



**CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN WOMEN'S NETWORK FOR
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS**

CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Rights

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BURNING ISSUE

September 28 Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion. The celebration has its origin in Latin America and the Caribbean where women's groups have been mobilizing around September 28 the last two decades to demand their governments to decriminalize abortion, to provide access to safe and affordable abortion services and to end stigma and discrimination towards women who choose to have an abortion. The date – September 28 – was chosen in commemoration of the abolition of slavery in Brazil which is now remembered as the day of the “free womb” demanding for safe and legal abortion for all women. In 2011 ASTRA Network was invited by the [Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights \(WGNRR\)](#) to organize Day of Action in Central Europe. This year we will celebrate again with the [International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion](#) joined by major regional and global SRHR networks, numerous national partners and grassroots activists.

In order to get involved and to get regular updates on the campaign go to:
<http://www.medicalabortionconsortium.org/>

More: <http://www.september28.org/herstory/>

Call to Action- Sign to Liberalize Polish Abortion Law. In September the Polish parliament will vote on a new bill liberalizing the current restrictive abortion law and expanding access to contraception and comprehensive sexuality education. Poland has one of the most restrictive abortion laws in Europe, the law which is a fiction - it is estimated that illegal procedures generate up to 95 million USD a year. We need your support to convince Members of Parliament to support this draft so that Polish women can again enjoy the full spectrum of their reproductive and sexual rights.

Please sign this petition individually or as an organization/network and help us promote this important cause in your respective networks:

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/%20Safe_Legal_Abortion_in_Poland_Now_Prawo_do_bezpiecznej_i_legalnej_aborcji_dla_Polek/

REGIONAL UPDATES

CEDAW Committee recommends to Bulgaria to systematically promote education on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) has recently considered the combined fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh report of Bulgaria, and issued its Concluding observations.. Although the CEDAW Committee recognizes positive developments in the country among which there are the fight against trafficking, discrimination, domestic violence, and promotion of gender equality through a National Strategy, it also expresses criticism on the report by noting the lack of statistics disaggregated by sex and qualitative data on the situation of women in a number of areas covered by the Convention, in particular in respect of women belonging to disadvantaged groups. The list of observations include also [recommendations](#) which are more than 50 in number and cover a large scope of principal areas of concern with regard to women's rights in Bulgaria, including SHRH.

The Committee urges Bulgaria to systematically promote education on sexual and reproductive health rights and to target adolescent girls and boys, including in vocational training schools, paying special attention to the prevention of early pregnancy, and to provide adequate family planning services and affordable contraceptives.

Source: Gender Alternatives Foundation at <http://www.genderalternatives.org>

Heads of Russian Orthodox and Polish Roman Catholic Churches sign a Joint Message to the Peoples of Russia and Poland. We are witnesses to the promotion of abortion, euthanasia, homosexual marriages and consumerism"- says the joint message signed by Heads of Russian Orthodox and Polish Roman Catholic Churches earlier in August. The message addresses politicians, public figures, scientists, people of arts and culture, believers and non-believers, and calls for the development of dialogue, restoration of mutual trust and for rapprochement between the Russian and Polish nations in face of common Christian responsibility and the need to solve the same problems today. According to the message, both the Orthodox Christians and Catholics face the same challenges in today's world: the secularization of the European society, which increasingly becomes a consumer society, the rejection of ethical principles in personal and public life, the attempt to oust religion from public sphere and to remove Christian symbols from public space.

More: www.astra.org.pl

Skopje to Hold Its First Gay Parade in 2013. The first Pride Parade in Skopje will be held next year. An updated annual report, "Rainbow Europe Index 2011," by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, ILGA-Europe, puts Macedonia at the bottom of the

Balkans when it comes to legal protection for the LGBT community. Macedonia scored only -2 on a scale from 17 to -7, with 17 as the highest score and -7 as the lowest, meaning a country characterised by “gross violations of human rights and discrimination” against the gay community.

More: http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/skopje-to-hold-first-gay-parade-in-2013?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=twitterfeed

Armenia Raises Minimum Marriage Age to 18. Citing legal, educational and health factors, Armenian government moved to raise from 17 to 18 years the minimum age at which women in Armenia are allowed to marry. The age limit is set by the Armenian Family Code. The minimum legal age of marriage for men is 18 years. Government data cited by the justice minister shows that underage girls were involved in roughly 1.5 percent of officially registered marriages in Armenia in the 1990s. The annual number of underage female marriages has shrunk by more than half since then.

Source: <http://asbarez.com/104165/armenia-raises-minimum-marriage-age-to-18/>

Gay parades banned in Moscow for 100 years. Moscow's top court has upheld a ban on gay pride marches in the Russian capital for the next 100 years. The Moscow city government argues that the gay parade would risk causing public disorder and that most Muscovites do not support such an event. In September, the Council of Europe will examine Russia's response to a previous European Court ruling on the gay rights issue, Russian media report.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-19293465>

GLOBAL UPDATES

High Level Panel for global development efforts. United Nations [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon announced the members of a High-level Panel to advise on the global development agenda beyond 2015, the target date for achieving the anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals. The Panel will hold its first meeting at the end of September, in the margins of the annual high-level debate of the General Assembly. It is expected to submit its findings to the Secretary-General in the first half of 2013, and those findings will inform his report to Member States. The High-level Panel is part of Secretary-General Ban's post-2015 initiative, mandated by the 2010 MDG Summit, at which UN Member States took stock of the progress made in achieving the MDGs. Member States have called for open, inclusive consultations – involving civil society, the private sector, academia and research institutions from all regions, in addition to the UN system – to advance the development agenda beyond 2015. The Panel's work will be closely coordinated with that of the intergovernmental working group tasked to design Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as agreed at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June.

More: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?Cr1=&Cr=mdgs&NewsID=42597>

EU News: EU ODA shows increased support to Reproductive Health and Population Programmes in 2011. The European Commission (EC) published its “Annual Report 2012 on the European Union's Development and external assistance policies and their implementation in 2011”, which includes the most recent data on the EU’s self-reported Official Development Assistance (ODA). While exceeding €10 billion in disbursements in 2011, the EU however did not meet its €12 billion commitments. In addition, the EU’s 2011 external assistance expenditures have been €1 billion lower than compared to 2010. However, the EU has increased its support to Population Policies/Programmes and Reproductive Health with €97.67 million in disbursements, or 1.06 per cent of its total ODA (a 0.15 per cent increase compared to 2010). The biggest share, €56 million, was spent through the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) thematic programmes, such as "Investing in People" and the "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" programmes. €18 million were spent via the Tenth European Development Fund (EDF), exclusively supporting EU partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. For 2012, the EU confirms its commitment to pursuing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by focusing more specifically on the most off-track targets, namely child and maternal mortality (MDG 4 & 5), and the most off-track countries. Also, the EC intends to concentrate on aid effectiveness and on actions with high impact on poverty reduction, including health, education and social protection.

To access the full report, please see: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/annual-reports/2012_en.htm

UPCOMING EVENTS

10 Days of Activism- “Nothing For Us Without Us”. Under the theme “Nothing for Us Without Us”, Y-PEER (Youth Peer Education Network) in partnership with organizations and individuals from around the globe working with young people is launching the third annual “10 Days of Activism” (10 DoA) campaign from 1st to 10th September, 2012. The goal for this year is to reach young people in 50 countries including young people in school, out of school, young key affected population and marginalized youths. From outreach to advocacy efforts, young people will raise their voices about their needs and rights that are critical to a rights-based, youth centered agenda at the national and global level. For 10 days, young people will be strengthening dialogue with local government representatives, leading seminars, participating in radio and TV shows, organizing photo and video contests and much more.

If you are interested to join us and be part of the global youth-led movement, please contact “10 Days of Activism” Coordinators at 10daysofactivism@gmail.com.

Global Youth Forum. 4th-6th December. Youth Rights at the Heart of Development. The ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Youth Forum aims to translate the participatory aspirations of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) into a sustainable youth advocacy network. Specifically, it seeks to tackle emerging issues and priorities for young people globally and ensure that these issues are central to the outcomes of the ICPD review process. The Global Youth Forum is being delivered in full partnership with youth advocates and will bring together all stakeholders to make recommendations that will influence the global development agenda for the next 20 years. We intend to bring a diverse group of young people to the Global Youth Forum and especially encourage young people under the age of 24 to apply.

More: <http://www.un-ngls.org/gyf/en/>

From Abortion Rights to Social Justice: Building the Movement for Reproductive Freedom.
Conference, April 12-14, 2013. Proposals due: September 17, 2012.

Details: <http://clpp.hampshire.edu/conference-program/submit-a-proposal>

PUBLICATIONS

Center for Reproductive Rights Annual Report 2011-2012. The report on activities of our inspiring partner and SRHR advocacy leader.

Available here: <http://reproductiverights.org/en/document/annual-report-2011-2012>

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Editorial Committee: Katarzyna Pabijanek, Martyna Zimniewska

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