



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

## CEE Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

### No 2 (139) 2015

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## BURNING ISSUE

### UNFPA and CSO Global Strategy Meeting: ICPD beyond 2014 and Post-2015 Development Agenda

The 'Global Strategy meeting between UNFPA and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on ICPD beyond 2014 and Post-2015' has been convened by UNFPA from 23-25 January 2015 in Istanbul, Turkey. The meeting objective was to strategize on how CSOs and UNFPA can partner to ensure that the outcomes of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process are taken forward and integrated into the Post-2015 agenda, including through a responsive monitoring and evaluation framework. The working groups of CSOs from different regions have given a great input to strengthen the SRHR issues in the final document. The final report summarizing the CSOs working groups' results will be finalized soon.

ASTRA representative attended the meeting, participated actively in the discussions and facilitated one of the sessions during the conference.

Source: ASTRA Network, UNFPA

## REGIONAL UPDATES

### **Emergency contraception to be sold over the counter in Poland!**

Early January the European Commission has decided that the emergency contraceptive with ulipristal acetate will be sold over-the-counter across the European Union. The EC will be available in pharmacy without the prescription in some European countries from February, with a full launch program taking place across the EU in the rest of the year.

Thanks to this decision emergency contraception (at least the new type with ulipristal acetate) will be available over-the-counter in Poland, Polish Health ministry said on 14 January. ASTRA member organization, Federation for Women and Family Planning has been advocating for better access to modern contraceptives for many years and people are supporting these claims. The Federation has launched the petition demanding that the government respects the EC decision on emergency contraceptives, which was supported by over 10000 people in three days. Also, the Federation wrote a letter to the Minister of Health urging him to make sure the administrative procedures are not delayed and that Polish women get access to the pill OTC as soon as possible. On 23 January government representative said that the pill will be sold over-the-counter to all people including teens aged over 15 (this is the age of consent in Poland).

You can still sign this petition [here](#). We need public support in order to push for a prompt introduction of these new regulations as, considering the government's conservative views, delays can be expected.

Source: [Federation for Women and Family Planning](#), [The European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health](#)

### **Armenia undergoes United Nations Universal Periodic Review**

Armenia underwent its second UPR review in 2015. On January 22, 2015 Armenian delegation presented its achievements since the previous review (which was in 2010) and the State parties were given a floor for comments and recommendations. This time the Republic of Armenia got very important recommendations from the State parties. Here are some key issues to be highlighted:

- There were crucial recommendations on women's rights, gender based discrimination and violence, domestic violence and women's participation in decision making.
- The absolute majority of the recommendations did include parts on women's issues, which was a real success.
- Many of the State expressed concerns about the fact that the draft law on domestic violence was rejected and recommended to have a stand-alone law on DV. It was acknowledged that the domestic violence should be recognized as a criminal and civil offense in the country.
- Another advancement was that number of state highlighted discrimination on the basis of SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity). Many have proposed to adopt anti-

discrimination law that will explicitly mention the grounds of discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This means that this year the reference on LGBT issues was quite visible.

- The issue of human rights defenders' security was also mentioned. Australia made reference to the recent attacks against women NGOs and condemned the hate attacks toward them. This recommendation was very encouraging for women human rights defenders and feminists in Armenia who have been constantly targeted by neo-nationalist extremist groups.

Source: [Society Without Violence](#)

### **Thematic Session on the issue of access to reproductive health services in Croatia**

On December 11 2014 the Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality together with Croatian ASTRA member CESI organized a thematic session on the issue of access to reproductive health services. Introductory speakers were representatives of CESI, Ministry of Health and a pro-choice gynecologist from state hospital. CESI's research results showing that the right to abortion was not available to women in all medical institutions where such a service should be provided were presented and the discussion was directed towards the problems in abortion provision, regulation and access to this medical service. Contributors to the discussion were, MPs, Ombudsperson for gender equality, medical doctors and hospital directors, and representatives of women's organizations. Assistant Health Minister said that the issue of access to abortion services in five medical institutions where the procedure was not performed because of doctors' conscientious objection had been resolved and that the procedure was now available in all state hospitals. Hospitals where all doctors do not perform abortions for reasons of conscience have to arrange extra medical cover from outside the institution. Three general hospitals have hired external gynaecologists to perform such procedures, some of the gynaecologists at the other hospitals who previously cited a conscientious objection have changed their opinion, while Zagreb's "Sveti duh" hospital has signed a contract with the "Sestre milosrdnice" hospital to perform abortions on request. The Ministry also require all doctors not performing abortions to be listed in a special registry, so that the Ministry can monitor whether each hospital is capable of performing abortions. Majority of participants in the debate supported announcement of Assistant Minister about the setting up of a special commission to analyse all issues related to women's reproductive rights.

Parliamentary Committee for Gender equality issued a conclusion that Ministry of Health had to abide by the law to ensure availability of the reproductive health services for all women, including specific recommendations for abortion provision.

Women's organizations will closely monitor the medical institutions providing the service and constantly put pressure on the Ministry of Health to ensure abortion provision.

Source: [CESI](#), [Libela](#)

### **Roundtable discussion on conscientious objection in medicine in Croatia**

Together with several pro-choice gynaecologists, CESI organized a round table discussion “Conscientious objection in medicine” in Zagreb on January 21, 2015 with the intention of mobilizing and creating a pro-choice opposition to neoconservative (Catholic) medical doctors. The Initiative of medical doctors for regulation of conscientious objection in medicine believe that Croatia have failed to comprehensively and effectively regulate the practice of conscientious objection, denying many women reproductive health care services they are legally entitled to receive. The number of gynaecologists invoking conscientious objection in their refusal to perform an abortion is rising and currently nearly 70% of gynaecologists refuse to perform abortions on moral grounds. They reminded the public that some anti-choice doctors will let women die rather than do an abortion, regardless of the law, as has occurred in Ireland, Poland and elsewhere. They presented recommendations to national governments as well as to professional associations, health care institutions, on how to regulate conscientious objection so as to both respect the practice of conscientious objection while protecting individual's right to reproductive health care.

For further details on the discussion and topic click [HERE](#).

Source: [CESI](#), [Libela](#)

### **Georgia introduces mandatory waiting period for abortion**

The Georgian Parliament backed by the initiative of the Ministry of labor, Health and Social Affairs, carried out legislative amendments and referred increasing the mandatory waiting period from 3 to 5 days. Currently abortion at medical institutions is provided only in case if the woman had a preliminary consultation and 5 days have passed between the consultation and operation. The motion says that within these 5 days woman must be provided with information about alternative possibilities, undergo mandatory psychological counseling and receive any other help which might help her make the decision to keep the pregnancy. The waiting period does not work in practice and does not affect the woman’s decision. On the contrary, it creates psychological, financial, economic and territorial barriers to access to safe, legal abortion. Association “HERA-XXI” has developed recommendations to the Government and expressed the willingness to cooperate.

Source: [Association “HERA-XXI”](#)

### **With Russian support, UNFPA assists Belarus in developing new population policy**

The Director of UNFPA’s Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Heimo Laakkonen, and the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Belarus, Alexander Surikov, signed an agreement on 3 December 2014 on providing assistance to the Belarusian authorities in implementing the country’s national demographic security programme. Under the agreement, the Russian Federation will cover USD 900,000 of the total project costs of USD 1.14 million, while UNFPA will contribute USD 180,000. The remaining USD 60,000 will be provided by UNICEF. The collaboration between the Russian Federation, Belarus and UNFPA goes far beyond the financial contribution as key ministries as well as

leading scientific and educational institutions of the Russian Federation will also make available their expertise and knowledge on population policy development.

Source: [UNFPA EECA](#)

### **Better protection for victims of violence anywhere in the EU**

As of this Sunday, victims of violence - notably those who have suffered domestic violence or stalking – will be able to guarantee themselves better protection in any EU Member State. The new rules mean that restraining, protection and barring orders issued in one Member State are now quickly and easily recognisable across the EU through simple certification.

"Rights of the victims of violence will now be guaranteed outside their own country too, wherever they are in Europe", said Věra Jourová, the EU's Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. "In the EU, an estimated one in three women face violence at some point in their life."

Source: [European Commission](#)

### **New definition of the marriage in Macedonia**

The Parliament of Macedonia voted for constitutional amendment that would impose a new definition of marriage on a vote that was 72 to 4 in favor of defining marriage as a “life union solely of one woman and one man”. Additionally, this new constitutional amendment imposes a requirement of a two-thirds vote in order to pass any legislation that would give the same-sex couples a right to form a civil union or any kind of a partnership. However, this still needs another parliamentary cycle of voting and a country presidential approval in order to become an official law. Nevertheless, the vote shows that this definition of marriage has a wide support.

Representatives of the LGBT community, non-governmental organizations and activists, a few days after this vote, on a peaceful protest expressed their dissatisfaction for the newest changes of the constitution that are discriminating towards same-sex couples. The National Network Against Homophobia and Transphobia points out that the government, instead of undertaking activities that would work towards improvement of the tolerance for the LGBT community and that would lessen the homophobic and transphobic discrimination and violence, it furtherly strengthens the discriminating laws and encourages homophobia and transphobia.

The LGBT community in Macedonia has been a subject of plenty violent threats, attacks and has faced a severe stigma. Along those lines, the government fails to react to those threats and attacks and does not work towards increasing tolerance, improving the rights of LGBT people and decreasing the stigma in the Macedonian society. Instead of following the examples of the Western countries that already made progress when it comes to marriage equality, Macedonia unfortunately makes steps backwards regarding the respect of LGBT and human rights.

Source: [H.E.R.A.](#) , [The EU Intergroup on LGBTI Rights](#)

### **Maternal mortality decreased in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan shows a decrease in maternal mortality, this has been stated by Nikolai Botev, Director of UNFPA's Central Asia Sub-Regional Office. According to the words of N.Botev "it can be concluded that in the last four years Kazakhstan has shown good results in this direction. From 2009 to 2013 maternal deaths in Kazakhstan decreased from 36.8 per 100 thousand live births to 12.6 per 100 thousand live births."

Source: [Kazinform](#)

### **European Parliament urges Kyrgyzstan to drop anti-LGBTI bill**

The European Parliament called on Kyrgyzstan to reject a bill which would censor information on LGBTI issues. The draft law would [punish](#) the dissemination of information "aimed at forming positive attitudes toward non-traditional sexual relations." The Kyrgyz bill closely resembles the Russian anti-propaganda law, but foresees harsher punishments: persons found 'guilty' face up to one year imprisonment. The European Parliament - acknowledging general democratic progress in the country – called on the Kyrgyz Parliament to reject the bill, and urges politicians to refrain from hate speech against LGBTI people. Furthermore, the Parliament supported the [recommendations](#) by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which highlight Kyrgyzstan should combat all forms of discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Earlier, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights already urged Kyrgyzstan to [reject](#) the bill.

Source: [The EU Intergroup on LGBTI Rights](#)

### **Call for action to protect LGBT community in Georgia**

The Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner called for greater action to be taken to protect LGBT individuals in Georgia after a series of threats was issued towards one of the country's leading LGBT-support charities.

Source: [Euroclash](#)

### **Helping healthcare workers respond to gender-based violence**

Six European countries are embarking on a major initiative to strengthen health-sector capacities to identify and respond to gender-based violence, guided by materials developed by UNFPA's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECARO) and Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE).

The resource and training package on '[Strengthening Health System Responses to Gender-based Violence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#)' will be used in piloting a regional programme on capacity development of health professionals in Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, and Romania. The initiative, called [IMPLEMENT](#), is part of the European Commission's Daphne Programme to prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and to

protect victims and groups at risk. It is funded by the European Commission through grants to national NGOs and institutions in each of the six participating European Union member states.

Source: [UNFPA EECA](#)

## GLOBAL UPDATES

### **MP letter to UN SG on Post-2015 Synthesis Report gets positive response**

Seventeen MPs from all regions of the world signed a letter to the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon concerning his Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda. The signatories drew attention on the lack of mention therein of sexual health or rights, the ICPD Programme of Action or the Beijing Platform for Action and their review conferences. In the letter, sent on 18 December, MPs called for these omissions to be rectified and drew attention to the IPCI Stockholm Statement of Commitment that was signed by 260 Members of Parliament from all regions of the world to call for an inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the post-2015 development agenda as well as for stand-alone goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Signature of the letter was coordinated by EPF along with parliamentary forums on population and development in Asia, the Americas and Africa.

On 5 January, the signatory parliamentarians received a reply from Ms Amina Mohammed, Special Advisor to the Secretary General on Post-2015, in which she thanks them for their comments and refers to an updated and final version of the Synthesis Report released on 23 December. Paragraph 70 (page 17) of the revised report now includes the wording “women’s sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights” whereas the advanced version only referred to “women’s reproductive health and rights”. This is an improvement to the previous version of the report and MPs will continue to monitor the intergovernmental process in the run up to the post-2015 Summit on 25-27 September.

Source: [EPF](#)

### **Post-2015 Process**

A complete and updated roadmap on the Post-2015 negotiations and process is available [HERE](#).

Source: [IWHC](#), [Women Deliver](#)

## YOUTH

### **Youth policy developments in Georgia**

Young people’s knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and especially sexual rights is limited by a combination of cultural restrictions, but at the same time the progress needs to be mentioned.

A National Youth Policy Action Plan 2014 – 2020 were developed in Georgia by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia. The policy covers the following topics: Participation; Education Employment and Mobility; Health; Protection and special Support. The Health directions include Healthy Life Style; Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and Physiological Health (the document is accessible [here](#)).

In 2014, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia developed a program for the development of non –formal education. The program aims to develop countrywide non-formal education which includes access to research infrastructure at the municipal level, preparation/training of non-formal education coaches, continued active support of youth organizations and support of development of volunteerism as an institute. The action plan about the policy was developed by stakeholders (Government agencies, “HERA-XXI” and other NGOs, experts). Frequently arranged meetings between the Government agencies and NGOs working on youth issues. The organizations had the opportunity to discuss on recommendations and to relay it to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia. Implementing the Action Plan starts from 2015.

Association “HERA-XXI” worked out the non-formal educational program on SRHR issues, which contains number of topics, such as: Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV, Sexual Rights and citizenship, Gender, Psycho-Sexual Education (Pleasure, Diversity and Relationships), thereby trainers of the organization are trained. It also introduced the Guide on mentioned topics, to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, in order to build capacity of the trainers for the non-formal education program.

On January 29 2015, the Government of Georgia endorsed the National Youth Policy Action Plan (NAP) 2014-2020 for successful implementation of the Youth Policy Document at the national level.

Source: [Association HERA XXI](#)

### **ASTRA Youth members’ involvement in EECA Youth Voice Campaign**

ASTRA Youth members: Association HERA XXI and Real People Real Vision from Georgia, H.E.R.A in Macedonia are involved in the realization of EECA Youth Voice campaigns in their countries. Find more information on their activities below.

- **Georgia**

The Youth Voice Campaign of Georgia was officially launched in mid-November 2014 and targeted more than 200 youth in urban and rural areas. The leading group consists of the representatives of UNFPA, Georgian Youth Development and Education Association (GYDEA), Association “HERA XXI”, Youth Parliament of Georgia, European Youth Parliament and Real People Real Vision.

Planned events included various informational activities, movie screenings and discussions conducted by group of vigorous youth, who lead the campaign at the national level. The leading group of the Youth Voice in Georgia organized two separate trips to the rural areas to meet the local youth and discuss the issues of early marriage, gender equality and education with them. More specifically, documentary film “Motherhood in Childhood” was arranged in Gori and Telavi, followed with the discussion sessions. The majority of the attendees expressed concern about the Child



Marriage in the country, demonstrated deep interest, as well as offered recommendations and possible solutions to combat the issue at the national level.

During the campaign, on December 1 organized the screening of the film “Dallas Buyers Club” in Amirani Movie Theater, which culminated with the awards ceremony of the Youth Media Contest, announced in November. The contest was conducted within the framework of the Regional Youth Campaign – Youth Voice, which started in November 2014 with the initiative of UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office. It encouraged young people from across the country to share their opinions on the issues of Youth Reproductive Health and Rights, Education and Participation, in three different nominations – photo, essay/article, and slogan. In the concluding part of the event, the three winners of the contest were awarded with special prizes and certificates.

Next step of the EECA is to conduct Advocacy Campaign, on national level. For this, YEP (Youth Adviser Panel) has been established, which consists Association “HERA-XXI” and other representatives of EECA member organizations.

General vision of YAP Advocacy campaign is to advocate number of youth’s issues on SRHR. Such as: comprehensive Sexuality Education on a national level, participation and representation on an international level, Youth Engagement in the decision making processes (Investing in Youth) Development and availability of Youth Friendly Services, Early Marriages, Working with key demographics - general discussion and sharing thoughts with youth groups, including vulnerable adolescents and ethnical minorities to voice their needs, Education (Formal and Informal).

Association “HERA-XXI” is working with UNFPA and other EECA member to create National Advocacy Campaign Action Plan and take effective steps for advocate number of Youth’s issues by strengthen collaboration with Georgian Stakeholders.

Source: [Association HERA XXI](#)

#### ▪ **Macedonia – ‘The future we want’**

The whole story of the Youth voice campaign started when representatives Y-PEER Macedonia with support of HERA, ARNO, Youth Can, Shadows and Clouds and Red Cross Macedonia decided to join the campaign and to do something more about their peers.

The first step was creation of eye-catching and youth-friendly design of the whole campaign. Good design- more young people that would like to participate. And that happened. There was banner where youngsters could leave there messages regarding the future they want. The banner was traveling with the FPs and NGO representatives form one city to another, form one even to other... everywhere where young people were gathering. The young people share their thoughts and ideas about the world they want to see after 2015. They also had a chance to gain branded bag and mug from the campaign. This activity took place in the period from 24<sup>th</sup> November to 12<sup>th</sup> December. During the whole period the photos together with the messages were published on the Y-PEER’s Facebook fan page. With this the visibility of the messages was increased.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of December Macedonian “Youth Voice” campaign, Y-PEER gathered more than 300 people though invitations to the 3 performances of the Shadow theatre performances and the Exhibitions of the printed Youth messages for the future development agenda. The Shadow Theatre

performance “Stories from the Hallway” was delivered by Shadows and Clouds and young people taking part in their project(MTV SAF supported), and it was facilitated by Y-PEER Macedonia FPs.

The following activity was press conference on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December- The World AIDS Day. The Press Conference was organized by “Shadows and Clouds”. This event was used for announcement of a winner of a Condom Design Contest (organized by “Shadows and Clouds”), as well as for sharing information about the “EECA Youth Voice Campaign” and the final activity- Youth conference.

The Youth Conference “Youth participation and recommendations for the development agenda of the United Nations” was held on 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2014. On this conference there were representatives from the Macedonian civil society as well as representatives from the relevant institutions. The whole discussion was focused on the top three priorities for the young people in Macedonia: education, employment and health. The important recommendation that were given by the participants will be used for the actions and the following steps in the future.

During the whole campaign the social media had the crucial role. The hashtags used were: #ИдеитеГиСподелувамГласно #EECAYouthVoice. The traditional media (such as famous Macedonian youth radio- Radio MOF, the magazine “Lice v lice” and others) played their role in increasing the campaign visibility and popularity among the youngsters.

For more info, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/youthpeer.org.mk>

Source: [HERA](#)

### **Girls Grade Beijing Survey**

[The Working Group on Girls](#) has launched the survey Girls Grade Beijing for girls aged 18 and under to gather their voices regarding gender equality in their communities. Access the survey [HERE](#).

### **ASTRA Youth contributes to UNESCO consultations on Post-2015 Education Indicators**

ASTRA Youth in cooperation with Ponton Group of Sex Educators and YouAct has submitted response to education indicators from UNESCO, calling for inclusion of comprehensive sexuality education indicator, paying particular attention to gender equality and marginalized youth groups.

The results of the response from civil society organizations are going to be summarized and integrated in the recommendations submitted to the Education for All Steering Committee before the World Education Forum in Incheon in May.

The final documents will provide contribution to the discussion on indicators framework to measure the education targets of SDGs at the UN General Assembly in September.

More information about the consultation on indicators is to be found [here](#).

## **ECOSOC Youth Forum**

The ECOSOC Youth Forum was held early February in New York. This year Forum's theme was: '**Youth Engagement in the Transition from MDGs to SDGs: What will it take?**'. The event gathered youth activists to discuss the role of young people in Post-2015 Development Agenda and transitioning from MDGs to SDGs. The debates during the event concerned also the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Programme on Youth (WPAY) and recommendations on ways to move forward, progress of the Beijing Platform of Action and engaging youth in acting for gender equality. More information about the event is accessible [here](#).

Source: [UN ECOSOC](#)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **59<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women**

The fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9 to 20 March 2015. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world will attend the session.

The main focus of the session will be on the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), including current challenges that affect its implementation and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission will undertake a review of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption at the [Fourth World Conference on Women](#) in 1995. The review ([Beijing+20](#)) will also include the outcomes of the [23rd special session of the General Assembly](#), the first five-year assessment conducted after the adoption of the Platform for Action, which highlighted further actions and initiatives.

The session will also address opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda.

Source: [UN Women](#)

### **48th session on the UN Commission on Population and Development**

The 48th session of the Commission on Population and Development will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 13 – 17 April 2015. The main theme for this year's session is *"Realizing the future we want: integrating population issues into sustainable development, including in the post-2015 development agenda"*.

Deadlines: NGO registration: 31 March 2015; NGO oral statements: 10 April 2015; Registration for side events: 6 April 2015

Source: [UN Population Division](#)

## **Women Deliver 2016**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 17-19 May 2016. For more information go to the official website: [www.wd2016.org](http://www.wd2016.org)

### **Applications open for Young Leaders Program**

The Young Leaders Program is a three-year fellowship program for young people (under the age of 30) who are passionate about maternal, sexual, and reproductive health and rights. The program involves capacity building e-learning covering SRHR issues, advocacy, communications and project management and enables attending the Women Deliver conference. To apply for the Young Leaders Program, fill out the application [here](#).

The application are also open for youth advocates to apply for Youth Scholarships enabling the attendance to the conference. The application is accessible [here](#).

Applications are open till 1st March.

Source: [Women Deliver](#)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Report on neo-conservative threats to SRHR within the European Union**

The report is a part of the *#IntheNameofLove* project, conducted by Zagreb Pride and CESI, Croatian ASTRA member. It focuses on the neo-conservative groups and their political agenda of opposing the laws and policies concerning sexual and reproductive health and rights in the European Union. In the last few years, the member states have witnessed a rise of some new, seemingly grassroots movements. The neo-conservative political agenda has been establishing itself as a struggle to defend and protect "endangered" values of "life, family and religious freedom", and a term its proponents love to use as the ultimate argument is "gender ideology". This pseudo-scientific term is used as a political tool to curtail further development of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The authors analyze direct political influences through the examples of the organized advocacy actions against accepting the Estrela, Lunacek and Zuber reports in the European Parliament, as well as through the example of European civil initiative called "One of Us". The final part of the report lists some guidelines for future advocacy actions and strategic confrontations that would limit the influence of neo-conservative interest groups regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights in the European Union. The guidelines have been grouped in three areas: Monitoring, informing and documenting; Reclaiming values and terminology in advocacy, and Networking and building alliances.

ASTRA Network had been consulted by the authors in writing of this publication.

Access the report in English [HERE](#).

Source: [CESI](#)

## Breaking Ground: Treaty Monitoring Bodies on Reproductive Rights

This annual publication from the Center for Reproductive Rights summarizes the jurisprudence from United Nations treaty monitoring bodies on reproductive rights, particularly the standards on maternal health care, abortion, and contraception. It is intended to provide treaty body experts and human rights advocates with succinct, accessible information on the standards being adopted across treaty monitoring bodies surrounding these important rights. It will be updated each year to reflect current trends in reproductive rights.

Access the publication [HERE](#).

## World Report 2015 on Human Rights

[World Report 2015](#) is Human Rights Watch's 25th annual review of human rights practices around the globe. It summarizes key human rights issues in more than 90 countries and territories worldwide. In his keynote, Human Rights Watch Executive Director Kenneth Roth reflects on a year so tumultuous, "it can seem as if the world is unraveling." Surveying several of the year's most daunting security challenges—including the rise of the extremist group Islamic State (also known as ISIS), China's crackdown on Uighurs in Xinjiang, and Mexico's abuse-riddled war on drugs—Roth stresses the important role that human rights violations played in fomenting and aggravating those crises. The report reflects extensive investigative work that Human Rights Watch staff undertook in 2014, usually in close partnership with human rights activists in the country in question. It also reflects the work of our advocacy team, which monitors policy developments and strives to persuade governments and international institutions to curb abuses and promote human rights.

Source: [Human Rights Watch](#)

The new advocacy brief from the High-Level Task Force for ICPD-- ***Smart Investments for Financing the Post-2015 Development Agenda*** gathers compelling data available on the costs of inaction and the economic and financial returns on investing in 4 key areas: gender equality/human rights of women and girls; sexual and reproductive health and rights; ending gender-based violence; and adolescents and youth. It available [here](#).

Source: [High Level Task Force for ICPD](#)

## Out-of-School Children report

UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF have published a joint report "**Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All – Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children**". The report states that around 63 million adolescents between the ages of 12 to 15 years are denied their right to an education and that they are twice as likely to be out of school as children of primary school age. The findings from the regional report, covering Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) show that in the region about 1.6 mln children of pre-

primary school age are not enrolled and the numbers are similar when talking of out-of-school teenagers.

The global report is accessible [here](#) and the Regional Report [here](#).

Source: [UNESCO](#)

### **Study on adolescent pregnancy, birth and abortion rates**

The Guttmacher Institute has published a study '**Adolescent Pregnancy, Birth, and Abortion Rates Across Countries: Levels and Recent Trends**', which examines rates among 15-19-year-olds and among 10-14-year-olds in all countries, for which the information could be obtained, as well as comparing it with trends for mid-1990s.

The study is available [here](#).

Source: [Guttmacher Institute](#)

## **Call to Action**

### **Online survey on abortion access in European Union states**

Participate in this online survey mapping abortion access in Europe and information about women's experiences. The point of this research is to provide an overview of European abortion law, accessibility, current activism, and opportunities for activism – both political and practical.

Access the survey [HERE](#).

### **Petition to Polish Ministry of Health demanding access to emergency contraception without prescription**

Polish ASTRA Network member, Federation for Women and Family Planning has launched the petition to Polish Ministry of Health demanding that Polish Ministry of Health implements European Commission recommendations that emergency contraception should be sold over the counter.

The English version of the petition follows along with the link:

[We demand emergency contraception without prescription in Poland](#)

## **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  
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Prepared by Marta Szostak

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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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