

# **ASTRA NETWORK**

## **2019 YEARLY REPORT**

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**A S T R A   N E T W O R K**

**WWW.ASTRA.ORG.PL**

**ASTRA Network - Central and Eastern Europe Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights** is a coalition of non-governmental and informal organisations from the CEE region that work together for advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as health care in general. The Network, established in 1999 during a regional meeting hosted by Federation for Women and Family Planning, currently consists of 41 organisations from 21 countries. ASTRA's secretariat is located in Federation's office in Warsaw. Our activity can be followed online: on [ASTRA's website](#), Facebook [fanpage](#) and [Twitter account](#).



## **New coordinator**

After 6 years, a major change happened within the Network - Marta Szostak was replaced by Antonina Lewandowska as ASTRA's coordinator. Antonina is a sociology student at the University of Warsaw, an activist and sexuality educator in Ponton Group of Sex Educators. She is also an alumni of Future Leaders Connect Programme and holds a certificate for graduating from a course on leadership, communication and policy development skills issued under the Royal Charter of Churchill College and endorsed by the University of Cambridge's Board of Executive and Professional Education.

## **63 United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women**

ASTRA's representatives participated in the 63rd United Nations' Commission on the status of Women. The event, it's highlights and most important outcomes were brilliantly [summed up](#) by Federation for Women and Family Planning.



## **Center for Reproductive Rights meeting in Brussels**

In June, ASTRA's coordinator participated in a meeting hosted by Center for Reproductive Rights in Brussels. Several organisations gathered in Belgium in order to discuss issues affecting Roma people and the situation of ethnic minorities in Europe in general. Main topics of the meeting included international and regional advocacy for improvement of ethnical minorities' situation and putting more emphasis on sexual and reproductive rights of Roma people.

## **International work – linking SRI with regional partners**

ASTRA Network worked closely with Sexual Rights Initiative to support our members with their works on Universal Periodic Reviews. As United Nation's Human Rights Council's [website](#) states: „The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to

improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human right obligations.” ASTRA Network is proud to have a small role in helping provide insights from activists and NGO’s from the region. This year we linked Sexual Rights Initiative with ASTRA’s member organisations from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kazakhstan.

## **Statement for 64 United Nations’ Commission on the Status of Women**

A [statement](#) was issued by ASTRA Network for the occasion of upcoming 64th United Nations’ Commission on the Status of Women. The document brings up women’s empowerment, comprehensive sexuality education, access to contraception and safe abortion, as well as other sexual and reproductive medical services, and protection from violence in any form – physical, psychological and economic.

## **Annual members meeting**

Representatives of our member organisations from 15 countries met during an annual members’ meeting hosted in Warsaw.



The agenda included identifying and tackling burning issues and obstacles in the fight for sexual and reproductive health and rights in the region, as well as a cybersecurity workshop. The meeting was also an introduction to further works on ASTRA's new publication.

## **Regional report**

During the annual meeting, the Network has agreed to launch a new publication. Designed as a comprehensive regional report on the situation of abortion, contraception, sexuality education, pre- and postnatal care, gender-based violence and LGBTQI+ rights, the publication is expected to be out in 2020.

## **Support for prosecuted Armenian activists from Women's Resource Center**

One of ASTRA's member organisations, Women's Resource Center, is facing legal prosecution in their home country, Armenia.



Armenian far-right activists accuse WRC of sharing paedophilic content and “sexualization of children”, basing the outrageous accusations on organization’s social campaign about comprehensive sexuality education. WRC’s team has been receiving death and rape threats, they were also targeted on social media. A case against WRC was filed in Armenian court with the ruling yet to be decided upon. ASTRA Network stayed in touch with WRC, we provided support for the activists and shared the news of their persecution with fellow networks via [Bulletin](#).

We are still monitoring the situation, as it is an ongoing process.

## **Nairobi Summit**

ASTRA’s representatives attended the Nairobi Summit on ICPD 25. The event, attended by activists, politicians and international organization’s delegates, was a “high-level conference to mobilize the political will and financial commitments we urgently need to finally and fully implement the ICPD Programme of Action”.



Throughout the event, ASTRA members had the opportunity to participate in lectures and workshops on sexual and reproductive health and rights, with emphasis put on access to contraception and abortion.

As a summary of the event, [Nairobi Statement on ICPD25](#) was issued.

One of ASTRA Network's members has shared her thoughts on the Summit on [our website](#).

## **Declaration of solidarity with Slovakia**

ASTRA Network member organisations have expressed their Solidarity with Slovaks, after Slovak government attempted to limit access to abortion. The Network's coordinator kept the general public informed of the development of the situation on our [website](#) and social media.

## **ASTRA Network's Bulletin**

ASTRA Network's monthly Bulletin is a vital source of information about the current situation of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.



It regularly reaches over 3,000 subscribers and social media followers. Our news were quoted by several organisations, i.e. Center for Reproductive Rights and International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion.

In 2019, ASTRA Network was strongly supported by our donors and partners – International Women's Health Coalition and Global Fund for Women.

