



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

### CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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### BURNING ISSUE

#### Edite Estrela SRHR report pushed back to FEMM Committee

The progressive SRHR report which was due to be voted on at the October 22<sup>nd</sup> plenary session of the European Parliament was pushed back to the FEMM Committee. Authored by Edite Estrela MEP (S&D, Portugal), the report recognizes Sexual and Reproductive Rights to be as important as other human rights, calls for universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights throughout Europe and urges member states to address existing disparities in access to family planning, reproductive health and abortion services. It also addresses comprehensive sexuality education and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections. The anti-choice campaigners and right-wing groups in the European Parliament successfully managed to postpone this vote. MEPs voted on a motion to send the report back to the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (351 in favour, 319 against, [see voting record](#)).

Federation for Women and Family Planning, Polish ASTRA member serving as ASTRA Secretariat, sent a letter of support to Edite Estrela on behalf of ASTRA Network. The letter is available online [here](#).

For the first time in decades sexual and reproductive health and rights are back on the European Parliament's agenda. Elections to the European Parliament will take place in 2014 and hopefully voters of all genders will have this event in mind and support leaders who stand for women's rights and SRHR.

To read the Estrela SRHR report click [HERE](#).

For more information click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

## **REGIONAL UPDATES**

### **Lithuanian Ministry of Health is against abortion ban**

Lithuania's government decided on Monday October 14<sup>th</sup> to oppose the bill pertaining to abortion ban that is being discussed at the Parliament. The position was proposed by the Ministry of Health, who referred to several international human rights standards. According to the governmental conclusions the amendments proposed by the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania would restrict women's right to private life. Those amendments aimed for a law within which an abortion could be performed only if it posed a threat to the life or health of the woman or it was the result of criminal act. In such cases, an abortion would be performed by week 12 only. The date of the final vote in the Seimas is yet unknown.

Source: [Lithuania Tribune](#)

### **European Parliament adopts report to combat "Gendercide"**

On October 8<sup>th</sup> the European Parliament adopted the report "Gendercide – the missing women?" authored by MEP Antigoni Papadopoulou (Cyprus, Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats). The overarching aim of the report is to stop the practice of "Gendercide", defined in the report as "sex-neutral term referring to the systematic, deliberate and gender-based mass killing of people belonging to a particular sex (...)". Promotion of an educational and social environment where women and men are equal, prevention of sex selection as a business, and combating discrimination against girls or unborn female foetuses are just some of the proposals of the resolution. It is the first time ever the European Parliament has dealt with this subject. A number of MEPs who spoke on the subject mentioned the importance to tackle the persisting problem of son-preference and to ensure the empowerment of women and girls in society by guaranteeing their rights, their health and their access to education.

Source: [PRESS RELEASE](#) and [EPF](#)

[Text of the Report as it was adopted by the EPs Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee in June 2013](#)

## Civil Society Statements for the 58<sup>th</sup> CSW

Several civil society organizations have submitted written statements for next year's UN Commission on the Status of Women (the deadline for submission was October 25). 58<sup>th</sup> CSW Priority theme is: *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls*. Polish ASTRA member, Federation for Women and Family Planning submitted its written statement which is available online [HERE](#). The Civil Society Platform to Promote SRHR beyond 2015, of which ASTRA is a member and part of its Coordinating Committee, also engaged several organizations worldwide and submitted a written statement for next years CSW, available online [HERE](#). To access more information on the 58<sup>th</sup> CSW session please click [here](#).

**EuroNGOs Conference “Next Steps: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights on the post-2015 agenda”** and Annual General Meeting took place in Berlin on October 24-25 and was preceded by a workshop on CPD 2014 on October 23. The Conference was attended by representants of over 75 Civil Society Organisations and numerous international speakers, among them Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, UNFPA Executive Director, and Lakshmi Puri, UN Women Deputy Executive Director. Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin introduced the [UNFPA proposals for the post-2015 development framework](#) and noted that the next 18 months will be the most critical in the Post 2015 processes. Lakshmi Puri in her opening remarks, [Sexual and reproductive health rights at the heart of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment beyond 2015](#), stated that *“there is no doubt that the post-2015 development framework must recognize that the lack of control that women and girls have over their own bodies and sexualities is an egregious violation of their rights”* and confirmed that UN Women is calling for a stand-alone gender equality goal and mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the future Post 2015 framework. Serge Rabier, Chair of EuroNGOs, said: *“The next 24 months present us with an historic opportunity to embrace the transformative shifts needed to finish the work started with the MDGs and achieve real sustainable development and poverty reduction. However, for the next agenda to take root, we need to keep women and girls at the heart of development and promote access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for all”*.

Source: [www.eurongos.org](http://www.eurongos.org)

**Regional UNECE meeting on Post-2015 Development Agenda** organized by UNECE, UNDP and the Government of Turkey entitled *“Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Perspectives from Europe and Central Asia on the Post-2015 Development Agenda”* took place in Istanbul, on 6-8 November 2013. The main objective of this event was to provide a discussion platform with participation of representatives from different countries and institutions to identify regional priorities for the Post 2015 UN development agenda and discuss how these priorities can become part of a coherent global framework. The event also aimed to review regional experiences and lessons learned from the MDGs and ways to improve regional cooperation among countries and development actors, strengthen inclusive development throughout the region, enhance UN system support to Member States, and create new partnerships. To access the programme click [here](#).

## GLOBAL UPDATES

### **CEDAW adopts landmark text on women, SRHR and conflict**

The UN CEDAW Committee has taken an important step forward in their recognition of women's reproductive rights in its new [General Recommendation 30 on Women in Conflict Prevention, Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations](#). The CEDAW Committee says that states should: *“Ensure that sexual and reproductive health care includes access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information; psychosocial support; family planning services, including emergency contraception; maternal health services, including antenatal care, skilled delivery services, prevention of vertical transmission and emergency obstetric care; safe abortion services; post-abortion care; prevention and treatment of HIV.”* (para. 52(c))

This is the first time that the CEDAW Committee has explicitly indicated that states should provide safe abortion services as a component of their obligation to provide sexual and reproductive health care in a general recommendation.

Source: [Press Release](#)

### **UNFPA Launched Advocacy Platform for Post-2015 Development Framework**

UNFPA has launched an advocacy platform for the subsequent post-2015 development framework: [“Empowering People to Ensure a Sustainable Future for All”](#). UNFPA, together with various partners and agencies, is working to have the principles of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), including its emphasis on individuals' sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, reflected prominently in any future development mandate. As far as the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process is concerned, the regional conferences and thematic meetings have been now held and it is very clear that the societies wish to realise gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, the support for advancing SRHR in the near future is strong and visible throughout the regions.

Read more at [NGOsBeyond2014](#) website.

Source: [UNFPA](#)

**ICPD Beyond 2014 Expert Meeting on Women's Health - Rights, Empowerment and Social Determinants** took place in Mexico City from 30 September to 2 October. As stated in the [Concept Paper](#) the primary purpose of this three day meeting was to review existing evidence and information and generate recommendations on ways to accelerate progress toward universal access to an integrated package of core SRH services, and toward protection of girls' and women's human rights, including reproductive rights.

Source: [NGOs Beyond 2014](#), [ICPD Beyond 2014](#)

## YOUTH

### **Young People's Bottom Lines for Post-2015**

The Regional Consultation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda “Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Perspectives from Europe and Central Asia on the Post-2015 Development Agenda” was held on 7 and 8 November 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. Young advocates from Major Group of Children and Youth present at the event were concerned that the emphasis on human rights and issues on SRHR, youth, CSE and abortion might be easily overlooked or downplayed, therefore they made a collaborative effort to state demands coming from the region.

Among other issues, young people call in the statement for championing sexual rights: *“Denying us our sexual and reproductive rights puts our lives at risk and violates our bodily autonomy. Responding to this requires you to have the courage to recognize our rights to pleasure, freely express our diverse sexualities, access safe and legal abortion services, contraception, and comprehensive sexuality education and live free from all forms of stigma, discrimination and violence”*.

The full document can be accessed [here](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**ICPD Review International Meeting on Monitoring and Implementation of the ICPD Beyond 2014** is the last of the series of international conferences within the Global ICPD Review Process and will be held in Taicang, China on 12-14 November.

Source: [www.icpdbeyond2014.com](http://www.icpdbeyond2014.com)

**International Conference on Family Planning: Full Access, Full Choice** takes place in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia from 12 to 15 November. This is the third edition of this conference which is co-hosted by The Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Federal Ministry of Health of Ethiopia.

Source: [www.fpconference2013.org](http://www.fpconference2013.org)

## PUBLICATIONS

### **State of the World Population 2013 Report**

UNFPA released its 2013 edition of the [State of the World Population Report: Motherhood in Childhood](#). This year the report focuses on the impact of adolescent pregnancy on girls' education, health, and long-term employment. UNFPA explicitly connects adolescent pregnancy with the failure to fulfill girls' rights to comprehensive sexuality education and to readily accessible sexual and reproductive health services. UNFPA calls on the global community to address a range of contributing problems, including gender discrimination, lack of autonomy, child marriage, and lack of comprehensive reproductive health information and care. The report also urges the implementation of policies and programs that support, rather than stigmatize, pregnant adolescents. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, teenage pregnancy is on the decline, but some countries still have high – and in some cases even increasing – adolescent birth rates. And some population groups, such as national minorities, are particularly affected. Tajikistan is the country with the highest teenage birth rate (54 births per 1000 women aged 15-19), followed by Georgia, Azerbaijan, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. Girls under 15 account for 2 million of the 7.3 million new adolescents mothers every year. One in five girls worldwide has given birth by the age of 18. According to the World Health Organization, roughly 16 million adolescent girls, aged 15-19 years old, give birth every year – most in low- and middle-income countries. Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death among girls in this age group.

Source: [UNFPA press release](#), [Regional briefing paper on adolescent pregnancy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#)

**UN Women post-2015 position paper** calls for freedom from violence, equality in capabilities and resources and women's voice to be the cornerstones of a transformative stand alone gender equality goal in the Post 2015 development framework. Available online [HERE](#).

**2013 UNAIDS Report on the global AIDS epidemic** is now available. It contains the latest data on numbers of new HIV infections, numbers of people receiving antiretroviral treatment, AIDS-related deaths and HIV among children. Headline figures are a 52% reduction in new HIV infections among children and a combined 33% reduction among adults and children since 2001. The UNAIDS report is available online [HERE](#).

**Freedom of Choice: A Youth Activist's Guide to Safe Abortion Advocacy**, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, by [Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights](#), offers a youth perspective on some of the key issues in advocating for young women's right to abortion. The updated version of this guide includes new information on the global context as well as background information on abortion health and rights and tips for advocates. It is available online [HERE](#).

ASTRA Network members: Albania - Albanian Family Planning Association, Armenia - Women's Rights Center, Armenia - Society Without Violence, Armenia - Women's Resource Center, 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, Bulgaria - Gender Education, Research and Technologies, Bulgaria - Demetra Association, Bulgaria - Gender Alternatives Foundation, Croatia - B.a.b.e. (Be Active, Be Emancipated), Croatia - CESI - Center for Education and Counseling of Woman, Croatia - Women's Room, Georgia - Women's Center, Georgia – Hera XXI, Hungary – PATENT, 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 - Association for emancipation, solidarity and equality of women, Macedonia – Shelter Center, Macedonia - Association for emancipation, solidarity and equality of women, Macedonia - Health Education and Research Association, Moldova - Reproductive Health Service Center, Poland - Federation for Women and Family Planning, Romania - Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives; Romania - A.L.E.G., Romania - The East European Institute of Reproductive Health, Romania - AnA: Society for Feminist Analysis, Russia - Novogorod Gender Center, Russia – Russian Association for Population and Development, Slovakia – Pro Choice, Ukraine - Women Health and Family Planning, Ukraine - Charitable SALUS Foundation, Uzbekistan – Future Generation.

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