



Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

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Table of contents:

- Burning Issue
- Regional Updates
- Global Updates
- Youth
- Upcoming Events
- Call to Action

BURNING ISSUE

Estrela SRHR report rejected at the European Parliament

On December 10th, the International Human Rights Day, the European Parliament failed to support the Sexual and Reproductive Rights of all people and rejected the [Estrela SRHR report](#). It is a great loss and disappointment that the majority of MEPs failed to recognise the right of all people, and especially women, to make informed choices on their reproductive and sexual lives, including on issues such as contraception and abortion. They have also failed to acknowledge the urgent need to prevent the spread of STIs, including HIV and gender based violence. This non-binding report called for universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights throughout Europe. If adopted, this report would have been a strong political statement from the EP in defence of these rights. The adopted alternative merely states that *“The formulation and implementation of policies on sexual and reproductive health and rights and on sex education in schools is a competence of the member states”*.

The vote in the EP Plenary Session took place on Tuesday, December 10. The SRHR report was rejected by only 7 votes and the alternative resolution drafted by the right-wing European Conservatives and Reformists backed by European People's Party was adopted by 334 votes to 327, with 35 abstentions.

[Mikael Gustafsson](#), Chair of the FEMM Committee said: "I remain ashamed and stunned that so many people still can't see how important sexual and reproductive health and rights are to achieving gender equality in the EU and beyond. Following the despicable behaviour in the October vote, it is no surprise that we were treated to more of the same shouting and heckling in the chamber today. We will continue to defend a woman's right to safe and legal abortion and access to contraception. We won't back down on calling for comprehensive, non-discriminatory sexuality education for all as well as for urgent protection of the rights of LGBTI persons in Europe. The Estrela report contained all these objectives and it is a scandal that right-wing forces have succeeded in throwing it out."

The complete voting record can be found on [Vote Watch Europe](#).

Source: [European Parliament News](#), [Humanist Federation](#), [GUE/NGL](#)

REGIONAL UPDATES

Further attempts to change the Polish law on abortion

The Polish Criminal Law Codification Commission proposed amendments to the Criminal Code. The suggested changes include criminalization of women who have abortions illegally and the increase of penalty for those performing abortions from three to five years imprisonment. Also, the Committee wants to introduce punishments for women who have in some way endangered the health of the fetus during pregnancy. Federation for Women and Family Planning sent a letter to the Polish Minister of Justice requesting an official statement regarding proposed by the advisory body to the Ministry. The Polish Prime Minister claims that there will be no changes in the current law concerning abortion.

Source: [Federation for Women and Family Planning](#)

EP report on 'Human rights in the world 2012 and EU policy on the matter'

On Wednesday, December 11th, the European Parliament adopted the *Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2012 and the European Union's policy on the matter (2013/2152(INI))*. The text includes strong references to sexual and reproductive health and rights, ending violence against women and condemns the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. It underlines that the [EU Special Representative for Human Rights](#) must focus on the rights of women and of all minorities and expresses its deepest concern about abuse of LGBTI persons. The report also calls for a stand alone goal on gender equality with a strong emphasis on SRHR in the Post-2015 agenda. Moreover it also refers to the ICPD+20 process and the report "(...)urges the EU and its Member States to ensure that the ICPD+20 review process results in a comprehensive review of all aspects related to the full enjoyment of sexual

and reproductive rights and to reaffirm a strong and progressive approach to the issue of sexual and reproductive rights for all in conformity with international human rights standards, as well as calling for greater accountability as regards achievement”.

Source: [European Parliament, The EP Intergroup on LGBT Rights](#)

Forced sterilization in Uzbekistan

The Open Society Foundation’s recent report on Uzbekistan shows that the practice of forced sterilization of women is widespread across the country. The medical professionals are often under pressure from the government which sees this practice as means of controlling population growth. According to this report all women in reproductive age who have already given birth to one or two children are potential targets for this procedure which most often happens without the women’s knowledge. Women with lower socioeconomic status and representatives of ethnic minorities are the most likely to be sterilized.

Source: [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#)

New law in Serbia may undermine women's reproductive rights

New law guaranteeing free healthcare to children and pregnant women and new mothers in Serbia can possibly influence their reproductive rights in a worrying manner. Article 5 of this newly adopted law requires that terminations of pregnancies, along with the identification details of the patient, be reported to the government health insurance fund. This started a heated debate over a potential register of abortions being compiled by the government. Doctors are concerned that penal provisions on healthcare facilities and practitioners who fail to send reports of their patients' procedures might push them to break confidentiality bounds and medical ethics. Meanwhile, the government is denying accusations of creating abortion records, claiming that this is the only system to prevent misuse of free healthcare provided by the new law.

Source: [AlJazeera](#)

Council of the European Union adopted conclusions on combating hate crime

The European Parliament’s [Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs](#) adopted [a recommendation](#) for a future EU roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. [The non-binding report](#) calls on the European Commission to make proposals for non-discrimination in employment, education, health and access to goods and services; in the field of citizenship, families and free movement; freedom of assembly and expression; hate speech and hate crime; asylum and migration; and foreign affairs.

Source: [ILGA Europe](#)

GLOBAL UPDATES

Abortion backlash in Spain

The new draft law proposed by the Spanish Government with big support from the ruling People's Party and the Minister of Justice, Alberto Ruiz, proposes severe restrictions in the current legislation on abortion. The new legislation would restrict women's right to abort, only allowing the procedure in cases of rape and when there is a serious threat to health. Currently, Spanish law allows women to terminate pregnancies without any restrictions up to 14 weeks. In addition, teenage girls would be required to get consent from their parents to perform abortions, something that was abolished in Spain in 2010. The pro-choice and feminist civil society mobilized and demonstrated against these sexual and reproductive rights violations on the streets of Madrid and other cities on Friday December 20th.

Source: [The Guardian](#), [Mama Cash](#)

Human rights in the Post-2015 agenda

Over 300 groups called for human rights in core of post-2015 development plan. Published on International Human Rights Day, the joint statement "[Human Rights for All Post-2015](#)" was presented to the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals at its 6th session in December. It sets out 10 practical, baseline implications of embedding existing human rights standards into the core of the sustainable development agenda.

Source: [Center for Economic and Social Rights](#)

UN General Assembly Meetings in 2014 for Post-2015 Development Agenda

President of the UN General Assembly announced that six meetings will be held in 2014 to operationalize the theme for the 68th session of the UN General Assembly: *The post-2015 development agenda: setting the stage!* Three thematic debates and three high level events are planned to take place this year. The thematic debates will be carried out in consultation with the co-chairs of the OWG and of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing.

Source: [NGOsBeyond2014](#)

6th session of the UNGA Open Working Group

The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals discussed “Human rights, the right to development, global governance” at its 6th meeting on December 9-13. Co-Chair Körösi presented the Co-Chairs’ summary of the session. As reported by the [iisd Reporting Services](#) he highlighted that: “...we cannot set ambitious goals without specifying how they will be achieved and the need for political will, financing, technology, capacity building, policies and institutions. He noted that the Rio+20 outcome identified means of implementation by creating the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and leaving the rest for the OWG to consider, and said the two tracks are interlinked, and that it may be difficult to draw the line between the two and to avoid duplication. He also noted the need to discuss the potential sources of finance to implement the SDGs and going beyond government-to-government cooperation, since there are limited resources available in the ODA framework.

The Co-Chair also announced future OWG dates after the eighth session in February 2014. These are 3-7 March, 31 March - 4 April, 5-9 May, 2-6 June, 14-18 July.

Source: [NGOsBeyond2014](#)

YOUTH

4th edition of 10 Days of Activism

During this year’s edition of 10 Days of Activism (10DoA) young people from 40 countries mobilized in order to bring their voice into the ongoing discussion around post 2015 agenda. Therefore, this campaign is under the theme of “The world WE all want” and took place globally between 1st – 10th December 2013. Just like in the previous years, ASTRA Youth was engaged in the 10 Days of Activism campaign. Young advocates from Central and Eastern Europe shared their asks for the post-2015 agenda over the social media, organised street actions and prepared articles on regional burning issues. More information can be found [here](#).

Global Youth Forum 1st Anniversary – #GYF1 Campaign

First week of December marked the one-year anniversary of the 2012 Global Youth Forum in Bali. As a reminder to governments and the ICPD+20 review, the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (YCSRR) organised a social media campaign. #GYF1 campaign spread a list of Tweets and Facebook messages in order to remind the societies of the key asks of the Bali Declaration and important facts about the event.

Full text of the Bali Declaration available [here](#).

H.E.R.A. Youth Statement

On December 10th, the International Human Rights Day the youth group of H.E.R.A. from Macedonia released its statement. It contains the call for the full realization of sexual and reproductive health and rights as a fundamental part of the human rights framework and highlights the need and benefits of comprehensive sexuality education. Full text can be accessed on [H.E.R.A.'s website](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Open Working Group sessions

The OWG will conduct two more sessions in 2014 before they start the formal and decision making sessions which will define a set of future Sustainable Development Goals. The OWG will convene for its seventh session (OWG 7) from 6-10 January 2014 and for its eight and final session (OWG 8) from 3-7 February 2014. The OWG meeting are open for Major Groups in Consultative Status with ECOSOC. To register click [here](#).

Source: [EuroNGOs](#)

New round of post-2015 consultations for 2014

Intergovernmental processes at the UN, such as the OWG, the Expert Finance Committee, and the recently announced thematic sessions to be organized by the President of the General Assembly are under way. While there are opportunities for direct engagement of civil society in these discussions, the UN has acknowledged that there are some limitations for CSOs participation, particularly for those who are not based in or cannot travel to New York. With this in mind **a new round of post-2015 consultations for 2014 on the online space The World We Want has been announced.**

Areas for consultation are as follows: Localizing the post-2015 development agenda; Helping to strengthen capacities and institutions; Participatory monitoring, existing and new forms of accountability; Partnerships with civil society and other actors; Partnerships with the private sector; Culture and development.

The timeline for these consultation processes is proposed as **January 2014 – December 2014**, with milestones including interim reporting where feasible to inform the final report of the OWG, the expert finance committee, the report requested of the UNSG at the end of 2014 and other intergovernmental processes which will inform and shape the discussions around the post-2015 agenda.

Source: [EuroNGOs](#), [UN](#)

CALL TO ACTION

Stop the draft bill to change the law on abortion in Spain and sign petitions on [Avaaz](#) and [Change](#).

ASTRA Network members:

Albania - Albanian Family Planning Association
Armenia - Women's Rights Center
Armenia - Society Without Violence
Armenia - Women's Resource 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
Croatia - B.a.b.e. (Be Active, Be Emancipated)
Croatia - CESI - Center for Education and Counseling of Woman
Croatia - Women's Room
Georgia - Women's Center
Georgia – Hera XXI
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 – Shelter Center
Macedonia - Association for emancipation, solidarity and equality of women
Macedonia - Health Education and Research Association
Moldova – Family Planning Association
Moldova - Reproductive Health Service Center
Poland - Federation for Women and Family Planning
Romania - Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives
Romania - A.L.E.G.
Romania - The East European Institute of Reproductive Health
Romania - AnA: Society for Feminist Analysis
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.

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