



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

President of the Kyrgyz Republic

Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) of the Kyrgyz Republic

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

Special Representative of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic in Jogorku Kenesh
(Parliament) on gender development issues

Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic

Public of Kyrgyzstan

14-VI-2006

Dear Kyrgyz Republic's Representatives,

I'm writing to you on behalf of ASTRA – Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. ASTRA consists of more than twenty organizations in Europe, and works to advance and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights by bridging the gaps between women's issues, health issues and human rights issues, as well as by monitoring of the state compliance in this field with international human rights treaties and other consensus documents and commitments.

We consider as our duty to express our serious concern about the initiative of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic to introduce a criminal liability for women and medical workers terminating 12-22 weeks pregnancy under social indications. If this proposal is accepted, human rights of Kyrgyz women would be seriously violated and democratic changes would be significantly threatened.

During its independence, Kyrgyzstan has made serious steps towards democratisation and gender development. It has ratified more than 40 UN conventions on human rights, including the main legal instrument on gender equality – Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, ratified in 1997).

In compliance with the CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation #21 -- Equality in Marriage and Family Relations -- the decision of a woman to have or not to have a child "must not be limited by spouse, parent, partner or Government". In addition, the Committee recommends States parties to "ensure that measures are taken to prevent coercion

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in regard to fertility and reproduction” (General Recommendation #19. Violence against Women.).

According to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Reproductive Rights (Article 12) «a woman can not be forced by anyone to pregnancy, abortion, or delivery. Such actions are qualified as violence against women».

Termination of pregnancy, especially in late terms, is always an extreme step. It roots in a complex combination of discriminatory mechanisms reproduced by the state and the society.

Proposed repressive sanctions against women in exercising their basic guaranteed freedoms and rights severely violates constitutional rights of a person and discriminates women. Introduction of the proposed amendment, in fact, means a reversal of democratic processes and a withdrawal from gender mainstreaming course.

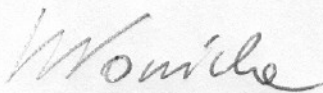
The global experience demonstrates that the decrease in abortion rates cannot be achieved through violent repressions against women and medical personnel, but rather through state policies supporting maternity, children and a wide access to information and services on family planning.

We firmly believe that, if the measures suggested by the Ombudsman -- namely the introduction of the criminal liability for termination of pregnancy of 12-22 weeks gestation -- are adopted, the situation with reproductive rights and humanitarian security will deteriorate. Narrowed access to quality healthcare may feed the illegal abortions industry, which kills hundreds of women worldwide every day.

We express our confidence, that the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Members of the Jogorku Kenesh, and the Government will not allow the adoption of the Ombudsman's proposition as breaking fundamental human rights and contradicting both the national and international legislation.

On behalf of ASTRA

Wanda Nowicka
ASTRA Secretariat



ASTRA members include:

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