



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

CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

No 12 (126) 2013

Table of contents:

- Burning Issue
- Regional Updates
- Global Updates
- Youth
- Call to Action

BURNING ISSUE

Estrela report back on the table

The Edite Estrela SRHR Report is back on the table at the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament! This is the second time that the FEMM Committee has [voted](#) on the Report as it was referred back to the Committee by majority of MEPs at an October plenary session of the European Parliament.

The need to prevent unwanted pregnancies and guarantee equal access to contraception and safe, legal abortion still remains among the main proposals in a non-legislative resolution on "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" approved by the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee on Tuesday by 19 votes in favour and 15 against.

"I am very happy once again, for the support of the FEMM committee. We are dealing with very important matters; this resolution provides a very in-depth analysis of SRHR, including important aspects such as the need to provide comprehensive sexuality education for girls and boys, to protect

pregnancy and childbirth by fighting maternal mortality as well as the need to protect contraception and safe abortion. The resolution also recognises that SRHR is not only a human rights issue; it is also a way to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment" said rapporteur Edite Estrela (S&D, Portugal).

MEP Sophie in't Veld, Chair of the EP Working Group on Reproductive Health HIV/AIDS and Development (EPWG), during the European Development Days appealed for a stronger mobilization from the SRHR community and general citizens in order to counteract a vocal anti-choice lobby.

Equal access to contraception and safe legal abortion

MEPs confirmed that, as "a human rights and public health concern", high-quality abortion services should be made legal, safe and accessible to all within the public health systems of the member states. The committee stresses that abortion should not be promoted as a method of family planning or be performed for social or economic reasons.

Committee Members also call on member states to promote scientific research on male and female controlled methods of contraception to facilitate the burden sharing of contraceptive responsibility. Further, they ask member states to take measures to remove all barriers hindering the access of adolescent girls and boys to safe, effective, affordable methods of contraception, including condoms, and provide clear information on contraceptives.

Gender and age appropriate sexuality education

MEPs in the committee believe that sexuality education would promote responsible behaviour in family planning. Well informed and educated couples or young people will, on the basis of good information and knowledge responsibly, choose number and timing of children. Committee members finally underline that sexuality education must be designed and implemented in a holistic, rights-based and positive way.

The Report has been put on the agenda for a plenary vote in EP on December 10 at 11:30 a.m.

ACTION NEEDED: Please contact and urge your MEPs to act to ensure the European Parliament Assembly adopts the SRHR Report on the 10th of December. Full list of MEPs is available [here](#). For your reference please use the [briefing paper on the Estrela report](#) which highlights the top 5 reasons for voting YES to this crucial report. The paper was prepared with the support of many SRHR organizations including CRR, DSW, EPF, IPPF EN, MSI and UNFPA

Twitter hashtags for the Estrela report are: #Estrelareport and #SRHReport

Source: www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/femm/home.html

REGIONAL UPDATES

Influence and the costs of the Governmental campaign “You have the right to choose. Choose life” in Macedonia

On November 11th, 2013 in Skopje, Macedonia, H.E.R.A. – Health Education and Research Association and ESE – Association for emancipation, solidarity and equality of women have organised a public presentation and press conference on the findings of the study that was conducted during the last couple of months with regards to the influence on the public opinion and the costs for the anti-choice governmental campaign “You have the right to choose. Choose life.” Invitees of the working meeting were the civil society organisations working on women’s rights, health specialists and their associations, UN representatives in Macedonia, and the media. The study “After four years of campaigning: Attitudes towards abortion among general population and gynecologists in Macedonia” is available [online](#).

Source: [H.E.R.A.](#)

Changes in the UN Human Rights Council

Russian Federation and Macedonia have been elected as the new representatives of CEE region (replacing Moldova and Poland). They will serve three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2014. The other representants of Eastern European states are: Estonia, Romania, Montenegro and Czech Republic.

Source: www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/ga11454.doc.htm

Russia bans abortion advertisements

The newly signed amendments to the law on healthcare introduce a ban on the abortion advertising. The law was signed by Russian president Vladimir Putin. Conservative and orthodox groups see abortion as a threat and cause of the decreasing Russian population and engage in actions aimed at tightening the legislation on abortion and shifting public attitudes. In September this year Deputy Health Minister, Tatyana Yakovleva, announced the number of abortions in Russia had fallen by a quarter over the past five years. Nevertheless the current abortion rate in Russia remains very high at about one million per year.

www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/25/us-russia-abortion-idUSBRE9A00VO20131125

Serbia ratified the Istanbul Convention

On November 21st Serbia became the 8th member state of the Council of Europe to ratify the Istanbul Convention. Only another 2 ratifications and the Istanbul Convention will enter into force.

Source: www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence

Croatia bans same-sex marriage

On Sunday December 1st Croatian citizens voted on whether to alter the constitution and to define marriage as 'matrimony between a man and a woman'. The referendum was held following a citizens' initiative led by anti-equality organisation 'In the Name of the Family'. During the past weeks, the Catholic Church strongly urged people to vote in favour, whilst human rights activists argued against the referendum. Turnout was low, at 37%. Two-thirds of those who voted approved changes to Croatia's constitution to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman. The result of this referendum will make it much harder to open marriage to all couples in the future.

Source: www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/meps-regret-outcome-of-referendum-banning-same-sex-marriage
www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25180548

Sexual reproductive health and rights discussed in the European Development Days

On November 26th and 27th, Brussels hosted the 2013 edition of the European Development Days (EDDs). A panel was organised on November 26th around the theme 'Finishing and moving beyond the health MDGs'. Lack of access to healthcare was addressed as a priority by all speakers. Dr Marleen Temmerman, WHO, stressed the need to better explain what the right to health implies, as further clarity will lead to further accountability. The representative of the French Government, Mme. Anne-Marie Descôtes, called for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda to be included in the post 2015 framework. France will continue supporting vertical funds such as the GAVI alliance, UNITAID and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, as well as horizontal approaches such as health system strengthening that integrates sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The European Commission's representative on the panel, Véronique Lorenzo, also reminded the audience that the unfinished business of the MDGs, notably on MDG5 and MDG 5B in particular, is a priority for the European Commission and that 20% of EU aid will be allocated to human development including Health.

To hear the podcast of the event, please see the link:
<http://eudevdays.eu/topics/finishing-and-moving-beyond-health-mdgs>

Source: [DSW nEUws](#)

GLOBAL UPDATES

First UN resolution ever on the protection of women human rights defenders has been adopted by the UN General Assembly's Third Committee.

The resolution highlights that women human rights defenders, because of their work, suffer from threats and sexual violence all around the world, because of their work. Among other things, the new resolution calls on states to adopt laws and policies to protect human rights defenders. The process leading up to the adoption of the resolution was complicated. In the final stages of negotiations, a

paragraph was taken out after pressure from several African countries, the Vatican, Iran and Russia. The paragraph removed, stated that states should "strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and women human rights defenders and refrain from invoking any customs, traditions or religious consideration to avoid their obligations".

Source: <http://news.yahoo.com/un-womens-rights-resolution-passed-despite-backlash-070519118.html>

YOUTH

4th edition of 10 Days of Activism

During this year's edition of 10 Days of Activism (10DoA) young people from 40 countries will be mobilized to bring their voices on their concerns related to the ongoing discussions around the Post-2015 agenda. They will have the chance to contribute to the process, as their capacity to advocate for their needs and priorities are enhanced. The theme of the campaign is "The world WE all want". It will take place globally between 1st – 10th December.

ASTRA Youth is actively engaged in this campaign, young advocates from Central and Eastern Europe are going to share their asks, wishes and demands for the post-2015 agenda over the social media daily. At the end, they will be developed together into "10 key demands from CEE youth for post-2015 agenda" and shared widely. ASTRA Youth members will also organize street actions and write articles on most burning youth issues.

Source: www.astra.org.pl/youth, <http://10daysofactivism.com/>

Rutgers WPF report on combatting youth sexual violence

The Dutch organization working in the field of SRHR, Rutgers WPF has published a report 'Combatting youth sexual aggression and victimization in the European Union: stakeholder perspectives and recommendations'. The report summarizes a 3-year European project on youth sexual aggression and victimization (YSAV). One of the objectives of the project was to monitor the existing European research on prevalence of YSAV and to create a research tool enabling examination of this phenomenon. The report explains what YSAV is and why it is so important to combat it.

Researchers, experts and young activists from the whole Europe created recommendations to decision makers concerning combatting YSAV. Recommendations advocate for the recognition of young people's right to a sexual life free of violence and coercion. They clearly state the responsibility of state for introduction of laws, which will protect survivors of sexual violence. It is underlined that implementation of mandatory comprehensive sexuality education is core to effectively combat YSAV. Recommendations include also the need of creating services, which will provide care and support for young victims.

The full report is available here:

http://ysav.rutgerswpf.org/sites/default/files/ESAP_2013_Online2.pdf

Polish ASTRA Youth member, the Ponton Group of Sex Educators was engaged in the process of creating recommendations of European youth activists for decision makers. In the statement young activists call for recognition of YSAV as an important issue for youth, including YSAV in sexuality education programmes and implementation of these programmes at every level of school education. They also demand that governments should engage young people in the process of creating laws which are addressed to them.

The statement is available here: <http://ysav.rutgerswpf.org/content/youth-statement>

CALL TO ACTION

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, November 25 – December 10, 2013

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates November 25- International Day Against Violence Against Women- and December 10- International Human Rights Day- in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates including November 29, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, December 1, World AIDS Day, and December 6, which marks the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. The 16 Days Campaign has been used as an organizing strategy by individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

Use the #16Days hashtag to share your thoughts, messages and input via social media! Make sure you follow the Campaign on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) and visit the official Campaign website for more information and action toolkit.

Source: <http://16dayscwggl.rutgers.edu>

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.

Prepared by Marta Szostak

Supported by the [Sigrid Rausing Trust](#)

ASTRA Secretariat

Federation for Women and Family Planning

Nowolipie 13/15, 00-150 Warsaw, Poland

ph/fax 48.22.635 9395, federa@astra.org.pl

www.astra.org.pl

Follow ASTRA on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)