



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

United Nations adopts the 2030 agenda for sustainable development

The 17 sustainable development global goals that will provide the framework for the world's development over the next 15 years were ratified by UN member states in New York on Friday, September 25th. The agenda aiming to tackle inequality for all people in all countries as well as poverty and climate change was endorsed by 193 countries at the start of a three-day UN summit on sustainable development. Speeches by 24 civil society representatives were delivered throughout the summit, they were identified through an open, transparent and participatory process (for the full list click [here](#)). Pope Francis and the Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai spoke on the ambitious agenda – which aims to tackle poverty, climate change and inequality for all people in all countries. Much has been made of the new goal dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, which includes targets to end discrimination against women and gender-based violence, ensure the full participation of women in all levels of public decision-making, and give appropriate value to unpaid care and domestic work. Under the Goal 3 which calls for ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages the UN Member States have agreed to “By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning,

information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes” (target 3.7).

These new goals apply in every country. The UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, said the true test of commitment to the new global goals will be implementation. *“We need action from everyone, everywhere. Seventeen sustainable development goals are our guide,”* he told delegates.

Source: [Sustainable Development, The Guardian](#)

REGIONAL UPDATES

Attempt to Completely Ban Abortions in Poland Fails in Parliament

On Friday September 11th the draft bill aiming to ban access to legal abortion in all cases has been rejected by the Polish Parliament plenary vote. There were 206 votes in favor of its rejection whereas 178 voted against and wanted it to be proceeded. 66 MPs were not present and 10 restrained from voting.

The Federation for Women and Family Planning was involved in mobilizing the feminist and pro-choice community in Warsaw to protest against this anti-women’s rights bill on Wednesday, September 9th, in front of the Polish Sejm. Over 100 people gathered late afternoon to voice their outrage with the draft bill. To view photos from the rally click [HERE](#).

The citizen’s bill amending the Act on Family Planning, protection of the Human Foetus and Conditions of Pregnancy Termination and related Acts was submitted by the Committee “Stop Abortion”. The bill included a total ban on abortion. It also proposed to delete any reference to prenatal diagnosis of a foetus understood as a woman’s right to information and testing. The possibility to save a pregnant woman’s life in case of direct pregnancy-related danger was hidden in the proposed Criminal Code provisions not to punish doctors who “kill a conceived baby” while saving a woman. It still did not mean a right to terminate in this case. These were the main points the Federation and other organizations were trying to reveal and expose the real effects of such law if adopted. The debate in the parliament was followed by a small number of MPs in the room. NGOs and activists from both sides were present at the gallery (with no right to speak). There weren’t any surprises regarding the content of interventions although the representative of the Committee was warned by the Speaker a few times for the language she was using (relating to murder, Holocaust and Hitler). Sadly there were not many comprehensive interventions by MPs to expose the manipulation behind the information the Committee was giving.

We may call the dismissal a victory yet the anti-choice attempts to influence women’s reproductive rights are reoccurring at the Polish political scene and within the Parliament every year, usually in Autumn. Meanwhile, Poland remains one of the few countries in Europe with such anti-women legislation on reproductive rights. The scale of the “abortion underground” where numerous illegal procedures happen daily remains unknown. The policy makers are ignorant of this phenomenon.

Federation for Women and Family Planning and ASTRA Network gathered endorsements from international community under their letter to Polish MPs, Speaker of the Parliament and the Prime Minister. To see the full letter along with endorsements click [HERE](#).

Source: [Federation for Women and Family Planning](#)

September 28 Conference on safe and legal abortion in Macedonia

In light of the September 28 Campaign, [H.E.R.A.](#), The Association for Health Education and Research organized a national conference - "Legal restrictions - safe and legal abortion". The event was an excellent occasion to gather all relevant stakeholders to discuss the new Abortion Law which was introduced by the Macedonian government two years ago. The changes introduced a written request to be submitted by the woman who wishes to terminate her pregnancy, mandatory counselling and waiting period of three days. Such barriers stigmatize women's dignity and create discriminatory legal obstacles to women's access to legal abortion. Among speakers were Bojan Jovanovski, Drasko Kostovski and Igor Jadrovski from H.E.R.A., Natasa Gaber-Damjanovska, Constitutional Judge and Marta Szostak, ASTRA Network Coordinator, who talked about the most burning issues in access to abortion services in Central and Eastern Europe.

Additionally, in the evening a Slam Poetry event took place, organized in collaboration with Poetry Slam Macedonia. Young Macedonian poets performed poems on topics related to women's rights and gender issues.

The event gathered a lot of media attention in Macedonia, news about the conference and parts of the press statement were published on [Akademik.mk](#), [Utrinski.mk](#), [Daily.mk](#), [a1on.mk](#).

View photos from the event [here](#) and [here](#).

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

Campaign for sexual and reproductive rights for young people in Romania

On the 28th of September 2015, to support international efforts for the decriminalization of abortion, Romanian women's rights NGOs organized a large scale public campaign demanding comprehensive and inclusive sexual and reproductive rights for young people living in Romania.

The campaign included an open letter sent out to relevant authorities demanding that all young people should have access to comprehensive sexuality education in schools. The letter emphasized both the dire situation regarding young people's SRHR (only in 2014, 18,600 women under 19 gave birth, high rates of rapes and intimate partner abuses among young women, lack of usage of contraceptives) as well as the added benefits of sexuality education for healthier and more responsible future citizens.

The open letter was initiated by 10 women's rights NGOs gathered in the platform "Coalition for Gender Equality" and signed by 67 NGOs across the spectrum. The open letter benefited amounts from the involvement of representatives of high school student's and youth led organizations.

In addition to the open letter, the campaign also included a public action. Activists organized a flashmob with supporters showing up in front of the Romanian Ministry of Health, the Romanian Ministry of Education and the Romanian Ministry of Youth and Sport.

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

Source: [A.L.E.G.](#)

Reproductive Health Week in Georgia

Association HERA-XXI initiated the campaign 'Reproductive Health Week' in Georgia. The activities were dedicated to World Contraception Day 26th September and 28th September Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion. The main message of the campaign was "Your Life is Your Future". The main activities of the campaign, which covered the biggest Universities of Georgia and internally displaced persons' communities, were conducted by focal points, youth leaders and young volunteers of the Association HERA-XXI. This event was focused on empowering young people to think ahead and consider contraception into their future plans, in order to prevent an unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.

Condoms in special design packages for youth and menstrual calendars for girls were distributed to students. HERA XXI youth leaders wearing T-shirts with action's message discussed relevant topics of SRHR with other youth. Brochures and educational leaflets were distributed during the event as well. The campaign received wide media coverage, as organization's representatives participated in many TV and radio programs where they discussed the importance of SRHR. Additionally, at the end of the campaign to sum up the activities a presentation of non-formal educational program on SRHR issues - "It's all one curriculum" and summary of the Week took place. Presentation of non-formal educational SRHR program was organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia.

Source: [HERA XXI](#)

'Men for Women' project launch in Lithuania

The campaign 'Men for Women' had been launched in Lithuania. The main message of the campaign is to encourage men not to remain silent and actively respond to any sign or hint of violence against women as well as to stereotypical, sexist, disdainful jokes regarding women in private settings. Fostering zero tolerance to violence against women and challenging stereotypical norms and attitudes in general. The target group is not women survivors or men perpetrators, but middle-aged well-established men who can bring the change by simply voicing the issue and showing their attitude. The campaign aims also to promote the modern, progressive and responsible image of

masculinity. The projects targets men as statistics of the Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior confirm that majority of all domestic violence cases in Lithuania are committed by men, with 80% of women as victims. As part of the campaign, TV spots and outdoor posters were released with the leading slogan ‘Stop the animal. Disrespect and violence against women will only stop when you react to it.’ To find more about the campaign, statistics on violence in Lithuania and advice on how to react to violence, visit the campaign’s website [here](#) (in Lithuanian).

Source: [Family Planning and Sexual Health Association](#)

Research on SRHR in Armenia

On September 11 Society without Violence NGO was invited to participate to the first public research organized by the Ombudsman office and UNFPA Armenia. The research aimed at identifying the issues in sexual and reproductive health and rights sphere. Experts and various organizations and institutions were invited to the research, and the participants effectively identified issues and shared their experience. In particular, the studies are carried out on in four areas of Sexual and Reproductive health and rights: maternal health, abortion and post-abortion care, reproductive and sexual health and contraceptive education, access to contraception. Armenia has taken important steps to ensure favorable legislative framework and adopt a national strategic plan in ensuring reproductive and sexual health and rights. However, there is still a need to explore gaps in the implementation of a public survey.

Source: [Society Without Violence](#)

TV programs on safe abortions to be broadcasted in Armenia

Women’s Rights Center (Armenia) is launching broadcasting TV programs in different regions of Armenia. These actions will be ongoing and will be devoted to safe abortions. The selected regions are the ones where abortion rate is the highest. Head of Maternity and Reproductive Health Protection Division, Mother and Child Health Protection Department of the Staff of the Ministry of Health of RA, obstetrician-gynecologist Gayane Avagyan and the head of the department of Gynecology & Obstetrics of Gegharkunik Maternity Hospital Dr. Hovhannisyan will participate in the first show in Gegharkunik region on September 28.

Women’s Rights Center was working on elaborating and printing Clinical Standard on “Organization and Delivery of Medical Aid in Medical Abortion”. Through these TV shows this guideline will be presented to the society which contains delivery of medical aid in early medical abortion and in abortion after 10th till 22nd week. The aim of this book is to assist doctors in using evidence-based practice when providing comprehensive medical aid in terminating unwanted pregnancy. The Guideline includes general information on pregnancy termination in Armenia, organization and performance of medical abortion in the first and second trimester, drugs and prescription terms for medical abortion, indications, contraindications and precautions of medical abortion, getting rid of side effects and treatment of complications.

Source: [WRC](#)

EP report on the Situation of fundamental rights in the EU

On September 8th the European Parliament adopted the following report on the Situation of fundamental rights in the EU (2013-2014). The text:

69. Recognises that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are fundamental rights and an essential element of human dignity, gender equality and self-determination; urges the Commission to include SRHR, as basic human rights, in its next EU Health Strategy in order to ensure coherence between the EU's internal and external fundamental rights policy as called for by Parliament on 10 March 2015;

70. Recognises that the denial of a life-saving abortion amounts to a serious breach of fundamental rights;

71. Calls on the Member States, in liaison with the Commission, to recognise the right to access safe and modern contraceptives and sexuality education in schools; urges the Commission to complement national policies to improve public health, while keeping the European Parliament fully informed.

For full text of the resolution click [HERE](#).

GLOBAL UPDATES

September 28 Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion.

This day forms part of the campaign activities undertaken by [International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion](#), that aims to build an international movement to promote universal access to safe, legal abortion as a women's health and human rights issue. As part of the International Campaign Advisory Group, [WGNRR](#) leads the coordination of September 28 annual campaigning activities, conducted by Campaign and WGNRR members, as well as allies and partners around the world, including ASTRA Network.

September 28 has been a regional campaign for decriminalisation of abortion in Latin America and Caribbean for nearly twenty years before being taken on by SRHR activists all over the world as a Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion in 2011.

The theme for this year's September 28 was "*Bust The Myths*" (#BustTheMyths) in order to fight abortion stigma and discrimination – see the Call for Action [here](#).

Source: www.september28.org, www.safeabortionwomensright.org

YOUTH

Gender equality resolution on empowering girls through education adopted at the European Parliament

The non-binding resolution calling for application of gender equality measures at all levels of education system, has been approved by MEPs, with 408 votes to 236 and 40 abstentions. The resolution proposes specific actions to ensure that all education systems promote gender equality, raise girls' skills and improve their professional and personal development. Specifically, it highlights the role of education in enabling women to participate fully in social and economic development and calls Member States to increase investments in education and integration of gender issues in teachers' training. It also urges Member States to ratify the Istanbul Convention and encourages to invest into awareness-raising campaigns to address gender stereotypes in vocational and professional orientation and provide career guidance for girls and boys.

Gender stereotypes and sexism are recognized in the resolution as greatest obstacles to achieve gender equality, as they affect self-image and decisions made by girls and boys. Thus, Member States are called to fight these through informal and formal education, encouraging girls and boys to take equal interest in all subjects.

Furthermore, age-appropriate and scientifically accurate sex and relationship education is recognized as an essential tool in empowerment of girls and boys and helping them to make informed choices. The resolution encourages MS to consider making sex education compulsory in all primary and secondary school curricula, to teach girls and boys about relationships based on consent, respect and reciprocity and empower girls through awareness and control over their bodies. In order to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, the Commission is called to support the inclusion of objective information on LGBTI issues in the school curricula, including facilitation of peer learning in tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying and harassment.

The text of the resolution is accessible [here](#).

Source: [EWL](#), [EP News](#)

Youth statement on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Youth organizations from Europe and Central Asia, including ASTRA Youth, have released a joint [Youth Statement on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

The statement calls upon governments to recognize the right of young people to participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda. It also addresses SRHR of young people and adolescents as central for achievement of sustainable development, although still not properly recognized by decisionmakers. The full text of the statement is accessible [here](#).

Source: [ASTRA Youth](#)

Amman Youth Declaration adopted at Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security

The Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security, which was held in August in Jordan, culminated with the adoption of the Amman Youth Declaration, defining youth inclusion in achieving peace and security.

The Declaration provides a roadmap towards strengthened policies, which will support young people in preventing and countering violence, transforming conflict and building sustainable peace. It highlights the four key areas, where young people's input and engagement must be recognized and addressed by decisionmakers:

1. Meaningful participation and leadership in decision and policy-making around peace and security;
2. Recognition and support of youth networks, organizations and individual initiatives in preventing violence and violent extremism and promoting peace;
3. Promotion and protecting of the rights of girls and prevention of gender-based violence; and
4. Prioritizing investing into youth socio-economic development.

Young peacebuilders also call upon the United Nations Security Council to adopt a resolution on Youth, Peace and Security in the document.

The copy of the Amman Declaration is accessible [here](#).

Source: [UN](#)

'Ask Dad and/or Mum' sexuality education project for parents in Lithuania

Family Planning and Sexual Health Association of Lithuania together with its partners from Italy, Denmark, Austria, Latvia and Germany is developing project **'Ask Dad and/or Mum': Parents as Key Facilitators: an Inclusive Approach to Sexual and Relationship Education on the Home Environment**. This project wants to develop a methodology and materials (a training programme and a Toolkit) to help parents to give sex and relationships education to their children aged 10-14.

So far, there were partners and stakeholders meetings in which process of project were discussed, Toolkit creation were started. Analysis of parent's investigation of their needs, opinions, information that are still missing for them, already have been done. By proceeding project, The Toolkit will be developed with direct involvement of target groups and will be structured in 6 sections:

1. Short introduction on definition, goals and strategies for sex education; short account of the project; use of the Toolkit
2. General Guidelines for children's sex education
3. Guidelines for parents carrying out sex education with their children
4. Practical tools for sex education (assessment and self-assessment sheets, description of exercises parents can carry out with their children, tips on improving and opening

communication between parents and children, tools for planning the career guidance activities and monitoring results).

5. Parents Informative Self Help Resource: this section contains basic knowledge on sexuality to transmit to children 10 to 14 and lists the main resources available at national level for further deepening.
6. How to use the Toolkit as a stand-alone resource.

To find out more about the project, follow its Facebook page [here](#).

Source: [Ask Project](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Conference on Family Planning

The 2015 International Conference on Family Planning will take place on November 9 – 12 in Bali, Indonesia. It will be co-hosted by the National Population and Family Planning Board of Indonesia (Bkkbn) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. This year's conference is expected to draw the largest number of attendants yet, and the ICFP will help shape and influence the role and contributions of family planning in attaining the new Sustainable Development Goals. The theme for 2015 is Global Commitments, Local Actions. Each day of the conference will feature a plenary session focused on a different track theme. The tracks will feature issue-oriented themes, such as: addressing youth needs and involvement; rights and quality of care: true improvements or lip service; the demographic dividend: how south-to-south exchanges can help its realization; implementation best practices (IBP); advancing FP through faith organizations; FP2020 progress and challenges; innovations in financing (GFF, Universal Health Care); and accountability and advocacy.

Source: <http://fpconference.org/2015>

PUBLICATIONS

New factsheet by [lpas](#) on “Women's Access to Safe Abortion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Advancing Maternal Health, Gender Equality, and Reproductive Rights” is available [here](#).

Combatting Violence Against Women and Girls in EECA region Brief

UNFPA EECARO has published a brief discussing violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The document explores the impact of this violence, why so many women and girls are affected, and why the available data represents only a small proportion of actual victims

and survivors. The document provides also policy recommendations on how to address this issue in the region, and examples of effective solutions from region's respective countries.

The brief is accessible [here](#).

Source: [UNFPA EECA](#)

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently released Policy Brief on Transgender People and HIV available [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
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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