



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

Warsaw/Brussels, 17 February 2010

Member of the European Parliament

*Dear Member of the European Parliament,*

ASTRA network welcomes the resolution of European Parliament on the new "Report on Equality between men and women in the European Union" that resulted in inclusion of the new Article 38 calling for women control over their sexual and reproductive rights.

On behalf of ASTRA regional network of NGOs I would like to congratulate you on the successful adoption of the report and for your vote for this important initiative of the committee of Women's Rights and Gender Equality. This great victory in the European Parliament recognised woman's right to have control over their own body, the right for abortion and contraception. This resolution is of particular importance and meaning for women citizens of European countries with restrictive antiabortion legislations.

At ASTRA we believe that this resolution is a right step in the direction that will end neglecting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. The equality between man and women will not be achieved if women are denied basic rights including the right to health and life. This voting in the European Parliament will strengthen legislation ensuring women's full control over their sexual and reproductive rights. ASTRA Network expresses great satisfaction that the European Parliament addressed SRHR in its Equality Report and supported right and access to abortion and contraception as "women's fundamental right".

For a number of years ASTRA Network works and supports relevant activities of the European Parliament. For eight years the European Parliament had failed to give explicit recognition to this basic right for women and improve legislation in this respect. This adopted report really shows that there is a progressive voice within current European Parliament. We congratulate you on leading this force for change!

ASTRA Network believes that this important resolution will be an important step forward to integrate SRHR in equality policies in all EU policies and programmes. The result of the voting signals changes in equal rights policy approach at the European level by parliamentary groups to include SRHR as integral component of equality policies. ASTRA hopes that these changes will be reflected at the national level especially in Central and Eastern European countries.

ASTRA is a network of NGOs and individuals advocating in a collective voice for sexual and reproductive health and rights in Central and Eastern Europe. Our aim is to raise awareness about women's health and reproductive choices and to build capacity, knowledge and experience of the societies and to improve policy standards in this respect. We provide support and advice to the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. Astra Focal Point in Brussels monitors activities of the European institutions in terms of progress regarding the status of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), disseminates this information and calls for action throughout entire ASTRA network in Central and Eastern Europe.

We would be happy to provide you with any further information or material that would assist your work in the European Parliament. We are looking forward to establish a more direct

contact with you to work together with us on a number of gender equality and other topics related to SRHR.

We hope that your term as a Member of the EP will continue to be beneficial to all EU citizens and Member States.

On behalf of ASTRA Network

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, Women's Link Worldwide/Colombia.

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