



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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FOUNDATION
FOR WOMEN
AND FAMILY
PLANNING

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SUMMARY OF 2022

The past year will always be associated with the beginning of the largest armed conflict in Europe in years. Russian aggression against Ukraine has changed the lives of all of us, and it can be felt in virtually every aspect of everyday life. It has also influenced our work. Since the outbreak of the war, FEDERA has been providing war refugees with support in access to sexual and reproductive health services. We quickly built not only a support system in Poland, but also organized international financial and humanitarian aid for war refugees seeking shelter in various countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Two weeks after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, our activities were lightened a bit by groundbreaking news. The World Health Organization issued new guidance on abortion care, explicitly stating for the first time that abortion pills are not only safe, but are the preferred method of abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy. Thanks to this, we were able to reassure hundreds of women who came to us, including war refugees, and provide them with even better support.

Despite this, the past year also saw the deaths of more women. Agnieszka from Częstochowa and Marta from Katowice died in hospitals where they should have received reliable care. Carrying the memory of them in us, we did everything possible every day to prevent the anti-abortion law from taking an even greater toll. We also handled the case of Marina from Warsaw, who - lied to by a doctor - was almost forced to give birth to a fetus without a skull. After our intervention, the abortion was performed. However, we did not end there - we represent Marina before the Ombudsman for Patients' Rights, we are planning the next steps. We have defended and defend everyone whose rights have been violated.

In order to better understand the scale of violations of the right to access contraception in Poland, we also began monitoring access to insertion of IUD as part of the National Health Fund. Results of our monitoring project are very popular with both women and the media. Today we know that more letters to the Ministry of Health and a wide promotional campaign of the project strengthen the assertiveness of patients, and also improve the practices of doctors from all over the country.

More and more people from the medical community, although often silently, express their disagreement with the extreme restrictions that the anti-abortion law imposed on their profession. In 2022, however, this did not stop the fundamentalists from making further attempts to tighten the inhumane regulations. In December last year, Kaja Godek submitted a bill to the Sejm to prohibit even informing about the possibility of abortion. We immediately prepared a commentary and a legal analysis, and soon we will deal with the fight against disinformation led by the Kai Godek foundation and - we are not afraid to say it - an attack on human rights.

We also constantly fought for reliable sex education. The Ponton Group was operating at full speed throughout the year. Ponton's educators ran campaigns and workshops, answered questions from young people, organized webinars and training, and supported

Ukrainian youth in accessing knowledge. Ponton spoke, among others, on the infamous Lex Czarnek and Lex Czarnek 2.0 draft bills, publicizing their harmfulness and mobilizing more people in the country to actively oppose them.

We enter 2023 strong, confident in ourselves and our work. We will continue to support access to abortion, work to liberalize the anti-abortion law and improve the quality of health care, educate and fight fundamentalists. Today, we present the fruits of our hard work in 2022 and move on.

ADVOCACY AND MONITORING IN POLAND

Around (the right to) abortion

Anniversary of the Constitutional Tribunal's judgement on abortion

On October 22, two years passed since the announcement of the judgment of the Constitutional Tribunal of Julia Przyłębska banning abortion for embryopathological reasons. On this occasion, we published a [summary](#) of our advocacy and assistance activities.

International Safe Abortion Day

On the occasion of September 28, we issued two appeals:

- [to gynecologists](#);
- [to psychiatrists](#).

Legal abortion. No compromise



Results of the collection of signatures under the LABK draft bill in FEDERA's office, Feb. 2022.

In February, the Civic Committee of the *Legal Abortion. No Compromise* Legislative Initiative announced the end of the collection of signatures for the bill. The FEDERA office was one of several places to which, for months, sheets with signatures of citizens supporting the bill aiming to legalize abortion were flowing from all over Poland as well as from abroad.

In June, the first reading of the bill was held in the Parliament of Poland. Just before it, FEDERA published an appeal to MPs.

Around (the right to) gynecological care

Cooperation with the Commissioner for Human Rights

In January, we provided the Polish Ombudsman with information about the disturbing practice of hospitals towards women who report with oligohydramnios or anhydramnios. In response to our information, the Commissioner's Office asked the National Health Fund and the Ombudsman for Patients' Rights about the scale of this practice.

In December, a representative of FEDERA participated in a meeting with the Ombudsman as part of the #NaszRzecznik initiative, during which she called for action to be taken in the matter of hospitals in Poland evading respecting mental health risk certificates entitling to abortion of pregnancies with fetal defects.

„The Gynecological Care We Need and Demand” manifesto

In February, we published the [manifesto](#) as FEDERA's commentary on the death of another pregnant patient, Agnieszka from Częstochowa. The text met with objections from the medical community, to which we responded by publishing an [appeal](#) to gynecologists.

“Pregnancy register”

At the beginning of June, we wrote a [comment](#) on the entry into force of the so-called “pregnancy register”.

Access to contraception

In April, we published [results](#) of the first stage of our nationwide monitoring of the medical service of insertion and removal of IUDs, which is guaranteed under the National Health Fund insurance. The first results concerned the city Warsaw, over the next months of the year we worked on checking medical facilities throughout the Mazowieckie Voivodeship.

Around threats to sexual and reproductive rights

Life and Family Foundation’s draft bill

In October, we [reacted](#) to the information that the Kaja Godek’s foundation started collecting signatures for another anti-abortion bill, this time to ban informing about abortion. We then published a [legal opinion](#) on the project, prepared by FEDERA’s Legal Team.

Lex Czarnek

In December, we [appealed](#) to the President of the Republic of Poland to reject the amendment to the educational law adopted by the Sejm, the so-called Lex Czarnek 2.0.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

On January 27, a year passed since the pseudo-judgment of the illegal Tribunal of J. Przyłębska banning embryopathological abortion in Poland entered into force. In addition to changing the emphasis in the intervention work of the FEDERA Foundation, it also significantly influenced the tightening of international alliances and the search for support for Polish women in access to abortion in other countries. In September 2022, a year passed since the death of the first publicly disclosed victim of the Constitutional Tribunal's judgment, and we learned about other women who lost their lives as a result of this inhuman judgment of politicians in gowns. An [article](#) by FEDERA's international advocacy coordinator was published in Euobserver on the anniversary of January 21 – the publication day of the Constitutional Tribunal's pseudo-judgement on abortion.

On June 23, 2022, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland rejected in the first reading the *Legal abortion. No compromise* draft bill aiming to liberalize access to abortion. 265 MPs were for the rejection, 175 MPs were against while 4 abstained.

Of course, a significant change in our work, also in terms of strategy and international alliances, was Russia's attack on Ukraine and the permanent or temporary arrival to Poland of several million women with children. Women who, like Polish women, fell victim to a sick health care system, especially in the sectors of reproductive health and protection against gender-based violence.

FEDERA informed our numerous international partners about these and many other current events, including, starting from [July 2022](#), on FEDERA's English-language website, we publish monthly summaries of events from Poland in the field of reproductive rights and activities of anti-gender movements.

In the past year, FEDERA also received countless proofs of support and solidarity from around the world in connection with the situation experienced by Polish women, and after the outbreak of war also by refugees from Ukraine and other countries, in access to reproductive health services.

Also in 2022, in June, the US Supreme Court overturned the nearly 50-year-old precedent in *Roe v. Wade*, which guaranteed American women the constitutional right to abortion. FEDERA published a [position](#) paper on this decision, followed by a longer [text](#) analyzing its causes and effects. We also took part in solidarity actions together with other organizations in Poland and abroad.

United Nations

Human Rights Council in Geneva (HRC)

- [49th session of the Human Rights Council \(March 2022\)](#)

FEDERA's [statement](#) concerned threats to SRHR during the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian Federation's attack on Ukraine;

➤ 50th session of the Human Rights Council (June 2022)

FEDERA's [statement](#) was read as part of the debate with the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls in the context of the discussion on young women's activism and the problems they face. We pointed out that also in Poland, young feminist organizations operate in a very hostile environment, and abortion activism carries the risk of criminalization.

➤ 51st session of the Human Rights Council (September 2022)

This time, FEDERA's [statement](#) was about the need to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services for people who have experienced sexual violence. FEDERA demanded, among other things, the removal of barriers to access to emergency contraception and abortion in cases of pregnancies resulting from rape.

➤ FEDERA's Universal Periodic Review report

FEDERA, together with the Sexual Rights Initiative, a partner organization in Geneva, submitted a [report](#) to the UN Human Rights Council on the state of non-compliance with sexual and reproductive rights in Poland for the fourth Universal Periodic Review of the implementation of Poland's commitments in the field of human rights, which took place in November 2022. Our report focuses on violations of women's reproductive rights in Poland and refers to the effects of the virtually complete ban on abortion in Poland introduced in November 2020. In the report, we also describe barriers to access to contraception, demonization and neglect in access to comprehensive sexuality education, and the burden on non-governmental organizations in providing assistance in accessing services and information in this area.

In November 2022, a review of Poland under the UPR took place and Poland received [recommendations](#) on health and reproductive rights from 17 countries. Such numerous recommendations are also the result of FEDERA's advocacy and established contacts with countries involved in activities for reproductive rights at the UN.

➤ As part of the cooperation with human rights organizations associated in the Sexual Rights Initiative coalition in Geneva, FEDERA is part of the #emptychairs campaign and in 2022 actively participated in numerous activities and consultations for this campaign, which aims to radically reform the UN human rights system, starting with of the Human Rights Council with the aspiration to bring this complicated machine closer to the common person anywhere in the world.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

As part of CSW66, at the invitation of RFSU (Swedish Association for Sexual Education), FEDERA's international advocacy coordinator took part in a remote conference on bodily autonomy, during which she shared her Polish experience on the battlefield for the right to abortion alongside organizations from Ireland and Argentina.

Committee Against Torture (CAT)

In January 2022, FEDERA submitted a [report](#) to the United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT) as part of the List of Issues, starting Poland's eighth reporting cycle before this Committee. In our report, we describe the situation in Poland in the light of persistent violations of women's reproductive rights. We believe that in some cases the treatment of women by denying them access to abortion constitutes torture or other inhuman and degrading treatment, and that the anti-abortion law in force in Poland leads to the death of women.

Other UN bodies

FEDERA maintains ongoing contact with UN experts working to improve the situation of women, also in the field of access to reproductive and sexual rights and sex education, including the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls (WGDAW) and with the committee monitoring the implementation of the Convention on all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW.)

European Union

European Parliament

FEDERA has solid relations with members of the European Parliament from Poland and other Member States belonging to progressive factions who work in the EP for the rule of law, women's rights, including the right to abortion and other reproductive rights. In the last three years, the EP has been very active with regard to the degradation of the rule of law and women's rights in Poland and has adopted two resolutions on abortion rights in Poland and one on reproductive and sexual health in general. In May 2022, at the initiative of the FEMM Committee, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the impact of war on women, emphasizing the need for access to reproductive health services in the context of violence against women as a weapon of war in a humanitarian crisis.

In 2022, the LIBE, FEMM, and AFCO committees of the European Parliament organized a total of two missions in Poland. FEDERA actively participated in meetings with members of both delegations, consistently drawing attention to the relationship between the impact of the rule of law crisis on the deteriorating situation of women in Poland.

In November, FEDERA participated in a joint meeting of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE). Our representatives [presented](#) the consequences of introducing a de facto ban on abortion in Poland by the judgment of the Constitutional Tribunal of October 2020. The hearing was also attended by Jolanta Budzowska, the legal adviser in charge of the case of Izabela from Pszczyna, and Barbara Skrobol, Izabela's sister-in-law.



Kamila Ferenc (first on the rights) during a hearing before the FEMM and LIBE committees in the European Parliament, November 2022.

In October, FEDERA's international advocacy coordinator took part in the PES Women European Socialist Party, women's rights faction) discussion panel in Berlin, Germany. The meeting was held under the slogan #MakeHerCount in the Times of Crisis. Helena Dalli, Commissioner for Equality in the European Commission, was present at the conference. The discussion concerned women's rights and the situation of women in Poland in the context of the humanitarian crisis.

Council of the European Union

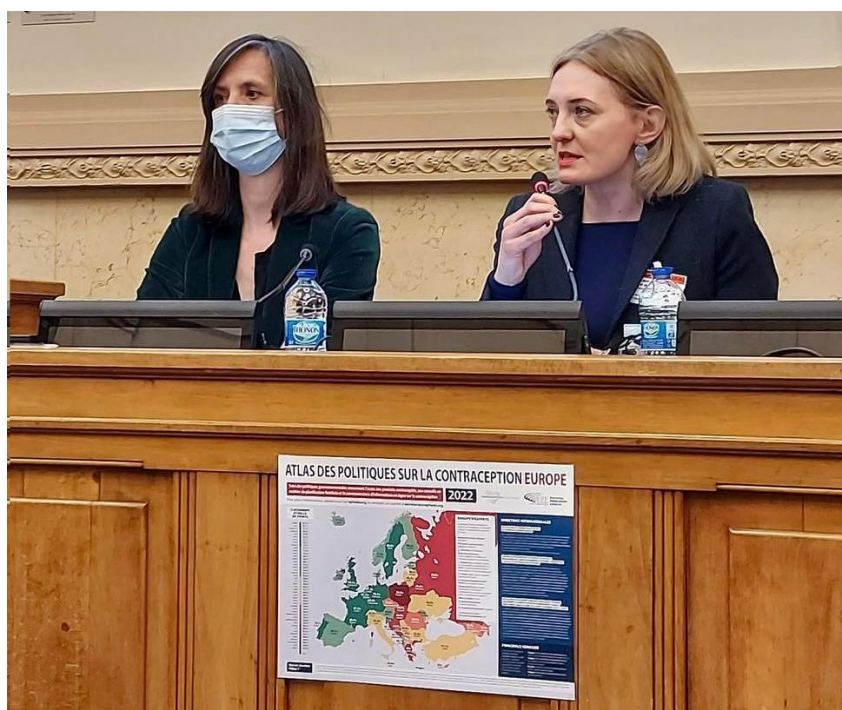
In February, Poland was heard under Art. 7 TEU by the EU General Affairs Council as part of the procedure initiated by the European Commission in 2017 in response to violations of the rule of law in Poland. FEDERA undertook a number of advocacy activities in connection with this hearing, urging the EU Member States to take into account the increasingly severe violations of fundamental rights, also resulting from the lack of access to reproductive health rights and services, including numerous talks with representatives of Member States in Brussels and meetings with representatives of the embassies of several countries, including France, which held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2022. Among the actions taken, together with other civil

society organizations in Poland and European organizations, a joint letter containing information on the situation of human rights in Poland and our demands was sent to the ministers of the EU Member States.

French Presidency of the Council of the EU

In the first half of 2022, FEDERA representatives participated in meetings with the French Embassy in Poland and with politicians in Paris.

In March, at the invitation of the French Planning Familial and the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights, FEDERA's international advocacy coordinator took part in a debate held in the French Parliament on reproductive and sexual rights in the context of the French Presidency of the European Union, with the participation of a French MPs, Guillaume Gouffier-Cha and Albane Gaillot, Minister Clément Beaune and Minister Élisabeth Moreno and representatives of civil society.



Urszula Grycuk during the debate in the Parliament of France, March 2022.

In July, FEDERA received an invitation from FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) and Ligue des droits de l'Homme to participate in a conference on threats to the rule of law in Poland, Hungary and France. During the round table discussion in Paris, our international advocacy coordinator spoke about the abortion reality in Poland and showed the connection between the dying rule of law in Poland and the lack of access to abortion and the constant attempts of the government to restrict our rights.

Advocacy for the reproductive health and rights of refugee women and girls from Ukraine

FEDERA participated in meetings of a group of organizations working for women's rights in Poland (counteracting violence and providing reproductive health services) together with the UN thematic agencies, humanitarian organizations from Poland and abroad. As part of this group, which was coordinated by the UN Commissioner for Refugees, FEDERA participated in trainings in the Polish context of access to reproductive and sexual rights, as well as in meetings regarding among others, supporting victims of sexual violence in access to reproductive health services that were co-organized by the World Health Organization.



Krystyna Kacpura and Kamila Ferenc during a visit to Refugee Support Center in Rzeszów, southeastern Poland, October 2022.

In order to respond to the reproductive health needs of people from Ukraine, FEDERA formed new coalitions and is implementing new projects to support refugee women with other organizations operating in this field, including projects with CARE International, Plan International, and the International Rescue Committee. Together with these organizations, FEDERA participates in various advocacy and support actions for Ukrainian refugees in Poland.

Together with partner organizations working to promote women's access to reproductive health services in the event of war in Ukraine, FEDERA was a signatory of numerous appeals on the threats to women and girls of war, such as the [appeal](#) of civic organizations, initiated by the Center for Reproductive rights, on the impact of war in Ukraine on sexual and reproductive rights and health of Ukrainian women and girls.

Together with the Center for Reproductive Rights and other women's rights organizations from countries neighboring Ukraine, since 2022 FEDERA has been implementing a [project](#) to help refugee women from Ukraine. The project aims to document the experiences of adult refugee women from Ukraine and other countries who need access to sexual and

reproductive health services and gender-based violence support services in Poland. We collect information about the needs of adult refugee women in the field of sexual and reproductive health and in relation to the experience of violence and about the barriers they may encounter in accessing services in this area.

Other

- In April, at the invitation of MEP Malin Björk, a member of our team went to Sweden, where she visited a clinic working for the sexual and mental health of young people and met with local activists and people associated with the Swedish Left, with whom she talked about abortion, women's rights in Poland, and the situation of refugee women from Ukraine.



Antonina Lewandowska (second on the right) and Malin Björk (first on the left) during the visit to the Youth Clinic in Uddevalla, Sweden, April 2022..

- In November, FEDERA's president took part in the International Conference on Family Planning in Thailand. She spoke about the lack of access to abortion in Poland and its consequences for women's health and lives.

LEGAL ACTIVITY

Strategic litigation

In 2022, FEDERA's Legal Team filed ten complaints with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of Polish women regarding the lack of access to abortion in Poland for embryopathological reasons. These complaints joined the nine previously filed.

In some pending cases, there have already been exchanges of letters (the so-called observations) between the Polish government and the applicants' attorneys (provided by FEDERA). We are currently awaiting the decision of the Court.

The Legal Team also submitted complaints to the Patient's Rights Ombudsman in five cases concerning lack of access to statutory abortion in Poland and related patient's rights violations, including one involving the death of a patient in hospital.

The Legal Team also continued work on previously initiated four civil proceedings for compensation for violation of personal rights in connection with unlawful refusal of abortion or exposure to drastic anti-abortion banners, and one misdemeanor case on presenting drastic anti-abortion banners in public space. The team represents the victims in these cases.

Open letters, legal opinion, and reports

- [open letter](#) to prof. Krzysztof Czajkowski, head of the 2nd Department and Clinic of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the Medical University of Warsaw and National Consultant in the field of obstetrics and gynecology;
- letters to the Supreme Medical Chamber, the Polish Society of Gynecologists and Obstetricians, the National Consultant for perinatology and the National Consultant for gynecology and obstetrics regarding the issue of guidelines for doctors on abortion;
- report to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Poland's non-compliance with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in the cases of *Tysic v. Poland*, *R.R. v. Poland*, *P. and S. v. Poland*;
- [legal opinion](#) on the draft bill prepared by the Life and Family Foundation;
- opinion of the friend of the court (*amicus curiae*) of the Foundation for Women and Family Planning in the case of Justyna Wydrzyńska (case no. V K 18/22.)

Counseling and interventions

The Law Team provided legal advice on health care services, social security, and criminal law in the context of reproductive health protection. The team also intervened in public hospitals in several dozen cases concerning the rights of patients, in particular the right to a guaranteed benefit in the form of abortion.

Trainings and workshops

- The Legal Team, in cooperation with the Global.Lab Foundation and the Grand Coalition for Equality and Choice, conducted the meeting "Protecting Reproductive and Sexual Health" as part of the series *Europe is a woman: What kind of European Union do we want?*;
- FEDERA's lawyer gave speech during the panel entitled "Embryopathological defects of the fetus. What is the medical, legal and civic environment doing and what else can be done to protect the health and life of Polish women after October 22, 2020" organized by the Damy Radę Foundation as part of the civic initiative *This is Not Talked About*.

EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLISHING ACTIVITY

Informational and educational publications

Leaflet on reproductive health for Ukrainian women who came to Poland after February 24, 2022

In the [leaflet](#), refugee women from Ukraine will find the most important information on access to contraception, prenatal tests, pregnancy and perinatal care, and abortion in Poland.

FEDERA's brochures translated into Ukrainian and Russian



- brochure on medical abortion [UA](#) [RU](#)
- brochure on emergency contraception [UA](#) [RU](#)
- the Ponton's Group brochure on adolescence and sex [UA](#) [RU](#)
- the Ponton's Group brochure on contraception methods [UA](#) [RU](#)
- the Ponton's Group brochure on STIs/STDs [UA](#) [RU](#)
- the Ponton's Group brochure on consent [UA](#) [RU](#)

Leaflet on access to reproductive health in Poland for female refugees and migrants in the refugee procedure (who are not citizens of Ukraine)

The content of the [publication](#) created in 2021 by FEDERA and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was updated in 2022. The leaflet is available in Polish, Belarusian, Russian, Arabic and Tajik.

Projects and events

#CategoCiała podcast on Kapital Radio

Until June 2022, we produced a podcast for a community non-profit Kapital Radio. On [#CategoCiała](#) which we freely talked about various aspects of sexual and reproductive rights and health. During almost three years, 29 episodes were created.

Episodes from 2022:

- on sex education in Polish schools;
- on FEDERA's activities helping war refugees from Ukraine;
- on monitoring of access to IUDs insertion/removal as part of the National Health Fund.



Aleksandra Magryta and Marta Paczkowska during recording of the #CategoCiała podcast, June 2022.

Online events

- In January, FEDERA organized a live broadcast, during which our president and vice-president talked about the current access to reproductive health services in Poland and what FEDERA's work looked like during the previous year, including its most important aspect - helping patients in struggling with the cruel anti-abortion law. A Q&A session followed.
- In October, an online event was held under the slogan "Pregnancy register, conscience clause, refusal of tests - practical advice. FEDERA's Q&A ", during which FEDERA's lawyer and vice-president answered the following questions: what to do when a doctor judges your choices or invokes the conscience clause, pregnancy register - what are your rights and who has access to the information, how to react to a refusal to: testing, abortion, IUD insertion, prescription for the morning-after pill, issue the result of ultrasound examinations. The lawyer gave practical advice - what to say, what to refer to, where and how to file a complaint.
- In November, we organized an online meeting entitled "Complaints about the lack of access to abortion in Poland. How to do it?" Our lawyer and her guests spoke

on how to file a complaint against the Polish state to the European Court of Human Rights for the lack of access to abortion in Poland.

- Also in November, there was a live broadcast on FEDERA's Instagram under the slogan "A visit to a gynecologist - what should it look like?", during which a gynecologist spoke on how a visit to a gynecology specialist should look like, how to prepare for it, what the doctor cannot do, how to behave if you do not feel safe in the office, what are your rights and what to do if they are broken, e.g. when the doctor does not want to issue a prescription for contraception.

COUNSELING ACTIVITY AND SUPPORT OF WOMEN

Helpline

[FEDERA's Helpline](#) has been operating continuously since November 12, 1991.

In 2022, our experts – sex educators, psychologists and gynecologists – on duty from Monday to Friday 4pm to 8pm, held over a thousand conversations. Callers most often asked questions about sex education (29.3%), pregnancy (23.5%) and gynecology in general (20.5%). Inquiries on abortion accounted for 17.4%, sexology 13.3%, contraception 11.4%, LGBT 2.7%, sexually transmitted infections 1.8%, law 1.6%, and violence – 1.6%. 10.4% of callers sought psychological advice. 9.2% of all calls were issues from the "other" category. The callers were mostly women (64%). Men accounted for 35.6%, and people outside the gender binary 0.4%.

Gynecological care counseling

In July, our counseling offer in the field of reproductive and sexual health was expanded to include an e-mail box with a gynecologist on duty - ginekolozka@federa.org.pl.

Counseling for refugee women from Ukraine

On March 21, we launched a new helpline - a Ukrainian-speaking gynecologist was on duty three times a week. Responding to the changing demand, after a few months the phone transformed into a Ukrainian- and Polish-language legal hotline, accompanied by e-mail advice.

In October, we conducted a webinar entitled "Protection of reproductive rights in Poland" for the organization Martynka, which helps war refugees from Ukraine.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Websites

FEDERA runs websites in [Polish](#) and [English](#).

In 2022, the number of page views of the Polish-language website was 760,000. This is over 10% more than in the previous year.

Social media

The most actively used communication channel was FEDERA's [Facebook page](#). In addition to current information on the implementation of reproductive rights and our activities, we also published many information and educational posts. The number of Facebook audience maintains a steady increase, in 2022 by 4.5% compared to the number from the previous year - currently the Foundation's page has over 46,000 followers. The largest group of recipients are women aged 25-44.

In addition, we published content on other social channels – [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

The “I Have the Right” Bulletin

The [“I Have the Right” bulletin](#) reaches the e-mail boxes of nearly a thousand people, and FEDERA has been publishing it since 1999. In 2022, we published two issues on, among others: the state of implementation of reproductive rights in Poland and in the world, activities of the Foundation, as well as information on medical and legal knowledge. The promotion of each issue of the bulletin takes place in social media.



WIELKA KOALICJA ZA RÓWNOŚCIĄ I WYBOREM

It's been 6 years of [Wielka Koalicja za Równością i Wyborem](#)'s (WKRW) existence. The Great Coalition for Equality and Choice is made up of 122 formal and informal organizations from Poland, as well as Polish diaspora organizations located in European countries, and recently also Ukrainian organizations based in Poland.

WKRW is an important FEDERA program that aims to:

- network feminist and human rights organizations,
- advocate for women's rights and rights of the LGBT community,
- educate in the field of reproductive health and sexuality,
- counteract violence,
- intervene in cases of patient's rights violations,
- monitor the socio-political situation and take appropriate action in response to it.

The Coalition is active on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

Advocacy activities

- [appeal](#) to Members of Parliament regarding changes to PIT settlement regulations, which deprived women raising children on their own of the possibility of settling tax on preferential terms;
- [statement](#) on the harmful activities of Barbara Nowak, the curator of education in Małopolska, which was sent to all curators of education all over Poland;
- [appeal](#) to the Ministry of Health and the National Health Fund on respecting the reproductive rights of women fleeing war;
- support of the social organization's [appeal](#) for equal treatment of people fleeing war;
- signature under the [statement](#) on the solidarity of Polish social organizations with Ukraine;

- [appeal](#) to the Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Health regarding the withdrawal of charges against Justyna Wydrzyńska, an activist of the Abortion Dream Team, for helping to terminate a pregnancy;
- advocacy around the civic draft bill *Legal Abortion. No Compromise* and campaigning in favor of the collection of signatures under the bill;
- supporting the [petition](#) of social organizations regarding the dismissal of the Deputy Commissioner for Human Rights, Dr. Hanna Machińska;
- joining the protest of carers of children with disabilities, who are forced to give up paid work in order to receive the care benefit;
- supporting Members of Parliament of the Left against who are being prosecuted for activities in favor of women's rights and the idea of secular state;
- joining the [#TylkoTakOznaczaZgodę](#) (#OnlyYesMeansConsent) campaign in favor the draft bill changing the definition of rape;
- [appeal](#) to MPs regarding the rejection of the draft bill "In Defense of Christians."

Monitoring activities

- monitoring of gynecologists who support refugee women;
- monitoring violations of patient's rights, with particular emphasis on refusals to insert an IUD by medical facilities that have signed a contract with the National Health Fund;
- monitoring activities related to reproductive rights, in particular abortion;
- monitoring violations of women's rights and acts of gender-based violence;
- monitoring activities around the LGBT community and violations of their rights;
- monitoring activities at the regional and state level in the field of anti-discrimination education (including monitoring activities around the Lex Czarnek draft bill) and secular school.

Educational activities

- campaign on social media about the possibility of obtaining abortion in Poland;
- information activities regarding the so-called "pregnancy register";
- educational campaign on patient's rights, with particular emphasis on IUD insertion/removal as part of the National Health Fund insurance;
- educational campaign on access to reproductive health services around the world;

- information activities regarding the support of women refugees from Ukraine;
- preparation of a [database](#) of gynecologists who offer free appointments to refugees from Ukraine.

Integration and pro-activism activities

4th WKRW Meeting

On November 27 and 28 in Warsaw FEDERA held another meeting of the Great Coalition for Equality and Choice member organizations. During the event, representatives of member organizations shared their experiences and participated in panel discussions on "Actions supporting refugee women* from Ukraine in Poland", "Feminist strategies of resistance", and "How to help in abortion."



Participants of the Great Coalition for Equality and Choice meeting, November 2022.

Other

- providing WKRW member organizations with educational materials on reproductive rights.



A S T R A N E T W O R K

WWW.ASTRA.ORG.PL

ASTRA Network – Central and Eastern Europe Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is a coalition of non-governmental and informal organizations from the CEE region that work together for advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as health care in general. The Network, established in 1999 during a regional meeting hosted by the Federation for Women and Family Planning, currently consists of 40 organizations from 20 countries. ASTRA's secretariat is located in the Federation's office in Warsaw. Our activity can be followed online: on [ASTRA's website](#), [Facebook page](#), and [Twitter](#).

War in Ukraine

2022 marked the beginning of the first European war on international, maybe even global scale. It severely impacts current developments around the world, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. A need for basic humanitarian care, unseen for decades in our part of the world, took the work of regional NGOs to extremes. All in order to help as many as possible.

As a Network of non-governmental organizations based in different countries of CEE, ASTRA became one of the main contact points for a number of foreign and international organizations wishing to support Ukraine. Thanks to the close ties of ASTRA with representatives of other networks, such as the Romanian Anti-Human Trafficking Network, ASTRA's secretariat operated as a hub connecting different partners according to the current needs of the first responders working on the borders of Ukraine and its neighboring countries.

Such strengthening of international relations opened the doors to new cooperations for the Network. ASTRA is now working with Care International or Voice Amplified, a project was also started with our friends at Fòs Feminista. The new partners have offered ASTRA's members support to be provided in a number of ways, including digital security trainings

or hosting of anti-burnout workshops for the first responders. The Network also works with long-time partners, Global Fund for Women and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

ASTRA's secretariat was (and still is) in touch with representatives of 20 countries of the region, what allowed the Network to quickly report about the war situation on the ground. The requests of the first responders were quickly forwarded to the international community, allowing for a swift response and an (at least temporary) meeting of the needs. That applies especially, although not only, to ASTRA's Ukrainian members: Salus Charitable Foundation from Lviv and Women's Health and Family Planning Foundation based in Kyiv.

For ASTRA Network, the war in Ukraine, however, does not come down to international advocacy only. Members of the Network have been provided with a platform for a swift exchange of good practices and experiences in providing support for those affected by the war. They have the possibility to share resources and grow together as first responders and members of the Network.

ASTRA Network remains a safe space for women's rights defenders, and at the same time ensures visibility and conveys the messages and needs of the grassroots organizations of Central and Eastern Europe – even, or maybe especially, during the war.

Members' meeting and Warsaw Statement

ASTRA Network's first post-pandemic meeting was held in Warsaw. On 5-7 October 2022, representatives of ASTRA's member organizations met in Warsaw for three days of intensive work. The participants shared stories and experiences from their work in Eastern Europe, especially in the new reality of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The first day of the meeting was dedicated solely to the war and how each organization navigates the new reality in the region. Luckily, due to a break in the shelling of Kyiv, the representatives had the chance to video chat with Galina Mastruk, M.D., a representative of the Kyiv-based Women's Health and Family Planning Foundation. Mastruk shared her experiences of providing medical care in a war zone and forwarded the requests of the first responders in Ukraine. Her insight allowed the present members to adjust their crisis-response strategies to the factual needs of human rights defenders operating in the war-torn country.

The following days included discussions about the strategies of regional fundamentalists and the far-right, Russian activities in the region, other armed conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe, and the crisis of liberal democracy. Given the number of challenges the activists face, and the toll the situation takes on them, a workshop on activist burnout was organized. The safe space created during the meeting allowed the participants to vent and recharge before going back to their home countries.

The work done during the meeting has been summed up in the [Warsaw Statement](#). The document calls for the international community to recognize human rights defenders and

first responders as the pillar of crisis facilitation efforts around the world, especially in the context of the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Regional Advocacy

In January 2022, the Network was one of the first organizations to inform the international community about the tragic death of another Polish woman – Agnieszka from the city of Częstochowa.

ASTRA has also issued an official [statement](#) regarding the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, strongly condemning Russian aggression. The document also contained a list of links to fundraisers started in order to support fighting Ukrainians, as well as strengthening of human rights protection during the war. Some of our international partners went with our suggestions and donated to the causes. Menstrual hygiene products and medicaments were also sent to the country.

The following months brought ongoing pro-Ukrainian advocacy efforts undertaken parallel to supporting our Polish colleagues in the fight against harmful ministerial bills. The Network was also one of the main sources of information about the trial of Justyna Wydrzyńska from the Polish Abortion Dream Team collective – the first activist in Europe charged with assistance in obtaining an abortion, an act criminalized in Poland.

A great success of 2022 was the Lithuanian government's announcement of the plan to liberalize the law and legalize abortion pills in the country. That achievement was fought for by members of civil society, including the Network's member – the Family Planning and Sexual Health Association from Lithuania.

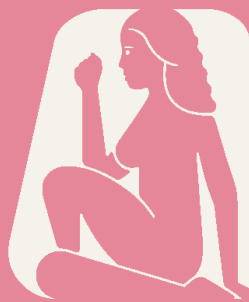
Bulletin

As in previous years, ASTRA carried out thorough monitoring of the state of sexual and reproductive rights in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Our monthly [bulletins](#) summarized the collected data and remained an important source of information on sexual and reproductive rights in the region. Over 3,000 subscribers and social media followers drew knowledge about reproductive health realities and policies from these bulletins. The information comprised in the newsletter was cited, among others, by the Center for Reproductive Rights or the International Campaign for Women's Right to Safe Abortion.

SPONSORS

- Sigrid Rausing Trust
- Global Fund for Women
- Rosa Luxemburg Foundation
- Fos Feminista
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- International Planned Parenthood Federation
- CARE International
- HIAS
- Plan International
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Warsaw (Human Rights Fund)
- individual donations for statutory activity





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