



**CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN WOMEN'S NETWORK FOR
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS**

Warsaw/Brussels, 25 February 2010

Androulla Vassiliou

European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth
EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Health and Consumers
B-1049 BRUSSELS

Dear Commissioner,

On behalf of ASTRA regional network of NGOs I would like to congratulate you being approved by the European Parliament as a Member of the new European Commission. We know that your previous experience and competence will allow you to successfully head this important commissioner portfolio and the challenges it will involve. We are convinced that the new Commission is ready to successfully work in the coming years. We have no doubts that your experience will help in addressing global challenges by using the EU justice policy instruments.

ASTRA is familiar with your previous achievements as the European Commissioner for Health and we wish you equal success with your new portfolio as the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth. We share your view that you expressed during your hearing in the European Parliament that health education is equally important as the general one. We trust that you will also pay equal attention to the sexual and reproductive education and support initiatives of European civil society organisations that work toward ensuring this form of education in all EU Member States.

With this letter, ASTRA would also like to raise your attention to the fact that in numerous European countries especially in the new Member States from Central and Eastern Europe, the sexual and reproductive education is neglected and the youth is denied basic access to relevant information.

We hope that as a Commissioner responsible for Education and Youth you have the strength and courage to address this important issue.

We are looking for your support for this ambitious task!

We would be happy to provide you with any further information or material that would assist your work in the European Commission. We are looking forward to establish more direct contact with you to work together with us on a number of gender equality and other topics related to sexual and reproductive education. We would very much appreciate the possibility to meet you in a near future to share with you our common vision of what the European Union can do to support women's health and free reproductive choices.

On behalf of ASTRA network, I also encourage you to take into consideration and implement within the area of your work any relevant action that would result in strengthening gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights not currently covered by existing EU laws. We hope that during your term as the Commissioner you will ensure that women's

issues remain one of the key objectives of the European Commission work programme for the coming years.

I am publishing this as an open letter on our website.

My best wishes for your new term in office.

Yours sincerely,



Wanda Nowicka
ASTRA Coordinator

ASTRA members:

Albania - Albanian Family Planning Association, Armenia - Women's Rights Centre, Azerbaijan - Centre "Women and Modern World", Belarus - Women's Independent Democratic Movement of Belarus, Bulgaria - Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Gender Education, Research and Technologies, Croatia - B.a.b.e. (Be Active, Be Emancipated), CESI - Centre for Education and Counselling of Woman, Women's Centre for Sexuality and the Prevention, Research, and Combating of Sexual Violence - Women's Room, Georgia - Women's Centre, Kazakhstan - The Legal Centre for Women's Initiatives "Sana Sezim", Lithuania - Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, Latvia - Latvia's Association for Family Planning And Sexual Health, Macedonia - Sheltar Centar, Moldova - Reproductive Health Service Centre, Poland Federation for Women and Family Planning, Romania - The East European Institute of Reproductive Health, AnA: Society for Feminist Analysis, Russia - Institute of State and Law, Russian Academy of Sciences, ANO "Women's Health", Novogorod Gender Centre, Slovakia - Pro – choice, Ukraine - Women Health and Family Planning, Charitable SALUS Foundation, ASTRA ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: Centre for Reproductive Rights, Ipas.

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