



**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

World Population Day 2012: Universal Access to Reproductive Health Services. Reproductive health problems remain the leading cause of ill health and death for women of childbearing age worldwide. Some 222 million women who would like to avoid or delay pregnancy lack access to effective family planning. Nearly 800 women die every day in the process of giving life. About 1.8 billion young people are entering their reproductive years, often without the knowledge, skills and services they need to protect themselves. On 11 July – World Population Day – many activities and campaigns will call attention to the essential part that reproductive health plays in creating a just and equitable world. On this day, we want to congratulate all reproductive health advocates and wish them success!!!

REGIONAL UPDATES

International meeting on abortion in Latvia. An international meeting on safe abortion care and related reproductive health services was held in Riga on 30-31 May 2012. The meeting was opened by Latvia's Minister of Health, Ms Ingrida Circene; Mrs Sandra Roelofs, the First Lady of Georgia and WHO/Europe Goodwill Ambassador for the Health-related Millennium Development Goals; and the Regional Director. 100 participants from more than 30 countries and 15 international organizations gathered to improve access to safe abortion in the WHO European Region.

WHO Regional Director for Europe said that WHO will continue to support countries in revising their policies and improving the quality of services to prevent unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortion, as well as addressing inequality in health. We welcome this commitment bearing in mind the growing efforts of anti-choice opposition to restrict access to abortion in Latvia, Macedonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, and Ukraine.

More: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/who-we-are/regional-director/speeches-and-presentations-by-year/2012/speech-at-opening-of-meeting-on-improving-access-to-safe-abortion-care-and-related-reproductive-health-services-in-the-european-region> at WHO.

UNAIDS Executive Director in Warsaw. Michel Sidibé UNAIDS Executive Director arrived in Warsaw, Poland, on 8 June for a day-long mission to meet with national stakeholders in the AIDS response and participate in the inauguration of UEFA Euro 2012, the European football championship. Mr Sidibé noted that Euro 2012 provides an excellent opportunity to highlight the HIV epidemic among a large audience. The UNAIDS Executive Director praised Poland's National AIDS Centre for launching "Fair Play"—an advocacy campaign, timed with Euro 2012, that focuses on HIV prevention. Through the campaign, football fans are encouraged to enjoy the games and protect themselves from HIV. Mr Sidibé expressed concern over the growing regional epidemic. An estimated 1.4 million people were living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in 2009, almost triple the number reported in 2000. In most countries across the region, the epidemic is concentrated among key populations, particularly people who inject drugs, sex workers and men who have sex with men. He also commended the government of Poland for providing free antiretroviral treatment to all who are eligible and for its success in keeping national HIV prevalence low. Poland is the current chair of UNAIDS' Programme Coordinating Board, the organization's governing body.

More: <http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2012/june/20120608fspoland/>

Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA): Registered partners should have the same property rights as spouses under EU law. The FRA has said Monday that European Commission proposals to facilitate couples' free movement may not be in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Last year the European Commission proposed two new EU regulations to simplify sharing and dividing couples' property, such as personal belongings and financial assets, when they move between EU Member States. The Commission drafted one regulation for married couples, and another for registered partners. Although both deal with jurisdiction and applicable law, the first regulation allows spouses—regardless of their gender—to choose under which national law they can share their property. By contrast, the second regulation does not allow registered partners—regardless of their gender as well—to choose which law applies to the management of their property. According to the FRA analysis, the proposal "does not appear to be in line with the principle of equality (Article 20 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights)". Furthermore, part of the proposal "generates potentially problematic effects with regard to the prohibition of discrimination (Article 21)", the Agency said. The European Parliament will now proceed to make recommendations to the Council of the European Union. The latter is in charge of adopting the regulations.

Source: <http://www.lgbt-ep.eu/press-releases/fra-registered-partners-should-have-the-same-property-rights-as-spouses-under-eu-law/>

Moldova's Ban on LGBT demonstration condemned. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that Moldova had violated human rights (peaceful assembly and freedom from

discrimination) when it denied in 2005 the LGBT campaigning group to hold a peaceful demonstration in front of the Parliament. Hopefully this judgment will be a signal to Moldovan authorities that the discrimination against LGBT people is unacceptable and illegal.

Source: www.ilga-europe.org

Polish Main Pharmaceutical Inspectorate Confirms: Refusal to Sell Contraceptives Not Legal.

Federation for Women and Family Planning received a reply to its letter to the Main Pharmaceutical Inspectorate asking whether its legal for pharmacists to refuse sell of contraceptives. The use of conscientious clause by pharmacists who refuse selling contraceptives based on catholic disapproval of contraceptives has become a growing problem in Poland. In her statement Main Pharmaceutical inspector agreed with the Federation's opinion that there is a very limited number of circumstances in which a pharmacist may refuse to sell a legally prescribed medical product. She also explained that the pharmaceutical law does not give pharmacists an option to use the so-called conscience clause. Federation for Women and Family Planning is currently collecting reports on breaches of existing law.

Source: Federation for Women and Family Planning at www.federa.org.pl

UE: Cyprus takes the helm. Cyprus took charge of the rotating presidency of the EU Council. Cyprus will have its work cut out to handle the ongoing economic and eurozone crisis as well as international relations. According to the Cypriot presidency programme, equality between women and men and the fight against all forms of discrimination will continue to be given attention. Moreover, Cyprus announces promoting gender mainstreaming, mostly in the context of Europe 2020 strategy. Furthermore, the programme stipulates continuation of work on the proposal for the Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Another challenge for the Cypriot Presidency will be work on a possible EU Health Strategy beyond 2013.

More: <http://www.cyparliament2012.eu/easyconsole.cfm/id/166>

New Moldova Equality Law. The law on equality of chances, earlier called as the law on non-discrimination, provides for the observance of gender equality, protection of the rights of religious, national and other minorities, including the protection of persons with non-traditional sexual orientation, as well as eradication of discrimination and violence in families. The law will also protect the rights of disabled persons and persons with mental deviations, and other categories of citizens. Adoption of the law on equality of chances was one of the requirements of the European Union for fulfillment by Moldova of conditions of the Plan for liberalizing the visa regime. To dismay of Moldovan LGBT community, the new law doesn't include a specific reference to 'sexual orientation' - although that might fall under the wording of 'any other similar grounds'. Although the law is a positive step forward towards equality, international LGBT rights group, ILGA-Europe, is highly concerned sexual orientation is not explicitly mentioned in the list of grounds of discrimination covered by the law, apart from in relation to discrimination in the workplace. Moreover, according to the news, the Moscow Patriarchate urged Moldova to amend "the law on gays equality" to avert the promotion of "sexual perversions". Moldova, which is part of the Russian Orthodox Church's canonical territory, passed the law on May 25. The Russian church warned in its statement that the law could be misused to restrict criticism of homosexuality and present it as a norm, while according to traditional religious beliefs, homosexuality is a sin.

More: http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/news/for_media/media_releases/moldova_anti_discrimination_law

The First Moscow's Pride. After years of direct banning or quiet blocking with red tape, LGBT activists managed to cheat Moscow city authorities and hold their first ever gay pride parade, media reports. On 3 June, about 70 people marched on one of Moscow quays under rainbow banners and then held a two-hour rally calling for freedom of assembly and organization for sexual minorities. According to Kommersant daily, the official name of the event was "March of the Burning Hearts" and the organizers initially applied for a permit to hold a rally against all types of discrimination. The paper also claims that the license was issued because the clerks from the Mayor's office did not perceive the real intention of the activists. Police did not obstruct the march. On the contrary, law enforcers dispersed a small picket of alleged nationalists who were standing on the planned route of the rally and probably planned some aggressive actions. About 10 people were detained in the process. After the rally was over, police offered the LGBT activists a lift in police vans to the nearest subway station.

More: <http://rt.com/politics/gay-moscow-hold-rally-903/>

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/who-we-are/regional-director/speeches-and-presentations-by-year/2012/speech-at-opening-of-meeting-on-improving-access-to-safe-abortion-care-and-related-reproductive-health-services-in-the-european-region>

GLOBAL UPDATES

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20. The tendency to ignore the connection between women's rights, SRHR, environmentalism and sustainability is a worrying signal for those engaged in review of actions plans related to population, demography and sustainability. To dismay of SRHR community worldwide, the outcome document of the conference "The Future We Want" is silent on sexual and reproductive rights. Moreover, during the negotiations many of the EU and G77 countries who have been progressive on these issues in the past were completely silent. Despite encouragement from the United States and a handful of other countries to protect and support women's rights, some states didn't react as the Holy See, Malta, Poland, Algeria, and other conservative countries rolled back the clock on women's rights.

Full coverage of Rio+20 from SRHR perspective available here: <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/blog/tag/rio20>

Family Planning Summit: Civil Society Declaration. Contraceptive information and services – "family planning" – form an essential part of the health services that women need throughout their lives. Any steps to increase demand for contraceptives must actively support efforts to improve comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive health. **Women's Human Rights Must be at the Center of the Family Planning Summit, says the declaration endorsed by CSOs from all over the world. The representatives of CSOs call on Family Planning Summit to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights are at the centre of all efforts to meet reproductive health needs, including family planning.**

The full text of the declaration is available here:

<http://blog.iwhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Womens-Human-Rights-must-be-at-the-centre-of-the-Family-Planning-Summit-Civil-Society-Declaration-June-19-2012.pdf>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Turning the Tide Together. XIX International AIDS Conference. The XIX AIDS conference will take place from 22 July 2012 to 27 July 2012, in Washington, D.C. For more details go to the events' website at: <http://www.aids2012.org/>

PUBLICATIONS

Toolkit on Polish Abortion Cases in ECtHR | Center for Reproductive Rights. The updated toolkit prepared by the Center for Reproductive Rights covers all cases related to abortion rights in Poland considered by the European Court of Human Rights and describes human rights violations resulting from restrictive regulations. The document is part of the Litigation Briefing Series.

Available at: <http://reproductiverights.org/en/rr-v-poland-st-v-poland-z-v-poland>

Global Impact Report 2011. Delivering choice and rights for women: past, present and future. This report tracks progress during 2011 towards Marie Stopes International's global mission 'children by choice, not chance'. It takes a detailed look at the quality, scale and impact of MSI's services, and examine to what degree we are reaching under-served groups.

Link: http://www.mariestopes.org/data-research/resources/global-impact-report-2011-delivering-choice-and-rights-women-past-present?tw_p=tw

Adding It Up: Costs and Benefits of Contraceptive Services—Estimates for 2012. A new study by the Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, finds that the number of women in developing countries who want to avoid pregnancy but are not using modern contraception declined only slightly between 2008 and 2012, from 226 to 222 million. However, in the 69 poorest countries—where 73% of all women with unmet need for modern contraceptives reside—the number actually increased, from 153 to 162 million women. The report finds that 645 million women of reproductive age (15–49 years) in the developing world are now using modern contraceptive methods, 42 million more than in 2008. However, about half of the increase is due to population growth rather than to a higher rate of contraceptive use. Disturbingly, the increase in the number of modern contraceptive users between 2008 and 2012, roughly 10 million per year, was much lower than the annual increase between 2003 and 2008, which was approximately 20 million per year. The overall proportion using a modern method among married women—who comprise 92% of all modern method users—remained virtually unchanged between 2008 and 2012, at 56–57%. However, there were significant regional variations. Substantial increases occurred in Eastern Africa (from 20% to 27%) and Southeast Asia (from 50% to 56%), while there was little change in Western Africa and Middle Africa, regions where fewer than 10% of married women use modern contraceptives.

Click here to read the full report: <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/AIU-2012-estimates.pdf>

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Leadership & Mentoring Partnership for Eurasian Women. Women from Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia it's important information for you! If you want to take a part in "Mentoring and Leadership program" in Warsaw send your applications directly to local US Embassies until 10th of July! Embassies will select 8 candidates from each country and then US Embassy in Warsaw and Vital Voices Poland will choose 4 participants form each country. We will start 10th of

September 2012! More: <http://www.vitalvoices.pl/leadership-and-mentoring-partnership-for-eurasian-women-10092012---27092012/62/news.html>

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