



# Sexual and Reproductive Health throughout the Life Course

ICPD Beyond 2014 Review  
in the UNECE Region

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*“....Reproductive health .. implies that  
people are able to have a satisfying and  
safe sex life and that they have the  
capability to reproduce and the  
freedom to decide if, when and how  
often to do so.... ” [para. 72]*

### Context of the PoA implementation in Eastern UNECE

- Profound transition period
- Significant social changes.

### Policy and practice

- Wide variety of policies, programmes and strategies
- Most social and welfare policies targeting vulnerable groups recently updated
- Special focus on Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Many challenges remain.

### Some Key Facts

- Low fertility
- Availability and increased use of modern contraception
- Abortion rates have declined, Inequities remain
- High rates of STIs and HIV
- Proportion of teenage mothers has decreased yet adolescent birth rates remain high in many sub-regions
- Weak rights-based policies for removing barriers that limit choices and protect vulnerable groups

## ICPD across the life course



## Family – roles, rights, composition, structure

***The family is the basic unit of society and, as such, should be strengthened. It is entitled to receive comprehensive protection and support. Various forms of the family exist. [ICPD Principle 9]***

- Family forms are changing
- Delaying childbearing, higher levels of infertility and demand for reproductive technologies
- Migration patterns affect family dynamics (women led households, vulnerable migrants, and return migrants).

### 45th Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) 2012

“.... give full attention to meeting the reproductive health-service, information and education needs of young people, with full respect .....”



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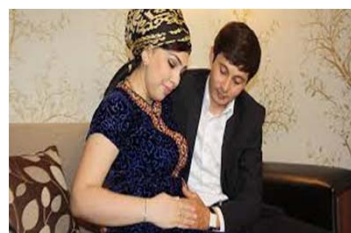
- Increased access to education for girls
- Improved data collection on sexual health
- High levels of well-being among young people
- Lack of comprehensive sexuality education
- Limited access to SRH youth-friendly services.
- Restrictive legal barriers
- Social / Normative Barriers to Behaviour Change

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- Young people's access to comprehensive sexuality education
- The right to access youth-friendly SRH information and services (*incl. contraception, safe abortion, STI/HIV prevention, treatment and care*)
- Limit adolescent pregnancies and child marriages through proactive laws and policy protections

The ICPD Programme of Action established a clear connection between  
**reproductive health**  
and  
**human rights.**



## Health Sexuality, Reproductive Choices, Access to Services – Progress and Challenges

Swiss TPH



- HIV and AIDS is the most important problem in the region
- Access to information, social stigma, and gender related barriers continues to restrict choices
- Access to SRH services varies among different populations and sub-regions
- Lack of financial mechanisms and integrated services
- Lack of enabling legal environments and participation by affected groups

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## Health Sexuality, Reproductive Choices, Access to Services -- Potential

Swiss TPH



- Universal access to SRH and Rights that recognizes access to quality services including maternal and newborn health and family planning as Human Rights issues
- Remove service level barriers through integration of SRH into PHC; and by investing in health system strengthening
- Challenge restrictive gender norms to equitably allow for sexual and reproductive life choices
- Create an enabling legal and regulatory environment to respect, protect and fulfil people's SRH rights

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ICPD Programme of Action  
gave little attention to SRHR  
among the elderly

- The UNECE population is getting older
- On average the elderly are healthier
- However, inequalities exist.



- SRHR sector has neglected the needs of older persons.
- Policy and media responses have been largely negative
- Support is needed for caretakers of older persons
- Care and support for older persons must keep them connected to their families and communities especially in the case of vulnerable elderly people
- Urgent need to recognize/support the rights of older persons

- 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10-24 do not have access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and sexuality education
- 215 million women who are married or living in unions do not want to be pregnant but lack access to modern contraception
- Too many women and girls continue to face gender inequality, violence, and other violations of human rights

There is a need to generate **political will, sustained action, and accountability** for:

- ✓ **Universal access** to quality, integrated SRH and HIV services
- ✓ Programmes that **empower women**, especially through **comprehensive sexuality education**
- ✓ Protection **reproductive rights as human rights**, and international adoption of **sexual rights as human rights**.
- ✓ **Young people's leadership**
- ✓ **Meaningful participation of civil society organizations**
- ✓ Recognition of **SRH needs throughout the Life Course**.