



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

May 28th - International Day of Action for Women's Health. Launch of the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), every 8 minutes a woman in a developing country dies of complications arising from an unsafe abortion. Every year, worldwide, about 42 million women with unintended pregnancies choose abortion, and nearly half of these procedures, 20 million, are unsafe.

On the International Day of Action for Women's Health, the International Consortium for Medical Abortion has launched the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion. ASTRA Network proudly joins the campaign. We believe in and advocate for safe and legal abortion as a woman's human right. Women must be able to take decisions about their own bodies and health care free from coercion: this includes the decision to carry a pregnancy to term or seek an abortion. No woman should be obliged to continue an unwanted pregnancy. Women's human rights should be respected, protected and fulfilled. These include women's right to life, the highest attainable standard of health, bodily integrity, the benefits of scientific progress, and to information, privacy, freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and equality and non-discrimination. The failure to give women access to safe abortion puts these rights at risk.

The aims of the campaign are to (1) build an international campaign to promote universal access to safe, legal abortion as a women's health and human rights issue; (2) support women's autonomy to make their own decisions whether and when to have children and have access to the means of acting on those decisions without risk to their health and lives.

Read more about this campaign and get involved here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CHH62F5>

REGIONAL UPDATES

2nd UPR of Poland. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism was created by the UN general Assembly in order to support the activities of the Human Rights Council. It involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States. In May Poland was subjected to the mechanism for the second time. The procedure consisted of the presentation of the governmental report by the representatives of the Polish Government. The delegates responded to written and oral questions of member states's delegations. Many of questions regarded issues violence against women and children as well homophobia and xenophobia. ASTRA Network welcomes written and oral questions posed by delegates of Norway, Sweden, Slovenia, who addressed the problem of restrictive abortion law and lack of legal framework that would enable women to access even lawful abortions due to abuse of conscientious clause and lack of complaint procedure against it.

More:<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2012/05/upr-report-of-poland-13th-universal-periodic-review.html>

EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine. The EURO2012 soccer competitions will be opening for the region in Poland and Ukraine. Hundreds of thousands of fans are expected to flood in for Euro 2012, which kicks off on June 8 in Warsaw, capital of co-host Poland, and ends with the final in Kiev on July 1. Feminist and SRHR activists from the region are concerned about risk of forced prostitution and human trafficking related to big sporting events. Various initiatives headed at disseminating knowledge about safe sexual behaviours are organized in both Poland and Ukraine in order to warn that Euro 2012 could see a rise in sex tourism. Mindful of the problem, European football's governing body UEFA has launched a campaign targeted at fans who have sex — not just with prostitutes — urging them to use condoms. “Show HIV and AIDS the red card. The HIV virus doesn't play fair, so you have to,” it says. Polish health officials say they will distribute free condoms to hundreds of thousands of fans attending Euro 2012 as part of the safe sex campaign. The “Fair Play” campaign advocating the use of condoms will be held in all four Euro 2012 cities in the country.

Source: www.federa.org.pl

The EU-mandated licensing of the abortion pill reopens abortion debate in Hungary. Although Hungarian National Pharmaceutical Institute registered the pill on May 17, in line with the code that is binding on EU member states, the governmental officials informed that the registration does not mean that the pill will be allowed for use, and that the pill will not be released commercially in Hungary. The governmental campaign against the abortion pill is a concealed effort to restrict abortion. Abortion is currently legal in Hungary, in spite of the fact that the new Hungarian Constitution adopted last year, states that life should be protected from the moment of conception and despite right-wing parties' effort to increase birth rate.

Source: PATENT

Anti-choice opposition in Latvia. ASTRA's member organization from Latvia, Ppapardes Zieds, informed that there have been several events organized by anti-choice opposition in Latvian Parliament since April. The outcome of anti-choice efforts is a project to extend waiting period (currently 72 hours) up to 2 weeks and impose obligatory counseling before abortion. The activities of anti-choice opposition has been supported by the representatives of the Hungarian Ministry on Youth, Family and Social Affairs whose visit in the Parliament focused on the protection of foetal life that was included in the text of the new Hungarian Constitution. Our informants expect that these developments will lead to the opening of the debate on current law regulating access to abortion services in Latvia.

Source: <http://www.papardeszieds.lv/>

Attacks on LGBT activists in Kiev. Attacks on gay activists in the Ukraine have drawn attention to the worsening situation for LGBT people in the former Soviet country. Increased hooliganism and the "gay gag" law currently before the parliament in Kiev has made the country the focus of human rights groups worldwide. On May 20th, the head of Gay Forum in Ukraine, Sviatoslav Sheremet, and fellow Pride organizer Maksym Kasianchuk held a press conference to address the cancellation of their parade by police. During the press conference, the activists were attacked by masked men with pepper spray. Shermet was beaten, kicked, and stomped on by masked thugs in the chaos that ensued when neo-Nazi hooligans "spread throughout the city and began to attack people". The parade planned for the May 20th, was cancelled by the police under the pretext of "protecting participants' safety". The attacks have drawn attention to the so-called "Gay Gag Law" that is currently before the Ukraine parliament. The law, currently under debate in Ukraine's parliament, will make it illegal to "promote homosexuality" in public.

More: <http://www.2bmag.com/2012/05/attacks-and-homophobic-law-plague-ukrainian-lgbts-8409>

40 arrested in banned Moscow Pride march. In spite of being banned for the seventh year in a row, gay activists in Moscow tried once again to hold a Pride march on May 27th. The small group was accosted orthodox anti-gay hoodlums and rough-handled by the police. An estimated 40 people were arrested in total. When a small group of activists decided to brave the official ban on gay Pride demonstrations, they found themselves quickly attacked by religious demonstrators who showed up to cause trouble. In recent months, Russia has been the locus of some severely anti-gay policy decisions. A bill currently before the Duma would impose fines on anyone found guilty of spreading LGBT "propaganda" to minors. St. Petersburg, Russia's second largest city, has already passed a similar law at the municipal level.

Source: <http://www.2bmag.com/2012/05/40-arrested-in-banned-moscow-pride-march-8384>

United Nations advocates urge Moldova to protect Roma women's rights. A group of United Nations independent human rights experts urged the Government of Moldova to ensure the implementation of the country's non-discrimination legislation to accelerate progress on gender equality and ensure the protection of women's rights. The group visited Moldova for 10 days in May, where it met with Government officials, representatives of the legislative and judicial branches, the national human rights institution, civil society organizations and religious institutions, as well as women of the Roma community. "We call on the Moldovan authorities to strengthen institutional and financial mechanisms to ensure coherent and effective implementation of the legal framework on equality between men and women," the head of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women in law and practice, Kamala Chandrakirana, said in the OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights news release.

Source: <http://womennewsnetwork.net/>

European Parliament strongly condemns homophobic laws and discrimination in Europe. With a large majority (430 for, 105 against), the European Parliament has adopted a resolution to condemn homophobic laws and discrimination in Europe and to call on EU member states to consider giving access to cohabitation, registered partnerships or marriage to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. For the first time since the last European elections, all five mainstream political groups co-authored the text, including centre-right EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL. The resolution “strongly condemns any discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity”. The resolution particularly condemns recent laws or proposals in EU countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary) and Council of Europe Member States Russia, Ukraine and Moldova, making it a penal or criminal offence to talk positively about homosexuality in public. These laws and proposals consider “gay propaganda” any support, tolerance or acceptance of LGBT people. They have already been used to arrest and fine citizens, and legitimise homophobia and sometimes violence, as was the case in Kiev and Saint Petersburg.

Source:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20120523IPR45696/html/Parliament-strongly-condemns-homophobic-laws-and-violence-in-Europe>

GLOBAL UPDATES

Rio+20. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 12-22 June 2012. World leaders will gather together for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil -- to make commitments for securing a sustainable future. Referred to as Rio+20, the conference comes 20 years after the historic Earth Summit of 1992, which set the framework for sustainable development; with its 3 dimensions: environmental, social and economic and with a strong role for women as confirmed in Rio Principle 20! Rio+20 marks the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was also held in Rio in 1992 (as well as the 40 years anniversary of the 1972 Stockholm Summit and the 10th anniversary of the 2002 Johannesburg Summit). In the Rio Declaration (1992) it is recognized that "Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development." Although women throughout the world are key actors in maintaining the sustaining livelihoods and welfare of their families and communities, and in making a transition to a more equitable and sustainable world, twenty years after the first Rio conference, great social and economic inequities still remain. These inequities especially affect women and children, who make up the majority of those living in poverty. Rio+20 is a major chance to ensure that our demands are recognized by governments and policymakers and that remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development can be assessed and acted upon.

In order to express your support and voice your expectations regarding the conference, you can take part in the Global Women Rio+20 Survey.

More: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&nr=976&type=230&menu=38>

The Kuala Lumpur Call to Action. More than 120 activists, advocates and representatives from CSOs across movements and generations from 27 countries in Asia and the Pacific gathered in Kuala Lumpur from May 2-4 have spoken! The Kuala Lumpur Call to Action outlines our 12-point Call to governments, international organisations, including UN agencies, development partners and other duty bearers, for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for sustainable development. The participants of the meeting also formed the Asia-Pacific Partnership for SRHR

and Sustainable Development to ensure the action-oriented follow-up of the meeting. This Partnership will take forward the youth, sub-regional and regional advocacy action plans developed at the meeting to take the SRHR agenda in the Asia-Pacific region forward in the lead up to 2014/2015.

More: http://arrow.org.my/APNGOs/KL_Call_to_Action.pdf

„Trends in maternal mortality: 1990 to 2010” - New Estimates Show Fewer Women are Dying in Pregnancy and Childbirth. The number of women dying of pregnancy and childbirth-related complications has almost halved in 20 years, according to new estimates released by the World Health Organisation, United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the World Bank. ”I am very pleased to see that the number of women dying in pregnancy and childbirth continues to decline. This shows that the enhanced effort of countries, supported by UNFPA and other development partners, is paying off. But we can't stop here. Our work must continue to make every pregnancy wanted and every childbirth safe,” said Dr Babatunde Osotimehin, executive director of UNFPA. The report “Trends in maternal mortality: 1990 to 2010”, shows that from 1990 to 2010, the annual number of maternal deaths dropped from more than 543,000 to 287,000 - a decline of 47 per cent. While substantial progress has been achieved in almost all regions, many countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, will fail to reach the Millennium Development Goal target of reducing maternal death by 75 per cent from 1990 to 2015.

More: <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/mothers/MMEstimates2012>

IPCI - Policymakers Recommit to Unfinished Agenda of Landmark Cairo Population Conference. Over 200 MPs from 107 different parliaments who are committed to protecting the reproductive wellbeing of women and girls met in Istanbul under the auspices of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in order to discuss the strategies that are urgently required to speed up the achievement of the ICPD Programme of Action. The participants from 110 countries reaffirmed today their support to the principles and goals of the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), emphasizing their continued centrality to efforts to reduce poverty and safeguard people’s health and rights, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. The delegates committed themselves to its unfinished plan by unanimously adopting the Istanbul Declaration of Commitment. In it, and under the theme, *Keeping Promises — Measuring Results*, they determined to advocate for increased national and external funding for the entire implementation of the ICPD agenda in order to achieve access to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning. They pledged to support policies that give special attention to the specific concerns and needs of young people by promoting and protecting their right to “access good quality education at all levels, health, sexual and reproductive services, including comprehensive sexuality education,” and to adopt measures to prevent all types of exploitation and abuse against them. Finally, delegates decided to build a global network of ICPD supporters, and to ensure that “ICPD’s continuing and emerging priorities and concerns are reflected in the ICPD Beyond 2014 discussions and reporting.” They also called upon the United Nations General Assembly “to play a key role in building support for the ICPD Programme of Action,” and committed to holding themselves accountable for reporting on the follow-up to the IPCI commitments.

The declaration will be soon published on the conference’s website: www.ipci2012.org.

UN Women announces members of Global Civil Society Advisory Group. UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet announced the members of her Global Civil Society Advisory Group that will facilitate regular consultations and dialogue between civil society and UN Women. “I am delighted that a group of outstanding international women’s rights advocates and

experts on gender issues have agreed to serve on my Global Civil Society Advisory Group. They will play an important consulting role, and provide strategic perspectives on advocacy on gender equality and women's empowerment and on UN Women's thematic priorities," said Ms. Bachelet.

The establishment of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Groups at the global, regional and national levels was announced earlier this year at the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Global Group appointed by the Executive Director is based on wide consultation with civil society networks and nominations from civil society organizations. All members have proven track records of work in areas related to gender equality and women's empowerment, and bring diverse experience and expertise to the group. Members include grassroots, rural and community-based leaders, leaders of indigenous people's groups, feminist scholars, human rights lawyers, and male leaders working on gender and women's rights issues. The main objective of this Group is dialogue and engagement to advance global goals of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Group serves as a consultative forum for UN Women.

More: <http://www.unwomen.org/2012/05/un-women-announces-members-of-global-civil-society-advisory-group/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Summer School: Knowledge Networking and Capacity Building Program on Engendering Macroeconomics and International Economics. This program aims to facilitate the integration of gender perspective into macroeconomic research and policy formulation. The purpose of the program is to continue to build upon and expand the knowledge network of economists working on gender, macroeconomics and macroeconomic policy formulation. Key activities of the 2012 program consist of a) an intensive Summer Institute to be held in Krakow between July 17th and 26th, and b) an international symposium to be held in Krakow on July 28 and 29th on "Economic Crisis in Europe: Towards Gender-Equitable Macroeconomic Policy-making and Economic Governance".

See www.genderandmacro.org for details.

More information: www.gem-europe.eu

Global Family Planning Summit, July, London. The event will aim to generate unprecedented political commitment and resources from developing countries, donors, the private sector, civil society and other partners to meet the family planning needs of women in the world's poorest countries by 2020.

More: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/Latest-news/2012/Family-planning-UK-to-host-summit-with-Gates-Foundation/>

Dignity and Human Rights: The Missing Dialogue. PWESCR, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Portugal in Geneva, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Amnesty International, WUNRN and Worldwide Organization for Women, invites you to a side event on Dignity and Human Rights: the Missing Dialogue, during the UN Human Rights Council, Session 20 on June 20th from 13:45 to 14:45 PM in Geneva.

More info: <http://www.awid.org/Library/UN-HR-Council>

PUBLICATIONS

Safe Abortion: technical and policy guidance for health systems (2012). On May 23, His

Excellency Mr. Roderick van Schreven, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Dr. Mike Mbizvo, World Health Organization (WHO) Director of the Department of Reproductive Health and Research (RHR) including the Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP), held a luncheon to celebrate the 40th anniversary of HRP and to underscore the crucial role for development of sexual and reproductive health and rights. During the event, WHO provided a first look at the much anticipated 2nd edition of *Safe abortion: technical and policy guidance for health systems*—a guideline that aims to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes and increase access to reproductive health through improved quality of care. The new safe abortion guidance, which will be released publicly in the coming weeks, provides a framework for health providers and policymakers to improve service delivery and legal environments to protect women's health and rights worldwide.

Updated "Safe abortion: technical and policy guidance for health systems" will be available soon on this link:

http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/unsafe_abortion/9789241548434/en/.

Misoprostol for all women seeking abortion? A. Templeton, Lancet. 2012 May 12;379(9828):1817-24. The article on drug-induced abortion in the latest issue of Lancet.

More: <http://www.1000jf.com/?mod=news&code=frame&id=4411>

Amnesty International. The State of the World's Human Rights. Annual Report 2012. Gender-based violence and violations of the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls remained serious concern in 2012, according to the report.

More: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/annual-report/2012/press-release>

TAKE ACTION!

The Paper Doll Campaign – we need 30 000 dolls by July 27th! Our friend Zawadi Smartlove needs you to make a statement for female condoms and break the Guinness World Record! Female condoms offer protection against unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS, and they are women-initiated. Do you want women everywhere to have access to female condoms? Write your message on the Facebook page or on <http://www.sign4femalecondoms.org/>

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