



ASTRA joins the global mobilisation of activists for the right to access to safe and legal abortion

Today, on **September 28, International Safe Abortion Day**, ASTRA Network stands in solidarity with all women human rights defenders and activists working to ensure abortion rights and demanding that abortion be legal, truly accessible, and safe.

Access to safe abortion is a matter of human rights, social justice and a basic health concern. In countries where abortion is illegal, criminalised or not effectively accessible, women and girls resort to unsafe or clandestine procedures, which can lead to complications and detrimental health consequences. Despite progress across the world, significant challenges in accessing abortion remain, let alone the widespread stigma and discrimination.

Recent developments in Central and Eastern Europe have put reproductive rights of women and girls under severe pressure and once again it has become clear that abortion rights must be fought for, upheld and secured.

In numerous countries of Central and Eastern Europe women's bodies are currently a symbol of national heritage and issue of national dispute in the context of religious and medical ethics, not that of human rights and bodily autonomy.

What all countries of the region have in common, regardless of their legislation, is the stigma surrounding abortion, as well as abortion providers and reproductive rights activists. Existing barriers do not hinder women from terminating their pregnancies every day as there are no laws or punishments that will put an end to abortions, what Poland and Ceausescu's Romania are perfect examples of. Moreover, access to abortion being legal on paper is not enough – it must be truly accessible, especially to those most vulnerable.

Through this statement we join the collective and global voice which aims to break the abortion stigma and start talking about abortion as an experience – besides a right.



A S T R A N E T W O R K

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