



CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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BURNING ISSUE

ASTRA Network points to the vast inequalities in access to reproductive health goods and services within the European Union

On Thursday June 4th ASTRA Network, regional women's coalition advocating for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Central and Eastern region, organised a Public Hearing in the European Parliament. The event was hosted by Co-Chairs of the [European Parliament Working Group on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Development](#), Dutch Member of European Parliament Sophie in 't Veld (ALDE/ D66) and MEP Heidi Hautala (Greens/ Vihreä liitto) from Finland.

ASTRA Network members discussed the current status of access to reproductive health goods and services and pointed to various barriers in exercising reproductive rights. The legal and policy barriers have been on the rise in the past few years. Proposals seeking to eliminate legal grounds for abortion have occurred throughout the region with the most recent example of Poland. A civic bill calling for a total ban of abortion is to be submitted to the Polish Parliament in July. Moreover, initiatives to grant a prenatal right to life and proposals seeking to impose procedural barriers on access to abortion such as mandatory waiting periods and biased counseling requirements, as well as refusals of abortion on the grounds of conscience have occurred throughout the region, including in Lithuania, Croatia, Romania and Hungary.

In countries of Central and Eastern Europe cultural and social barriers are possibly the most recent factors hampering women's access to reproductive health services and commodities. The backlash on gender equality and the "anti-gender movement" is fueled by religious and conservative forces

with substantial effects on women's health. The demographic crisis often serves as an entry point for initiatives which aim to limit women's human rights. The use of modern contraceptives continues to be low in Central and Eastern Europe. The recent decision of the European Commission which enabled the emergency pill, EllaOne, to be available at pharmacies without prescription has been implemented in most countries of the CEE region yet not all of them. The high price of this product as well as age limit for accessing remain a real obstacle for many women and youth. Young people require special attention as none of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe offers comprehensive sexuality education classes in schools. The most at risk groups, such as poor and young women, HIV positive women, LGBTQI persons and ethnic minorities, in addition to stigma and discrimination experience an even more difficult situation in exercising their reproductive rights.

Neil Datta of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development discussed the geopolitics of current developments in Central and Eastern Europe. The current anti-choice and neoconservative developments in that region are fueled by three components: the defense of life, family values and religious freedom, all understood within the conservative discourse. To counteract these the civil society of the region must strengthen its activities. However, due to the steady decline in funds for the progressive civil society initiatives and at the same time the rise in anti-choice activities this becomes a difficult scenario. He also mentioned the phenomenon of sex-selective abortion which often serves as an entry point for limiting women's rights instead of looking at the root cause being the discrimination of women and girls.

Heidi Hautala and Sophie in 't Veld reiterated the difficult situation in the region and underlined that reproductive rights and reproductive health are an important aspect of EU public health and must be addressed by the institution especially in times of alarming initiatives aiming to limit women's rights. Sophie in 't Veld called for inclusion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the EU health strategy what ASTRA is very glad to see having been embraced by the recently adopted report on "EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015" together with a strong call for sexuality education, equal access to modern contraception and safe and legal abortion. MEP Sophie in 't Veld: *"Anno 2015 sex should no longer be a taboo, but an important aspect of EU public health. Therefore I welcome the call from the European Parliament to include SRHR in the EU's next Health Strategy. Every individual should have the right to make their own choices, to achieve this equal access to reproductive health goods and services is key."* In addition In 't Veld called for a thorough research on access to reproductive health goods and services in the EU and in individual Member States.

Speakers:

Opening speech by MEP Sophie in 't Veld
Marta Szostak, ASTRA Network Secretariat
Adriana Lamackova, Center for Reproductive Rights
Milena Kadieva, Gender Alternatives Foundation
Irina Costache, A.L.E.G.
Nataša Bijelić, CESI - Centar za edukaciju, savjetovanje i istraživanje
Neil Datta, The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development
Closing remarks by MEP Heidi Hautala

Source: [ASTRA Network](#)

REGIONAL UPDATES

The European Parliament in support of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The Noichl Report on the "EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015" received the majority of votes in the plenary vote on June 9th in Brussels. This report was issued by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), which has called for wide measures to achieve full gender equality, including gender mainstreaming, a roadmap for LGBT people, access to safe and legal abortion, sexuality education programmes in schools, quota for women in directorates, the adoption of the Equal Treatment Directive, and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by those Member States who have not yet done so. Parliament also says specific actions are needed to strengthen the rights of women with disabilities, migrant and ethnic minority women, Roma women, older women, single mothers and LGBTI.

The rapporteur, Maria Noichl (S&D, DE), said: *"Despite our differences, MEPs focused on our key aim: to finally achieve real gender equality in Europe."* She added: *"The resolution will serve as a good, balanced and forward-looking basis for a new women's rights and gender equality strategy for all women and men in the EU."*

This non-binding resolution was adopted by 341 votes to 281, with 81 abstentions.

Access the full report in pdf [HERE](#) and the press release [HERE](#).

Recommendations from the "Noichl report" targeting HEALTH:

52. Calls on the Commission to assist Member States in ensuring high quality, geographically appropriate and readily accessible services in the areas of **sexual and reproductive health and rights and safe and legal abortion and contraception**, as well as general healthcare;

53. Urges the Commission to include sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHRs) in its next EU Health Strategy, in order to ensure equality between women and men and complement national SRHR policies;

54. Calls on the Member States to focus on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and prevention methods, as well as on prevention and research in order to improve early detection of diseases such as female cancers (cancers of the breast, cervix, and ovaries), by means of regular gynaecological controls and check ups;

55. Reiterates its call on the Commission and the World Health Organisation to withdraw gender identity disorders from the list of mental and behavioural disorders, and to ensure non pathologising reclassification in the negotiations on the 11th version of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD11), and to ensure that gender diversity in childhood is not pathologised;

56. Recognising the importance of sexual and reproductive rights, calls on the Commission to create best practice models of sex and relationship education for young people across Europe;

57. Stresses that the Commission needs to carry out a gender audit in order to ensure that EU health policies and EU funded research increasingly address women's health status and diagnosis;

58. Stresses the importance of awareness raising campaigns for gender specific symptoms of disease, as well as gender roles and stereotypes having an impact on health, and calls on the Commission to provide financial support for gender sensitive research programmes;

59. Calls on the Commission to encourage Member States to promote (medical) fertility support and to end discrimination in access to fertility treatment and assisted reproduction; also notes in this connection the importance of support for adoption and the right of all children to know their parents;

60. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to act to implement sex education programmes in schools and ensure counselling and access to contraception for young people.

The Russian Ministry of Health signs a cooperation agreement with the Russian Orthodox Church regarding access to abortion

On 19 June the Ministry of Health and the Russian Orthodox Church signed a cooperation agreement. The agreement signed by Minister Veronika Skvortsova and Patriarch Kirill was published on the [website](#) of the Synodal Department for ROC Church Charity and Social Service. The agreement consists of 21 articles. Article 9 is devoted to abortions prevention and article 5 on the role religious representatives in medical institutions.

Article 9:

1. The Parties shall cooperate on the protection of maternal and child health, including reproductive health, promotion of family values and prevention of abortion.

2. The Parties shall promote cooperation of medical institutions with representatives of religious organizations of the Russian Orthodox Church in the prevention of abortion by:

- creation of the crisis pregnancy centers at the hospitals with the participation of psychologists and representatives of religious organizations of the Russian Orthodox Church;
- the participation of representatives of religious organizations of the Russian Orthodox Church in advising women who are planning to terminate the pregnancy, in medical institutions;
- providing places for posting information of religious organizations of the Russian Orthodox Church on the stands in medical institutions.

3. The Parties shall take part in joint efforts to provide assistance and support to pregnant women whose prenatal diagnosis indicate to the malformation of the fetus, as well as mothers who give birth to a child with developmental disabilities.

Article 5

1. The Parties shall cooperate on the preparation of professionals in the health sector.

2. This cooperation is carried out by the Parties by: conducting seminars, courses, training programs and other activities in the institutions of higher, secondary and post-graduate medical education, aimed at the formation of the spiritual foundations of professional medical activities, including on the interaction of medical organizations with religious organizations of the Russian Orthodox Church;

As a response the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe tabled Written Declaration 594 entitled “**Women's right to access appropriate reproductive health services in the Russian Federation**”. The document is available [here](#). The undersigned members criticised the 3 draft laws that are currently submitted to the Russian State Duma aiming to strongly restrict access to abortion. They called on their fellow parliamentarians in the Duma to reject the draft laws: “*We the undersigned members of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly are strongly concerned about the three draft laws submitted to the State Duma of the Russian Federation aiming to severely restrict access of women to abortion. They aim: to require women to visualise and listen to the heartbeats of the foetus before being given permission to access a legal abortion; exclude coverage of abortion from the Obligatory Medical Insurance and to prohibit the sale of safe medication that terminate pregnancies.*”

Source: [European Parliamentary Forum](#)

Ukrainian Parliamentarians discussed Strategy of State Policy on Reproductive Health

On June 19th an Advocacy Round Table Strategy of Ukrainian State Policy on Reproductive Health of the Nation was held in the Ukrainian Parliament. The discussion was initiated by the Woman Health and Family Planning Charity Foundation in collaboration with the “Equal Opportunities” Intersectoral Deputies Association, and civil society leaders – members of All-Ukrainian Coalition on Reproductive Health & Family Planning. Goal of the meeting was to advocate for developing and adoption of the new State Program of Reproductive Health of the Nation for the period of 2016-2020.

The necessity to conduct such an event stemmed from the fact that the current State Program “Reproductive Health of the Nation” (SPRHN) for the period of 2006-2015, which defines key objectives and expected indicators in maternal, child, and reproductive health, is coming to its end. The completion of the current state program in 2015 without government’s attention, sufficient financial support and availability of a new RH strategy, may jeopardize the achievements of the previous years and can lead to a loss of the positive performance results being used currently to assess the country’s rating in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the Human Development Index. During the meeting WHFP’ experts presented results of independent assessment of the Program's performance and its success in achieving results which was conducted at the end of 2014 by WHFP specialists in cooperation with leading reproductive health, family planning and maternal and child health experts representing state authorities, international projects, health facilities, educational institutions and civil society organizations. The assessment confirmed that the SPRHN has had a positive impact on and contributed to a decreased maternal mortality rate, decreased neonatal and new born mortality rates, a decreased abortion rate, including the one among adolescents, and an increased usage of modern methods of contraception. At the same time, objectives related to reduction of oncological diseases (in particular cervical cancer) were not achieved due to insufficient funding. Regardless considerable progress in recent years, the main indicators of reproductive health in Ukraine still do not correspond to respective indicators in EU countries.

It should be noted that under the current economic and demographic crisis and the ongoing military conflict in the country, the issues related to the protection of reproductive health should remain at

the center of the government's attention as the ones determining topics of national safety and future sustainable development of Ukraine. But the existing unresolved issues in reproductive health are in need of response without delay at the highest level as well as immediate joint efforts of members of Ukrainian Parliament – key legislative body in Ukraine, experts and international donors as well as members of All-Ukrainian Coalition of Reproductive Health & Family Planning. Round table's agenda also included expert discussion on the strategy of Ukrainian state policy in reproductive health sphere with regard to priorities identified during current SPRHN assessment as well as on further steps towards the preparation of the new RH strategic document.

Source: [Women, Health and Family Planning Charity Foundation](#)

Advocacy meeting with the Minister of Health of Ukraine on Reproductive Health state policy

On June 30th Mr. Alexander Kvitashvili, the Minister of Health of Ukraine, met with the heads of the international agencies, working in Ukraine, and the Chief of the Board of the Woman Health and Family Planning Foundation, Co-Head of the All-Ukrainian Coalition of Reproductive Health and Family Planning. The meeting aimed to discuss the perspective of reproductive health policy in the country, MOH' vision on the new State Program Reproductive Health of the Nation for the period of 2016-2020, and prospects of donor's support to this sphere. The meeting initiated by WHFPF was organized by the Minister of Health of Ukraine as a reaction on the joint letter addressed to the Minister of Health of Ukraine on behalf of civil society organizations and donors.

Heads of USAID, WHO, UNFPA, SDC, UNICEF and WHFPF and MOH Head of profile department participated in the meeting. Galina Mastruk, WHFPF Chief of the Board, shortly presented to the Minister results of independent assessment of the performance of State Program "Reproductive Health of the Nation" (SPRHN) for the period of 2006-2015. After that each agency presented its experience of support of RHFP sphere as well as their vision of the priorities in this area for Ukraine. As a result Mr. Kvitashvili fully supported the presented initiative on the development and adoption of the new State Program of Reproductive Health of the Nation for the period of 2016-2020. Besides, he stressed on the necessity of the elaboration of Action Plan on new SPRHN design. The first step will be support letter from the MOH, order on the creation of the Working Group to develop the Concept of the new Program, and the appointment of the responsible deputy Minister. Additionally it was agreed to organize the next technical meeting on implementing Action Plan related to SPRHN prompt development and adoption. The WHFPF will continue its advocacy activities in partnership with interested parties towards new State Program Reproductive Health of the Nation for the period of 2016-2020.

Source: [Women, Health and Family Planning Charity Foundation](#)

"International Perspectives on Reproductive Health and Justice" event in Ireland

ASTRA Network honorary advisory board member Daniela Draghici was invited as the keynote speaker as part of a roundtable titled "International Perspectives on Reproductive Health and Justice", co-hosted by the Ulster Hall in Belfast on June 29, 2015. The event was organized by

the [Belfast Feminist Network](#), [Alliance for Choice Belfast](#), hosted by [Acsoni Northern Ireland](#), with support from The Institute of Research in Social Sciences at Ulster University in the context of the non-observance of women's reproductive justice discourse in Northern Ireland, as well as in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEE/ CA). After Daniela's presentation, focusing on reproductive rights and justice-related issues in Romania and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, there was a panel discussion on the challenges and experiences of women in Northern Ireland, with particular emphasis on women from Belfast minority and ethnic communities. The event was highly appreciated by the audience that felt grateful for the solidarity shown by a representative of women in Eastern Europe. The topics presented by the panelists spurred fiery discussions and showed the need for more frequent public debates on such difficult issues.

Source: Daniela Draghici, [Facebook event](#)

Abortion Drone - first flight to Poland

On Saturday June 27th an "abortion drone" flew for the first time packages of abortion pills from Frankfurt an der Oder in Germany to Słubice in Poland. The campaign was a collaboration between Women on Waves; Coccia Basia, a Berlin based abortion support group for Polish women; Feminoteka Foundation from Warsaw, the 8th of March women's rights informal collective "Porozumienie kobiet 8 marca", Berlin-Irish Pro Choice Solidarity, Codziennik Feministyczny and the Political group Twój Ruch. The Abortion drone aimed to draw attention to the different reality for Polish women to access to safe abortion services compared to other women in Europe. In almost all European countries abortion is legal, only in Poland, Ireland and Malta abortion is illegal and women's rights are still violated.

Source: [Women on Waves](#)

Successful Kiev Pride despite far right attacks

For the second time since 2013, the march for equality took place in Kiev, Ukraine. Over 2000 police officers protected around 300 participants against far right counter demonstrators. The event found support by President Poroshenko who emphasized that it "is a constitutional right of every Ukrainian citizen." The march was attacked twice, resulting in nine injured police men and at least ten injured participants. Police arrested 25 people for 'illegal actions' against the march, which included throwing stones and smoke bombs. Last year's march had to be called off last-minute when local authorities refused to guarantee participants police protection.

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

GLOBAL UPDATES

The sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly calls for shared responsibility and global solidarity to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030

United Nations Member States welcomed and reflected on the latest HIV report of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, entitled [Future of the AIDS response: building on past achievements and accelerating progress to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030](#), at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly on 8 June in New York, United States of America.

The Secretary-General's report highlights important gains and historic breakthroughs in the global AIDS response since 2000. It also provides overview of some of the persisting challenges, including low paediatric and adolescent treatment coverage, lack of stable AIDS funding, gender inequalities, violence against women and vulnerable populations being left behind. United Nations Member States collectively echoed their support for the UNAIDS Fast-Track approach to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030. They also made several recommendations for leadership, resource mobilization, human rights, community engagement and civil society involvement to strengthen global efforts on health and development beyond 2015.

Source: [UN AIDS](#)

6th session of intergovernmental negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The sixth session of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda was held from 22nd to 25th June. This session focused on the [zero draft of the outcome document](#). The interventions from UN Member States were predominantly focused on the introductory part of the outcome document and on the declaration. They also provide information as to the positions and priorities of the various countries, which could be useful for the negotiations moving forward. For a summary of Member States interventions click [HERE](#).

The co-facilitators convened a meeting with the Major Groups and other Stakeholders on Wednesday, 24th June. Several civil society representatives had an opportunity to deliver a statement, among them many focused on SRHR and gender equality. For a list of CSO statements click [HERE](#).

The next two and last sessions before the UN Summit for Adoption of the Post 2015 Development Agenda in September will be held in the end of July, from 20th to 24th and from 27th to the 31st.

Source: [NGOsBeyond2014](#)

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development began its work

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), with the theme Strengthening integration, implementation and review – the HLPF after 2015 began its work end of June and will continue until 8 July.

As set out in the [Integrated Programme](#) speakers in the opening plenary included Martin Sajdik, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); Rudolf Hundstorfer, Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Austria and Thomas Gass, on behalf of the UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs. Representatives from Major Groups and other Stakeholders, Kadir Topbaş, Mayor of Istanbul and President of UCLG; Frances Zainoeddin of the Gray Panthers NY; and Hirotaka Koike, Japan Youth Platform for Post-2015 also spoke. The keynote address on Shaping the world for 2030: From vision to transformative action was given by David Donoghue, Co-Facilitator of the negotiations on post-2015 development agenda. After the keynote address a panel session, in which Ambassador Donoghue also participated, was held. Dr Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA was also a member of the panel.

Attached is the [letter of transmittal](#) and the [draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the HLPF](#).

Source: [NGOsBeyond2014](#)

YOUTH

Anti-sex ed letter to Romanian Ministry of Education

The debates on sexuality education in Romania continue, as the Ministry of Education considers changing the current educational curriculum and upgrading the status of the subject "Education for Health" aka "Sex Education" from optional to compulsory (to be taught in all schools). There is an ongoing discussion in the media, but there haven't been any legal decisions made.

In response to these discussions, several Christian organizations have issued a letter to the Romanian Ministry of Education, demanding abstinence-only education to be introduced as the potential compulsory subject. In the letter they express anti-LGBT views and argue that providing information on gender identities and homosexuality does harm and causes confusion among youngsters. Also, they attack CSE initiative 'Sexul vs.Barza' (Sex vs.Stork) and claim it to be aggressive, unlawful and promoting promiscuity among children. It is also recommended that organizations representing parents should be involved in development of policies regarding health education.

SRHR activists reacted, explaining why it is absurd and outdated to advocate for 'abstinence until marriage' -based education. The earliest possible date for the new education law to be adopted by the Parliament is the beginning of 2016. The public debate concerning the law project will likely continue until the end of the year.

Source: [Adevarul.ro](#)

The Latvian parliament approves introduction of 'moral education' at schools

The parliament in Latvia approved amendments to education law introducing 'moral education' in Latvian schools, with 64 votes to 12 opposing. 'Moral education' in practice means that schools will

be obliged to provide education in line with values of the Constitution, primarily information regarding marriage and family life. Besides implementation of lessons on morality, parliamentarians voiced also support for proposal declaring that students will be protected from education and upbringing which stands in opposition to their moral development.

Source: [LSM.LV](#)

UNICEF Progress for Children report 'Beyond averages: Learning from the MDGs'

UNICEF has published the 11th edition of its report 'Progress for Children' (accessible [here](#)), focusing on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to child development. The report provides the most current data showing that there has been a tremendous progress in enhancing children lives and prospects, but millions of children are still left disadvantaged. Thematic areas covered in the report regard education, health and gender equality, presenting achievements and failures in the last twenty years.

Source: [UNICEF](#)

International Youth Day 2015: Youth Civic Engagement

This year's International Youth Day theme is 'Youth Civic engagement' to promote youth involvement in public life and politics. On this occasion the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development is running an online campaign, which aims to provide a space to share stories and ideas on civic engagement. Young people are invited to tweet using [#YouthDay](#), share photos and stories, organize an event related to International Youth Day.

To find out more about the campaign and how to join it, visit [UN DESA](#) website.

Source: [UN DESA](#)

Post-2015 negotiation briefs for youth advocates

The PACT has launched Post-2015 negotiation briefs, which might serve as advocacy tool for youth activists to ensure states' commitment to SRHR and HIV in the Post-2015 agenda. The briefs provide insight into current state of debates on SRHR and HIV at the United Nations, information on regional proceedings and give instructions on language regarding indicators for SDGs. The toolkits deliver knowledge on the variety of topics related to youth development: CSE, drug-related harm reduction, youth and HIV, mental health, SRHR, social and political determinants of health, youth engagement and accountability mechanisms, youth-friendly services in universal health coverage.

The briefs are accessible [here](#).

Source: [PACT](#)

The overview of statistics regarding youth situation around the world

The Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth has published the overview of world statistics regarding young people's situation, as a result of #YouthNow campaign and commemoration of the 20th anniversary of World Programme for Action for Youth (WPAY). The overview consists of infographics prepared in cooperation with various UN agencies. The infographics cover sixteen areas of development focused on youth and provide worldwide knowledge on progress and remaining gaps in ensuring young people's wellbeing.

The infographics are available [here](#).

Source: [UN SG Envoy on Youth](#)

Meetings on the National Youth Strategy in Macedonia

First round of meetings for the new National Youth Strategy has ended. The new National Strategy for Youth is for the period of 2016-2025. The process is led by the Agency for Youth and Sports and the Office of the UNDP. HERA took part of two working groups, the ones for education and health, where was strongly advocating for sexual and reproductive health and rights, with focus on comprehensive sexuality education. Having on mind the political situation in the country and the recent Kumanovo clashes, a meeting was organized with the National Agency for Youth and Sport, where HERA also took part in. The reason for the meeting was that in the last period the number of participants in all working groups was constantly decreasing, due to the political crisis and protests happening in the capital. It was decided before next round of meetings for the strategy from September, the Agency for Youth and Sport to meet with the civil society organizations and discuss the future steps.

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

Pride Month events in Macedonia

As part of the Pride month, HERA's youth group devoted one radio show, as part of the show "Sexy hood" LGBTI issues. It was discusses about history of the LGBTI movement worldwide as well as the historical development of the movement in Macedonia. Challenges and problems that LGBTI community is facing with at the current moment also were included in the show. The messages from the show afterwards were communicated through the social media. During this month in Skopje, Pride week was also organized by National network against homophobia and transphobia (LGBTI network) in which HERA is also a member. During this week lectures about sexuality and LGBTI activism, workshops for HIV/STI prevention, public debate, movies nights, protests, lesbian picnic and party for closing the week were organized. A lot of LGBTI people and their supporters visited these events.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

AWID Forum 2016

The next AWID Forum will be held on May 5-8, 2016, in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. The goals of the AWID Forum 2016 are to: Celebrate the gains of the past 20 years by diverse social movements and critically analyze the lessons we can carry forward; Assess our current reality in the full diversity of our contexts, to locate opportunities for advancing the rights of women and other oppressed people, as well as the threats and challenges – both new and old – confronting us today; Explore strategies for mobilizing greater solidarity and collective power across diverse movements to push back the forces of oppression and tap into existing opportunities to advance shared visions for a just world; Inspire, energize and renew strength and purpose among activists and advocates from diverse locations and movements.

The call to submit a proposal to organise a session at the 2016 AWID Forum is now open. The deadline for sending applications is July 3rd, 2015.

Source: [AWID Forum 2016 Official Website](#)

PUBLICATIONS

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has published the long-awaited report on sexual health, human rights and the law available [HERE](#).

The Policy on Gender Equality in the Czech Republic

Upon request by the FEMM Committee, this report provides an overview of the existing gender-equality legislation and policies in the Czech Republic, focussing on the recent developments and achievements. It discusses gender equality in employment, reconciliation of work and family life, presence of women in decision-making positions, recent measures to fight violence against women, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Czech Republic is still far from reaching real equality between men and women, in spite of a quite satisfactory level of implementation of EU legislation. In practice and daily life, the country has still a long way to go.

Source: [European Parliament](#)

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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