



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

## CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

### No 6 (143) 2015

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## BURNING ISSUE

### ASTRA Network Public Hearing at the European Parliament

ASTRA Network will hold a public hearing on the issue of "Barriers in access to reproductive health goods and services". It will be held under the auspices of the [European Parliament Working Group on Reproductive Health HIV/AIDS and Development](#), especially MEPs Sophie in't Veld and Heidi Hautala. The hearing will be held on June 4th from 12.30 to 14.30 in the premises of the European Parliament in Brussels, Altiero Spinelli Building, meeting room ASP 1E1.

#### Speakers:

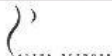

Opening speech by MEP Sophie in 't Veld  
Marta Szostak, ASTRA Network Secretariat  
Adriana Lamackova, Center for Reproductive Rights  
Milena Kadieva, Gender Alternatives Foundation  
Irina Costache, A.L.E.G.  
Nataša Bijelić, CESI - Centar za edukaciju, savjetovanje i istraživanje

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
ASTRA Network and European Parliament Working Group  
on Reproductive Health HIV/AIDS and Development  
European Parliament, Brussels  
Altiero Spinelli Building, ASP 1E1  
Thursday, 4 June 2015  
12:00 – 12:30 sandwich lunch  
12:30 – 14:30 event

**BARRIERS  
IN ACCESS  
TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH  
GOODS AND SERVICES  
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

Hosted by EPWG co-chairs  
SOPHIE IN 'T VELD and HEIDI HAUTALA

**SPEAKERS**  
OPENING SPEECH BY SOPHIE IN 'T VELD  
MARTA SZOSTAK, ASTRA Network Secretariat  
ADRIANA LAMACKOVA, Center for Reproductive Rights  
MILENA KADIEVA, Gender Alternatives Foundation  
NATAŠA BIJEIĆ, CESI  
IRINA COSTACHE, A.L.E.G.  
NEIL DATTA, European Parliamentary Forum  
CONCLUDING REMARKS BY HEIDI HAUTALA

  [www.astra.org.pl](http://www.astra.org.pl)

Neil Datta, The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development  
Closing remarks by MEP Heidi Hautala

[Access the event flyer in pdf](#)

[Facebook event](#)

Source: [ASTRA Network](#)

## REGIONAL UPDATES

### **UNFPA Regional Conference: Promoting Health and Rights, Reducing Inequalities**

UNFPA, in partnership with the Government of Bulgaria hosted The Regional Conference 'Promoting Health and Rights, Reducing Inequalities: Towards Better Sexual and Reproductive Health Outcomes in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It took place on 27-29 May 2015 in Sofia, Bulgaria. This platform for dialogue among ministers of health, parliamentarians, national and international experts, CSO representatives, regional partners and UN agencies elaborated on how to advance sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and reproductive rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The content was built on the recommendations that emerged from the [ICPD Beyond 2014 Regional Review Conference](#), held in Geneva in July 2013, and on the discussions related to the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

“A person-centered approach to the world’s development agenda is simply essential,” said Kate Gilmore, UNFPA’s Deputy Executive Director at the opening session. “Without putting people at the center - enabled and supported through the realization of their rights to, for example, health and education - they will not realize their full potential. Without their fuller potential realized, their capacities to be productive, engaged and constructive contributors to the sustainability and resilience of their communities and economies is undermined.”

The conference ended with an agreed outcome document – the [Sofia Declaration of Commitment](#)

Source: [UNFPA EECA, Press Release](#)

### **Council of the European Union recommit to SRHR on conclusions on gender in development**

On May 26th, the Council of the European Union adopted conclusions on Gender in Development. This text precedes the adoption of the new EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment 2016-2020 (GAP II), expected during the second semester of 2015. In this text, the Council ‘remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context’. That same paragraph further reads that ‘Having that in mind, the Council reaffirms the EU’s commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full

control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The Council further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services.' Throughout the text, the Council stresses the importance of promoting a holistic and inclusive approach 'to promote women's and girls' rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all spheres of society and throughout their life cycle', namely by involving civil society organisations and by addressing several sectors, such as health and education.

To have access to the press release on the Council conclusions, please click [here](#).

To read the Council conclusions, please click [here](#).

### **European institutions adopt a strong position for a global partnership for development favourable of gender equality and health**

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, the European Parliament (EP) adopted in plenary its resolution on Financing for Development. In this text, the EP states that 'gender equality, social cohesion and the fight against inequalities should remain at the core of development activities'. For this purpose, the EP calls for the implementation of gender budgeting, for targeted investments in key sectors such as health, and for a gender equality measure that should complement GDP in order to measure new social and environmental challenges. Moreover, in this resolution the EP 'stresses the decisive importance of good governance, human rights protection [...]; especially supports investment in capacity-building, basic social services such as education and health (ensuring universal health coverage), including sexual and reproductive health and rights, [...] and the fight against poverty and inequality, including among children and in terms of gender'. On May 26<sup>th</sup>, the Council of the European Union also adopted conclusions on the 'New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015'. In its position, the Council reiterated the need to ensure access to health as a basic service that enables human capital. In addition, the text reads that 'Gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as being ends in themselves, are a key means of implementation and should be promoted at all levels', and such importance can be read through in different sections, including the chapter dedicated to 'enabling environment'. These texts are a key step towards the finalisation of a common EU position for negotiations ahead of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, taking place in Addis Ababa next July.

To read the EP resolution, please click [here](#).

To have access to the press release on the Council conclusions, please click [here](#).

To read the Council conclusions, please click [here](#).

### **All-Ukrainian Family Planning Week**

On May 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> the Family Planning and Reproductive Health Prevention Week took place in Ukraine. Within this period of time number of events and activities were conducted in all regions of the country. Even though the majority of events were aimed to raise awareness of Ukrainians on FP and RH issues, some activities were also aimed to advocate sexual and reproductive rights of different target groups, including people with mental disabilities, HIV-positive people etc. Among the activities one could choose from thematic competitions, photo exhibitions, lectures, trainings, workshops and debates, street actions, quests and flash mobs for youth, social theatre performances, exhibitions of thematic literature and medical consultations provision, round tables and press conferences. All participants of these activities received a number of information materials consisted information on sexual and reproductive rights, contraception, FP services, thematic web sites and hot line on RH etc., provided both by WHFP and partner NGOs and projects. Due to this a significant number of different target groups' representatives were reached with reliable SRHR information.

This wave of events was initiated by Women Health and Family Planning Charitable Foundation and mostly conducted by NGOs – members of All-Ukrainian Coalition of Reproductive Health and Family Planning, which was created in 2014 under the initiative of WHFP. The plan to support All-Ukrainian Family Planning and Reproductive Health Prevention Week was previously included into the Coalition' Strategic and Operational Plans as well as in its Communication strategy. One of the main Coalition' tasks is the advocacy of continuation of the current State Reproductive Health Program till 2015 in order the progress achieved in RH sphere was not lost, but due to state support was going on, in particular in order to reach the MDG.

Source: [Women Health and Family Planning](#)

### **Women's Rights Center raising awareness activities on domestic violence**

Women's Rights Center in Armenia organized informative meetings on domestic violence, as part of WRC regular raising awareness activities in May. The meetings were conducted with two diverse groups: students of the Faculty of Philosophy of Yerevan State University and parents of Basic School in Yerevan. The discussions with parents and students started with presentation of WRC, its goals and activities enhancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and then there was a screening of social films on domestic violence. After the films the lively debate took place. Participants discussed the films, problem of domestic violence, ways of preventing and combating it, as well as negative psychological impact of violence on women and. At the end of the meeting the participants expressed their feelings and attitudes towards the issue of violence. Additionally, parents who took part in the meeting raised questions and appreciated WRC's significance. The organization's representatives responded to all questions and highlighted the importance of raising awareness on domestic violence among Armenian population. Such kind of events are regarded by WRC as crucial to help people gain information and empower gender equality attitudes. They also increase the awareness of girls about their right to be free and protected from domestic violence.

Source: [Women's Rights Center](#)

## **Project enhancing LGBTI people's rights in Georgia and Armenia**

Homophobia is still not a recognized social problem in Armenia. LGBTI persons represent one of the most discriminated against, marginalized and least visible groups and face extreme violence and oppression from the public. To enhance protection of and respect for LGBTI people's rights and to combat homophobia and support LGBTI people's inclusion in Georgia's and Armenia's respective societies, the South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation (HBF) initiated the "Solidarity Network for LGBTI in Armenia and Georgia" project designed by a working group composed of Georgian and Armenian partner organizations: Women's Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG) and Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre (EMC) from Georgia; Society Without Violence (SWV) and PINK Armenia from Armenia.

The specific objectives of the project are to support LGBTI people in the full scale realization of their rights through the enhancement of an LGBTI friendly environment and to stimulate civil society actors' higher cohesion on sexual orientation and gender identity issues (SOGI) in Georgia and Armenia. In the framework of this project, SWV is mainly responsible for managing components of journalists capacity building, micro grants, capacity building of CSOs in Armenia as well as for the implementation and preparation of baseline assessment report on legal and physical conditions of LGBTI people in Armenia.

**Source:** [The Heinrich Böll Foundation South Caucasus](#)

## **Special Report on the State of the Rights of LGBT People in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

On May 19th, the Joint Committee on Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina (PSBiH) held a thematic session on the occasion of May 17th, the International Day Against Homophobia, Bi-phobia and Transphobia. This is the first time ever that a legislative body in Bosnia and Herzegovina discusses the state of the human rights of LGBT people, and thus it is a historic moment in the struggle of the LGBT movement in BiH.

The International Day Against Homophobia, Bi-phobia and Transphobia has been officially recognized in 2005 by the European Parliament and it is officially celebrated in more than 70 countries. On this day, May 17th, 1990, the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses and from that day onwards, May 17th has been celebrated as a reminder of the importance of the respect for human rights of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) people worldwide.

Borislav Bojić, the chairman of the Joint Committee, opened the thematic session stressing the following: "The LGBT citizens remain completely invisible in the BiH society because of the fear of violence and discrimination". The situation in which LGBT people in BiH live was then presented, within the context of the human rights violations they face, by Mary Ann Hennessey, Council of Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Saša Gavrić, a representative of Sarajevo Open Center, and Jasminka Džumhur, Human Rights Ombudsperson. During the thematic session, Saša Gavrić reminded everyone of the fact that LGBT people are 5-12% of citizen in any society, including BiH. "LGBT citizens face violence and discrimination, the large portion of which remains invisible to the BiH society, since the existing official mechanisms for reporting, processing and documenting of

discrimination and violence are not available to the majority of LGBT people, who, due to the fear of public reaction, and the reaction of the representatives of the institutions, report less than 10% of all the incidents.” Hence, it was underlined that the protection of LGBT people and their rights is a duty of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a civilized state, and that it has to become a part of its culture and social tradition.

The protection of human rights and the improvement of the position of LGBT people are incredibly important issues for the Western Balkan states on the road to full EU membership, as it was stated during the session. Accordingly, every year the European Commission pays considerable attention to the respect of the human rights and the minority rights, including the rights of the LGBT people, in the reports of the Council of the EU and the European Parliament on the progress of a particular country on the road to European integration. The representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH and of the Parliament of FBiH, as well as the civil society activists were actively engaged in the discussion following the presentation of the state of rights of LGBT people in BiH. After it was stated that there is a series of activities aiming at the improvement of the rights of LGBT people, it was concluded that the BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees would begin the process of introducing the legislative amendments to the BiH Law on Prohibition of Discrimination in order to further improve their position in BiH society. Also, it was concluded that the Institution of Ombudsman for Human Rights in BiH should draw a special report on the protection of rights of LGBT people and deliver it to the competent bodies, including PSBiH.

Source: [Sarajevo Open Centre](#)

### **Poland's parliamentarians dropped the debate on civil partnership proposal.**

The Sejm lower parliamentary house has voted against a debate on a bill which would regulate civil partnerships – both heterosexual and homosexual – in Poland. The proposed law – which was put forward by the Democratic Left Alliance – foresees the possibility of joint payment of income tax, the right to inheritance as well as social security benefits in the event of one of the partner’s deaths. However, the bill will likely now be shelved after MPs overwhelmingly voted against any discussion on the matter. Only 146 MPs voted for, while 215 were against, with 24 abstaining and 75 not voting at all.

Source: [TheNews.pl](#)

### **FRIDA is looking for feminist activists**

FRIDA | The Young Feminist Fund is recruiting passionate and committed young feminist activists - also from Eastern Europe and Central Asia - to join its Global Advisory Committee. Age limit is 35 years and deadline to send applications is June 10th.

Source and more information: [FRIDA](#)

## GLOBAL UPDATES

### May 28<sup>th</sup> International Day of Action for Women's Health



On May 28, women's rights defenders and activists from all over the world mobilized to observe May 28th International Day of Action for Women's Health. Various activities from more than thirty countries have been reported by women's advocacy groups to be taking place to commemorate the Global Day of Action.

Collectively, activists called on the governments and the international community for the fullest inclusion of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and respect, protect, and fulfill women's right to health, dignity and bodily integrity.

May 28 Campaign was first established in 1987 by women's rights activists at the IV International Women's Health Meeting in Costa Rica, as a means to speak out on SRHR issues faced by women and girls all over the world..

This year's campaign highlighted the often forgotten link between SRHR and Institutional Violence, a form of violence against women perpetuated by the State, particularly experienced by women and girls if they are young, unmarried, poor, HIV affected, of diverse sexual orientations or gender identities, living with a disability, or in other vulnerable situations. The campaign focuses on 4 grave cases of Institutional violence: The denial of access to safe and legal abortion services; Forced and coerced sterilizations; Obstetric Violence and the denial of access to contraceptives and emergency contraception. All of these are issues commonly neglected and often normalized and endorsed by States.

Currently governments around the world are involved in the process of formulating the next development agenda in which they must address these human rights violations and uphold their existing commitments, by ensuring a comprehensive and rights-based approach to women's health, and accounting for the full spectrum of women and girls' sexual and reproductive health issues, needs, and rights.

For more details about the May 28 campaign, local actions in each region and to endorse the Call for Action, visit [www.may28.org](http://www.may28.org).



### **Ireland becomes first country to vote in favor of marriage equality**

Ireland has become the first country in the world to adopt marriage equality in a national election. On Friday, May 22nd, 2015, voters approved a government-backed amendment to the Irish Constitution legalizing same-sex marriage. Ireland has become the 11th EU state to adopt equal marriage. In March 2015, the European Parliament emphasised in a [resolution](#) on human rights and democracy in the world that it considers same-sex marriage or partnerships a “political, social and human and civil rights issue.”

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

### **WHO: Misoprostol for treating PPH included in the Model List of Essential Medicines**

The World Health Organization has just released the Report of the 20th WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines. The Report recommends that misoprostol be included in the Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) for the additional indication of treating post-partum haemorrhage (in addition to preventing PPH) when oxytocin is not available or cannot be used safely. This means that health care providers who are not qualified to give oxytocin injections or where oxytocin is not available, e.g. in community-based facilities can now provide misoprostol to treat as well as to prevent post-partum haemorrhage.

The Report states: "Two applications related to misoprostol were considered by the Expert Committee. The Committee recommended listing misoprostol for the additional indication of post-partum hemorrhage, when oxytocin is not available or cannot be used safely, but it did not recommend deletion of misoprostol for the post-partum hemorrhage prevention indication. The Committee noted that no new clinical trial data to support deletion has been presented compared to the same application in 2013."

The Committee also recommended the addition of three new contraceptive products to the EML: the etonogestrel-releasing implant, the levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system and the progesterone contraceptive vaginal ring.

[Report of the 20th WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines, May 2015](#)

All applications and documents reviewed by the Expert Committee:

[http://www.who.int/selection\\_medicines/committees/expert/20/en/](http://www.who.int/selection_medicines/committees/expert/20/en/)

[2015 WHO Model List of Essential Medicines](#)

Source: [International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion](#)



## **World Bank's new gender strategy**

The World Bank is developing a new gender strategy to be finalized later this year. Part of the process includes a global consultation to elicit input from a wide range of stakeholders including civil society organizations and individual experts. The consultation will run till 15 July 2015. For more information and instructions on submission please click [here](#).

## **YOUTH**

### **200 Young Leaders selected for Women Deliver Young Leaders Program**

Women Deliver has announced the selection of 200 young advocates, who will join the Young Leaders Program – a three year fellowship for young people under the age of 30, who are working for enhancement of health, rights and wellbeing of girls and women around the world. In June youth advocates will begin the e-course and they will attend Women Deliver Conference in Copenhagen in 2016. Among the selected Young Leaders are ASTRA Youth members from Poland and Romania, adding to 20 candidates from EECA region. The full list of chosen advocates is accessible [here](#).

Source: [Women Deliver](#)

### **Romanian senators reject law proposal for a compulsory Sexuality Education curriculum in schools**

Romanian senators voted against transforming the currently optional subject “Education for Health” (“Sexuality Education”) into a compulsory graded course. The upper chamber of the Parliament supposedly rejected the law because of its incompatibility with the current law of Education. The Romanian law of Education states that curriculum changes can only be implemented by the Ministry of Education and these changes cannot be introduced and adopted directly by the Parliament. On the other hand, the representatives of the Ministry of Education are neither supportive of the idea of transforming sexuality education into a compulsory subject motivating that this change could overload the already crowded curriculum. Other voices accuse MPs of backing out because of fears of upsetting the Romanian Orthodox Church, still a powerful institution in today's Romanian politics. “Education for Health” is an optional subject implemented in some Romanian schools as early as 2004. The subject provides general information about hygiene and health tips starting from the first grade and detailed information about sexuality, STIs, hygiene and pregnancy prevention as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Sexuality education is partially covered by other compulsory subjects such as Biology or in some cases the Homeroom Class. In Romania curriculum changes are decided by the Ministry of Education. There is no previous record of Parliament getting involved in major curriculum changes. Even if some official sources claim that the national education law may be soon revised, there is no guarantee that in the following months Sexuality Education will be put back on the ministerial agenda.

Source: [Adevarul.ro](#)

## **Regional advocacy training and conference: Promoting Health and Rights, Reducing Inequalities**

ASTRA Youth members from Georgia and Russia participated with other youth activists in the advocacy training for youth voices and priorities in EECA region that took place from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May in Sofia, Bulgaria. During the training they had a chance to improve their capacity in the advocacy skills related to Post-2015 Agenda and ICPD. Also, participants of the training prepared advocacy messages with youth priorities: education and meaningful youth participation, which were presented to the parliamentarians during *Promoting Health and Rights, Reducing Inequalities Towards Better Sexual and Reproductive Health Outcomes* conference that was held by UNFPA EECARO from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> May. During the conference ASTRA Youth members participated in the working groups focused on Sexual and Reproductive Health of key populations at higher risk of HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Youth Age. Georgian representative highlighted the issues that young people are facing in rural areas, especially such problem as access to education and SRH youth friendly services. Russian advocate was calling for the importance of providing more visibility for transgender youth population by implementing the practices of empowerment and investing in the research on this topic.

Youth advocates were fighting hard to include youth priorities and identify the main problems of youth from EECA region at the conference. We hope that parliamentarians will hear voices of young people from the different regions and include them in SRHR priorities in their countries. The conference concluded with an adoption of **Sofia Declaration of Commitment**, calling on governments to prioritize young people's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. The document is accessible [here](#).

**Source:** [ASTRA Youth](#)

## **Young Leaders conference in Moldova**

More than 50 young parliamentarians, representatives of governments, private sector, journalists and civil society activists attended the **'Young Leaders for Population and Development'** conference, which took place on 11-12 May in Chisinau, Moldova. The conference aimed to gather young leaders from diverse sectors to discuss the progress made since the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) and identify the remaining gaps that need to be addressed. The two-day debates focused on population issues: migration, population ageing, fertility, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and gender equality.

First day of the conference was concentrated on assessment of progress in population dynamics in the last 20 years. Participants were discussing in working groups innovative solutions for burning issues in the area of population dynamics, SRHR, gender equality and meaningful youth participation. The regional focus was also raised at the overview of ICPD for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and debates on controversies around issues of population and development. Conference participants had also the opportunity to visit institutions working on population and development in Moldova: youth friendly clinic Neovita, HIV/SRH centre 'Positive Initiative' and Gender Equality centre. On the second day the sociological review of population dynamics was presented, paying attention to reasons for

low fertility rates. Following panel discussions regarded the contribution of media, private sector and young leaders to the advancement of the ICPD programme.

ASTRA Youth members from Poland and Azerbaijan were present at the conference, sharing experiences on youth SRHR in the region, contributing to working groups' and general discussions and raising the importance of meaningful youth participation in policy-making processes.

Source: [ASTRA Youth](#), [UNFPA EECARO](#)

### **IDAHOT Watchdog with ASTRA Youth contribution on LGBTQ youth in Central and Eastern Europe&the Balkans**

In celebration of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT), the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights has launched its 2015 edition of the IDAHOT Watchdog – the youth-authored Coalition's newsletter providing space for young people to share their stories, experiences and appeals. The theme of 2015 IDAHOT Watchdog was *Freedom of Expression* and collected young people's articles and art works related to this topic.

The Watchdog includes ASTRA Youth's coordinator article **"This world cannot handle my true colors": Challenges faced by LGBTQ youth across Central and Eastern Europe & the Balkans**, describing LGBTQ youth realities across the region. The Watchdog is accessible [here](#).

Source: [YCSRR](#)

### **UNFPA Policy briefs on Sexuality Education**

UNFPA in collaboration with BZgA (Federal Centre for Health Education) have launched two policy briefs on sexuality education: **'Sexuality Education: What is it?'** and **'What is its impact?'**. The briefs provide an overview of key issues related to sexuality education, debunk myths, explain its embedment in human rights and prove sexuality education's impact on health and well-being of children and young people. The briefs focus on Europe and Central Asia, but are also relevant for countries outside of these regions.

The publications are available for download [here](#) and [here](#).

Source: [UNFPA EECARO](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SRHR at the European Development Days

A debate during the European Development Days (EDDs) entitled ‘Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights: a prerequisite for youth economic empowerment’ will be held on June 3rd. This session will demonstrate the benefits of advancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights agenda for inclusive growth and sustainable development, and provide concrete policy recommendations on how to achieve this. The event is co-organised by DSW, International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network, Marie Stopes International, United Nations Population Fund, Alianza por la Solidaridad, Countdown 2015 Europe and European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development.

Source: [eudevdays.eu](http://eudevdays.eu)

### AWID Forum 2016

The next AWID Forum will be held on May 5-8, 2016, in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. The goals of the AWID Forum 2016 are to: Celebrate the gains of the past 20 years by diverse social movements and critically analyze the lessons we can carry forward; Assess our current reality in the full diversity of our contexts, to locate opportunities for advancing the rights of women and other oppressed people, as well as the threats and challenges – both new and old – confronting us today; Explore strategies for mobilizing greater solidarity and collective power across diverse movements to push back the forces of oppression and tap into existing opportunities to advance shared visions for a just world; Inspire, energize and renew strength and purpose among activists and advocates from diverse locations and movements.

The call to submit a proposal to organise a session at the 2016 AWID Forum is now open. The deadline for sending applications is June 26th, 2015

Source: [AWID Forum 2016 Official Website](http://AWID Forum 2016 Official Website)

## PUBLICATIONS

### Civil society position paper on EU’s post-2015 strategy

EU governments met to coordinate for the post-2015 negotiation session (as well as the Council Conclusions on the “Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015”, which are also to include a section on accountability) from 18 to 22 May. European civil society came together to address this important meeting. The joint ASTRA, EuroNGOs, Countdown 2015 and IPPF EN position paper is available [HERE](#).

### **State of the world's mothers report 2015**

One of the worst places in the world to be a mother is in an urban slum. The 16th Annual State of the World's Mothers Report delves into a comparison of the health disparities between wealth and poor women and children living in cities around the world. In 2015 more than half of the world's population lives in cities. Unfortunately, a growing proportion of child deaths are occurring within these cities in urban slums.

[Full 78-Page Save the Children Report](#)

[Report Summary](#)

### **Gender as symbolic glue: the position and role of conservative and far right parties in the anti-gender mobilisations in Europe**

This publication is a result of a successful cooperation between the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and the regional gender programme of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) on critically analyzing anti-gender discourses in European far right and conservative party programmes and the role of the respective parties in shaping the discourse and mobilisations. The publication looks at five case studies: Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, France and Germany with the purpose to comparatively examine the commonalities and divergences of this phenomenon, also offering a chronological overview.

[Read the book](#)

### **Amnesty International Report on the state of human rights**

The Amnesty International Report 2014/15 documents the state of human rights in 160 countries and territories during 2014. Some key events from 2013 are also reported. This report also celebrates those who stand up for human rights across the world, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. It represents Amnesty International's key concerns throughout the world, and is essential reading for policymakers, activists and anyone with an interest in human rights. The report mentions the violations of women's reproductive rights in Poland: problems with accessing legal abortion due to conscientious objection regulations and the case of denial of legal termination of pregnancy to a woman whose fetus was diagnosed with a fatal condition.

Access the report [HERE](#).

## **CALL TO ACTION**

### **Amnesty International Campaign**

Endorse the Amnesty International My Body My rights Manifesto defending sexual and reproductive rights [HERE](#).

## **GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

### **Organizational Development Grants to Think Tanks**

The Open Society Think Tank Fund requests proposals for organizational development grants from independent, multi-issue think tanks working in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine. For more information on the process and the eligibility criteria click [HERE](#).

## **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  
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Sarajevo Open Center  
Croatia - B.a.b.e. (Be Active, Be Emancipated)  
Croatia - CESI - Center for Education and Counseling of Woman  
Croatia - Women's Room  
Georgia – Real People, Real Visio  
Georgia – HERA XXI  
Georgia - Women's Center  
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 - Novgorod 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

Prepared by Marta Szostak

Supported by the [Sigrid Rausing Trust](#)

ASTRA Secretariat  
Federation for Women and Family Planning  
Nowolipie 13/15, 00-150 Warsaw, Poland  
ph/fax 48.22.635 9395, [federa@astra.org.pl](mailto:federa@astra.org.pl)  
[www.astra.org.pl](http://www.astra.org.pl)

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