



Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Rights No 2 (117) 2013

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BURNING ISSUE

Central and Eastern Europe Health Consultation. 20 advocates participated in health consultation convened by ASTRA and Eastern European Alliance for Reproductive Choice (EEARC). ASTRA Network in partnership with EEARC was selected by the World Health Organization to take forward a Central and Eastern Europe Health Consultation in the post-2015, as a part of a global consultation process: [The World We Want](#). The meeting took place from 26th to 27th January 2013 in Moscow, Russian Federation. 20 experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Lithuania, Moldova, Macedonia, Romania, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russian Federation, Bulgaria, Romania, and Poland prepared recommendations that will contribute to shaping post-2015 development framework in order to improve health status in the region, especially in terms of sexual and reproductive health. Participants discussed and developed a shared understanding on the positioning of health in the post 2015 development framework; proposed health goals and related targets and indicators for the post-2015 development agenda, as well as approaches for implementation, measurement and monitoring that reflect specific regional situation regarding uneven progress towards universal access to health in order to ensure that the post-2015 framework will be empowering for women by providing them with access to health. The recommendations from the meeting fed into the [Global G8/G20 Civil Society Working Group](#) consultation and were sent to WHO. WHO will use regional recommendations to prepare the final report for the High Level Panel.

Source: www.astra.org.pl

REGIONAL UPDATES

Public hearing on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the European Parliament.

The European Parliament Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee organized a public hearing on sexual and reproductive health and rights on January 22nd. The aim was to discuss SRHR as a gender equality issue within and outside the European Union. Thilde Knudsen, Marie Stopes International Head of Europe office, highlighted the importance of investing in SRHR in low- and middle-income countries for the future inclusive and sustainable development of individuals, families and communities. Sietske Steneker, Director, UNFPA Brussels Office, called on the European Parliament to contribute to make SRHR as defined by the International Conference on Population and Development, a reality both within and outside Europe. Krystyna Kacpura, Executive Director of Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning represented ASTRA Network and discussed the access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights services and supplies in the Eastern European countries of the European Union. She called for reducing inequalities between citizens of new and old member states by the concentrated effort of the EU to address reproductive health and right issues in CEE countries. Other renowned experts presented their views in discussion panels, such as health literacy and sexuality education, public health systems and accessibility in the EU and the role of the EU in promoting these rights globally.

The programme of the hearing is available here:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201301/20130111ATT58942/20130111ATT58942EN.pdf>

To stream the FEMM public hearing, please see:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20130122-1500-COMMITTEE-FEMM&category=COMMITTEE&format=wmv>

To see DSW publication on SRHR at the heart of EU aid:

http://www.euroresources.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Fast_Facts/SRHR_at_the_heart_of_EU_aid.pdf

Source: www.astra.org.pl, E-zine nEuws www.dsw-online.org

Abortion restrictions in Belarus. Several changes to the law on abortion have been introduced. The number of social grounds which allowed abortion was reduced from ten to two. Abortion on social grounds is now available up to the 22nd week for victims of rape and women who were deprived of maternal rights. Abortion on request continues to be available up to 12th week. Abortion based on medical indications is currently still available without restrictions.

Source: <http://news.tut.by/health/330313.html>

Sex-selective abortions in Albania. Albania, like most countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, has a liberal law on abortion. Under the current one abortions are legal during the first trimester. The status of women is however very low what can be observed in the son-preference phenomenon and the numerous cases of sex-selective abortions in the country. Even though this finding has caused public debates the health authorities deny evidence of this issue. Nonetheless the Minister of Health has ordered a task force to review the enforcement of the abortion law.

Source: <http://womensenews.org/story/abortion/130125/sex-selective-abortion-trending-in-albania>

Romanian Mediation Law includes cases of rape. The project for the new Mediation Law in Romania requires victims of rape to go through a mandatory meeting with a mediator that would present to them "the advantages of mediation" in dealing with their rape case. The mediator would also

encourage victims of rape to use mediation, before their complaint is accepted by the court.

Source:

[www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Eliminate RAPE from the upcoming Mediation Law in Romania/?fsdEpdb&pv=6](http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Eliminate_RAPE_from_the_upcoming_Mediation_Law_in_Romania/?fsdEpdb&pv=6)

The only clinic in Hungary offering pharmaceutical abortion closed. Due to political pressure the private clinic, located in Budapest, decided to close down. This forces a big number of women to travel abroad to access pharmaceutical abortion, mostly to Austria. The law on abortion continues unchanged however medical abortion is unavailable.

Source: <http://abortusz.info/peticio>

Three bills on civil partnerships rejected in the Polish Parliament. All three draft bills concerning civil partnerships would give some legal protection not only to heterosexual couples but also to gay and lesbian. The bills were proposed by the ruling Civic Platform, the Palikot's Movement and the Democratic Left Alliance. The motion to reject these bills was supported by an alliance of two conservative parties, Law and Justice and Solidarity Poland. They also used this opportunity to attract media attention with statements referring to the Polish constitution being obliged to protect the institution of marriage as a relationship between man and woman. In spite of this MPs intend to resubmit draft laws on civil partnerships already this year.

Source: www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/125237,Parliament-throws-out-draft-laws-on-civil-partnerships

Russian Duma approved law on banning "propaganda of homosexuality". This federal law was approved at its first reading at the lower house of Parliament on January 25th. The civil society, especially the LGBT activists, engaged in protests and expressed their concerns about this law. *"We are extremely concerned that the Russian Duma has passed this discriminatory bill in its first reading. The experience of similar regional laws has already shown that they are used to curtail freedom of expression and assembly. They have also lead to an increase of threats and harassment towards the LGBT community. We therefore strongly urge the Russian Duma to dismiss the bill"* said Cecilia Rosing, Program Officer for Eastern Europe and Central Asia at Civil Rights Defenders. The bill will be further discussed within the Committee on Family, Women's and Children's matters which will prepare it for a second reading and adapt the language to the Russian legislation. If the bill passes the second and third reading and receives the President's signature it will clearly curtail the right to freedom of all LGBT people in the Russian Federation.

Source: www.ilga-europe.org

www.civilrightsdefenders.org/news/russian-duma-supports-homophobic-bill

Landmark Strasbourg ruling on same-sex couples. The European Court of Human Rights stated that religious beliefs may not interfere with the rights of same-sex couples. The Court examined four cases which were all brought by Christians; two of them claimed their right to refuse a service to same-sex couples on the basis of their religious beliefs. Sophie in't Veld, Vice-President of the European Parliament's LGBT Intergroup commented on this outcome: *"With this ruling, the court has established that freedom of religion is an individual right. It is emphatically not a collective right to discriminate against LGBT people, women, or people of another faith or life stance."*

Source: www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/landmark-strasbourg-ruling-religious-beliefs-not-a-valid-reason-to-oppose-rights-of-same-sex-couples

The EU Irish Presidency will support gender equality at EU and international level. Minister of State responsible for Disability, Older People, Equality & Mental Health, Kathryn Lynch, presented to the European Parliament committee on Women' rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) the priorities of Ireland during its EU presidency which will last from January to June 2013. Violence against women will be a priority topic under this Presidency as Ireland will closely follow the Commission of the Status of Women on violence against women. In March they will lead the EU delegations and ensure a strong UN position on this topic. During the debate with the Members of the European Parliament of the FEMM Committee, MEP Parvanova (ALDE, Bulgaria) and MEP Romeva i Rueda (Green, Spain) called on the Irish EU Presidency to put violence against women as one of the priorities of the external actions of the EU. In addition, MEP Bozkurt (S&D, the Netherlands) also stressed the critical issue of Female Genital Mutilations.

Source: E-zine nEuws www.dsw-online.org

The Government of the Republic of Armenia refused the Domestic Violence draft law. The reasoning showed to other laws which will incorporate several provisions of the proposed law on Domestic Violence and the planned amendments to the criminal code.

Source: www.swv.am/index.php/en/activities/331-rejection-of-dv-law-by-the-ra-governmen-t

GLOBAL UPDATES

Third High Level Panel (HLP) meeting on the Post 2015 Development took place in Monrovia, Liberia, from 28th to 30th January. Consultations with CSOs were organized by the Africa-wide post-2015 Working Group and the Liberian CSO post-2015 Working Group; working in partnership with Beyond 2015, the UN HLP Secretariat Outreach desk, the UN SG Secretariat, and representatives from other southern CSO networks. The outcome of CSO Pre-Consultative Forum can be found on [NGOs beyond 2014 webiste](http://ngosbeyond2014.org).

Source: <http://ngosbeyond2014.org/articles/2013/1/31/post-2015-high-level-panel-hlp-meeting-in-monrovia-outcome-o.html>

UN Secretary General appointed a young Jordanian as his Envoy on Youth. Ban Ki-moon identified "working with and for Women and Young People" as one of his top priorities in his Five-Year Action Agenda. Ahmad Alhindawi, born in 1984, will work to address the needs of the largest generation of youth in history.

Source: www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43944#.UQZKJR1FXjB

Sustainable Development Goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals. The UN General Assembly has adopted by consensus the draft decision on the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The first meeting of the group is expected to take place in early February. The draft decision (A/67/L.48, Rev 1) was agreed on 9 January 2013, and announced by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN, who chaired the consultations. The SDGs seek to guide countries in achieving targeted outcomes within a specific time period, such as on universal access to sustainable energy and clean water for all, and will build on the anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after their 2015 deadline.

Source:

www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43981&Cr=sustainable+development&Cr1#.UQu8Lr_WhGO
<http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/un-general-assembly-decides-to-establish-owg-on-sdgs-agrees-on-membership/>

Countdown 2015 Europe. European donor countries not only support Reproductive Health and Family Planning through funding, but also through progressive policies. An update of the latest European policies on RH/FP in international development in each of the Countdown 2015 Europe focus countries is now available on the official website: www.countdown2015europe.org/country-profiles

UPCOMING EVENTS

Post-2015 online consultations:

E-discussion on Growth and Employment in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, four different consultation will run throughout February: www.worldwewant2015.org/employment

E-discussion on Health: www.worldwewant2015.org/health

E-discussion on Education: www.worldwewant2015.org/education2015

With the largest ever generation of young people alive today the post 2015 agenda will include young people in a large manner. Young people will be the ones who will experience the impact of these developments. Contribute to the online discussion here: www.youthpost2015.org

Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. Reconfirming Rights – Recognising Limits – Redefining Goals. This international NGO conference will take place on 20 – 22 March 2013 in Bonn, Germany. It will bring together about 250 civil society activists and representatives from key stakeholders in order to draw together civil society inputs into the Sustainable Development and Post-2015 discussions. Official website of the conference: www.berlin-civil-society-center.org/shared-services/post-2015

57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 4 to 15 March 2013. Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls will be the priority theme for this session.

Source: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm

CSOs survey for ICPD beyond 2014 – deadline February 12th. Contribute to the Review Process and take part in the survey for non-governmental organizations here: www.surveymonkey.com/s/TXMD5M2

PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

ASTRA Network participated in consultation to develop a position paper for the European SRHR civil society organizations post-2015 development agenda. **“TOWARDS A POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK. POSITION PAPER”**, developed and endorsed by EuroNGOs, Countdown 2015 Europe, IPPF EN and ASTRA is available on [ASTRA Network’s website](#).

Public consultation on “Towards a Post-2015 Development Framework” - results from are now available online: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/towards_post-2015-development-framework_en.htm

New Center for Reproductive Rights publication, “The monitoring tool”, provides means to monitor the implementation of specific State obligations in the field of reproductive rights and outlines State obligations under international and regional human rights law on a range of reproductive rights issues.

Source: <http://reproductiverights.org/en/document/monitoring-tool-human-rights-state-obligations>

CALL TO ACTION

Petition to eliminate rape cases from the upcoming Mediation Law in Romania – sign, support and share on [AVAAZ](#).

Please support petition calling for availability of pharmacological abortion in Hungary!
<http://abortusz.info/peticio>

www.myworld2015.org is a virtual space for the Post 2015 process where the Millennium Development Goals are discussed and evaluated. You can contribute to the process by taking part in this global survey and select the top six priorities and also suggest one of your own choice. There is also space to advocate Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights by suggesting them as a priority since they are not on the official list of priorities.

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ASTRA Network members: 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", Novgorod Gender Center, Slovakia - Pro – choice, Ukraine - Women Health and Family Planning, Charitable SALUS Foundation.

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