

BULLETIN

SRHR NEWS FROM CENTRAL
AND EASTERN EUROPE
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Burning issue:
**Where is the Money for
Movements in Central Eastern
Europe, Caucasus, and Central
and North Asia (CEECCNA)?**

astra
network

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BURNING ISSUE

Where is the Money for Movements in Central Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central and North Asia (CEECCNA)?

ASTRA Network is pleased to share the launch of a groundbreaking new report from the Dalan Fund, titled **Growing Against All Odds: Mapping Funding for Intersectional Organizing in the CEECCNA Regions (2019–2023)**.

This report presents the first comprehensive mapping of funding dedicated to intersectional movements across Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central and North Asia. It focuses on how resources are reaching feminist, LGBTQIA+, Indigenous, disability justice, and other social justice movements in the region, and where critical funding gaps remain.

The report is based on data gathered from both funders and intersectional social justice movements, complemented by desk research, and highlighting trends, challenges, and opportunities in the resourcing of civil society.

It includes key findings on funding realities of CEECCNA organizers across geographies and movements from 2019 to 2023, offers analysis of regional disparities, and proposes concrete recommendations to ensure more just, equitable, and long-term support for grassroots organizing.

For ASTRA and its members, the report confirms a persistent reality: grassroots and social justice movements, including those advancing SRHR, continue to be chronically underfunded, even as they operate in ever more restrictive and high-risk contexts. In fact, the average annual budget size for organizations in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and North Asia (excluding Ukraine) between 2019 and 2023 was only \$11,000–30,000, underscoring the scale of under-resourcing faced by the region's civil society. The research emphasizes the need for core, flexible, and sustained fund-

ing, especially for organizations led by those most affected by structural inequalities and rights rollbacks.

The voices of activists featured in the report offer important insights into how movements continue to organize, adapt, and resist, often with very limited financial support. Their experiences reflect the resilience and determination of civil society across the region.

We invite you to read and share this important report. It is available on the Dalan Fund website: [Read the full report](#)

ASTRA remains committed to advocating for stronger, more accountable funding practices that reflect the realities of movement work across our region. We welcome this report as a critical tool for shaping conversations with donors, allies, and policymakers.

For further information or to connect with activists and organizations working in the SRHR field in the region, please contact us at feder@astra.org.pl.

ASTRA Joins the SexSense Network

We're proud to announce that ASTRA has joined SexSense, a dynamic European network uniting NGOs, researchers, public institutions, and education professionals working to advance comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive rights across Europe.

Led by [CESIE ETS](#), the SexSense network promotes evidence-based, intersectional, and inclusive approaches to sexuality education. Through collaboration and EU-funded ini-

atives, the network aims to drive meaningful change and ensure that everyone has access to accurate, respectful, and empowering information about their bodies, relationships, and rights.

By joining SexSense, ASTRA brings a strong regional perspective and years of advocacy experience to the table—working together to strengthen SRHR in Europe and beyond.

Follow the movement at sex-sense.eu

ASTRA Network: SRHR Must Be Central to the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030

The **ASTRA Network** has formally contributed to the European Commission's consultation on the **EU Gender Equality Strategy (2026–2030)**, emphasizing that **sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)** must be recognized as fundamental to achieving gender equality across the EU. In their submission, ASTRA highlights growing threats in Central and Eastern Europe—from legal barriers to abortion, regressive sex education campaigns, and discrimination against marginalized groups like Roma and LGBTQ+ people—calling for a robust EU response.

Key demands include:

- **Monitoring & enforcement** of SRHR across member states via tools like the Rule of Law Mechanism and integrating SRHR indicators into the Gender Equality Index.
- **Policy guidance** supporting legal, barrier-free access to abortion and contraception; comprehensive sexuality education; and respectful, patient-centered maternal healthcare.
- **Enhanced support** for civil society, including flexible

funding for SRHR defenders through CERV, MFF, and emergency protection mechanisms.

- **EU legal compliance**, including enforcement of victims' rights laws and addressing violations of the Race Equality Directive.
- **SRHR in external action**, ensuring that enlargement, Global Gateway, and development policies enhance SRHR support and cross-border access for women and girls from restrictive regimes.
- **Strategic integration**, integrating intersectionality in strategy design and enabling structured consultations with SRHR civil society, including from candidate and neighboring countries.

Gender equality cannot be achieved without full respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. EU leadership must extend beyond its borders to protect SRHR throughout the accession region.

[Read the full ASTRA statement here](#)

Uniting for Impact: ASTRA Network Meeting 2025 in Kraków

The ASTRA Network gathered in Kraków, Poland, for its 2025 Annual Meeting — a vibrant and collaborative space that brought together member organizations and allies from across Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Over two days of intensive discussion, peer exchange, and collective planning, participants reflected on key achievements, shared challenges, and helped shape ASTRA's strategic direction for 2025–2026. The program featured member updates, a World Café on best practices, workshops on advocacy at the EU and UN levels, and a focused session on shrinking civic space and the rise of anti-gender movements in the region.

A highlight of the meeting was the launch of ASTRA's strategy consultation process, laying the groundwork for a renewed regional vision. Empowerment and self-defense sessions, as well as interviews for ASTRA's upcoming documentary film, added personal and creative dimensions to the gathering.

The meeting reaffirmed ASTRA's role as a vital platform for collaboration, solidarity, and action in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Politics of Feminism: Between Weaponisation and Resistance

Guest contribution by Julia Mazurkiewicz*

Across the world today, we are witnessing a growing backlash against what has long been labelled “feminist issues”. Sexuality, reproductive rights, and protection from domestic violence are increasingly politicised and weaponised. In many countries across the region where ASTRA operates, this backlash is reflected in the electoral successes of far-right parties that openly oppose feminism.

In Poland, where I come from, these issues came to the forefront following the recent elections and the victory of Karol Nawrocki, technically an independent candidate but practically representing the PIS (Law and Justice Party).

The victory of this candidate represents a major setback for feminist communities, who had fought hard for change and played a key role in the government shift during the 2023 elections, hoping for a more progressive agenda.

However, in these elections, feminist demands were sidelined, since the president-elect is openly opposed to their cause and holds veto power, further limiting their influence.

The election was extremely close, with around 10 million votes for the more progressive side and just over 10 million for the regressive candidate, highlighting a deeply divided society. These developments have left feminist communities increasingly frustrated and disillusioned. The strategies that once seemed effective now appear insufficient, and there is growing concern about what the future holds.

Simultaneously, support for the far right continues to grow. Candidates from the far-right Confederation party, such as Sławomir Mentzen and Grzegorz Braun, respectively received 15% and 6% of the votes, openly promoting anti-feminist agendas, referring to rape as a “discomfort for women” and defending a “traditional” heteronormative family model.

What Does This Mean for Women? It means that women’s rights are once again under threat. Hard-won protections, including those for sexual and reproductive rights, are being rolled back. We see this vividly in debates surrounding abortion and contraceptives. Suddenly, everyone has an opinion, and often not a supportive one.

The world appears increasingly divided into “us” versus “them.” The polarisation and politicisation of feminist issues are intensifying, hostility is mounting, and only a few truly understand what all of this means. So, what is this really about? Why did feminism and its associated demands become again some of the most politicised topics in the world?

Feminists — Who Are They? Who Is Feminism For? When we hear the word “feminism,” some people picture angry, protesting women demanding more rights, calling for workplace equality, access to abortion or sexual freedom.

Or perhaps the image that comes to mind is a woman in red lipstick, a corporate executive giving workshops on “female leadership.” A woman, a “feminist” who made it to the top. Is that what feminism is — a fight for women to “live like men,” or even better?

If feminism is serving only women, then at whose expense? Who will lose from women getting more rights?

The dominant portrayal of feminism as a “women vs. men” movement fuels the backlash. Young men, especially those aged 18–30, are increasingly drawn to anti-feminist parties. Meanwhile, women in the same age group overwhelmingly support progressive, left-wing parties. Why such a divide?

Perhaps the answer lies in a simplified, misleading narrative. If feminism is portrayed as serving to uplift only women, it’s no wonder that men feel excluded or even threatened.. But is this really what feminism is about?

Nothing could be more wrong! Feminism should not divide people into those who “climb to the top” and those who help them get there. It is about rights for women, but not only. It is not the women with the red lipstick, as women’s success in a boardroom does not automatically translate into equality for women. So, who is feminism really for? Who gains and who is left behind?

Or Maybe... Feminism Is for Everyone?

Let's return to the basics. US-American Black feminist thinker bell hooks offered a simple, universal definition of feminism:

"Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression."

It's not an ideology of "women versus men," but a struggle against all forms of discrimination. Contemporary feminism — especially in its intersectional form — makes this clear: it's about equality for all, regardless of gender, identity, orientation, class, or background. It's about enabling everyone to live authentically, with dignity, and on equal terms — where men don't have to be "tough" and women don't have to "be more like men" to succeed.

It is important to acknowledge the roots of feminism — the tireless fight of countless feminists, often invisible and unrecognized, that paved the way for the inclusive, intersectional understanding we have today. Their hard work translated into significant progress, including landmark achievements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which remains one of the most comprehensive and progressive global blueprints for achieving gender equality.

So Why Are So Many People Still Against Feminism? Because the feminism that dominates media narratives has been turned into a political product. It's been simplified, chopped into slogans, and marketed as a movement of liberal elites fighting for privileges, not justice. This strengthens the image of neoliberal feminism, focused on individual success while ignoring systemic, class-based, racial, and global inequalities.

Feminism Has Always Faced Internal Struggles
From its beginnings, feminist movements have grappled with the question of representation: who is included, and whose voices are heard? Early waves of feminism mainly focused on the experiences and demands of white, middle-class, heterosexual women, while sidelining the realities of queer women, women of colour, working-class women, migrants, and others. Feminists in the Global South, too, frequently found their priorities overlooked or dismissed by dominant narratives.

Over time, feminism has expanded and transformed. Many scholars and theorists challenged fixed notions of feminism, opening up space for more inclusive understandings of identity and power. Today, feminism continues to evolve, shaped by intersectional perspectives that expose how systems of oppression are interconnected. Feminism is no longer, and never should have been, just about one group. It's about dismantling injustice in all its forms.

The Takeaway. As anti-feminist narratives grow louder and more politically influential — particularly in the context of rising far-right movements — the core values of feminism are being distorted, co-opted, and weaponised. What began as a grassroots, justice-driven movement is too often repackaged in simplistic, depoliticised slogans or used as a tool for exclusion and division.

The backlash we are witnessing is not just about disagreement — it is a calculated effort to undermine solidarity, erase feminist histories, and pit people against each other. In this climate, it is essential to remember that feminism was never about power over others — it is about liberation for all.

We must resist the framing of feminism as an elite or divisive agenda and reassert its roots: a movement to end all forms of sexist oppression and exploitation. That means reclaiming its language, its vision, and its power – refusing to let it be stripped of its meaning or used against the very people it seeks to empower.

Feminism is not a trend, nor a threat. It is a living, evolving struggle for justice – and it belongs to all who believe in equality, dignity, and freedom.

***Julia Mazurkiewicz** is a Master's student in Gender Studies at Central European University, specializing in reproductive rights and gender policy. She is currently researching the strategies of pro-abortion NGOs in Poland in the context of democratic backsliding and polarization. Julia holds a BA in Political Science from Leiden University. She has worked with the Federation for Women and Family Planning (Federa), ASTRA Network, and WAVE, focusing on reproductive justice, gender based violence and gender-sensitive advocacy. She is passionate about advancing feminist policies and shaping inclusive social change.

New Members Join the ASTRA Network

We are delighted to welcome two new organizations to the ASTRA Network, both bringing decades of expertise and commitment to advancing gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

[Women's Issues Information Centre \(WIIC\), Lithuania](#). Since 1996, WIIC has been a driving force for gender equality—providing support for survivors of domestic violence, delivering training for companies, youth, and professionals, and working tirelessly to ensure no one

faces discrimination based on gender.

[Tajik Family Planning Association \(TFPA\), Tajikistan](#). Established in 2002, TFPA has been at the forefront of SRHR advocacy and service delivery—supporting marginalized communities, advancing rights-based policies, and expanding education and awareness for youth and women. As a full member of IPPF EN, TFPA adds strong regional and international expertise to the Network.

We look forward to collaborating with WIIC and TFPA to continue building a more equal, just, and empowered future across Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Accredited Training on Medical Abortion Soon to Launch in Armenia

With the initiative and support of the Women's Resource Center, a group of OB-GYN specialists has developed a new clinical guideline on medical abortion. While not fully aligned, the guideline reflects many key principles of the WHO's Safe Abortion Guidelines, marking a significant step toward improving reproductive healthcare in Armenia.

In June, the Ministry of Health officially approved the guideline. The Women's Resource Center is now working toward its accreditation for use in OB-GYN training programs. Once accredited, the guideline will form the basis of a certified course aimed at expanding knowledge and skills among healthcare providers.

This initiative will contribute to making medical abortion more accessible, safe, and rights-based for women across Armenia.

The Guideline is available in Armenian: <http://bit.ly/41ujYs6>

[The Women's Resource Center](#)

Over 78,000 Abortions Reported in Azerbaijan in 2024: Official Health Statistics Released

According to the **Ministry of Health of the Republic of Azerbaijan**, official statistics on abortions by age group for 2024 have been released, as reported by the State Statistics Committee.

During the year, a total of **78,245 abortions** were officially registered in the country. The age distribution was as follows:

- 15–17 years – 72 cases
- 18–19 years – 2,679 cases
- 20–24 years – 13,054 cases
- 25–29 years – 23,468 cases
- 30–34 years – 23,645 cases
- 35–49 years – 15,239 cases

Of the total number, **668 abortions** were carried out through medication. Importantly, **2,335 abortions** were recorded as the termination of a **first pregnancy**, highlighting the prevalence of early reproductive health challenges among young women.

Legal Framework: Are Abortions Permitted in Azerbaijan?

Yes. Under Azerbaijani legislation, abortion at the request of a pregnant woman is permitted during the **first 12 weeks of pregnancy**. Beyond this period, pregnancy termination is only

legally allowed under specific medical or social grounds.

Maximum Time Limits for Abortion

- **Up to 12 weeks** – abortion is permitted **at the woman's request**.
- **Up to 22 weeks** – abortion may be performed for **social reasons** (such as cases involving rape, family hardship, or other serious circumstances defined by law).
- **At any stage of pregnancy** – abortion is allowed for **medical reasons**, particularly in cases where the mother's life or health is at risk, or when severe fetal abnormalities are diagnosed.

Decline in Births to Underage Mothers

Alongside abortion statistics, the State Statistics Committee also reported on births to underage mothers. In **2024, 1,279 children were born to mothers under the age of 18**, marking a significant decrease compared to **1,742 in 2023** and **2,011 in 2022**.

This downward trend suggests gradual progress in addressing early pregnancies, though experts emphasize that further efforts in reproductive health education and support remain crucial.

Infant Mortality in Azerbaijan: Persistent Challenges

Infant mortality remains one of the most pressing public health concerns in Azerbaijan. In **2024, 549 stillbirths** were recorded, and **2,519 children died before reaching one year of age—1,449 boys and 1,070 girls**. Of these, **770 deaths occurred within the first seven days of life**, underscoring the risks of the perinatal period.

By place of residence, **1,420 infant deaths** were recorded before age one—**751 in urban areas and 669 in rural areas**. In total, **1,745 children under five** died during the year.

According to the **UN Inter-Agency Group on Child Mortality Estimation**, Azerbaijan's **under-five mortality rate is 19 per 1,000 live births**, the highest among European and neighboring countries. For comparison: Moldova – 15, Turkey – 13, Armenia – 10, Georgia – 9, Ukraine – 8, Romania – 7, Bulgaria – 6, Russia – 5.

Main Causes

- **Premature births** and underdeveloped organ systems.
- **Complications during childbirth**, including oxygen deprivation and traumatic labor.
- **Congenital anomalies** of the heart, brain, and other vital organs.
- **Maternal health conditions** such as hypertension, diabetes, and infections (HIV/AIDS, syphilis, COVID-19).
- **Early and high-risk pregnancies**, especially where access to prenatal care is limited.

Outlook

Despite improvements in healthcare, Azerbaijan continues to face **serious systemic challenges** in maternal and child health. Experts stress the urgent need for a **comprehensive national strategy** to strengthen perinatal care, improve management of premature births, expand reproductive health education, and reduce urban–rural disparities.

[Women and Modern World Social Charitable Center](#)

Young Voices Lead the Conversation on CSE in Georgia

Young people today live online — and that's exactly where they want to learn about the issues that matter most to them. To better understand how to reach them with comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), Association HERA XXI carried out a social media review. The goal was simple: to find out where young people seek information, what formats capture their attention, and which topics they care about most: Short, engaging videos, Interactive Q&A sessions, Honest conversations that feel safe, even when anonymous, and most importantly — content that speaks directly to their realities.

These insights didn't stay on paper — they directly shaped the way HERA XXI approached young people online. Guided by what young people asked for, HERA XXI volunteers stepped in front of the camera to create six short podcast-style videos on the topics that are often the hardest to talk about: from communication and consent, to youth-friendly doctors, menstruation and self-care, awkward talks with parents, and even cybersecurity.

Despite the stigma that still surrounds sexuality education, the videos broke through. Shared on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [TikTok](#), they reached more than 165,000 viewers, sparking conversations in the comments and encouraging young people to share their own experiences. A powerful reminder that when young people are given the chance to lead the conversation, even the most “taboo” topics can find an open audience.

[HERA XXI](#)

New Publication from EMMA Association, Hungary: “Supporting Women in Crisis – Responding to the Sexual and Reproductive Needs of Women in Humanitarian Crises”

The EMMA Association has released a compelling, evidence-informed handbook that shines a light on how humanitarian responses can more effectively meet the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, especially in the context of a humanitarian crisis response. Based on EMMA’s humanitarian work in Hungary between 2022 and 2025, this guide blends the descriptions of real-life cases with a trauma-informed, women-centered, feminist methodology.

The handbook:

- Centers women’s lived experiences, especially those of Roma and Ukrainian-speaking refugee women and girls, revealing systemic barriers women face in accessing safe and respectful healthcare.
- Illustrates a women-centered and trauma-informed approach, and the role of peer support in facilitating reproductive justice and informed decision-making.
- Offers a practical methodology for those working with marginalized, underserved communities, covering case management tools—from psychosocial support, legal aid, and supply distribution to a wide range of SRH services, including obstetric care, contraception, safe abortion access.
- Emphasizes strategic program design and advocacy in resource-limited, challenging environments.

This handbook is for everyone working at the intersection of:

- Women’s rights
- Health equity

- Refugee protection
- Roma inclusion
- Feminist humanitarian response

Download the publication [here](#).

We welcome dialogue, collaboration, and feedback. Please reach out to the authors at ivanyi.anna@emmaegyesulet.hu

Kazakhstan Presents Domestic Violence Reforms at the UN Human Rights Council

Geneva, 23 June 2025 – As part of the 59th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the public association Legal Center for Women’s Initiatives “Sana Sezim”, a member of the international ASTRA Network, hosted a side event titled “Combating Domestic Violence in Kazakhstan”. The event took place at the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva.

Since 2020, **Sana Sezim** has held special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), enabling the organization to initiate and host this event on an international platform.

The side event was organized within the framework of a social project by the Center for Civil Initiatives Support and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan titled “**Strengthening Public Accord and National Unity**”. The initiative aimed to present Kazakhstan’s progress in women’s rights protection and to foster international cooperation.

The event brought together a broad range of participants, including representatives of gov-

ernment agencies, civil society, international organizations, academia, and human rights defenders. The central focus was on specific measures undertaken by Kazakhstan to prevent and respond to violence against women and children, as well as legislative reforms aimed at enhancing the protection of survivors.

The event was opened by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who reaffirmed the country's commitment to a zero-tolerance policy on domestic violence and highlighted the protection of women's and children's rights as a key priority of the national human rights institution. Key achievements presented included:

- Criminalization of battery and minor bodily harm;
- Introduction of mandatory psycho-correctional programs for perpetrators;
- Establishment of a specialized police unit, with women comprising 80% of the staff;
- Launch of a national "digital family map";
- Operation of more than 70 crisis centers across the country.

As a result of these efforts, Kazakhstan has recorded a 34% decrease in domestic homicides, a 30% drop in severe bodily injuries, and a 33% decline in moderate injuries. Public trust has also grown significantly, with the number of calls to the national hotline "111" increasing nearly fivefold compared to 2023. The Ombudsperson emphasized that tackling domestic violence requires a long-term, cross-sectoral approach, the involvement of international experts, and regular evaluations of policy effectiveness.

Shakhnosa Khasanova, Director of Sana Sezim and a member of the Human Rights

Commission under the President of Kazakhstan, underscored the importance of civil society's hands-on experience. In her remarks, she outlined the organization's work in providing free legal, psychological, and social support to survivors, as well as conducting training for law enforcement and public sector staff. She also identified several ongoing challenges:

- Unequal access to support services in rural regions;
- Lack of crisis centers in certain areas;
- Potential constraints on NGO activities with the introduction of a licensing system in 2025;
- Delays in state funding, affecting the sustainability of local support services.

Professor Marat Sarsembayev, former member of the UN Human Rights Committee, delivered an expert analysis of Kazakhstan's current legal framework in the context of its international obligations. He highlighted both achievements and areas requiring further attention. In particular, he emphasized the potential accession of Kazakhstan to the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe, calling it a logical step forward that would strengthen international legal guarantees for the protection of women from violence.

The speech by Dr. Muslim Khasenov drew particular attention. He spoke about the "Saltanat" Law, the outcome of a more than seven-year civil society campaign with strong involvement from human rights advocates, NGOs, and experts. Dr. Khasenov stressed the need for effective implementation of the law's provisions. Among the unresolved issues, he pointed to the need for criminal liability for stalking, forced marriage, and sexual harassment. He also shared a more detailed analysis of the remaining legal and practical challenges during the event.

The side event reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to a comprehensive and consistent approach to combating domestic violence. The Legal Center for Women's Initiatives "Sana Sezim" expressed its continued dedication to contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 5.2 and to expanding international partnerships in this field.

[PA LCWI "Sana Sezim"](#)

HERA Activities in North Macedonia: Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Combating Gender-Based Violence

Timely HIV Diagnosis – The Key to a Long and Healthy Life!

From 27 to 30 May, as part of the European Spring Testing Week, HERA organized free, confidential, and safe [HIV and STI testing](#) at the Youth Center "I Want to Know" on Vodno. Early testing enables timely treatment, ensures a better quality of life, and helps prevent the transmission of HIV while the results for syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia are available within just 30 minutes. The testing is anonymous, carried out by trained professionals, and accompanied by personalized counseling on sexual and reproductive health. The initiative is part of a European program aimed at raising awareness about early diagnosis and improving access to testing, with the support of the Ministry of Health.

The Role of Associations in Health Care: A Proposal for Legal Regulation

Developed within the framework of the pro-

ject "Advanced health rights of girls, women and vulnerable groups" and as a result of joint work with ESE, Stronger Together, and the Women's Rights Initiative from Shuto Orizari, HERA published a public policy document "[The Role of Associations in Health Care: A Proposal for Legal Regulation](#)." The document examines the challenges and potentials related to the inclusion of civil society organizations in the health care system in North Macedonia, with a special focus on services for vulnerable and marginalized population groups. It also analyzes the practice of social negotiation, through which the Ministry of Health enters into agreements with associations for the implementation of specific health services, and underscores the need to strengthen this practice through appropriate legal framework. The publication aims to spark public discussion and support the development of a more inclusive and sustainable healthcare system in North Macedonia.

The Interparty Parliamentary Group on HIV and SRH Continues Its Work in the Current Parliamentary Term

On June 12, 2025, the [Interparty Parliamentary Group on HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health \(SRH\)](#), composed of members from nine political parties, resumed its work. The group aims to strengthen parliamentary commitment to HIV and SRH issues through dialogue with civil society organizations and communities. HERA serves as the secretariat, supporting cooperation between the Parliament and the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, while the group continues to promote legislative and financial initiatives to advance the health and reproductive rights of women, girls, and mar-

ginalized communities.



Silence is not an answer, speak up and seek support when you need it!

HERA, in partnership with Centar Municipality in Skopje, provides free services for youth and families, including psychosocial support, drug prevention, professional mental health counseling, and protection against violence. These services respond to concerning data from the HBSC study, which show that 53% of 15-year-old girls and 19% of boys experience depressive moods. As part of its 25th anniversary, HERA supported the creation of a mural at “Kočo Racin” Primary School symbolizing support and the fight against peer and family violence. Through these initiatives, HERA emphasizes the importance of timely support for young people and the role of schools, parents, and communities in creating safe and nurturing environments.

Order a Rapid HIV Test Online

HERA provides the option of HIV [self-testing](#) using a rapid oral test for home-use. Clients can complete a quick online questionnaire in just a few minutes, and order their test directly through the same form. Early testing is key for timely care and health protection. HERA actively promotes this service through influenc-

ers, social media campaigns, and platforms targeting the LGBTQ+ community, ensuring wider access and awareness.



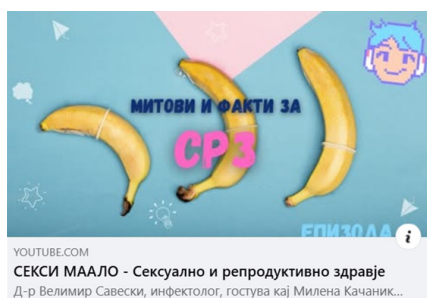
Community Forums to Promote Inclusive Health Care

Three community forums were held on the topic: “[Analysis of the Participation Program for Access to Health Care for Specific Diseases and Health Care for Mothers and Infants in North Macedonia for 2023.](#)” Participants shared personal experiences and challenges, helping to identify barriers and shape more inclusive health services. The forums took place on June 10, 11, and 16, 2025, in Skopje, Kumanovo, and Štip, as part of the project “Advanced Health Rights of Girls, Women, and Vulnerable Groups”, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development through the Civica Mobilitas program and implemented by the partner organizations HERA, ESE, Stronger Together and the Women’s Rights Initiative from Shuto Orizari.



Podcast Sexy Neighbourhood

In the framework of HERA, the youth team produces the podcast Sexy Neighborhood, exploring topics like sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's rights, HIV/AIDS, stigma, hate speech, and youth participation in decision-making. In May, [Dr. Velimir Saveski](#) from MAH joined the show to share insights on protection against STIs, the importance of regular check-ups, and the role of sexual education in maintaining health. In June, the seventh episode featured [peer educator Marija Gjorgievska](#), who offered practical advice on building healthy relationships and responsible behavior, highlighting the value of education and open dialogue among young people.



[HERA](#)

“NOT Indifferent Students” – a nationwide campaign in Poland by the HumanDoc Foundation against peer violence

Peer violence is one of the most serious chal-

lenges facing today's schools. These are no longer “ordinary conflicts” between children that will solve themselves. These are phenomena linked to gender- and age-based violence (GBV) with long-term psychological and social consequences. Exclusion, public humiliation, spreading rumors, and cyberbullying—all these forms of violence erode self-worth, isolate, and can lead to depression, anxiety disorders, and even suicide attempts.

It is no coincidence that the series Adolescence has become one of the most talked-about shows in recent years, including in Poland. It addressed hate and violence within peer groups, showing that young people experience it not only offline but above all in the digital world, where the boundaries between perpetrator and target blur even further. The series drew huge interest because it touched on real experiences of young people—and its reception in Poland showed that the issue of peer violence is close to our students and their families as well. This is further proof of the urgent need for education, systemic response tools, and open conversation about the problem.

For years, the HumanDoc Foundation has worked at the intersection of education, violence prevention, and social inclusion. The organization has run programs supporting refugees and people experiencing domestic violence, and today, in response to growing challenges, it is expanding its activities to the area of peer violence. The nationwide “NOT Indifferent Students” campaign is the result of this strategy: it provides not only educational content but, above all, practical tools for students, teachers, and parents.

As part of the campaign, educational post-

ers (“How to respond to violence against children?”, “Are you a witness to peer violence?”), mini-guides, and a series of publications about so-called red flags—signals in children’s behavior that may indicate someone is experiencing violence—have been created. The publications explain how to recognize them, how to respond, and where to seek support. Thanks to this, schools and families receive concrete, accessible, and vetted tools that enable action before harm becomes irreversible.

The campaign materials are widely shared: through social media, a newsletter, and a dedicated subpage from which they can be downloaded free of charge. Here, HumanDoc draws on its experience and the trust it has built in local communities—particularly in regions where for years it has supported refugees—to reach groups especially vulnerable to exclusion more effectively.

“NOT Indifferent Students” helps create schools that become safe places for every child.

[HumanDoc Foundation](#)

A Rumble Growing in the Shadows: Poland’s Anti-Choice Movement Recent Activity

Since late 2024, Poland has witnessed a further intensification of anti-choice activity, with two of the country’s most entrenched conservative organizations—Fundacja Życie i Rodzina (Life and Family Foundation) and the Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture—at the center of the campaign. Their methods diverge, yet their ambitions remain unified: the dismantling

of reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ protections, and the foundations of a pluralist, secular democracy. These recent months in Poland, a country known as the litmus paper for the far-right activity in the region, reflects a growing trend across Europe—a strategic, well-funded and transnational campaign to reverse decades of progress on gender equality and bodily autonomy. What Poland is experiencing forms part of what experts have identified as a continent-wide shift. According to the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF) and their 2025 report, *The Next Wave: How Religious Extremism Is Reclaiming Power*, Europe is undergoing an orchestrated anti-gender backlash, driven by a coalition of ideologues, political actors, and transnational religious interests. This anti-rights movement has mobilized over \$1.18 billion across the continent between 2019 and 2023, with Poland alone receiving over \$90 million in documented anti-gender funding during that time. The report describes an increasingly professionalized infrastructure: legal foundations disguised as think tanks, media networks channeling ultra-conservative narratives, and Church-organized NGOs offering ideological services under the pretext of care.

Fundacja Życie i Rodzina, led by an anti-abortion activist Kaja Godek, continues to act as the symbolic and tactical face of Poland’s anti-choice movement. In early 2025, it launched a protest campaign against a newly opened meet-up spot for women undergoing a medical abortion in Warsaw. Publicized as a national call to action, the campaign involved daily picketing and emotional appeals coordinated through Catholic and far-right media. This mobilization was a meticulously orchestrated campaign designed to stigmatize abortion and

intimidate. The visual tactics—graphic banners and emotional rhetoric—are as theatrical as they are strategic, evoking shame and fear as tools of persuasion.[\[AL1\]](#)

But Fundacja Życie i Rodzina has not stopped at that, contrarily – the campaign was an interlude to an intensification of the messaging on other areas of reproductive health. Between April and June, it led an aggressive social media campaign targeting in vitro fertilization, portraying it as a form of eugenics through the hashtag #InVitroToSelekcja (#IVFIsSelection). Weekly videos on Facebook and Instagram spread disinformation and amplified moral panic, while petitions circulated to local governments seeking to defund fertility services. This was not mere advocacy but a disinformation strategy dressed as morality, one that preys on anxieties and cloaks its intent in pseudo-scientific authority.

The foundation’s activism also targeted education and cultural spaces. Its “Ambassador of Life” program trained a substantial number of volunteers in ideological mobilization, leading to public demonstrations across Polish cities. Bloody banners depicting dismembered fetuses were not only deployed in Polish but, chillingly, also in Ukrainian—a move signaling that refugee populations are now being drawn into the scope of anti-choice campaigns. An echo of the from the Foundation’s campaign from 2022, when Ukrainian war refugees were handed disinformative leaflets about abortion in Poland as the traumatised women and children had crossed the border seeking safety. Moreover, in June 2025 Życie i Rodzina submitted a request to host a “Stop LGBT” exhibition in the Polish Sejm, an effort to normalize exclusionary ideology within the very heart of

democratic representation. While not associated with Życie i Rodzina personally, it is worth to mention that the infamous Polish far-right MEP, Grzegorz Braun, had destroyed an exhibition dedicated to the LGBTQ+ in Poland in celebration of Pride Month, presented in the Sejm.

While Życie i Rodzina garners attention through street-level spectacle, Ordo Iuris focuses on legal warfare and institutional capture. Since late 2024, it has published a series of ideological policy papers designed to erode democratic norms under the guise of legal reform. Its November 2024 document, a 26-point denunciation of the EU’s Migration Pact, painted humanitarian policy as a threat to Polish sovereignty. In January, the group redirected its critique toward climate policy, framing the European Green Deal as an assault on traditional family life. By mid-year, it escalated further with a 57-page indictment of the Tusk government, accusing it of violating constitutional norms in a move intended to discredit democratic reforms as autocratic overreach.

Beyond publications, Ordo Iuris has moved to restrict personal freedoms through legislation. It issued a legal opinion supporting the right of pharmacists to deny emergency contraception and reintroduced a bill that would eliminate legal gender recognition for minors—a measure backed by 25 MPs. If enacted, it would make legal and medical transitions for youth impossible, part of a broader effort to erase trans people from public life. This strategy of preemptive legalism is central to the anti-rights project: building a normative and institutional landscape hostile to difference, autonomy, and dissent.

In June 2025, *Ordo Iuris* escalated its institutional strategy by publishing *Wielki Reset: Przywrócenie suwerenności państw członkowskich w Unii Europejskiej* (The Great Reset: Reinstating the European Union Member States' Sovereignty), a manifesto co-authored with Hungary's ultraconservative Mathias Corvinus Collegium. The document outlines two radical reform scenarios for dismantling the European Union's current supranational framework. It argues that EU institutions have overstepped their legal mandates, accusing them of ideological colonization and democratic illegitimacy. Through proposals that include eliminating the primacy of EU law, weakening the European Parliament, replacing the European Commission with a technocratic secretariat, and restoring national constitutions as ultimate legal authorities, the report aims to normalize the rejection of European integration as a defense of "sovereignty." This call for a "new Europe" steeped in nationalist governance and ideological rollback reveals *Ordo Iuris*'s ambitions not only to reshape Poland's legal order, but to redefine the architecture of European cooperation itself. The publication marks a significant convergence of Poland's ultra-conservative legal activism with Hungary's authoritarian intellectual export model, framing democratic backsliding as institutional reform.

None of these developments occur in a vacuum. According to The Next Wave report, Poland is but one battleground in a Europe-wide reactionary surge. The movement draws strength from coalitions that span denominations, borders, and party lines. Actors like *Ordo Iuris* are embedded in networks such as the global Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) alliance, which supports affiliated organizations from France to Brazil. The report

also documents how ultra-conservative media platforms, pseudo-academic think tanks, and Church-organized NGOs form an ecosystem designed to launder religious ideology into secular policy.

The rise of such actors is made possible by transnational funding and the co-option of democratic institutions. The largest share of anti-gender funding in Europe—over \$339 million—goes to lobbying organizations, many of which explicitly target reproductive and LGBTQ+ rights. Poland's place in this architecture is both as a recipient and an exporter of regressive strategies. The Rev. Piotr Skar-ga Christian Culture Association, for example, based in Kraków, is a central node in the European TFP network and one of its most influential funders.

This is not simply a cultural shift; it is a strategic, material, and ideological project aimed at consolidating power. It is often cloaked in the language of tradition, family, and freedom, yet what it delivers is coercion, exclusion, and repression. While *Życie i Rodzina* galvanizes public sentiment through moral panic, *Ordo Iuris* crafts the legal scaffolding to enshrine inequality. Together, they are reshaping Poland's cultural and legal landscape in ways that may prove harder to reverse than any singular legislative loss.

Despite the absence of landmark new laws in 2025, the conditions for future repression are being steadily constructed. From legislative drafts to street intimidation, these organizations are creating a climate in which repressive laws become thinkable, palatable, and eventually inevitable. It is a war of attrition: waged in the courts, on the airwaves, in schools, and

on the sidewalks.

At the Foundation for Women and Family Planning (FEDERA), we remain committed to resisting this wave. We continue to monitor, expose, and confront these threats with evidence, advocacy, and solidarity. As the anti-choice movement evolves and embeds itself more deeply into the European political mainstream, our resistance must be equally strategic, persistent, and uncompromising. The struggle for dignity, autonomy, and equality is not merely one of policy—it is a defense of the future itself.

Foundation FEDERA extends her thanks to the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, along with Neil Datta, the author of “The Next Wave: How Religious Extremism Is Reclaiming Power”.

Antonina Lewandowska, [FEDERA](#)

Empowerment through Self Defense: Breaking New Ground in Romania during International Self-Care Month

To mark the International Self-Care Month, which is celebrated in July, ASTRA Network Advisory Board member and Empowerment through Self Defense lead instructor conducted a series of workshops in several cities in Romania:

In the municipality of Satu Mare during July 21-23 Daniela was invited by the Chief Police Commissioner for a podcast on the topic of gender-based violence and to hold a demo as part of a public community event in the central park, dedicated to preventing and combating

domestic violence, under the central message “Domestic violence can be stopped—only together!”.

The event was organized as part of the Campaign to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence in a Cross-Border Context, carried out by the Satu Mare County Police Inspectorate through the UNITE - The Unseen Aggression Project - Prevent & Combat Domestic Violence Across Borders, funded by the Interreg V-A Romania-Hungary Program.



The event was attended by Hungarian partners from the National Institute for Research and Prevention of Crime, GRAB - Support Group for Women Who Have Experienced Abuse - Satu Mare, the Kardio Club youth karate team, as well as the Mayor of Satu Mare.

Next, Daniela held a special Empowerment through Self Defense workshop for 22 police officers, mostly women, and their daughters and sons, aged 11-50. This was a national premiere, following Daniela's participation in a videoconference on domestic violence organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Romania, and the invitation by the Satu Mare County Police Inspectorate.



A second national premiere was an Empowerment through Self Defense workshop held in Tasnad Spa, Satu Mare County, for 25 women and girls, a brave local police officer, and teenagers from the foster care center, aged 12-56. This workshop was made possible thanks to the enthusiasm of the mayor of Tasnad, the first mayor in Romania to accept and host such an event.



The workshops were also possible thanks to the collaboration with the County Police Inspectorate, the National Police Corps, and GRAB—a support group for women who have experienced abuse in Satu Mare.

A third national premiere was an Empowerment through Self Defense workshop organized at the Satu Mare County Library, with the librarians Daniela used to teach advocacy. The workshop was co-organized and supported

by the Satu Mare County Police Inspectorate, GRAB- Support Group for Women Who Have Experienced Abuse- Satu Mare, the Youth Tourism and Ecology Association.



Daniela concluded the summer series of ESD workshops with two more in the city of Timisoara: one for a group of feminist and LGBT+ organizations and one for the largest and most complex student event in the country, the Forum of Student Organizations in Romania, organized by the National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania. This was the second year Daniela represented the SEXUL vs BARZA / SEX vs The STORK Association during the students' annual event, where she reviewed the Association's activities, educational platform and encouraged young people to advocate for their rights. Daniela also held an Empowerment through Self Defense workshop for some 30 students, considering the incidence of harassment and sexual violence in universities.





[Daniela Draghici](#)

Protecting Sexual and Reproductive Health in Romania: Education and Advocacy Amid Austerity

SEX vs THE STORK Association is developing 10 new educational videos on the most frequent experiences and questions teenagers have regarding sexual and reproductive health. The inspiration for the themes of the videos comes from the association's information and support service which continues to serve young beneficiaries daily, free of charge and anonymously. The organisation also continues to contribute to the SRH working group of the Romanian Ministry of Health, in order to shape the official strategy for sexual and reproductive health.

SEX vs THE STORK Association is also monitoring the planned reform for the family planning clinics in Romania. After budgeting 10 million EUR from the EU funded National Recovery and Resilience Plan and supporting the clinics to apply for the funding, the organisation is keeping a close eye on the cuts that are being made to the program. It is highly possible that at least 30% of the clinics who have applied will not benefit from the planned investments.

The new austerity measures have also impact-

ed the health insurance of those on parental leave, usually mothers, in Romania. In order to benefit from free healthcare during their leave, they now have to give up 10% of their indemnity for the health insurance, leaving them with less money at the end of the day.

[SEX vs THE STORK Association](#)

Beyond Money: Building Economic Autonomy and Resilience with L.U.N.A. in Romania

Recently, A.L.E.G. launched the L.U.N.A. Journal (MOON in Romanian) - a guide designed to accompany people on their journey that goes beyond money and material wealth, rooted instead in sustainable well-being.

There are still many prejudices about wealth and how we access it based on gender. The journal is a reminder that our greatest wealth is the relationship we nurture with ourselves and with those who respect and bring fulfillment into our lives. You can have all the money in the world and still lack autonomy and well-being.

What is economic autonomy? Economic autonomy is more than a good salary or a bank account. It means the freedom to choose without pressure, how you live your life. It means clarity, balance, and the courage to build a life aligned with your aspirations.

Why L.U.N.A.? For generations, women's access to financial resources was restricted, leaving behind limiting beliefs about money, success, and personal worth that persist today. L.U.N.A. was created to respond to this need for financial education, self-reflection,

and emotional support.

The journal explores topics such as:

- Needs vs. desires
- Ingredients of a healthy economic relationship
- Setting goals and discovering personal values
- Preventing economic abuse

Economic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of income, education level, or degree of independence. Survivors of domestic violence often face similar challenges: struggling to support their families, earn a stable income, find affordable housing, and plan a long-term sustainable budget. L.U.N.A. offers both guidance and hope.

The Journal can be downloaded for free from our A.L.E.G.'s website <https://aleg-romania.eu/en/luna-financial-autonomy-journal/>



[A.L.E.G. Romania](https://aleg-romania.eu/en/)

Defending Reproductive Rights and Advancing Equality in Slovakia

Thanks to a short break in the National Council proceedings, we finally had time to focus on something other than defending reproductive rights from conservative attacks.

We turned our attention to education, because

we believe education is a pathway to fairer society. We organized gender training for our alumni to help us all feel stronger and more connected in these challenging times. The seminars included presentations from our lecturers, as well as from alumni, who shared how feminism connects to their professional work.

Freedom of Choice at Pohoda Festival

This summer we joined one of the country's biggest festivals, Pohoda. At our stand in the NGO tent, we prepared fun activities, presented our work, and most importantly, met and connected with so many wonderful people.

Media & PR Training

At the end of July, we ran the second cycle of training for media and PR professionals. We discussed how to report on reproductive rights in an inclusive way and addressed the often-challenging media image of women in politics. We also presented our almost finished media guide on how to report sensitively on abortions.

Our support line is working, and we help 20-30 women every month. They usually contact us because of the lack of information there is in Slovakia. The financial unavailability is also a big problem, mainly for people with fewer resources. There is still no abortion pill approved, even after 30 years of successful use in the Europe.

We have completed the first part of our project 3R – Recognize, Resist, Rise Up: Report on gender-based violence against female politicians in Slovakia. We found out, that there is no legal definition of violence against women pol-

iticians (VAWP); existing laws cover relevant individual criminal offenses but do not recognize their gender-based political dimension and impact. New legislation aimed at increasing the safety of public officials lacks a differentiated gender-sensitive perspective and fails to consider VAWP and its forms. A substantial part of the legislative and institutional framework provides protection and punishes most forms of VAWP, but there is a lack of redress mechanisms and timely access to justice.

We hope this project will lead to change in Slovak law when approaching gender-based violence against women (politicians).

What's next?

In late August, we'll be at Pride Košice for the very first time as an organization — and we couldn't be more excited! In September, we'll train volunteers from fellow organizations. Then, the National Council will return, and we may face the harmful proposal to define “only two genders” in the Constitution.

Wish us luck — and stand with us in defending equality for all.

[Možnosť voľby / Freedom of Choice](#)

Sexual Violence Against Children in Uzbekistan: A Call for Urgent Action

The NGO “ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD” (Future Generation) conducted a rapid assessment in spring 2025 to evaluate perceptions and urgency surrounding sexual violence against children. The survey involved professionals from both governmental and non-governmental

sectors including teachers, psychologists, lawyers, and law enforcement officers.

Key Findings

- 66% of respondents identified child sexual violence as an extremely pressing issue
- 100% of legal and law enforcement professionals called for urgent action

These results confirm what many of us already feel: child sexual violence is not an isolated issue it is a systemic and escalating crisis.

Why Is This Happening?

- Lack of age-appropriate sexuality and safety education
- Influence of the internet and normalization of abuse
- Societal indifference and lack of accountability
- Persistent gender inequality and socio-economic vulnerability

What Needs to Be Done

1. Introduce safety education for both children and parents
2. Launch nationwide awareness campaigns against child sexual violence
3. Strengthen legal enforcement and accountability mechanisms
4. Build multisectoral cooperation involving schools, NGOs, social services, and law enforcement

Our Conclusions

- Child abuse is no longer rare it is pervasive and increasingly normalized
- Children lack safe, accessible ways to report and seek help
- Government systems are overstretched, while civil society actors remain underutilized
- A cross-sector response is urgently needed to fill this gap

Our Proposal: A Multi-Channel Child Helpline

We believe that every child deserves a safe space to speak up, ask for help, and be heard. ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD is currently working on the pilot launch of a national child helpline, which would include:

- Phone hotline with trained professionals
- Messaging platforms such as Telegram and WhatsApp
- Referral pathways to mental health, legal, and protective services
- Anonymity, confidentiality, and trauma-informed care

This initiative is designed to operate with speed, flexibility, and trust, especially where public services face limitations.

Final Words

We cannot remain silent. Every day we delay is another day a child suffers in silence. We call on partners, donors, and international agencies to support this initiative and help us ensure that child protection becomes a reality not just a principle. “A safe childhood is not a privilege. It is a right and a responsibility we all share.”

[ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD](#)

Tajik Family Planning Association (TFPA) joins ASTRA Network

TFPA is a voluntary, self-governed, non-commercial organization, operating in the field of reproductive health and the protection of human rights in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Maternal Health: TFPA implements projects aimed at improving the quality of maternal health services. Special attention is given to safe childbirth, promotion of CCP, and the capacity building of healthcare providers. The association also works closely with women in local communities, raising awareness about available services and health opportunities.

Gender Equality: TFPA promotes equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Our goal is to create a safe and fair society where every woman and girl's voice is valued.

HIV: TFPA actively works to reduce the spread of HIV in Tajikistan. We conduct awareness campaigns, educate youth and vulnerable groups on prevention methods, and provide access to testing.

Youth Engagement & Family Planning: TFPA involves young people in advocacy, training, and community projects on reproductive health and family planning. We empower youth to make informed choices, participate in decision-making, and become agents of positive change in their communities.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR): TFPA ensures access to SRHR information and services for all, especially adolescents and vulnerable groups. Our programs focus on raising awareness, improving health literacy, and supporting safe practices in communities.

Obstetric violence against women living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Obstetric violence—a form of institutional, gender-based abuse experienced during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care—is a pervasive issue affecting women living with HIV across Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA). A community-led study conducted by the Eurasian Women’s Network on AIDS (EWNA) reveals alarming trends in the mistreatment of this vulnerable population, documenting abuse, discrimination, and systemic violations of reproductive rights.

The study, part of the regional campaign “No Excuse for Violence!”, surveyed 365 women across 13 EECA countries. It found that **63.6%** experienced at least one form of obstetric violence. These included psychological abuse (63%), verbal insults and threats (56%), physical mistreatment (39%), unconsented medical procedures (26%), and breaches of confidentiality (47%).

One of the most concerning findings is that **46% of respondents were denied essential medical services**, including pain relief, abortion, and support for breastfeeding and postpartum depression. Many women also reported being coerced into specific delivery methods or sterilization, often without their informed consent. In countries like Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, women described being isolated in medical facilities, verbally assaulted, or denied care based on their HIV status, poverty, or drug use history.

Discrimination extended beyond healthcare to reproductive decision-making: 13% of wom-

en lacked autonomy over whether or when to have children. Many faced pressure to terminate pregnancies or were shamed for becoming mothers at all.

The impact of these violations is far-reaching. About **67% of women reported mental health effects**, ranging from anxiety and depression to severe trauma. Some have stopped seeking reproductive or maternal healthcare altogether. Others remain unaware of community support resources that could aid their recovery and advocacy.

Despite the challenges, the study also highlights the power of community support and advocacy. National coordinators and NGOs in countries like Kazakhstan and Latvia have begun using these findings to push for systemic reforms. Community-based organizations remain vital in providing legal, psychological, and peer support to women affected by obstetric violence.

EWNA’s recommendations include:

- Enacting and enforcing laws against obstetric violence;
- Reforming healthcare systems to ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and respect;
- Empowering communities to hold institutions accountable and support survivors;
- Training healthcare providers on respectful, rights-based maternity care.

This landmark study not only exposes the structural injustices faced by women living with HIV but also serves as a roadmap for policy change and community empowerment throughout the EECA region.

[EWNA](#)

EVENTS

[80th Session of the UN General Assembly \(UNGA 80\)](#) 9–23 September 2025., New York City

The 80th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 80) will open on Tuesday, 9 September 2025. The first day of the high-level General Debate will be Tuesday, 23 September 2025.

[WONCA World Conference 2025](#)

17 – 20 September 2025

New Vision for Primary Health Care and Sustainable Development

[PMNCH 13th Annual Accountability Breakfast at the UN General Assembly](#) 22 September 2025 08:00 – 10:30 ET, New York City

Partnership Power: Disrupting the Status Quo and Accelerating Change for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health

[“Science for Choice”](#) September 27, 2025, Split, Croatia

“Science for Choice” is an international, interdisciplinary conference that brings together experts, activists, scientists, and healthcare professionals to explore one of the most urgent and controversial issues of our time: abortion and women's right to choose.

[9th International Workshop on Adolescence, SRHR & HIV 2025](#) October 1 - October 3

The 9th edition of the International Workshop on Adolescence, SRHR & HIV 2025 will take place from 1 – 3 October 2025 in Gaborone, Botswana.

[World Mental Health Day - 2025](#)

10th of October 2025

The overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health. The Day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide.

[World Health Summit 2025](#) 12 – 14 October 2025 Berlin, Germany

The annual World Health Summit brings together global health stakeholders from all sectors and regions to find solutions for the most pressing health challenges. In 2025, it takes place under the theme “Taking Responsibility for Health in a Fragmenting World.”

[International Day for the Eradication of Poverty - 2025](#) 17 October 2025 08:00 – 17:00 UTC Time

In a world characterized by an unprecedented level of economic development, technological means and financial resources, that millions of persons are living in extreme poverty is a moral outrage. Poverty is not solely an economic issue, but rather a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses a lack of both income and the basic capabilities to live in dignity.

[Sexual and reproductive rights: worldwide and for all!](#) 23 October 2025 | 17:00-20:00 | Albert Schweitzer House, Schwarzspanierstraße 13, 1090 Vienna

Linking perspectives from health, devel-

opment cooperation and humanitarian aid

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is an issue that affects everyone worldwide. Every human being has the right to make free, informed and self-determined decisions about their own body, sexuality and reproduction – without discrimination, coercion or violence. This affects every area of life and society as a whole. In order to ensure that people can shape their sexual and reproductive health in a self-determined way, sufficient and low-threshold access to information, services and medical care is needed. All institutions, local and international organisations and political leaders are called upon to do this.

For this reason, the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC), THE RAIN WORKERS - Network for sexual and reproductive health, the Austrian Public Health Association and Women in Global Health - Austrian Chapter aim to establish SRHR as a key function for social, health and economic development.

[The seventh International Conference on Family Planning \(ICFP 2025\)](#) 3 – 6 November 2025 Bogotá, Colombia

The seventh International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP) is taking place 1–6 November 2025 in the vibrant city of Bogotá, Colombia at the Ágora Bogotá Convention Center. ICFP 2025 will unite leaders, advocates, and innovators from across the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) community to exchange ideas, forge partnerships, and drive progress toward achieving and safeguarding SRHR for all.

ASTRA Secretariat

Foundation for Women and Family Planning

Nowolipie 13/15, 00-150 Warsaw, Poland

ph/fax +48 22 635 93 95,

federa@astra.org.pl

astra.org.pl



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