



## CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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### **BURNING ISSUE**

#### **Shrinking space of civil society in Eastern Europe – focus on Hungary and Romania**

The recent months have shown that the space for NGOs and civil society in Central and Eastern Europe has been gradually shrinking.

**Hungary's parliament** has approved a law imposing strict regulations on foreign-funded non-government organisations. The new rules increase reporting requirements for the groups, which risk closure for non-compliance. This decision is a serious attack on Hungarian democracy. “Cosmetic changes to the law in response to the Venice Commission have not altered the law’s true intent; it seeks to suppress democratic voices in Hungary just when the country needs them most. It attacks Hungarians who help fellow citizens challenge corruption and arbitrary power, and who stand up for free and independent media and for open debate,” said Goran Buldioski, director of the Open Society Foundations’ work in Europe. The Hungarian government claims that the law is needed for additional

transparency and to address unspecified “national security” concerns. However, the provisions proposed address neither, and NGOs already fulfill transparency requirements. Moreover, the law does not apply to religious and sports organizations, so it targets only democracy and rights groups. The law stigmatizes civil society organizations that already comply with robust transparency measures, including statutory requirements to publish all funding. A number of NGOs will now pursue available options in Hungary to challenge the new law as unconstitutional.

The European Parliament has already called for the unprecedented launch of Article 7 procedure due to the emerging systemic threat to the rule of law in Hungary that represents a clear risk of a serious breach of the values of the European Union.

The Hungarian government has failed to produce any evidence of a threat or wrongdoing by the NGOs targeted through this law. In 2014, NGOs that received funding from the EEA/Norway grants were subjected to government-ordered financial inspections and police raids. Budapest courts later found the police raids unlawful and cleared the organizations of any financial wrongdoing.

[The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union](#) denounces the unlawful NGO Act. According to the watchdog organization, the bill should not have been adopted at all, as it violates fundamental rights. The organization believes that the most effective way of acting against the unlawful provisions is not to abide the law. They underline that, given their economic management is already fully transparent, this would not violate anyone’s rights or the demand of transparency

Source: [Open Society Foundations](#)

The ruling party of **Romania** prepared a draft law that would shutter in 30 days all NGOs that do not publish reports on their operating budgets twice annually. It has been submitted. Two Romanian MPs from the Social Democratic Party submitted the legal proposal, which is now set to be discussed under an emergency procedure, and which proposes important amendments to the national law regulating the work of organizations and foundations.

The proposals include obliging NGOs to publish in the Official Monitor, twice a year, information on their revenues and expenses, with details on the persons bringing in the revenues and on what activities the money is spent. Otherwise, they would risk being closed in 30 days.

Together with several Romanian non-governmental organizations, APADOR-CH submitted to the Parliament and the government [a protest letter](#), urging that they themselves adhere to the transparency they are demanding from the non-governmental sector and to organize public debates before passing the legislative changes.

Source: [Liberties.eu](#)

## REGIONAL UPDATES

### **Poland limits access to emergency contraception**

On June 23rd the Polish President Andrzej Duda approved legislation that will end prescription-free access to emergency contraception. The new provision will be binding in 30 days (since 24th July 2017) and will require women wishing to obtain a prescription for the morning after pill to visit a doctor, either at a public or private facility.

On May 25th the Polish Government voted in favour of limiting access to emergency contraception as a result of the proposal put forward by the ruling Law and Justice party in February this year. According to the Health Minister, Mr. Konstanty Radziwill, hormonal means of emergency contraception were being abused, especially by teenage girls, and had harmful health effects. By being forced to see a doctor, he said women will now “get advice on whether these substances negatively affect their health”. Despite numerous scientific facts and opinions from the medical professionals he has also suggested the pill induces an early abortion.

The Dutch MEP, Sophie in 't Veld, said to [the Guardian](#) that the legislation was a violation of shared European values. “The current populist national-conservative Polish government is enforcing a sexual counter-revolution, against the health interests and wishes of Polish women and girls,” she said. “Restricting access to the morning-after pill, combined with the right of doctors to refuse treatment based on religious grounds, will have far reaching consequences”.

As result of the C(2015)51 ruling from the European Commission, and upon recommendation from the European Medicines Agency (EMA), in January 2015 emergency contraceptive with ulipristal acetate, registered in Poland under the brand name ellaOne, received the authorization to be sold without prescription across the European Union (EU). The ulipristal acetate emergency contraceptive pill (UPA ECP) – ellaOne - became available in Polish pharmacies without prescription from April 2015. The planned restrictions will greatly impede the lives of women and girls and contribute to the sales of this product from unsafe sources. The economical aspect of this decision is crucial to note as only women who can afford to visit a doctor at a private facility (gynecologists at public facilities have an average waiting time adding up to app. 18 days) will be able to do so. This ruling, besides weakening women’s reproductive health and rights, will contribute to a rise in the number of unplanned pregnancies and abortions in a country where access to a safe and legal abortion is already incredibly difficult.

Poland becomes one of the very few European countries where such an obstacle in accessing emergency contraception will exist. Such a requirement is also present in Hungary, Albania and Russian Federation.

Additional links: [New Europe](#), [MIC](#), [The Guardian](#), [Federation for Women and Family Planning](#)

### **New European Consensus on Development adopted**

On the 19th of May, the Council of the European Union adopted the revised European Consensus on Development, which identifies a new framework for development cooperation and for the

implementation of the 2030 Agenda by the European Union and the 28 member countries. The consensus was endorsed on the 31st of May by the European Parliament and it will be officially launched at the European Development Days in June.

The adoption of the consensus was preceded by the interinstitutional negotiations and public consultations lasting several months, during which EuroNGOs together with IPPF EN submitted recommendations highlighting women's rights-related issues and SRHR in particular.

The revised European Consensus on Development (the previous one was adopted in 2006) is a crucial document to navigate the EU development policy in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the next 15 years. It sets out the necessary core elements of cooperation between the EU and its member states and "developing" countries; the strategic approach for accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals; and details how the funds for development cooperation will be used.

What does the consensus say about SRHR?

"The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context. Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services."

Source: [EuroNGOs](#)

### **EU signs the Istanbul Convention**

The European Union has signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Commissioner Jourová signed the document in Strasbourg in the presence of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, M. Thorbjørn Jagland.

The Council of Europe's [Istanbul Convention](#) provides the most progressive and comprehensive international standard on combatting violence against women and girls. The Convention recognises that violence against women constitutes a violation of their human rights. It also addresses violence against women through measures aimed at preventing violence, protecting and supporting its victims, and prosecuting the perpetrators.

Combatting violence against women is one of the European Commission's priorities for 2017. This is why the Commission has launched a year-long [campaign](#) to raise awareness of all forms of violence towards women, which is using the hashtag [#SayNoStopVAW](#) on social media.

Source: [Europa.eu](#)

## From ASTRA Members

### **A five-month long pilot project “Kazakhstan without violence” launched**

From June 2017 to November 2017 the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan together with representatives of state bodies and NGO are implementing a pilot project “Kazakhstan without violence” in the South Kazakhstan oblast. The goal of the project is to create an accessible, professional, free system of rendering assistance to the population, in order to prevent instances of gender violence including sexual harassment, early marriages, and unwanted pregnancies. Moreover, the project aims to inform society about social services, guaranteed medical care and ways to protect their rights, including SRHR. Furthermore, representatives of non-governmental organizations provide separate trainings for boys, for girls and for parents about the consequences of forced marriage, early pregnancy and abortion. A Training of Trainers for psychologists and social workers about complex approach to instances of gender violence with the involvement of international experts was conducted. In the future, the participants should conduct trainings for more than 2,000 people to develop zero tolerance for gender violence. Video clips with the participation of Kazakhi stars that promote contests and events about preventing gender violence, and inform the population about SRHR are broadcast on local television channel. Every day, public receptions are conducted by representatives of law enforcement and government agencies, NGO are received statements from victims of gender-based violence. Also, the project will provide medical, social and legal assistance to people in a difficult life situation and preventive work with family aggressors was already carried out. Based on the results of the pilot project, it is expected that the government of Kazakhstan is going to create a separate Agency for Family Affairs for the first time, which will regulate issues of not only gender violence, but also early marriages, unwanted pregnancies, and, in general, the reproductive rights of girls and women.

Source: [Sana Sezim](#)

### **Feminist camp in Armenia**

Between 27 June and 2 July in the region of Aghveran, Society Without Violence is holding a feminist camp called “FemCamp 2017”. More than 130 young women applied, although only 30 could be admitted to the camp. Half of the participants are from the capital city of Yerevan, while the other half is from various regions of Armenia.

The speakers during the camp will include the SWV staff members, and other experts in the field of women’s rights and gender issues. A wide range of topics will be covered during the camp, such as feminism, gender based discrimination and equality, gender based violence (domestic violence), sexuality and SOGI, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and more.

Source: [Society Without Violence](#)

## **Solidarity network for LGBTI people in Armenia and Georgia**

As was mentioned in the previous ASTRA Bulletin, within the context of the “Solidarity Network for LGBTI in Armenia and Georgia” SWV provided four micro-grants to NGOs and individuals for projects aiming to increase the positive visibility of LGBTI people in Armenia. One of the grantees, the “Right Side” organization, the first transgender NGO in Armenia, held an exhibition entitled “Our Love is Real”, which depicts transpersons in various locations of Armenia.

The feedback received after the exhibition was very positive. Information about the exhibition were widely shared on social media, both in Armenia and internationally.

Source: [Society Without Violence](#)

## **GLOBAL UPDATES**

### **35<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**

The United Nations Human Rights Council held its thirty-fifth regular session from 6 to 23 June 2017 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. During the three-week session, the Council heard the presentation of more than 80 thematic and country reports by more than 30 human rights experts and investigative bodies on a wide range of issues. It also held two panel discussions, its annual full-day discussion on the human rights of women, and its annual half-day thematic discussion on technical cooperation. UN Member States debated and passed resolutions on cross-cutting human rights issues and human rights situations in particular countries.

The detailed agenda of the session can be found [here](#), further information on the thirty-fifth session can be found [here](#), and the Adopted resolutions, decision and President’s statement [here](#).

Among the Key resolutions passed\* by HRC Member States are [Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women: engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls](#) (sponsored by Canada), [Elimination of discrimination against women and girls](#) (sponsored by Mexico and Colombia) and [Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings](#) (sponsored by Sierra Leone, Netherlands, Argentina, Canada, Ethiopia, Honduras, Italy, Maldives, Montenegro, Poland, Switzerland, Uruguay, United Kingdom, Zambia).

The civil society also engaged with counteracting the resolution on [Protection of the Family: Role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of human rights of older persons](#) that was put forward by Bangladesh, Belarus, China, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, El Salvador, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia. The resolution is not fully in line with the international human rights standards and present a limited and narrow understanding of the role of family. Read more on AWID’s website [here](#).

Read the recap of the 35<sup>th</sup> HRC by Sexual Rights Initiative [here](#).

Source: [OHCHR](#)

## **U.N. Committee Finds Ireland's Abortion Laws Are Cruel, Inhumane and Degrading**

Ireland's abortion laws subjected a woman to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, according to a [landmark decision](#) from the United Nations Human Rights Committee. This ground-breaking ruling marks the first time that, in response to an individual complaint, an international human rights court or committee has recognized that by criminalizing abortion a state has violated a woman's human rights.

The [U.N. committee](#) ruled in favor of Amanda Mellet, who was denied access to an abortion in Ireland in 2011 after learning her pregnancy involved a fatal fetal impairment and found the prospect of continuing her pregnancy unbearable. The committee held that the Irish government must take measures to redress the harm Ms. Mellet suffered and reform its laws to ensure other women do not continue to face similar violations, as well as instructs the government to guarantee effective, timely and accessible procedures for abortion in Ireland.

In November 2013, the Center for Reproductive Rights filed a complaint on behalf of Amanda Mellet before the United Nations Human Rights Committee, arguing that Ireland's restrictive abortion laws violated her basic human rights by subjecting her to severe mental suffering and anguish.

Said Leah Hocror, regional director for Europe at the Center for Reproductive Rights: "Women's health and wellbeing are put at risk when laws deny them access to abortion services. Today's landmark decision from the U.N. Human Rights Committee sends the clear message that Ireland's abortion laws are cruel and inhumane, and violate women's human rights. The Irish government can no longer ignore its responsibility to ensure women's health. Ireland must now move swiftly to provide Amanda Mellet the justice she deserves and reform its abortion laws."

In 2011, [Amanda Mellet](#) learned during the course of her pregnancy that the fetus had a fatal fetal impairment. She knew she could not continue with the pregnancy and asked her doctors for an abortion. However because Ireland outlaws abortion in almost all circumstances, she was forced to travel to the United Kingdom to end the pregnancy.

In its decision, the U.N. Human Rights Committee affirms that outlawing women's access to abortion services can cause severe suffering and undermines their personal integrity and autonomy, which results in acute violations of their human rights.

The U.N. committee unanimously held that prohibiting Ms. Mellet from accessing abortion services in Ireland violated her right to be free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as well as her right to privacy. The U.N. committee also determined that Ireland's failure to provide services that Ms. Mellet required constituted discrimination.

Source: [Center for Reproductive Rights](#)

## **UN experts call for resistance as battle over women's rights intensifies**

Women's rights are facing an alarming backlash in many parts of the world, and it is critically important to press on with further setting of standards on gender equality, a group of UN independent experts\* has warned.

“The world is at a crossroads, with the very concept of gender equality being increasingly contested in some quarters,” said the experts. “We feel it is time to reiterate the backlash against the progress which has been made in promoting and protecting women’s human rights. The polarization in the battle for rights is being demonstrated increasingly, and regressive positions have become a serious threat to the human rights legal framework.

“The international community needs to keep moving forward on setting standards on gender equality to counter the alarming trends which are undermining human rights principles and jeopardizing the gains made in women’s rights.”

The experts restate their support for the repeal of all laws that discriminate against women on traditional, cultural or religious grounds and laws that exclusively or disproportionately criminalize action or behaviour by women and girls. They also stress women’s rights to make decisions about their own bodies, and to receive comprehensive sexuality education so they can enjoy their right to sexual and reproductive health.

“We need more than ever to protect the fundamental principle that all rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,” the experts said. “Despite this unbreakable principle, upheld in the 1993 [Vienna Declaration](#) on human rights, we are witnessing efforts by fundamentalist groups to undermine the foundation on which the whole human rights system is based. Some of these efforts are based on a misuse of culture, including religion and tradition, or on claims related to State sovereignty.

“Under the guise of protecting the family, some States are taking initiatives aimed at diluting human rights. We obviously recognise that the family is the fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection, but we insist on the need to re-assert women's right to equality in all aspects of family life and recognise that diverse forms of families exist.”

The experts stress that discriminatory practices frequently take place within families, where, for example, women and girls may be limited to certain roles, experience harmful practices and patriarchal oppression, and suffer other human rights abuses including domestic violence and sexual abuse. The experts insist that international human rights bodies need to guard against the backlash being witnessed, to ensure that the human rights legal framework is not undermined.

“In the current context, where women’s rights are being pushed back in all regions of the world, we need to continue denouncing any anti-rights rhetoric and actions which hinder the implementation of human rights standards, in particular regarding gender equality. Without equal rights in the family, gender equality will never be achieved,” the experts conclude.

\*The experts: UN Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice; Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights Karima Bennouna; Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Ahmed Shaheed; Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity Vitit Muntarbhorn; and Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences Dubravka Šimonović.

Source: [United Nations Human Rights](#)



## YOUTH

### **New Envoy on Youth announced**

On 20 June the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Jayathma Wickramanayake of Sri Lanka as his next Envoy on Youth. She will succeed Ahmad Alhendawi of Jordan. The Office of the UN SG's Envoy on Youth was created in 2012. The Envoy is expected to expand the UN's youth engagement and advocacy efforts across all four pillars of work – sustainable development, human rights, peace and security and humanitarian action. The Envoy on Youth will play a lead role in realizing the Secretary-General's vision on youth, which places young people as a cross-cutting priority of the UN; ensures that young people's perspectives are reflected across all pillars of the UN's work; and places young people's interests at the center of the Secretary-General's agenda for crisis prevention and sustaining peace by leveraging their talents, energy and innovation in addressing youth challenges and fostering opportunities.

Among the nominees for the new Envoy there were two representatives of ASTRA Youth region: Ana Rizescu from Romania and Peter Mladenov from Bulgaria.

Source: [Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth](#)

### **The Ponton Group of Sex Educators among the speakers of the European Foundation Centre Conference in Warsaw**

On May 31, a representative of Ponton was, along with Carolyn Boyd Tomasović (Ecumenical Women's Initiative), and Elena Zacharenko (Policy and Advocacy Consultant), among the speakers of the conference's session entitled "Women's Movement's in Europe – Creativity & Courage". The aim of the discussion was to explore the increasing backlash against progressive values and social change actors across Europe. This backlash manifests itself in various forms within the resurgence of nationalist and conservative agendas – including narrowly-defined family values, closing space for civil society, legislation limiting reproductive freedom, and barriers to people's right to move freely and safely, among others. The conference delegates heard from activists directly, unpacked this phenomenon and explored what works to advance solidarity given the increasingly challenging and polarizing context. The session was organized by Mama Cash and Prospera.

Source: [Ponton Group of Sex Educators](#)

### **The Ponton Group of Sex Educators on the "Youth Policy Responses to the Contemporary Challenges Faced by Young People" symposium in Prague**

The event gathered 110 practitioners, researchers, policy makers, representatives of different European, national or local youth organizations who discussed the most compelling challenges that young people are facing, as well as the current and possible policy responses to these challenges.

Source: [Ponton Group of Sex Educators](#)

### **Annual job fair at the Ilia State University in Georgia**

On 2 June more than 40 representatives of public and private institutions and non-governmental organizations gathered to share their projects, good practices and find potential youth employees on the “Annual Job Fair” at Ilia State University in Tbilisi. HERA XXI presented activities focused on youth, youth friendly services and opportunity to have new volunteers, engaging them in HERA XXI’s activities. The association gained big interest among attendees.

The event was organized by the Ilia State University.

Source: [HERA XXI](#)

### **Training on SRHR for young Georgian peer educators**

On 24 June HERA XXI held a training “All in One Curriculum” that aimed to increase SRHR awareness and capacity of 12 young people from four different regions of Georgia and prepare them to be peer educators. During the training sessions the participants gained knowledge about the training-of-trainers methodology as well as formulating a training curriculum. They made group presentations, discussed case studies, and formulated peer education training modules on SRHR. Following the training sessions all of the 12 young peer educators will conduct informative and educational sessions on SRHR in their communities.

Source: [HERA XXI](#)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Report of the High-Level Working Group on the Health and Human Rights of Women, Children and Adolescents**

The High-Level Working Group for Health and Human Rights of Women, Children and Adolescents, established at the 69th World Health Assembly, launched its report at a high-level side-event at the 70th World Health Assembly in May in Geneva. The report – the first of its kind that will be presented both to the World Health Assembly and the Human Rights Council – calls on governments to step up their action to uphold the right to health in national law; to protect people who advocate for rights – including health workers; and to strengthen the collection of rights-sensitive data for better monitoring and reporting.

High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, welcomed the report, noting that “nowhere is the attack on health and human rights more obvious than in the systematic roll-back of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and deliberate attacks on health facilities.” He committed to continue to raise his voice to denounce violations of health and human rights against women, children and adolescents.

The report contains strong language and recommendations on sexual and reproductive health and rights and a clear focus on the rights of young people.

[Read the report here](#)

Source: [WHO](#)

### **The Observatory on the Universality of Rights**

[The Observatory on the Universality of Rights \(OURs\)](#) is a collaborative, multi-organizational initiative that works to monitor, analyze, and share information on initiatives that undermine the universality of human rights. Currently it is being coordinated by AWID. On May 25, coinciding with the World Congress of Families (the biggest annual global meeting of the far right) OURs released a new report. The report is the first of a series on human rights trends produced by the OURs. This comprehensive research documents and analyzes key trends and developments mapped over 2015 to late 2016 in order to inform and support our collective advocacy.

[Read the OURs Trends Report](#)

Relevant read: [The World Congress of Families: A prime example of today's anti-rights lobby](#)

### **Reclaiming Family Values: How to address family in social justice activism**

In 2016–2017, ten movement leaders and experts from the LGBTI, women's rights and progressive faith movements charted the use of family in recent years of progressive activism. They engaged with 200+ experts, movement leaders, activists, scholars and grant makers through a survey, a conference and consultations with key organisations. This guide invites social justice activists in Europe – and their funders! – to consider placing family equality at the centre of our progressive strategies, discourse and actions.

The publication is first and foremost for social justice activists: activists, organisers, leaders in civil society, non-governmental organisations and movements working for human rights, equality and the rule of law. It is also for the donors, funders and other grant makers funding those organisations and movements. They should step up and support these bridge-building actions to include family equality in their work. The numerous discussions that led to this guide closely involved grant makers. Our intention is to show what family-centred social justice activism could look like, in the hope that grant makers will share this vision. The guide explains why progressive actors should talk about family more. It explains what family equality is, and offers ten strategies to include family in our work through planning, funding, research, communication and messaging, lobbying and advocacy, cross-movement alliances, media work, litigation and working with faith. It also suggests ways to engage with opponents to equality.

[Download the guide here](#)

Source: [www.reclaimingfamilyvalues.eu](http://www.reclaimingfamilyvalues.eu)

## **Global Abortion Policies Database - new online tool**

WHO and the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs have launched a new, open-access database of laws, policies and health standards on abortion in countries worldwide. The database aims to promote greater transparency of abortion laws and policies, as well as to improve countries' accountability for the protection of women and girls' health and human rights.

The database is being launched on two platforms:

[Global Abortion Policies Database](#)

[The Global Abortion Policies Project \(GAPP\)](#)

The database allows comparative analyses of abortion laws and policies across countries, while at the same time viewing information and recommendations from WHO safe abortion guidance. The global picture for abortion laws and policies is complex. Individual countries' laws and policies can be protective or punitive, specific or non-specific, and limiting or facilitating for access and service provision. The database can help to unpack the complexities and nuances of these laws and policies. The database does not address how laws and policies are applied in practice, and so database users interested in progressive policy reform to protect women and girls' health and human rights are encouraged to use the information to generate evidence on how laws and policies are implemented.

By sharing abortion laws and policies from across the world, it is hoped that the database will improve transparency and encourage countries to hold themselves to account for protecting girls' and women's human rights to health and well-being.

The database includes information on a broad range of policy areas. These include: legal grounds and related gestational limits, authorization and service-delivery requirements, policies about who can provide abortion and where, when and how abortion services are permitted, and criminal penalties for women, girls, health-care providers and others. In addition to data on specific abortion policies, individual country profiles include sexual and reproductive health indicators, links to ratified human rights treaties, and links to UN Treaty Monitoring Body Concluding Observations and Special Procedure Reports, which address abortion.

Source and additional information: [WHO](#)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Meeting of the UN High Level Political Forum in New York**

The meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017 convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, will be held from Monday, 10 July, to Wednesday, 19 July 2017; including the three-day ministerial meeting of the forum from Monday, 17 July, to Wednesday, 19 July 2017.

The theme will be "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The set of goals to be reviewed in depth will be the following, including Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, that will be considered each year:

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

**Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

**Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

In accordance with paragraph 84. of the [2030 Agenda](#), Member States have decided that the HLPF shall carry out regular voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda which will include developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders. The reviews will be state-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants, and provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of [major groups and other relevant stakeholders](#).

In 2017, 44 countries have volunteered to present their national voluntary reviews to the HLPF, with Slovenia and Tajikistan as representatives of ASTRA region. For more details, please [click here](#).

Source: [Sustainable Development](#)

### **EuroNGOs 2017 Conference "Re:Frame. Promoting SRHR in a time of growing populism"**

The dates for the 2017 EuroNGOs Conference have been shifted to September 27-28 with the event taking place in Brussels. This year, the conference will focus on how we can protect and promote SRHR in a time of growing populism. Rising support for populist movements, echoed through examples such as Brexit in the UK, the rhetoric of Orban in Hungary and Kaczynski in Poland, the success of far-right parties from Germany to Greece, and Trump in the USA, is reshaping the politics of many Western societies. For the SRHR community this global political shift is particularly worrying as populism favours traditional over progressive values and national self-interest over international cooperation and development aid. These changes can have serious implications in terms of political support and financial investment in SRHR and development issues, and also risks undermining the achievement of SDGs and decisions taken at UN level.

More information on the background, rationale and objectives of the 2017 EuroNGOs conference can be found in the [Conference concept note](#).

- Go on [website](#) to access registration instructions and online registration form. Please register before the 25th of August 2017.

Source: [EuroNGOs](#)

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### QueerFemSEE in Bucharest

University of Bucharest, Romania, and will host an interdisciplinary conference, QueerFemSEE, on 17 – 19 November 2017 and is opening its call for papers for all those interested. The conference seeks to explore various accounts of South-Eastern and Eastern European researchers (and their Western peers with similar interests) concerning topics connected to media studies, cultural studies, public space, and their intersection with gender and queer studies. Organisers aim to offer a space for sharing research, ideas, alternative readings of cultural and media products that are often neglected in various national academic contexts.

Deadline for submissions: July 30, 2017

There will be no conference fee for attending QueerFemSEE.

Source and more information: <https://queerfemsee.wordpress.com/call-for-papers>

ASTRA Network Members: Albania - Albanian Family Planning Association; Armenia - Society Without Violence; Armenia - Women's Resource Center; Armenia - Women's Rights 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.; Croatia – CESI; Croatia - Women's Room; Georgia – HERA XXI; Georgia – Real People, Real Vision; 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 – H.E.R.A.; Macedonia – Shelter Center; Moldova – Family Planning Association; Moldova - Reproductive Health Training Center; Poland - Federation for Women and Family Planning; Romania - A.L.E.G.; Romania - AnA: Society for Feminist Analysis; Romania - Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives; Romania - The East European Institute of Reproductive Health; Russia - Novogorod 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

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](mailto:federa@astra.org.pl)  
[www.astra.org.pl](http://www.astra.org.pl)

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