



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

### Secretary General's Synthesis Report available

An advanced and long awaited unedited copy of the [Secretary-General's Synthesis Report: The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet](#) was released on December 5<sup>th</sup>. The report prepares the ground for the last phase of work before the adoption of the new development agenda. It represents a key milestone as member states will use it as the base for the negotiations. Major Groups and other **civil society stakeholders are invited to submit their official responses to the report to a central online repository via this online form [here](#)**. Links to all submissions will be published live as they are received [here](#).

Secretary-General remarks to the General Assembly on the Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda, 4 December 2014 click [here](#).

Secretary-General's remarks at press encounter after briefing the General Assembly on the Synthesis Report, 4 December 2014, click [here](#).

Follow hashtag [#SythesisReport](#) to see some comments on Twitter to the report.

## REGIONAL UPDATES

### **Macedonian rulebook on abortion may traumatize women**

Late October the Macedonian Minister of Health adopted [“Rulebook on the content and manner of counseling for the pregnant woman prior to the termination of pregnancy”](#) which instructs doctors how they should counsel those who are seeking an abortion. The document seems to be however more a guide on how to apply psychological pressure on women to change their minds and neglects the right of the woman to make a free choice on her own body.

The document, written in line with the government’s socially conservative policies that aim to portray abortion as a murder, is signed by Health Minister Nikola Todorov, and will soon be distributed to medical facilities and become obligatory for doctors. Medical professionals said that the most disturbing part of the text specifies that “during counselling (...) dynamic ultrasound images are shown [to the pregnant woman] along with description of the offspring, and she is played the heartbeat of the offspring”. The text further instructs that “the doctor should inform the woman of all the anatomical and physiological characteristics of the offspring at that gestational age”.

H.E.R.A. - the Association for Health Education and Research, ASTRA member, said that the rulebook should be withdrawn and revised because it goes against local legislative and international health conventions: “The showing of dynamic ultrasound images of the foetus, listening the heartbeat, being informed about its gestational age and explanations of the effects of the intervention are in no way linked to the health condition of the woman, and are irrelevant for the intervention itself.”

In June 2013, the government adopted new abortion legislation that critics said curbs women’s rights. The changes were adopted amid protests by activists and in the absence from parliament of opposition parties. The government has also backed an anti-abortion media campaign that described terminations as murder.

Access the Rulebook [HERE](#).

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

### **Presidential candidates in Croatia express their views on abortion**

Presidential elections will be held in Croatia on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Currently there are four candidates running for the office: Ivo Josipović, nominated by the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDP) and running on a centre-left platform; Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, candidate of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) running on a centre-right platform; Milan Kujundžić, member of the right-wing populist Croatian Dawn (HZ) non-parliamentary party and Ivan Vilibor Sinčić, independent political activist. The candidates were invited by the current president Ivo Josipovic to state their position on abortion. Termination of pregnancy is available in Croatia without restrictions as to reason up to ten weeks of pregnancy for all women above 16 years of age.

The presidential candidate of the opposition Croatian Democratic Union, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović expressed her support for pro-choice legislation: “I am for life, but I also respect the right of choice. I do not support banning abortion because it never brought any good to anyone anywhere. But I am in favour of positive measures such as education, psychological and other counselling that helps a woman get through that stressful situation and decide whether to keep her pregnancy or not. I also

advocate de-stigmatising unmarried women who have given birth and de-stigmatising their children and facilitating the adoption procedure.” Milan Kujundžić said that his position on the issue of abortion was in line “with universal Christian values that promote preservation of life from conception to death”. He also expressed his support for proactive measures instead of introducing further restrictions. Running for a second term in office Ivo Josipović supported the use of doctors’ conscientious objection to performing abortions, while at the same time expressed his support for women’s free choice: “Abortion is not desirable, but this whole phenomenon should be considered from the aspect of the woman’s right to choose whether she wants to give birth or not. My position on this is completely clear. The present system, in which women can choose under specific circumstances, must stay. Conscientious objection by health workers should be respected, but the public health system must provide the service women need.”

Source: [Dalje.com](#), [here](#) and [here](#)

### **Safe Abortion Services in Armenia**

Since 2007 Women's Rights Center (WRC) in Armenia has been working on implementing a clinical research study on introduction of medical abortion services in Armenia. The aim of this research study is investigation on medical abortion with the use of mifepristone and misoprostol, results and success rate, its acceptability and feasibility for women in Armenia.

It’s important to note that WRC was the first organization in Armenia to introduce medical abortion as an optional method for terminating unwanted pregnancies. All activities of organization on safe abortion are realized with the permission and in cooperation with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia (Together with Gynuity Health Projects, New York). Only licensed obstetrician-gynecologists working at obstetric-gynecologic institutions of the Republic can do medical or surgical abortions.

In the frame of implementation process of the first trimester medical abortion we organized various trainings, round table and dissemination meetings with gynecologists from different medical institutions of Armenia. During the meetings and trainings the results of international studies, concerning mifepristone and misoprostol usage for first and second trimester termination of pregnancy, are introduced to doctors, they have an opportunity to share their concerns and get answers to their questions, to be involved in a discussion.

WRC has also elaborated and published various relevant materials on medical abortion, including the Clinical Guideline on Organizing and Providing Health Care on Medical Abortion on first trimester second abortion, the information booklet on “Medical Abortion” and other relevant materials have been disseminated among the doctors-participants (obstetricians - gynecologists) and women throughout the regions.

Currently, our organization coordinates the second trimester safe abortion study with the usage of mifepristone and misoprostol for terminating unwanted pregnancies. We’re also working on elaborating a new Clinical Guideline on second trimester medical abortion.

*Article prepared by Women’s Rights Center*

Source: [ASTRA Network](#)

### **Poland remains a reproductive rights phenomenon in Europe**

Recently Aljazeera featured a long article about the reality of Poland's restrictive anti-abortion law and the sad reality of reproductive rights which Polish women face. Poland has one of the harshest abortion laws in Europe. It is a crime to terminate a pregnancy in the eastern European country except in three circumstances: cases of foetal abnormality, risk to the health and life of the mother, and rape or incest. Despite these exceptions, in reality access to abortion, where the law permits it, remains extremely limited. According to the official numbers there were 701 abortions in year 2012 (latest data available) what in a country of almost 40 million citizens serves more as an indication of the scale of the problem than as a fact.

Source: [Aljazeera](#)

### **Recognition of civil partnerships fell off the political agenda in Poland**

On Thursday December 17<sup>th</sup> Polish Sejm once again rejected to the draft law on civil partnerships. During the vote in Parliament 252 members , including 18 who abstained , decided not to include the project in the political agenda of the ongoing session of the Sejm. 185 MPs voted in favour. The bill would provide legal framework for homo- and heterosexual couples and enable them share responsibilities equally.

Source: [Campaign Against Homophobia](#)

### **Kyrgyzstan's new anti-gay law is even worse than Russia's**

The Kyrgyz version of the [Russian law against "gay propaganda"](#) passed its first reading by a vote of 79 to 7. Following one more reading, the bill will reach President Almazbek Atambayev's desk, where it is almost certain to pass into law. Legislators proposed that the minimum sentence for making reference to homosexuality be increased from one year to three. Kyrgyzstan's close affiliation with Russia inspired the law, and the Kyrgyz version is even tougher. To protect "traditional Kyrgyz values and families," the law states, any "positive image of nontraditional sexual relations" will be prohibited. Anyone caught distributing a photo, writing an article, or posting on Facebook about homosexuality will face up to a year imprisonment. The law will effectively make it illegal to advocate for, provide information about, or even organize a peaceful assembly in support of LGBT rights. Human rights organizations will cease to exist as our current activities will be deemed unlawful. This violates Kyrgyzstan's commitments under both international law and its own constitution, which protects the right to peaceful assembly, free access to information, and freedom from any form of discrimination. In a society as homophobic as Kyrgyzstan's, the law will only encourage more anti-gay crimes.

Source: [Open Society Foundations](#), [Labrys Kyrgystan](#)

## EU Council Conclusions on Post-2015

The final version of the Council Conclusions on Post-2015 adopted today at the General Affairs Council meeting is available [HERE](#).

## GLOBAL UPDATES

### Beyond 2015 Copenhagen CSO Conference

The Beyond 2015 CSO Conference brought together almost 200 participating organisations from 46 countries who gathered in Copenhagen in late November to discuss the post-2015 agenda, with a specific focus on inequalities. It was a key moment for global civil society to take stock of progress on the creation of the new Post-2015 framework and influencing the final stage of negotiations. The Outcome Document produced at the conference is available [here](#). The overall conference report, as well as outcomes from the thematic discussions, can be found [here](#). The Outcome Document is currently being shared with the high level UN representatives, Member States in NY and at the capital level, and other civil society coalitions. Beyond2015 encourages participating organisations of Beyond 2015 to highlight the Outcome Document on their website, and tweet about it using the hashtag #beyond2015 and #beyond2015cph

Source: [Beyond 2015](#)

### UNAIDS Board underlines ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as central to the post-2015 Development Agenda

The 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board held on December 12<sup>th</sup> in Geneva reaffirmed its commitment to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 and encouraged United Nations Member States to push for this goal to be fully reflected in the final agreement on the post-2015 development agenda. During the meeting, UNAIDS Board members recognized the value of the Joint Programme's experience in relation to multisectoral collaboration, issue-specific partnership and the inclusive governance model, in particular the participation of civil society. Board members agreed that this UNAIDS model was relevant for the United Nations system's response to a post-2015 development agenda that leaves **no one behind**. Urging action towards the goal of ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030, the Board noted compelling evidence to Fast-Track the AIDS response over the next five years.) To accelerate action and investment, the Board requested UNAIDS to update and extend its strategy through 2016–2021. Board members called on states to take steps to implement the [90–90–90 treatment strategy](#) to set ambitious targets for HIV prevention and to reduce stigma and discrimination among people seeking HIV services. The Board highlighted the particular need to improve treatment options for children living with HIV, which are currently significantly lacking. The UNAIDS Board emphasized the need to support low- and middle-income countries to scale up access to essential HIV treatment. They also urged UNAIDS to support low- and middle-income countries to leverage existing flexibilities in international trade agreements to improve access to treatment and to review current national patent laws.

The meeting concluded with a full-day thematic segment on halving HIV transmission among people who inject drugs. Participants underlined the critical need for renewed efforts to reduce transmission

of HIV and hepatitis C among people who inject drugs, towards the 2030 goal of ending the AIDS epidemic. Participants and observers from United Nations Member States, international organizations, civil society and nongovernmental organizations attended the meeting, which was chaired by Australia, with Zimbabwe as Vice-Chair and El Salvador as Rapporteur. The Board elected Zimbabwe as Chair, with Switzerland as Vice-Chair and Ukraine as Rapporteur for 2015.

Source: [UNAIDS](#)

### **RESURJ Launches #SexRightsTopia Video**

On the occasion of the Human Rights Day on December 10<sup>th</sup> [RESURJ](#) launched its new video campaign „SexRightsTopia” focusing on sexual orientation and gender identity. The organization invites everyone to contribute to the campaign by sharing their views on what does the #SexRightsTopia look like.

Watch the video [HERE](#).

### **Terror attack at “Vessel” screening in Sweden**

Three masked men stormed a screening of abortion documentary *Vessel* in Sweden on December 7, setting off a smoke bomb that sent audience members fleeing in panic. The [award-winning documentary](#), which focuses on activist Rebecca Gomperts and her pro-choice organization Women on Waves, was being screened at the Abortion Rights Festival in Stockholm – an event jointly hosted by Swedish organization RFSU (the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education) and its magazine *Ottar*.

Source: [Real Screen](#)

### **French “Veil Law” anniversary**

On the occasion of the 40 year anniversary of the French law on abortion, the “Veil Law” (named after the French Minister at the time, Simone Veil), the French National Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a Resolution reaffirming a woman’s right to abortion. The Motion passed with 143 votes in favour, and 7 against. It was reassuring to see that many from the centre right UMP party also voted in favour of the Motion.

Source: [EPF](#)

### **Addendum to Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**

An Addendum has been issued to the Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970/Add 1) giving explanations of position and reservation on the report. Apart from many reservations that were issued on Goal 16, a number of countries made reservations on Goal 3, target 3.7 and on Goal 5, target 5.6 (list of goals [here](#)). For full summary of the reservations click [here](#).

Source: [NGOs beyond 2014](#)

## YOUTH

### Call to action: #UpsideDownfie – photo action on ending violence against women and girls

On Human Rights Day UNFPA has launched next stage of the general Show Your Selfie campaign: **#showyourselfie mini – campaign on ending violence against women and girls**. From 10 December - until 20 January people are asked to take an **UpsideDownfie** to call on people to turn violence and harmful practices against women and girls on their head. Sharing the picture is possible either on Twitter or Instagram by using #showyourselfie, or by uploading the photo directly to [www.showyourselfie.org](http://www.showyourselfie.org).

The #showyourselfie campaign has now collected over 11,000 selfies to support the rights of young people. To express further support for young people, the set of mini-campaigns will be conducted. The timetable for all mini-campaigns may be found below:

- **Protection from Violence:** 10 December - 20 January
- **Health (access to contraception/sexuality education):** 21 January - 7 March
- **The Power of the Adolescent Girl:** 8 March - 19 April
- **Education:** 20 April - 1 June
- **Employment:** 1 June - 13 July
- **Participation in decision-making:** 14 July - 25 August

The toolkit on the campaign is accessible [here](#).

Source: [ShowYourSelfie](#)

### All in for Adolescents

UNAIDS and the United Nations Children's Fund convened the consultation on challenges adolescents face regarding HIV/AIDS. The meeting was held in Geneva, from 3 to 5 December and gathered around 50 activists from youth networks, governments, implementers, donors and UNAIDS cosponsors. The participants reviewed the results framework to measure progress and establish a strategy to effectively improve young people's situation. The final result of the meeting was the action plan outlining the most important efforts which are necessary to be undertaken.

Source: [UNAIDS](#)

### First results of MY World global survey

MY World is a global survey for citizens led by the United Nations and partners. It aims to collect people's voices and priorities, so that global leaders can be informed as they are in the process of

defining the new development agenda. In the survey, individuals are asked to choose six of sixteen priorities which they regard as most important in their lives.

On 12<sup>th</sup> December the UN Millennium Campaign partnered with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to present a special report '*We the Peoples - Celebrating 7 Million Voices*', showing the latest results of the survey. So far 7 million responses were collected and 77% of respondents were people under 30 years old. The most important priorities identified are: a good education, better healthcare and better job opportunities – areas crucial for young people. The latest data is available [here](#).

MY World survey is still accessible to vote [here](#).

Source: [My World](#), [UN](#)

### **Supplement on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Journal of Adolescent Health**

The 56<sup>th</sup> issue of the [Journal of Adolescent Health](#) includes a supplement devoted to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights. The articles in the supplement are related to sexuality education, health services, sexual violence and youth leadership. The supplement is available to download [here](#).

Source: [Journal of Adolescent Health](#)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Women Deliver 2016**, the 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 17-19 May 2016. For more information go to the official website: [www.wd2016.org](http://www.wd2016.org)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**"From Commitment to Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights"** - assessment report on the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by UNFPA was launched on Thursday, 11 December in UN Headquarters in New York. The report explores the role of the UPR mechanism in advancing the realization of human rights at the global, regional and country levels by assessing the attention given to these issues during the first cycle of the UPR and identifying how this level of attention can be further enhanced through all stages of the UPR process. Findings of the report will be presented and discussed to inform Member States and civil society, UN agencies and other stakeholders on efforts to advance human rights related to sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing through strengthened engagement with the UPR process.

Access the report [HERE](#).



**Estimating the Costs of Gender-Based Violence in the European Union** – Report by the European Institute for Gender Equality provides an analysis of methodological options on the cost of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence, by studying different literatures and studies, and provides recommendations. It includes a case study on the cost of intimate partner violence against women in the UK during 2012 and provides a calculation of the costs in the EU.

Source: [EIGE](#)

### **Being Trans in the European Union**

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) presented the largest comparative study on the experiences of trans people in all 28 EU Member States. The FRA calls the results “alarming”, but highlights that legal frameworks and good policies have a positive impact on trans people’s lives. The study takes a closer look at results of the nearly 7000 trans respondents of the [EU LGBT Survey](#). Commenting on the results, Vice-President of the LGBTI Intergroup Sirpa Pietikainen MEP said: “It turns out that over half (54%) of the respondents felt personally discriminated against or harassed because they were perceived as trans in the year preceding the survey. This is a clear sign that the European Commission and the Member States must work to outlaw discrimination and harassment.”

Source: [European Parliament Intergroup on LGBT Rights](#)

**Reproductive Rights are Human Rights: A Handbook for National Human Rights Institutions** published jointly with UNFPA and the Danish Institute for Human Rights can be accessed online [HERE](#).

### **The World Survey on the role of women in development 2014: Gender equality and sustainable development**

The World Survey on the Role of Women in Development is a UN Secretary-General report mandated by the Second Committee of the General Assembly and comes out every five years. The 2014 report focuses on gender equality and sustainable development, with chapters on the green economy and care work, food security, population dynamics, and investments for gender-responsive sustainable development. The report comes at a crucial moment, as the global community grapples with the definition of the Sustainable Development Goals and the emergence of the post-2015 framework. Against this context, World Survey 2014 asserts the central role of gender equality in charting the rationale and the actions necessary to achieve sustainable development. The World Survey uses three criteria to assess whether policy actions and investments for sustainable development adequately address gender equality. Do they support women's capabilities and their enjoyment of rights? Do they reduce, rather than increase, women's unpaid care work? And do they embrace women's equal and meaningful participation as actors, leaders and decision-makers? It offers a comprehensive set of recommendations for gender-responsive policy actions and investments towards sustainable development overall, as well as for the selected areas which the World Survey emphasizes. Access the report [here](#).

Source: [UN Women](#)

## Call to Action

### **Petition to the European Parliament: Please Guarantee Access to Safe and Legal Abortion for Every Woman in the European Union.**

On the occasion of the September 28 Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion, European civil society organizations working on human rights launched a petition directed to the European Parliament to guarantee the respect of human rights standards on the issue.

International human rights law recognizes that obtaining a safe and legal abortion is crucial to women's and girls' effective enjoyment and exercise of their human rights, including, among others, the rights to life, non-discrimination, equality, health and privacy. UN treaty bodies have frequently expressed concern about the relationship between restrictive abortion laws, clandestine and unsafe abortions, and high rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. In cases of restrictive laws, the central problem is the difficulty of obtaining abortions even when women are legally entitled to undergo the procedure. According to the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, once the state adopts statutory regulations allowing abortion in some situations, it must not structure its legal framework in a way that would limit real possibilities to access it. UN treaty bodies have also affirmed that where abortion is legal, states must ensure that it is available, accessible, acceptable and of good quality. Both the Court of Human Rights and UN treaty bodies have also found that restrictive abortion laws can constitute inhuman and degrading treatment. However, in several EU countries, women are facing or will soon face important challenges to accessing safe and legal abortions according to the mentioned human rights standards. Some of these countries are Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Ireland, Greece, Spain and Italy.

The signature under this petition will be used to ask the FEMM (Women's Rights and Gender Equality) Committee to produce an opinion favourable to a European Parliament resolution that guarantees that human rights standards related to the access to safe and legal abortion are respected by all member states. In particular, member states should guarantee accessible and affordable access to contraceptives and support services for women, and in cases when abortion is the chosen option by a woman, that she gets timely and effective access to the procedure in a safe and professional way.

Sign the petition [here](#)

Source: [European Liberties Platform](#)

## **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  
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Sarajevo Open Center  
Croatia - B.a.b.e. (Be Active, Be Emancipated)  
Croatia - CESI - Center for Education and Counseling of Woman  
Croatia - Women's Room  
Georgia – Real People, Real Visio  
Georgia – HERA XXI  
Georgia - Women's Center  
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 – Family Planning 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 - Novgorod Gender Center  
Russia – Russian Association for Population and Development  
Slovakia – Pro Choice  
Tajikistan – Gender and Development  
Ukraine - Women Health and Family Planning  
Ukraine - Charitable SALUS Foundation  
Uzbekistan - Future Generation

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Supported by the [Sigrid Rausing Trust](#)

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