



October 16th, 2017

Dr. Natalia Kanem
Executive Director

UNFPA HQ
605 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10158
USA

Dear Dr. Natalia Kanem,

On behalf of ASTRA and ASTRA Youth Networks we would sincerely like to congratulate you on your role as the new Executive Director of UNFPA. Your leadership will enable UNFPA to take lead on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women and girls and hopefully contribute to the progress on realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to health, education and gender equality.

With this letter we would also like to stress ASTRA's and ASTRA Youth's willingness to continue our cooperation in advancing women's and girl's sexual and reproductive health and rights globally and in Central and Eastern Europe and use this opportunity to present ourselves to you as key regional networks working on SRHR. ASTRA's experience adds up to 18 years of work for and with women and youth in Central and Eastern Europe but also Caucasian and Balkan countries. As an informal network we have been able to raise awareness about SRHR in our region, empower our member organizations and continue advocating for sexual and reproductive health and rights on regional, European and international levels.

After decades of steady progress on women's rights the opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights became increasingly visible in the Central and Eastern European region. Currently, with countries such as Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, and many others we are witnessing a gradually shrinking space of the civil society and further attacks on women's rights, especially the right to safe and legal abortion. Access to modern contraception and comprehensive sexuality education is not only on a much lower level than in Western Europe, but it is also questioned and challenged on numerous levels. This region plays a very clear role in the global backlash on progressive values and individual autonomy.

We count on your support, leadership and meaningful partnership with the women's movement in order to keep the governments accountable which will hopefully lead to a positive change to the lives of all women and girls. We offer our support and expertise on the issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the context of Central and Eastern Europe.

Yours sincerely,

Marta Szostak



ASTRA Coordinator

Marta Paczkowska



ASTRA Youth Coordinator

Krystyna Kacpura



Executive Director of the Federation for Women and Family Planning serving as ASTRA Secretariat

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