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The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) is a sex worker-led network representing 95 organisations led by or working with sex workers in 31 countries in Europe and Central Asia, as well as 150 individuals including sex workers, academics, trade unionists, human rights advocates, and women's rights and LGBT rights activists. The core aim of ICRSE is to ensure that the voices of sex workers in the region are heard, listened to and respected. We strive to raise awareness about the social exclusion of sex workers of all genders in Europe and Central Asia; to promote the human, health and labour rights of all sex workers at the community, national and regional level; and to build alliances with key partners, including sex workers and their organisations on a global level, and with NGOs, other civil society organisations and key stakeholders involved in policy- and decision-making processes in the EU.

ICRSE opposes all forms of criminalisation of sex work and firmly rejects the conflation of sex work with human trafficking. We aim to raise awareness of the harmful impact of this conflation on sex workers’ lives and seek to put forward a labour rights’ perspective of sex work, whereby the labour, health and human rights of all sex workers are recognised, protected and fulfilled by national, regional and international laws, policies and programmes.

ICRSE supports sex workers’ right to self-determination and self-organisation. Sex workers can and do effect change; solidarity among ICRSE members will ensure that the needs and voices of sex workers will be heard and addressed equally.

The Annual Report 2016 outlines ICRSE’s latest projects, programmes and achievements which contribute to our strategic aims as a regional advocacy network for sex workers’ rights.
ICRSE’S MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

ICRSE’s vision is a world where sex work is recognised as work; where all sex workers are respected and their rights upheld; and where gender, racial, social and economic equality and freedom of movement are a reality enabling individuals to start, continue or leave sex work safely, free from violence and coercion.

ICRSE’S MISSION:
ICRSE is a network of sex worker organisations and their allies that work together to support the development of national and international law, policy and practice that respect and uphold the human and labour rights of sex workers throughout Europe and Central Asia.

ICRSE’S CORE VALUES:
ICRSE and its members:
• Recognise sex work as work
• Support sex worker self-determination and self-organisation
• Oppose the criminalisation of sex work

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS:
ICRSE’s members are composed of organisations and individuals working or living in Western, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. ICRSE’s organisational members are sex worker-led collectives and associations, service providers working directly with sex workers, and other organisations supporting sex workers’ rights. Individual members include sex workers, academics, human rights activists, feminists, and trade unionists. The governance structure of ICRSE ensures the network is led by sex worker-led organisations and sex workers themselves, with a majority of sex workers elected as board members, staff, consultants and spokespersons.
Dissemination of “10 years of sex workers’ rights activism and advocacy in Europe and Central Asia” report

Feminists for Sex Workers campaign

Launch of “Exploitation: Unfair labour arrangements and precarious working conditions in the sex industry” report

Participation at International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2016) in Durban, South Africa

Participation at 13th AWID International Forum, hosted by Association for Women’s Rights in Development in Bahia, Brazil

Action Meeting and Seminar on the Rights of Migrant Sex Workers in Brussels; Launch Intersection Briefing Paper “Surveilled. Exploited. Deported. Rights Violations against Migrant Sex Workers in Europe and Central Asia”

“RCNF Consortium meeting with global and regional sex worker-led networks”

ICRSE members’ consultation

“Regional training on Sex Workers Implementation Tool (SWIT) in collaboration with Sex Workers’ Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN)”

“Commercial Sex: Fight for Rights” seminar in Chisinau, hosted by Moldova Feminist Initiative Group (GIFM)

Follow-ups on SWIT trainings in Serbia and Macedonia; Participation at workshop by European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe)

Development of advocacy video “United we stand: Introduction to the Sex Worker Implementation Tool”
# ICRSE’S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

| ICRSE Vision | ICRSE’s vision is of a world where sex work is recognised as work; where all sex workers are respected and their rights upheld; and where gender, racial, social and economic equality and freedom of movement are a reality and enable individuals to start, continue or leave sex work safely, and free from violence and coercion. |
| ICRSE Mission | ICRSE is a network of sex worker organisations and their allies that work together to support the development of national and international law, policy and practice, which respects and upholds the human and labour rights of sex workers throughout Europe and Central Asia. |

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<td>Advocacy and Campaigning</td>
<td>1. ICRSE is a respected partner in the European political arena and national legislatures and effectively advocates for the human and labour rights of sex workers.</td>
<td>1.1 To develop a four-year targeted ICRSE Advocacy Strategy in line with member priorities 1.2 To monitor relevant policies and political shifts that may impact on sex work in member countries and at national and international level 1.3 To build strategic alliances with relevant organisations, networks and rights-based movements 1.4 To identify and lead regional campaigns 1.5 To provide support to national-level advocacy initiatives</td>
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<td>Strengthening ICRSE Membership</td>
<td>2. A cohesive and vibrant sex worker-led movement in Europe which vocally advocates for the human and labour rights of sex workers.</td>
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<td>2.1 To increase the membership and to actively encourage membership applications from countries in which ICRSE doesn’t currently have members</td>
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<td>2.2 To maintain and improve effective communication mechanisms for members through in-country meetings and online tools</td>
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<td>2.3 To establish and maintain a tiered membership structure and associated membership communication</td>
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<td>2.4 To mobilise members’ joint action on arising issues that affect sex workers nationally, regionally and globally</td>
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<td>2.5 To build the capacity of member groups according to their needs as identified in this strategic planning process</td>
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<td>Sustainable Capacity Building</td>
<td>3. ICRSE is a strong and sustainable network that provides expertise and guidance in the fight for sex workers’ rights throughout Europe.</td>
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<td>3.1 To develop and utilise strategic governance documents</td>
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<td>3.3 To develop a fundraising strategy</td>
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<td>3.4 To monitor and evaluate ICRSE activities and outcomes against the stated goals and objectives as identified in this Strategic Plan</td>
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This Annual Report lays out how ICRSE worked in diverse areas in order to achieve our strategic goals and objectives as laid out in the Strategic Plan 2016-2019:

• Ensuring that ICRSE is a respected partner in the European political arena and national legislatures, and effectively advocates for the human and labour rights of sex workers. (ADVOCATING FOR SEX WORKERS’ HUMAN AND LABOUR RIGHTS)

• Developing a cohesive and vibrant sex worker-led movement in Europe which vocally advocates for the human and labour rights of sex workers. (STRENGTHENING OUR MEMBERS THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING)

• Establishing ICRSE as a strong and sustainable network that provides expertise and guidance in the fight for sex workers’ rights throughout Europe. (ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTHENING THROUGH EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE)

A - ADVOCATING FOR SEX WORKERS’ HUMAN AND LABOUR RIGHTS

“Driven by the needs of its members and in line with the ICRSE Declaration of the Rights of Sex Workers http://www.sexworkeurope.org/resources/declaration-rights-sex-workers-europe and Sex Worker Manifesto http://www.sexworkeurope.org/sites/default/files/userfiles/files/join/manbrussels2005.pdf, ICRSE will continue to step up its advocacy and campaigning efforts at the national and regional levels. With the need for support for sex workers ever increasing and the worrying political trends developing across Europe, advocacy will continue to be the primary focus for ICRSE and maximum efforts will be invested in the next four years for positive changes to be achieved in policies and practices regulating and affecting sex workers.”

ICRSE Strategic Plan 2016-2019

In 2015, ICRSE embarked on a wide-reaching advocacy campaign aiming to strengthen our collaboration and partnership with other social justice movements, European networks and rights-based organisations, in order to effectively challenge policies and legislation that adversely affect sex workers in the region. The key element of this campaign was the development of a series of briefing papers highlighting the intersections of sex workers’ rights with other rights and social struggles, such as those of the LGBT community, women, workers and migrants. One of the briefing papers titled “Underserved. Overpoliced. Invisibilised. LGBT Sex Workers Do Matter” http://www.sexworkeurope.org/de/underserved-overpoliced-invisibilised-lgbt-sex-workers-do-matter and documenting rights’ violations of LGBT sex workers in Europe, was published in 2015 already. In 2016, ICRSE launched
two additional documents, focusing on the intersections of the rights of sex workers and women and (undocumented) migrants in Europe (for more details, please see pages 9-10). These briefing papers contributed to the formation and strengthening of many significant partnerships and relationships between ICRSE and other rights-based organisations and movements. Over the last year, ICRSE has also engaged in many other activities and campaigns which aimed at highlighting challenges and barriers to sex workers’ rights, both across the European region and globally.

1. New community resources

In 2016, ICRSE published several resources, all which were uploaded online and distributed among our member organisations and allies:

Intersection Briefing Paper “Feminism Needs Sex Workers. Sex Workers Need Feminism. For a Sex Worker Inclusive Women’s Rights Movement”

On the 8th of March 2016, International Women’s Rights Day, ICRSE launched its second intersection briefing paper, exploring how sex workers’ rights are connected with women’s rights. This briefing paper is intended to serve as a tool for sex workers, activists from the women’s rights movement and policy makers to understand the diversity and complexity of sex workers’ lives and social struggles. It explores the intersection of feminist thought, women’s rights and sex workers’ rights, and the feminist ideals which are included and supported in sex work activism. It calls upon the feminist movement to consider the growing evidence in support of decriminalising sex work, build an alliance with sex workers and their organisations, and actively support sex workers’ rights and the decriminalisation of sex work.
In addition to launching this briefing paper, ICRSE was also involved in drafting a Feminist Manifesto in Support of Sex Workers’ Rights. The manifesto, which aims to visibilise the support of feminist organisations, collectives and individuals for the recognition of sex work as work and for its decriminalisation, was translated into 13 languages and signed by 129 women’s and feminist organisations in Europe. The signatories call upon feminists to concentrate their resources on including and amplifying sex workers’ voices in the movement and to stop promoting legal frameworks that have been shown to be detrimental to sex workers’ rights. The manifesto led to many debates and discussions within feminist movements and organisations at the national level (i.e. in Hungary, Poland, etc.) and increased ICRSE’s profile. As a result, ICRSE was invited to participate in Moldova’s first-ever public debate on feminism and sex work.

Community Report “Exploitation: Unfair Labour Arrangements and Precarious Working Conditions in the Sex Industry”


This report was developed through consultation with sex workers and sex workers’ organisations in the region and analyses the different forms of exploitation sex workers can face in the sex industry. It aims to engage in the discussion over exploitation in the sex industry, while simultaneously challenging the neo-abolitionist definition of sex work (or “prostitution”) as “sexual exploitation”. The report argues that this definition obscures the complex realities of sex workers’ lives and work arrangements, and in consequence fails to address the diversity of exploitative working practices that do occur in the sex industry. Both sex work, as a form of work and income-generating activity, and exploitation in the sex industry, i.e. labour arrangements that enable one person to take unfair advantage of the work of another, belong to the realm of work and should be viewed and analysed through the lens of labour. In the report, we argue that only by focusing on sex workers’ working conditions and employment practices and arrangements under which sexual services are sold and exchanged can we come to a better understanding of and challenge exploitation in the sex industry.

The Community Report also includes recommendations for sex workers’ collectives and allies, including trade unionists, to combat exploitation in the sex industry as well as examples of exploitative practices as experienced by sex workers in different settings, countries and legal frameworks.

On Thursday, 16th of November, ICRSE launched its third intersection briefing paper titled “Surveilled. Exploited. Deported. Rights Violations against Migrant Sex Workers in Europe and Central Asia” as well as a policy brief and recommendations on migrant sex workers’ rights.

This report explores how the criminalisation of migration in contemporary Europe and the common conflation of human trafficking with sex work affect the living and working conditions of migrant sex workers across the region. It also demonstrates how these factors often lead to serious violations of migrant sex workers’ human rights and heighten their vulnerability to violence and labour exploitation. Furthermore, violations of migrant sex workers’ fundamental human rights, such as the right to employment, health and housing are analysed through case studies from the European and Central Asian context.

In its policy brief, ICRSE stresses that the magnitude of these problems is calling for urgent European and national policy responses to address the root causes of migrants’ vulnerability: the criminalisation of migration and the facilitation of the entry and stay of undocumented migrants, lack of access to employment, repressive laws regulating sex work, and the use of anti-human trafficking policies to detect and deport undocumented sex workers. ICRSE therefore calls upon policymakers to:

• Support the decriminalisation of sex work in order to ensure (undocumented) migrant sex workers’ access to health and justice
• Support irregular migrants’ regularisation and an end of deportations of (undocumented) migrant sex workers
• Ensure that asylum seekers, refugees and (undocumented) migrants have access to welfare support and economic opportunities, including employment

2. Seminars, key events and other activities

Participation in UN Women’s consultation on sex work

In response to UN Women’s consultation to develop a policy on sex work, ICRSE translated the call for responses by the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) into 6 regional languages and drafted our own submission http://www.sexworkeurope.org/news/general-news/icrse-publishes-response-un-womens-consultation. ICRSE joined NSWP and many
other sex workers’ rights, human rights and health organisations in condemning UN Women’s consultation process – conducted exclusively online, in English and in a language style understandable only to professional NGO and UN staff – all factors leading to the exclusion of the vast majority of sex workers.

“By organising a consultation that excludes the vast majority of sex workers from answering, you are participating in the silencing and exclusion of sex workers, reinforcing the idea that our opinions, concerns, experiences – and therefore our lives – are not worthy.”

(Excerpt from ICRSE’s submission to UN Women)

Seminar on migrant sex workers’ rights

The seminar “Surveilled, Exploited, Deported: Rights Violations against Migrant Sex Workers in Europe and Central Asia”, held by ICRSE on the 16th of November 2016, in Brussels, Belgium, was the conclusion of a three day Action Meeting bringing together migrant sex workers, sex workers’ rights organisations, service providers and human rights organisations (see page 24). The seminar was a powerful event where migrant sex workers spoke publicly about their living and working conditions, and allies from diverse organisations re-affirmed their commitment to supporting the sex workers’ rights movement.

ICRSE’s seminar reflected on the human rights situation of migrant sex workers, who in some Western European countries constitute the majority of sex workers. The legal and policy measures that criminalise migration in contemporary Europe and the conflation of human trafficking with sex work affect the living and working conditions of this population across the region. Sex workers from various contexts discussed more extensively how these trends lead to serious violations of migrant sex workers’ human rights and heighten their vulnerability to violence and exploitation. Furthermore, they presented case studies on how their rights to employment, health and housing are being infringed upon as a consequence of repressive anti-migration and anti-human trafficking laws.

Speakers included members of seven European sex worker collectives.

- Sabrina Sanchez (APROSEX, Spain)
  “From Latin America to Europe: experiences and organisation of migrant sex workers in Spain”
- Kemal Ördek (Kirmizi Semsiye, Red Umbrella, Turkey)
  “Which rights and services for refugees selling sex in Turkey?”
• Mimi (ACCEPTESS-T, France)
  “For respect and equality: the struggle of trans migrant sex workers in France”

• Trajche (Red Edition, Austria)
  “Not voiceless: migrant sex workers self-organising in Austria”

• Paulina Nicol (English Collective of Prostitutes, United Kingdom):
  “When anti-trafficking practices hurt migrant sex workers: police raids and deportations in the UK”

• Paula Ezkerra (Asamblea de Activistas pro Derechos sobre el Trabajo Sexual en Catalunya, Spain):
  “Against violence, racism and criminalisation: sex workers reclaiming public space in Barcelona”

• Boglarka Fedorko (Association of Hungarian Sex Workers, Hungary)
  “Pushed out by state repression: migration decisions and routes of Hungarian Roma sex workers”

Other speakers were representatives of international organisations working in the fields of health, human rights, human trafficking, and migration.

• Nathalie Simonot (Médecins du Monde, France)
• Suzanne Hoff (La Strada International, European Network against Trafficking in Human Beings, Netherlands)
• Catherine Murphy (Amnesty International, United Kingdom)

During the seminar, ICRSE officially launched its third intersection briefing paper titled “Surveilled. Exploited. Deported. Rights Violations against Migrant Sex Workers in Europe and Central Asia” as well as a policy brief and recommendations on migrant sex workers rights (for more details on these documents please see page 11).

**Building alliances and fostering collaboration**

In 2016, ICRSE continued to strengthen its collaboration with national, regional and global sex worker-led collectives, including the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP [http://www.nswp.org]) and its sister network in the region, the Sex Workers Rights’ Advocacy Network in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SWAN [http://www.swannet.org]). Owing to the financial support of the Robert Carr Fund for Civil Society Networks (RCNF [http://www.robertcarrfund.org]) and coordinating efforts from NSWP, a series of regional and national trainings was co-facilitated by ICRSE and SWAN, which successfully increased sex workers’ knowledge and engagement with the Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT) or the “Implementing Comprehensive STI/HIV Programmes with Sex Workers” tool developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), NSWP, and the World Bank in 2013 (more details on the training and SWIT on page 25).

ICRSE continued to build fruitful alliances with other rights-based organisations and collaborated through participation in many events organised by other regional networks and national organisations working in the field of human rights, LGBT rights, migrants’ rights and other related fields.

ICRSE’s staff and board members participated in and coordinated various events, conferences and trainings in several countries in the region, showing solidarity with other networks and fostering collaborative and alliance building efforts in seven key areas: health rights; labour rights; LGBT rights; women’s rights and gender equality; migration and human trafficking; cultural activism; and sex work research.

**Health rights**

- European Action Treatment Group's (EATG) stakeholders meeting (1 February 2016 in Brussels, Belgium)
- Regional training “Improved Treatment and Care Access (ITACA): Treatment Cascades in Central and South East Europe”, organised by the European AIDS Treatment Group
(EATG) and the Network of Low Prevalence Countries of Central and South East Europe (NeLP) (13-15 May 2016 in Warsaw, Poland)

- WHO pre-meeting event on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Implementation at the 2016 International AIDS Conference (17 July 2016 in Durban, South Africa)
- 2016 International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2016); Poster presentation by ICRSE titled “Developing collective leadership in HIV responses: An innovative approach to community-led training on Sex work, HIV and Human Rights among sex workers in Europe” (18-22 July 2016 in Durban, South Africa)
- 3rd International Conference on Public Health and Law Enforcement, organised by the Centre for Law Enforcement and Public Health (CLEPH) (2-5 October 2016 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
- International "Sex Work Seminar", organised by the European Network to Reduce Vulnerabilities in Health in cooperation with Doctors of the World (Médecins du Monde) (27-28 October 2016 in Bucharest, Romania)

**Labour rights**

- Participation at CIRI Forum titled “Worker driven innovation in the globalized economy – learning from encounters”, hosted by the Civic Innovation Research Initiative (CIRI) (13-15 June 2016, The Hague, the Netherlands)
- Participation at Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) Labour Working Group focusing on exploitation in the informal economy with the participation of representatives from the International and European Trade Union Confederations (20-21 October 2016 in Brussels, Belgium).

**LGBT rights**

- Participation at 6th European Transgender Council organised by Transgender Europe (TGEU) (2-5 June 2016 in Bologna, Italy). During TGEU’s General Assembly, the organisation’s “Sex Work Policy”, supportive of decriminalisation, was enthusiastically acclaimed and adopted by its members. [http://tgeu.org/sex-work-policy/](http://tgeu.org/sex-work-policy/)
- ICRSE co-organised a roundtable discussion on LGBT sex workers and activism with the Association of Hungarian Sex Workers (Szexmunkások Érdekvédelmi Egyesülete, [SÉVE]).
SZEXE), and the Sex Workers’ Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN) (26 June 2016). The roundtable was organised after the organisers of Budapest Pride excluded a workshop on sex work from the official program, which had been proposed by SZEXE and Transvanilla Transgender Association (Transvanilla Transznemű Egyesület). http://www.sexworkeurope.org/news/general-news/hungary-sex-workers-rights-workshop-banned-budapest-pride

• Participation at Annual ILGA Europe Conference titled “Power to the people - Celebrating 20 years of the strength within”, hosted by the European chapter of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA Europe) (October 19-24 in Nicosia, Cyprus). During the conference, ICRSE facilitated a workshop focusing on decriminalisation policy and its impact on LGBT sex workers.

• Participated in seminar titled "Queer Unite - Fighting the societal backlash", hosted by the LGBTI Intergroup of the European Parliament titled (17 November 2016 in Brussels, Belgium) http://terryreintke.eu/blog/queer-people-unite-fighting-the-societal-backlash/

• Participated at 28th ILGA World Conference organised by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) (28 November - 2 December 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand). During the conference, ICRSE facilitated a workshop on the needs and demands of LGBT sex workers, as well as a session on “Disparity of health for LGBT sex workers”.

Women’s rights and gender equality

• Participated at seminar titled “Commercial Sex: Fight for Rights”, organised by the Moldova Feminist Initiative Group (Grupul de Inițiative Feministe din Moldova, GiFM) (4 August 2016 in Chisinau, Moldova)

• With the support of the Sex Workers’ Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN), ICRSE
convened a session on sex worker-inclusive feminism titled “Forging alliances: Sex workers call for cross-movement solidarity” at the 13th International AWID Forum “Feminist Futures: Building Collective Power for Rights and Justice”, organised by the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) (8-11 September 2016 in Bahia, Brazil).

Migration and human trafficking

- Participated at 2nd meeting of the European Migration Forum, organised by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee (6-7 April 2016 in Brussels, Belgium)
- In June 2016, members of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) overwhelmingly voted in support of ICRSE joining the PICUM network as a new member.
- At PICUM’s General Assembly, ICRSE facilitated a workshop on migration and sex work in Europe and Central Asia (10-11 June 2016 in Brussels, Belgium).

Cultural activism

- Together with the Centre for Artistic Activism (C4AA) and Open Society Foundations (OSF), ICRSE supported and participated in a 5-day Art Action Academy on sex workers’ rights (13-17 December 2016 in Dublin, Ireland).
- Together with the Sex Workers’ Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN), ICRSE developed a new video advocacy tool titled “United we stand: introduction to the Sex Worker Implementation Tool.” The video was shot during a joint training by ICRSE and SWAN in Budapest in June 2016, edited in December 2016 and released in March 2017.

Sex work research

- Participation at quarterly ProsPol meeting (21-23 March 2016 in Ljubljana, Slovenia). ICRSE Policy Officer Agata Dziuban delivered a keynote speech titled “Sex workers’ involvement in public health responses: theory and practice” during the meeting’s opening plenary session on sex work and public health. Additionally, ICRSE’s staff participated in a roundtable discussion titled “Prostitution and sex work in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans”.
- Delivered lecture titled “Solidarity, mobilisation and participation: Community education among sex workers in Europe and Central Asia” at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology, Warsaw University (30 March 2016 in Warsaw, Poland).
• Participation at quarterly ProsPol meeting (19-21 September 2016 in Zagreb, Croatia). ICRSE’s staff participated in the workshop dedicated to “Violations of human rights of sex workers”.

• ICRSE continued its collaboration with the European Cooperation on Science and Technology (COST) intergovernmental framework as part of its Action “Comparing European Prostitution Policies: Understanding Scales and Cultures of Governance” (ProsPol). One of the outcomes of this collaboration was a book chapter on sex workers’ self-organising in Europe and Central Asia, authored by Luca Stevenson and Agata Dziuban (ICRSE), in “Assessing European Prostitution Policies’ edited by Synnøve Økland Jahnsen), published in September 2017 in the Routledge series “Interdisciplinary Studies in Sex for Sale” with support from COST. http://prospol.eu/is1209/ In addition, ICRSE continued its active participation in ProsPol working groups on human rights and sex work policy.

B. A VIBRANT SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS MOVEMENT: BUILDING THE CAPACITIES OF SEX WORKERS IN THE REGION

“ICRSE plays a unique role among sex-worker led organisations throughout Europe. [...] Being recognised as a sex worker-led and member-driven network, ICRSE will invest resources to develop, expand and organise its membership base. To strengthen the membership of ICRSE, objectives will focus on the expansion of membership and the strengthening of existing and new communication channels between members and on the improvement of the ICRSE Secretariat’s response to members’ requests for support. A continuous process will be developed and maintained that will seek to identify changing needs of ICRSE members and ensure a timely response by ICRSE within available resources.”

ICRSE Strategic Plan 2016-2019

1. Welcoming new members

In 2016, 10 organisations based in Albania, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden joined ICRSE, bringing its membership to a total of 95 organisations. 16 individual activists also joined ICRSE membership in 2016. The list of organisation members of ICRSE can be seen here http://www.sexworkeurope.org/node/464.
2. Communication: Strengthening the voice of sex workers in the region

ICRSE continued to fulfil its role as a regional network by facilitating the sharing of information by our members through our listserv mailing list, website and social media accounts, where news, events, statements and resources, such as advocacy tools, community reports, statements and videos, are regularly uploaded.

ICRSE communicates with the public through social networks, including Facebook, Twitter and a YouTube channel, and publishes a regular newsletter that is sent to all individual and organisational members, as well as other stakeholders and interested individuals. Our statements and resources are often shared by other networks and organisations including the Sex Workers’ Rights Advocacy Network in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SWAN), the Global Network of Sex Workers Projects (NSWP), the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD), Correlation – European Network Social Inclusion & Health, and the Association for Women in Development (AWID), as well as national sex worker collectives and other civil society organisations.

In 2016, ICRSE published a total of 36 news and statements on its website and social media accounts, thus increasing the visibility of our members and supporting their advocacy at the national and local level. Throughout the year, the network also launched several reports related to sex workers’ rights, advocacy and activism, different challenges and forms of exploitation experienced by sex workers in Europe and Central Asia, as well as the intersections between the rights of sex workers, women’s and migrants’ communities in the region. All resources developed by ICRSE are available in open access.

ICRSE Website http://www.sexworkeurope.org
ICRSE Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/pages/ICRSE/105375937644
ICRSE Twitter account https://twitter.com/sexworkeurope
ICRSE YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC EjQn5D57Y_e-hXjQK-jYaw
3. ICRSE in the media: examples from 2016

Slovenia TV and press

• **News articles** in Slovenian press during COST ProsPol event in April 2016

  “Our central message is that sex work is work” (Naše osrednje sporočilo je, da je seksualno delo – delo) Delo (19 March 2016) [link](http://www.delo.si/sobotna/nase-osrednje-sporocilo-je-da-je-seksualno-delo-dash-delo.html)

  “Sex workers are well aware of when sexual intercourse is consensual and when we are victims of violence” (Spolni delavci dobro vemo, kdaj je spolni odnos konsenzualen in kdaj smo žrtve nasilja) MMC RTV Slovenija (5 April 2016) [link](https://www.rtvslo.si/slovenija/spolni-delavci-dobro-vemo-kdaj-je-spolni-odnos-konsenzualen-in-kdaj-smo-zrtve-nasilja/389810)

• **Prime time talk show** on sex work on Slovenian TV channel RTV Slovenija; audience of 100.000 viewers who, as ICRSE was informed, stayed with the show until the end. In feedback ICRSE received, we learnt that our statements were perceived as clear and that the audience...
had understood the problem of conflating sex work with human trafficking. (English statement by Luca Stevenson from minutes 12 to 15)

“Prostitution – Yes or No?” (Prostitucija, da ali ne?) RTV Slovenija (28 April 2016) http://4d.rtv.slo.si/arhiv/tarca/174402408

- Video of roundtable in Slovenia

“Sex work in Central and Eastern Europe” (Szexmunka Közép-Kelet-Európában)
Szexmunkások Érdekvédelmi Egyesülete, SZEXE (30 March 2016) http://szexmunka.hu/szexmunka-kozep-kelet-europaban/

Other publications and media reports


- News article by Tanja Milevska following the criminalisation of clients in France titled “The long fight for the recognition of sex work” Equal Times (27 April 2016) https://www.equaltimes.org/the-long-fight-for-the-recognition


- News article by Molnár Dávid following the exclusion of LGBT sex workers from Budapest Pride titled “14 millióos büntetés egyetlen szexmunkásnak” (14 million punishment for a single sex worker) 24 Hu (26 June 2016) http://24.hu/belfold/2016/06/26/14-millios-buntetes-egyetlen-szexmunkasnak/

4. Trainings on Sex Workers Implementation Tool (SWIT)

Together with the Sex Workers’ Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN), ICRSE co-organised and co-facilitated a five-day regional training on the Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT) from 21-25 June 2016 in Budapest, Hungary. Teams from 7 countries attended the training: Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Georgia, Macedonia, Serbia. The training, co-facilitated by Anastacia Ryan, ICRSE’s Health Policy Officer, included information sessions and participatory knowledge exchange between groups. The topics of the training were community empowerment, sex work and the laws, violence, sex worker-led community services, condom programming, community-led clinical services, programme management, and organisational capacity building.


As part of ICRSE’s activities supported by the Robert Carr Fund for Civil Society Networks (RCNF), technical support was provided to two national sex worker-led groups in the region. In Serbia, technical support for Sloboda Prava brought together sex workers from the country’s two main cities of Belgrade and Novi Sad to develop a broad strategy for action and community mobilisation. An associated work plan and activities were developed in partnership with sex workers and the organisation’s core team to assist in the national roll-out of the SWIT.

In Macedonia, technical support for the Association for Support of Marginalized Workers (STAR-STAR) brought together sex workers from the country’s three main cities and gathered input for the roll-out of some of STAR-STAR’s main activities in Skopje and across Macedonia’s Eastern and Western regions. These activities are in line with the overall SWIT roll-out and focus on STAR-STAR’s scaling up and branching out through the support of activities being developed by sex workers in Macedonia’s Eastern and Western regions.

“I joined Sloboda Prava after Serbia’s law on sex work was tightened earlier this year. The training was more than useful for me. I met other sex workers and activists. I learned from them. I learned about the situation in their countries. I learned from their problems. I also learned how to use this knowledge to fight our common enemy and how to change the perception of sex work and push for its decriminalisation.”

Kristina from Sloboda Prava, Serbia
Video by ICRSE titled “United we stand: Introduction to the Sex Worker Implementation Tool” (March 21, 2017) The video was developed as an advocacy tool for sex workers and allies to raise awareness about the SWIT, a resource produced by World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with the Global Network of Sex Worker Projects (NSWP) and other partners. SWIT offers practical guidance on effective HIV and STI programming for sex workers as well as evidence for full decriminalization of sex work, and the affirmation of sex workers’ self-determination, autonomy, and rights. The video can be used by sex workers and their organisations when advocating for rights-based services that meaningfully include sex workers; when facilitating workshops for sex workers to inform them about the SWIT. Likewise, it can be used by policy makers and service providers to educate themselves and each others about the SWIT and its positive impacts on sex workers’ health. Sex workers speaking in this video present the work of their organisation, the obstacles they face, from police violence to judgmental services and how they work collectively towards better environments for all sex workers. https://youtu.be/8enK8m5EDp8

5. Capacity building of migrant sex workers’ organisations

Meeting of ICRSE and Red Edition in Vienna, Austria

On the 9th of November 2016, ICRSE staff organised and facilitated a one-day capacity building training for Red Edition, a migrant sex worker-led collective that was founded in Vienna, Austria. During the workshop, representatives of Red Edition and ICRSE identified main priorities to be addressed, namely barriers and opportunities for migrant sex workers in Vienna. They also worked together on the development of a broad strategy for Red Edition’s action and community mobilisation, as well as a more detailed work plan for the following months.
Action Meeting on Human Rights Situation of Migrant Sex Workers in Europe

One of the year’s biggest events organised by ICRSE took place in Brussels, Belgium, on November 14-15th, 2016. The two-day Action Meeting focused on situations and human rights violations experienced by migrant sex workers working across Europe and Central Asia. The meeting brought together 30 sex workers, most of them migrants, who are engaged in numerous community-led collectives across Europe, including ACCEPTESS-T (France), APROSEX (Spain), Asamblea de Activistas pro Derechos sobre el Trabajo Sexual en Catalunya (Catalonia, Spain), English Collective of Prostitutes (UK), Hydra (Germany), Kırımızı Şemsiye/Red Umbrella (Turkey), Red Edition (Austria), STRASS (France), UTSGIPI (Belgium), Whores and Alliances (Spain), and ICRSE. The workshop was also attended by representatives of two organisations providing services to migrant sex workers in Belgium – Center for Medical and Social Assistance (GHAPRO) from Antwerp, and Alias Association, a harm reduction for male sex workers based in Brussels – as well as staff member of the Red Umbrella Fund.

ICRSE’s Action Meeting provided sex workers from across Europe with a great and unprecedented opportunity to collectively discuss the main needs and concerns of migrant sex workers in the region, identify key barriers and challenges compromising migrant sex workers’ rights, and share experiences of problems faced by sex worker-led organisations in the context of the rising power of racist, nationalist and conservative governments and social movements, both in the region and globally. While discussing specific situations and challenges faced by organisations working in different countries and European sub-regions, sex workers participating in the meeting identified three main threats affecting migrant sex workers in Europe: the criminalisation of migration, the criminalisation and stigmatisation of sex work, and – last but not least – austerity, increasing poverty, and the precarisation of work. Subsequently, participants worked together on developing collective advocacy and activism strategies that could help reverse these trends and empower migrant sex workers and provide them with means to defend themselves against stigma, labour exploitation, precarisation and criminalisation.

The Action Meeting was followed by a Seminar on Migrant Sex Workers’ Rights (see page 12).
C. A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE AND ACCOUNTABLE NETWORK - REPORT ON GOVERNANCE

“In order to be able to implement its mission and to achieve its goals and objectives, ICRSE continued to develop its own organisational capacities to ensure the network is transparent, accountable and sustainable. The network has been chronically underfunded, understaffed and under-resourced yet the personal motivation and eagerness of individuals (staff, consultants, volunteers and members) have made possible the achievements to date. However, in order to build on this, ICRSE needs systematic organisational strengthening that will ensure that the networks’ capacities, knowledge and skills are developed and accountability to members maintained.”

ICRSE Strategic Plan 2016-2019

1. Our staff: a competent and dedicated activist team

SECRETARIAT:

Coordinator: Luca Stevenson
Role: Planning and coordinating ICRSE’s activities, programmes and resources; liaising with board members in strengthening ICRSE’s governance; managing and supervision of staff and consultants; coordinating advocacy and capacity building activities and trainings with Advocacy Team; identifying, liaising and reporting to funders.

Administration, Membership and Communication Officer: Yiğit Aydin
Role: Maintaining day-to-day administrative, financial and communication services; overviewing membership application and approval processes; sharing ICRSE’s and members’ statements and information on ICRSE’s website and social media accounts.

POLICY, ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNING TEAM

Policy Officer: Agata Dziuban
Role: Responsible for the development of community reports and briefing papers on key issues related to sex workers’ rights. Coordination of ICRSE’s “Needs and priorities assessment” community consultation.
Advocacy and Campaign Officers: **Thierry Schaffauser** and **Boglarka Fedorko**
Role: Building alliances with other social movements and NGOs, in particular in the fields of labour, LGBT and migration. Development of briefing papers and campaigns; participation in key-events.

**PROGRAMMES AND CAPACITY-BUILDING TEAM:**

SWIT Programme Officer: **Anastacia Ryan**
Role: Design, development and facilitation of participatory training on Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT) with sex workers in Budapest in partnership with SWAN, NSWP and UNFPA, as well as in-country trainings and technical follow-ups in Serbia (with Sloboda Prava) and Macedonia (with STAR-STAR) with country-specific SWIT-related activities.

Each staff member and consultant of ICRSE is also a member and activist of a national sex workers’ rights organisation or collective in countries such as France, Hungary, Poland, Turkey or the UK, bringing their own and direct understanding of issues faced by sex workers at the national level to the regional work of ICRSE.

**STAFF CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

To strengthen ICRSE’s financial skills and limit financial risks, the ICRSE Secretariat was trained in finance skills and obtained Financial Awards from Pitman Training in Glasgow, UK.

**2. Sex worker leadership: Election of board members and annual board meeting**

In 2016, ICRSE organised its annual board election. Board members must be members of ICRSE and are elected by sex worker-led organisations members of ICRSE.

This year, ICRSE Board Members included:

**PG Macioti**, Hydra, Germany, ICRSE Co-convenor  
**Kate Mcgrew**, Sex Worker Alliance in Ireland (SWAI), Ireland, Co-convenor  
**Borce Bozinov**, STAR-STAR, Macedonia, Treasurer  
**Stasa Plecas**, SWAN, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia  
**Maxime Maes**, UTSOPI, Belgium
ICRSE held its annual board meeting in May 2016 in Berlin, Germany, at the offices of Hydra e.V., and a co-convenors and secretariat meeting in September 2016 in Dublin, Ireland, at the offices Migrant Rights Centre Ireland.

3. Funding: Challenges and successes

Funding for sex workers’ rights organisations and networks is very limited (http://www.redumbrellafund.org/report/). ICRSE’s secretariat and staff prepared and submitted grant applications to diverse private and public donors which were unsuccessful. The constant research for (new) donors and the preparation of funding applications are very time- and energy consuming processes, taking away from our advocacy and movement building work. In 2016, however, ICRSE was able to develop its capacities thanks to several successful funding applications. These generous grants allowed ICRSE to hire or continue to employ several staff and consultants based in France, Germany, Poland and the UK to organize and coordinate numerous trainings, campaigns and other activities as described in this annual report.

Funding Grants:

ICRSE would like to thank the following donors for their financial contribution and support to our 2016 activities:

- Red Umbrella Fund (RUF), http://www.redumbrellafund.org;
- Robert Carr Fund for Civil Society Networks (RCNF), http://www.robertcarrfund.org;
- Open Society Foundations https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org


ICRSE Member consultations / Needs and priorities assessment

ICRSE conducted a consultation of its members aimed at assessing members’ views on and experiences with recent ICRSE projects and their needs with respect to capacity-building support that could be provided to them by ICRSE in the future. These consultations intend to help ICRSE identify and determine future priorities and design a strategy to better support our members in ways they would find most useful.
In the course of the consultations, member organisations were invited to assess the work done by the network. They were asked whether they have used any of ICRSE’s resources or if they have been involved in any of programmes and campaigns led by ICRSE, and how they would evaluate these and their impact on members’ work on the ground. The consultations also focused on activities undertaken by member organisations and aimed at gathering knowledge on the different ways in which ICRSE could foster collaboration with its members, support their activities and build their capacities.

Assessment of ICRSE’s work

Since its foundation in 2004, ICRSE has been active in developing resources and tools, leading campaigns or conducting programmes with sex workers. Member organisations participating in the consultations were asked to indicate which of the many ICRSE’s projects have had impacted their work. Below are some of the resources, tools and projects they pointed out to most frequently.

Resources and tools

- The Declaration on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (2005)
- Hands off Our Clients! Advocacy and Activism Toolkit against the Criminalisation of clients (2013)
- Nothing about us Without Us! Ten Years of Sex Workers’ Rights Activism and Advocacy in Europe (2015)
- ICRSE’s letter and briefing note to Amnesty International in support of AI’s “Draft Policy on Sex Work” (2016)

Campaigns and projects

- Campaign against the “Honeyball” resolution at the European Parliament (2014), information available here
- Campaign in support of Amnesty International’s decriminalisation policy (2015), information available here
- Campaign “Feminists for Sex Workers” and publication of “Feminist Manifesto in Support for Sex Workers’ Rights” (2016), information available here

Communication tools

- Members mailing list
- ICRSE’s website
- Social media profile (Facebook, Twitter)
- Email support

Events

- Brussels Conference on Sex Work, Migration, Labour and Human rights (Brussels 2005); information available here
- Paris Convening on Regional Movement Building (Paris: 2013) information available here
- Seminar and launch of Ten years report at the European Parliament (Brussels; 2015) information available here
- Local community meetings with ICRSE’s staff presence

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