



## CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN WOMEN'S NETWORK FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

### CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Rights No 10 (113) 2012

#### Table of contents:

- **Burning Issue**
- **Regional Updates**
- **Global Updates**
- **Upcoming Events**
- **Publications**

#### **BURNING ISSUE**

**September 28 - Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion.** Today, more than half of the world's female population lives in a country where abortion is partially or totally illegal. Criminalizing abortion can have disastrous consequences on women's health and lives. Every year, 47,000 women die because of a clandestine or unsafe abortion. September 28th is celebrated as day of action for access to safe and legal abortion. This year, the celebrations were coordinated by the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion, the Latin American and Caribbean Campaña 28 de Septiembre, and the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights. According to the organizers, in as many as 50 countries, abortion rights groups, women's health and rights and human rights groups and other NGOs, as well as national coalitions, regional networks and international organisations who support safe abortion joined the celebrations this year. They all shared one demand: to see women's right to control their own bodies respected the world over.

Reports from around the world can be found at: <http://safe-abortion-womens-right.tumblr.com/archive>

The open letter "The right to abortion is under attack!" is available at [http://www.september28.org/international-call-of-young-feminists-my-body-is-mine/-](http://www.september28.org/international-call-of-young-feminists-my-body-is-mine/)

More: <http://www.september28.org/herstory/>

#### **REGIONAL UPDATES**

**Abortion Vote in Suspense in Poland.** In September the Polish parliament debated two new draft bills regarding access to SRHR services. The first draft proposed by the conservative party Solidary Poland stipulates total ban of so called eugenic abortions. According to the second draft tabled by the populist Palikot Movement, abortion should be legal and available on demand up to the 12th week. Moreover the liberalizing draft regulates access to contraception and sexuality education. The bills will be voted during the next parliament sitting in October. Poland's abortion law is one of the most restrictive in Europe and even more restrictive in practice than on paper. Although the law

allows termination of pregnancy under three conditions - including for therapeutic reasons and when it results from a criminal act - legal abortion is actually not accessible even for women whose conditions fall under the exceptions. Moreover, access to other SRHR services is also limited. There is no sexuality education in schools and contraception is not subsidized.

Source: [www.federa.org.pl](http://www.federa.org.pl)

**Abortion Debate in the Russian Duma.** In July, Elena Mizulina, the MP who has introduced most anti-abortion amendments in the Russian Parliament (Duma) last year, has now introduced a new proposal that aims at punishing/criminalizing providers of illegal abortions (proposing administrative punishment when, for example, the obligatory waiting period is not respected or when abortion is performed after the 12 week cut-off). Committing the "offence" twice or more during one year could lead to big fines or up to 3 years in jail. The proposal has been introduced into the State Duma Committee on Constitutional Law and State-Building, and the Committee has not yet taken any further steps with regard to it. Meanwhile, the famous St Petersburg Regional MP Milonov, author of the scandalous law on the so-called "propaganda of homosexuality", has introduced a law proposal on the embryo's rights. The Saint-Petersburg Regional Parliament is going to discuss the law proposal, and Milonov hopes that it will be sent then to the State Duma in Fall.

Source: RAPD at [www.ranir.ru](http://www.ranir.ru)

**Ukrainian Parliament passes draft law banning 'homosexual propaganda' in first reading.** The Verkhovna Rada, the Ukrainian parliament, voted with an overwhelming majority to support a bill that would ban "homosexual propaganda". 289 out of 450 members of parliament supported the bill, which is now expected to move for a second round of reading in parliament later this month. After that the Chair of the Parliament and the President would need to sign the bill before it would become official law. The bill would modify several existing laws in Ukraine, including criminal law, and introduce sanctions for the import, production and distribution of products that would "promote" homosexuality. If voted into law, it would lead to the further marginalisation of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans community in the country and would limit the work of human rights defenders. Moreover the draft law is incompatible with international human rights law. First it is so vague that it fails to conform to the requirement that restrictions must be provided for by law. Under the draft law, it is impossible for an individual to determine what kind of expression is banned. Second, the asserted reasons for the "homosexual propaganda" ban fail the tests of proportionality and necessity. In other words, the restriction serves no permissible purpose. Third and finally, the homosexual propaganda ban discriminates against LGBT people by prohibiting public discourse on issues that matter to LGBT lives.

Source: <http://www.ilga-europe.org>

**Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland) at the Human Rights Council session.** Federation for Women and Family Planning, presented the statement (together with the Sexual Rights Initiative) at the 21st Human Rights Council session in Geneva during the discussion on Universal Periodic Review report on Poland. The Federation addressed recommendations submitted by member states for the Polish government in connection with the exercise of women's reproductive rights. Also Action Canada for Population and Development delivered a statement, urging Poland to ensure access to abortion services, subsidized contraception and comprehensive sexuality education. The NGOs questioned the Polish government's answers to recommendations issued by Human Rights Council' Working Group. Polish government states in its report that it has "accepted and implemented" Norway's, Slovenia's, Sweden's recommendations regarding improving women's access to SRHR, especially abortion, and implemented effective mechanism for redress.

Source: [www.federa.org.pl](http://www.federa.org.pl)

**International anti-choice civic initiative collects signatures to protect fetal life.** Carlo Casini, an Italian MEP and leader of anti-choice organization Movimento per la Vita, announced that action to collect signatures to support international civic initiative for protection of fetal life will start on 15th of October. The European Citizen's Initiative introduced by the Lisbon Treaty enables citizens to demand that the Commission propose legislation on any matter of concern to them, provided they succeed in gathering a million signatures.

Source:

[http://nol.hu/belfold/magyarorszagon\\_is\\_elindul\\_az\\_alairasgyujtes\\_a\\_magzati\\_elet\\_vedelmeert](http://nol.hu/belfold/magyarorszagon_is_elindul_az_alairasgyujtes_a_magzati_elet_vedelmeert)

**Belgrade Pride Banned Again.** Serbia's Ministry of Interior announced they would ban this year's Belgrade Pride, just three days before it was due to take place. The ban repeats last year's experience, when authorities declined authorising the event out of 'safety concerns'. The National Security Council chose to outlaw the Pride, as well as any other public gathering on 6 October, fearing for public safety. The decision was criticized by MEPs and it is hoped that the decision will weigh heavily against Serbia in a decision on the opening of EU negotiations. The European Commission will publish the next accession reports for Serbia and several other countries in November 2012.

Source: <http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/belgrade-pride-banned-again-for-2012/>

## GLOBAL UPDATES

**EU law to protect victims of crime due to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.** The European Parliament agreed on a new Directive on the rights guaranteed to victims of crime in the EU. Notably, it provides specific assistance and protection to people who suffered crime because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime now says victims should receive appropriate assistance and protection. This will be determined on the basis of "the personal characteristics of the victim such as his or her age, gender and gender identity or expression, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, health, disability, residence status, communication difficulties, relationship to or dependence on the offender and previous experience of crime." It is the first time EU law mentions gender expression. While sexual orientation defines a person's attraction to others, gender identity is understood as someone's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. Gender expression is the way someone expresses their gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms. EU Member States will now have three years to transpose the Directive into their national law.

More:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20120907IPR50809/html/Parliament-backs-minimum-rights-for-crime-victims-across-the-EU>

**Council of Europe survey on hate speech online.** In the framework of the project "Young people combating hate speech online", the Youth Department of the Council of Europe launches a survey on young people's attitudes and experience of online hate speech. The survey targets young people in Europe and beyond and will provide empirical data to better shape the online campaign against hate speech. The surveys will be open until 4 October 2012.

The survey is available at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/hatespeech>

**HRC adopts resolution on "traditional values".** The Human Rights Council (the Council) adopted on 27 September 2012 a controversial resolution presented by the Russian Federation on traditional values and human rights. The resolution was adopted by 25 votes in favour, 15 against, and 7 abstentions. The debate on resolution that started last year drew attention to the distinction between universal human rights rights and traditional values. While on the one hand, traditional

values can be used to interpret and reinforce human rights, it is also possible that they will be used to weaken the observance of human rights. The EU noted that the concept of traditional values could be misused, and its position was supported by Switzerland. The Russian Federation stressed that it is 'impatiently' waiting for the final report on traditional values which it hopes will make a significant contribution to the discussion on the issue of human rights and traditional values. The submission of the report on traditional values has been delayed until the 22nd Council Session in March.

Source: [http://www.ishr.ch/council/376-council/1365-council-adopts-resolution-on-traditional-values-without-considering-expert-input?utm\\_source=ISHR+Publications+and+News&utm\\_campaign=09faa2ce30-RSS\\_Email\\_Campaign\\_Council&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.ishr.ch/council/376-council/1365-council-adopts-resolution-on-traditional-values-without-considering-expert-input?utm_source=ISHR+Publications+and+News&utm_campaign=09faa2ce30-RSS_Email_Campaign_Council&utm_medium=email)

The resolution is available here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3k1czumu433ykks/TV-resolution-adopted.doc>

**The post-2015 development agenda: Health and other thematic consultations** . WHO has announced that the global health consultation will take place between October 2012 and February 2013, when there will be a high-level meeting involving governments, NGO coalitions, key UN partners and members of the UNSG's High-Level Panel. There is a new page on the WHO website which links to other key documents including a WHO briefing paper on Health in the post-2015 development agenda and a thematic think piece. The global consultation on addressing inequalities and the global consultation on governance, which are both of relevance for the health sector, have been published on the World We Want 2015 website.

Source: <http://ngosbeyond2014.org/articles/2012/9/25/health-and-other-thematic-consultations.html>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**CSW 2013.** The fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 4 to 15 March 2013. Representatives from Member States, UN entities, and NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) from all regions of the world will attend the session. The two-week session will include a high-level round table, interactive dialogues and panels, and parallel events. The 2013 session will focus on elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls (priority theme) and the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS (review theme).

More: [http://www.unwomen.org/how-we-work/csw/Commission on the Status of Women](http://www.unwomen.org/how-we-work/csw/Commission%20on%20the%20Status%20of%20Women)

## PUBLICATIONS

**Conscientious Objection to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: International Human Rights Standards and European Law and Practice.** The article by Ximena Andión-Ibañez and Cristina Zampas is available here:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22916532>

**'HIV and the Law: Risks, Rights & Health'**- Landmark Report Released! The report presents a coherent and compelling evidence base on human rights and legal issues relating to HIV. This report presents persuasive evidence and recommendations that can save lives, save money and help end the AIDS epidemic. The recommendations appeal to what is common to all our cultures and communities—the innate humanity of recognising and respecting the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals. This report may make a great many people uncomfortable—hopefully uncomfortable enough to take action.

<http://www.hivlawcommission.org/index.php/report>

**Born Free and Equal** - The UN Human Rights Office has released a new publication on sexual orientation and gender identity in international human rights law. It sets out the source and scope of some of the core legal obligations that States have to protect the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/BornFreeAndEqualLowRes.pdf>

**Unmet Need for Contraception.** The World's Bank study on Unmet Need for Contraception is available here:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTHEALTHNUTRITIONANDPOPULATION/EXTPHAAG/0,,contentMDK:22546157~pagePK:64229817~piPK:64229743~theSitePK:672263,00.html>

### **ASTRA Bulletin subscription**

**In order to subscribe or renew your subscription for ASTRA Network Bulletin go to: [www.astra.org.pl](http://www.astra.org.pl)**

@@@ @@@ @@@

All issues of ASTRA Bulletin are available on: [www.astra.org.pl](http://www.astra.org.pl). To unsubscribe please mail to: [info@astra.org.pl](mailto:info@astra.org.pl). Please refer your friends willing to subscribe to ASTRA bulletin to: [info@astra.org.pl](mailto:info@astra.org.pl)

ASTRA members: ASTRA coordination and secretariat: Albania - Albanian Family Planning Association, Armenia - Women's Rights Center, Armenia – Society Without Violence, Azerbaijan - Center “Women and Modern World”, Belarus - Women's Independent Democratic Movement of Belarus, Bulgaria - Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, Bulgaria- Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Gender Education, Research and Technologies, Bulgaria - Demetra Association, Bulgaria- Gender Alternatives Foundation, Croatia - B.a.b.e. (Be Active, Be Emancipated), CESI - Center for Education and Counseling of Woman, Women's Centre for Sexuality and the Prevention, Research, and Combating of Sexual Violence - Women's Room, Georgia - Women's Center , Georgia – Hera XXI, Kazakhstan - The Legal Center for Women's Initiatives "Sana Sezim", Lithuania - Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, Latvia - Latvia's Association for Family Planning And Sexual Health, Macedonia - Sheltar Centar, Moldova - Reproductive Health Service Center, Poland Federation for Women and Family Planning, Romania- ECPI -Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives; Romania-Asociatia pentru Libertate si Egalitate de Gen - A.L.E.G., Romania -The East European Institute of Reproductive Health, AnA: Society for Feminist Analysis, Russia - Institute of State and Law, Russian Academy of Sciences, ANO "Women's Health", Novogorod Gender Center, Slovakia - Pro – choice, Ukraine - Women Health and Family Planning, Charitable SALUS Foundation.

Editorial Committee: Katarzyna Pabijanek, Martyna Zimniewska

Supported by: the Sigrid Rausing Trust Foundation and the International Women's Health Coalition  
ASTRA Network Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights 10/2012