



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

ASTRA Activities in 2008

The 2008 was another active and fruitful year for ASTRA Network. The membership in the network is constantly expanding- ASTRA grew from 10 in 1999 to 29 in 2008 members from 18 countries. It was marked by very active participation in the international projects related to the promotion and monitoring the RH Supplies, as well as further expansion in the area of the EU institutions.

- Media and Publishing Presence:
 1. Monthly Bulletin on Sexual and Reproductive Rights. Circulation: about 1000 addresses. Monthly update on sexual and reproductive rights and health in the CEE. Distributed among sexual and reproductive health and rights activists and professionals.
 2. "Breaking the Silence" documentary produced by ASTRA: screenings on Planet TV, and in several Polish cities in the frames of the campaign "Wandering Cinema of the Federation for Women and Family Planning". Thanks to the NEWW, the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation and the Center for Reproductive Rights, the film was also shown at the Women's Human Rights Training Institute in fall 2007 in Bulgaria, as part of the introduction of reproductive rights issues in CEE. The film was also translated into Lithuanian and shown to a group of Lithuanian deputies and NGO activists.
 3. The website www.abortionfilms.org included "Breaking the Silence" into its collection.
 4. The Report on RH Supplies in ASTRA Countries (within the frame of the PAI grant)
 5. New leaflet on ASTRA Youth activities.
 6. New look of ASTRA and ASTRA Youth websites.
- Campaigns:
 1. Wandering Cinema of the Federation for Women and Family Planning": screening of the documentary "Breaking the Silence" accompanied by a meeting with the president of the Polish member of ASTRA, the Federation for Women and Family Planning and ASTRA's Coordinator, Wanda Nowicka and Alicja Tysi c, Polish woman who was denied right to legal abortion despite serious medical indications.
- Conference attendance:
 1. The PAI Conference on RMA (Resource Mobilization Project), April 24-25, Campala, Uganda. Presentation on ASTRA and ASTRA Youth. Discussion on RH Supplies' role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
 2. The AWID Forum, November 14-17, Cape Town, South Africa. ASTRA's and ASTRA Youth's presence at the forum was enhanced by a panel held by ASTRA's and ASTRA Youth's representatives on building sexual and reproductive rights movement in CEE as a response to the rise of religious fundamentalisms, and by ASTRA representatives' participation in various sessions.
- EU Monitoring

From 2008, ASTRA has a representative in Brussels facilitating and supporting the work of the network in the EU institutions.

 1. Participation in the Public Hearing on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (28 January) organized by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament. ASTRA representative, Wanda Nowicka presented recent trends regarding sexual and reproductive rights in Central and Eastern Europe.
 2. Meeting with the Vice President of the European Commission Mrs. Margot Wallstroem (17 April) during her visit in Poland. Discussion regarding the reproductive health services.
 3. Participation in the EU Equality Summit (29-30 September). Presentation of ASTRA's statement (http://www.astra.org.pl/ASTRA_EU_EqualitySummit29%2009%2008.doc) on the

importance of sexual and reproductive rights in the perspective of rights to equal treatment and fighting discrimination.

4. Participation at the EPSCO meeting (2 October). Presentation of ASTRA's statement (<http://www.astra.org.pl/EPSCO.doc>) on access to sexual health supplies in the CEE region.
5. Participation in the Public Hearing on Combating Discrimination Outside the Labour Market (8 December). Wanda Nowicka and Christina Zampas represented ASTRA and expressed reservations expressed by ASTRA members regarding the new proposal of the directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.
6. European Open Health Forum (10-11 December)

- Open letters and Statements

1. Statement on Proposal for Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, <http://www.astra.org.pl/Statementonequaltreatment.pdf>
2. Statement on Proposal for Directive on application of patients' rights in cross-border health care, <http://www.astra.org.pl/Statementonpatientsrights.pdf>
3. Statement on the occasion of the 2nd UE Equality Summit, 29-30 September in Paris, http://www.astra.org.pl/ASTRA_EU_EqualitySummit29%2009%2008.doc
4. ASTRA comments to DG Sanco priorities for annual Work Plan 2009, <http://www.astra.org.pl/ASTRA%20WP2009%20DG%20Sanco.doc>
5. Statement to the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) under the French Presidency, <http://www.astra.org.pl/ASTRA%20EPSCO%2029%2009%2008.doc>
6. Statement to the French Presidency, June 2008, <http://www.astra.org.pl/FP.doc>
7. Statement for EPSCO meeting, 9 - 10 June 2008, <http://www.astra.org.pl/EPSCO.doc>
8. Statement for e-Health Conference - May 2008, <http://www.astra.org.pl/e-Health.doc>
9. Statement to Ministers of Health during Slovenia Presidency - April 2008, <http://www.astra.org.pl/Sloveniapres.doc>
10. Letter to Vladimir Spidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, after Public Hearing in the European Parliament, <http://www.astra.org.pl/articles.php?id=171>
11. Statement from Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning, in cooperation with Lithuanian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association, to the Lithuanian Parliamentarians concerning the abortion law, <http://www.astra.org.pl/articles.php?id=170>
12. Petition to EU for Sexuality Education, <http://www.astra.org.pl/Petition%20to%20EU%20for%20Sexuality%20Education.doc.pdf>

- International Projects

1. The RH Supplies Project (sponsored by PAI)- preparation and promotion of the report on the RH Supplies in the ASTRA countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Macedonia, Poland, Russia, Ukraine. The goal of the project was to investigate factual access to the RH Supplies in ASTRA Countries. Its outcomes were, apart from the detailed report, activities and events promoting the knowledge about sexual and reproductive health held in countries- members of ASTRA. In Poland, Polish member of ASTRA Network Federation for Women and Family Planning initiated the establishment of Association for Promotion of Sexual Education.
2. The RH Supplies in Poland, Georgia, Macedonia, Albania and Ukraine (sponsored by PAI). Analysis of the legislation concerning sexual and reproductive health and equal status of men and women in ASTRA member countries. Assessment of the level of implementation of international regulations in the participating countries. The project will be finalized in 2009 with the preparation of detailed report and drafting recommendations regarding including international regulations into the legal system of ASTRA member countries.

- Awards and Honors

1. Wanda Nowicka, coordinator of ASTRA Network was awarded the University in Exile's Award
2. Wanda Nowicka was nominated one of the 16 Women Human Rights Defenders during the 16 Days Against Violence Against Women, 2008.

- ASTRA Secretariat in Warsaw
 1. Fund rising, reporting, administrative support
 2. Preparation and distribution of the publications
 3. Editing and distributing ASTRA's monthly bulletin
 4. Project management and coordination of common activities of the ASTRA members