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1. ABOUT ICRSE

The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) is a sex worker-led network representing 99 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 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 2017 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 all forms of criminalisation and other legal oppression of sex work

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS:
ICRSE’s members are composed of organisations and individuals working or living in 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 steering committee members, staff, consultants and spokespersons.
2 - 2017 AT A GLANCE

JANUARY
Publication of Briefing Paper in Russian "Underserved. Overpoliced. Invisibilised. LGBT sex workers do matter"

FEBRUARY
Launch of Video "Migrant Sex Workers Speak Out" to mark International Women's Day

MARCH
Launch of Briefing Paper "Understanding sex work as work: a brief guide for labour rights activists" to mark International Women's Day

APRIL
Launch of Briefing Paper (Spanish) "Underserved. Overpoliced. Invisibilised. LGBT sex workers do matter"

MAY
Publication of Briefing Paper (Spanish) "Underserved. Overpoliced. Invisibilised. LGBT sex workers do matter"

JUNE
Launch of Video Advocacy Tool "United we stand: Introduction to the Sex Worker Implementation Tool" in collaboration with Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN)

JULY
Launch of Briefing Paper (English/German) "Professed Protection, Pointless Provisions – Overview of the German Prostitutes Protection Act (Prostituiertenschutzgesetz – ProstSchG)" to mark International Sex Workers' Day

AUGUST
Publication of Book Chapter in new academic anthology on sex work: "Assessing Prostitution Policies in Europe"

SEPTEMBER
ICRSE joins Community Workshop "LGBTIQ People and Sex Workers’ Rights" at Malta Pride Week

OCTOBER
ICRSE joins 20th European Health Forum in Austria and launches 5th and final Intersection Briefing Paper "Understanding Sex Workers’ Right to Health: Impact of Criminalisation of Violence"

NOVEMBER
Launch of Infographic "Stop Ignoring The Evidence: Client Criminalisation Endangers Sex Workers. Decriminalise Sex Work Now!" to mark the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers (IDVASW)

DECEMBER
ICRSE joins ILGA-Europe Annual Conference in Warsaw, Poland "CHANGE! Communities Mobilising, Movements Rising"
ICRSE’S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

<table>
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<th>ICRSE Vision</th>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<th>Strategic Directions</th>
<th>Strategic Goals</th>
<th>Strategic Objectives</th>
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| Advocacy and Campaigning      | 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. | 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 |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strengthening ICRSE Membership</th>
<th>2. A cohesive and vibrant sex worker-led movement in Europe which vocally advocates for the human and labour rights of sex workers.</th>
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|                               | 2.1 To increase the membership and to actively encourage membership applications from countries in which ICRSE doesn’t currently have members  
2.2 To maintain and improve effective communication mechanisms for members through in-country meetings and online tools  
2.3 To establish and maintain a tiered membership structure and associated membership communication  
2.4 To mobilise members’ joint action on arising issues that affect sex workers nationally, regionally and globally  
2.5 To build the capacity of member groups according to their needs as identified in this strategic planning process |
| Sustainable Capacity Building | 3. ICRSE is a strong and sustainable network that provides expertise and guidance in the fight for sex workers’ rights throughout Europe. |
|                               | 3.1 To develop and utilise strategic governance documents  
3.2 To strengthen organisational and HR capacities  
3.3 To develop a fundraising strategy  
3.4 To monitor and evaluate ICRSE activities and outcomes against the stated goals and objectives as identified in this Strategic Plan |
In 2017, we continued to pursue our strategic objectives as defined in ICRSE’s 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 – ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGN: 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 and Sex Worker Manifesto, 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

1. SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS AS LABOUR RIGHTS

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. The first of ICRSE’s intersection briefing papers was published in 2015 and documented rights’ violations of LGBT sex workers in Europe. Two additional
briefing papers, focusing on the intersections of the rights of sex workers and women and (undocumented) migrants in Europe and Central Asia, were published in 2016.

In 2017, ICRSE published the final two briefing papers of the series, with the fourth introducing sex workers’ rights from a labour rights perspective, and the fifth and final paper aiming to educate sex workers, health professionals and policy makers on issues related to sex workers’ health.

Publication
Intersection Briefing Paper “Understanding Sex Work: A Brief Guide For Labour Rights Activists”

To mark Mayday 2017, the International Workers’ Day, marked by numerous sex worker organisations all around the world, ICRSE launched the fourth in our series of intersection briefing papers. Titled “Understanding Sex Work: A Brief Guide for Labour Rights Activists”, this briefing paper is intended as an introduction to sex workers’ rights from a labour rights perspective.

While exploitative arrangements, unfair workplace practices and bad working conditions are common in sex work, they are neither unique to nor uniform across sex industries. Exploitation and unjust treatment of workers of any profession are prevalent in the majority of labour markets within the global capitalist system, as is the increasingly growing precarisation of work.

But among all those selling their labour power, sex workers are denied recognition as workers and either directly or indirectly criminalised. If sex workers are to enjoy fair and just working conditions and the ability to defend themselves against exploitation, sex work needs to be fully decriminalised and treated as legitimate economic activity.

The briefing paper can be used as an advocacy tool for trade unionists and labour rights activists, including sex workers’ rights activists.
Reach out to and establish contacts with local sex workers, sex worker groups and organisations in order to identify how their labour rights are violated and assess how the legal framework in place contributes to exploitation in the sex industry.

When providing legal advice and aid, include information and expertise on criminal and administrative laws that are relevant to sex work.

Respect the confidentiality of sex workers in any activity that you organise and proactively prepare measures to protect the identity of sex workers, including undocumented workers, e.g. in public marches, demonstrations and membership processes.

Design your services so that they take into consideration the specific needs sex workers have, based on consultations and partnership with sex worker groups and organisations.

Provide safe and confidential places where sex workers from different backgrounds can meet and discuss their experiences, working conditions and prioritise issues they want to challenge.

Raise awareness in your advocacy activities on the precarious situation and exploitation sex workers face due to the criminalisation of the sex industry.

Speak out for the full decriminalisation of sex work, highlighting the hazardous and abusive conditions sex workers of all genders might face in their work.

Activities
Submission to ILO Consultation on “Ending violence and harassment in the world of work”

Following a call for submissions by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), ICRSE submitted a detailed response to a survey regarding violence and harassment in the world of work. In its response, ICRSE highlighted, among other issues, the limits that the conflation of sex work with violence places on sex workers’ capacities to address and report violence and receive justice, and the importance of the inclusion of sex workers as a distinct category in labour rights discourses to ensure equality and non-discrimination. In addition, ICRSE stressed the need for member states to provide resources and assistance for informal economy
workers and their associations to address violence, as sex workers’ self-organisation is made more difficult, if not impossible, by laws in many member states against the “facilitation or promotion of prostitution”. Such laws contravene the rights to associate or form trade unions and member states should not prevent sex workers from self-organising. ICRSE also urged the ILO to add sensitisation training for court staff to its list of recommendations to address the stigma surrounding marginalised groups, including sex workers, LGBT individuals, and people living with HIV, especially in light of the fact that in many cases, authors of violence are police or other public actors.

In light of the serious threats faced by sex workers and the efforts made to contribute to the ILO’s survey in a meaningful way, it was with great disappointment that we learnt that along with submissions from the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) and the European Network for the Promotion of Rights and Health among Migrant Sex Workers (TAMPEP), as well as other organisations, the ICRSE’s response was noted but not included in the final report, illustrating once more the lack of inclusion of sex workers in policy-making processes.

2. SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS AS RIGHT TO HEALTH

Publication
Intersection Briefing Paper “Understanding Sex Workers’ Right to Health: Impact of Criminalisation of Violence”

In October 2017, while attending the 20th European Health Forum in Austria (see below), ICRSE launched its fifth and final intersection briefing paper, titled “Understanding Sex Workers’ Right to Health: Impact of Criminalisation of Violence”. The paper aims to educate sex workers, health professionals and policy makers on issues related to sex workers’ health. It features an introduction to the right to health and documents the impact of criminalisation and violence on sex workers’ health. It also provides information on sex work and mental health, occupational health, and related issues such as mandatory and forced testing. The briefing paper can be used as a tool to underpin effective health programmes.

Seminars, key events and other activities

In 2017, ICRSE strengthened its focus on building alliances and joining forums and conferences within the health sector to advocate for sex workers’ rights and network with other organisations, including ICRSE members.
Lecture “Sex Work: Public Health and Human Rights” at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

On 2 March 2017, ICRSE Coordinator Luca Stevenson delivered a lecture together with Dr Pippa Grenfell, a research fellow at the LSHTM, as part of the school’s “Sexual Health” module. Titled “Sex Work: Public Health and Human Rights”, the lecture gave an overview of the definitions and conceptualisations of sex work and introduced key discourses affecting research, public health policy and programming in relation to it. Furthermore, it highlighted structural, community and integrated approaches to sex workers’ health. Finally, it discussed collaborations between sex workers, practitioners, and researchers to achieve integrated, rights-based approaches.

Participation at two EU HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and Tuberculosis Civil Society Forums in Luxembourg

ICRSE was accepted as member of the Civil Society Forum on HIV, Hepatitis C and Tuberculosis and joined the 25th and 26th of its meetings, held on 20-21 June and 18-19 December 2017, in Luxembourg. The Civil Society Forum (CSF) has been established by the European Commission as a working group to facilitate the participation of NGOs in policy development and implementation and in information exchange activities. In 2017, the HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum was extended to include Hepatitis and tuberculosis NGOs. It is the first time a sex worker led organisation join this forum and the 40 other organisations there.

At the first meeting, ICRSE Coordinator Luca Stevenson gave a presentation on the “Situation of sex workers in Europe”. He delivered an overview of legal frameworks in Europe, including requirements for mandatory HIV testing and registration of sex workers (“back door criminalisation”) and elaborated on key pillars of sex worker health programming. Furthermore, he described main threats and obstacles to sex workers’ access to health and examples of successful mobilisation. The presentation also highlighted harmful and stigmatising campaigns calling for the criminalisation of sex work across Europe, including the so-called “Honeyball resolution” or the campaign for a “Europe free from prostitution”, led by the European Women Lobby (EWL). Finally, Stevenson stressed the intersection of vulnerabilities, the importance of sex workers’ involvement in HIV responses and the effectiveness of community-led responses by presenting good practice examples.

At the second meeting, ICRSE’s Health Officer, Anastacia Ryan, provided an update on the situation of sex workers in Europe and highlighted the impact of violence against sex workers, particularly in legal environments criminalising sex work, on their access to health services, which in turn also hampered prevention efforts. Ryan also noted the specific challenges regarding prevention work faced by organisations from countries losing Global Fund funding.
Participation at “Murder and Mental Health in Sex Work” Symposium at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

On 11 July 2017, ICRSE participated in the “Murder and Mental Health in Sex Work” symposium at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Bringing together social scientists, epidemiologists, sex worker rights activists and health practitioners, the symposium presented the findings of the Wellcome Trust Seed Award project under the same name, which examined how occupational health and safety differs between sex workers and other professions which are established as ‘risky’ because of the elevated prevalence of violence in the workplace and poor mental health. Symposium participants discussed the findings and how to take forward the presented research and intervention agendas.

Participation at “Nobody left behind – European Health Forum in Gastein, Austria

On 4 October 2017, ICRSE joined the 20th European Health Forum (EGH) in Gastein, Austria. The EGH is an independent, non-partisan organisation, founded in 1998 as a European health policy conference.

At the forum, ICRSE presented the need and demands of sex workers in regard to health. The workshop “Nobody Left Behind: Improving access to healthcare for underserved people” brought spokespeople working with diverse marginalised communities – sex workers, men who have sex with men (MSM), LGBT people, undocumented migrants, people in prisons, homeless people and people who inject drugs (PWID) – together with policy and other experts to identify commonalities in barriers to healthcare services and discuss policy solutions.

Ms Anastacia Ryan, ICRSE’s Health Officer, introduced to an audience of public health professionals and policy-makers from Europe the main obstacles to sex workers’ access to health including discrimination and criminalisation with examples from our region and presented briefly on the urgent need to roll-out the Sex Worker Implementation Tool in Europe.

During the workshop, ICRSE also launched its fifth and final intersection briefing paper (see ‘Publication’), which aims to educate sex workers, health professionals and policy makers on issues related to sex workers’ health.

Participation at 16th European AIDS Conference in Milan, Italy

On 25-27 October 2017, ICRSE participated at the 16th European AIDS Conference in Milan. The conference focused on long-term effectiveness of drugs, co-infections with TB or viral hepatitis and other co-morbidities, and most importantly inequitable access to care across
Europe. Issues faced by sex workers in Europe were raised in several workshops and panels in particular at the Women Against Viruses in Europe workshop and at Viiv and Gilead’s Community Receptions and events.

Participation at European HIV Academy for Enabling Legal Environments in Berlin, Germany

On 13-14 September 2017, ICRSE joined the first European HIV Academy for Enabling Legal Environments in Berlin, Germany. 30 advocates and community representatives from 20 countries addressed legal and regulatory barriers such as HIV criminalisation, the criminalisation of key populations, including sex workers, and over-medicalised HIV testing regulations.

Besides increasing awareness and understanding of how legal environments can present barriers to accessing prevention, testing, treatment and care services, the meeting also provided participants with excellent networking opportunities. The Training Academy was a joint collaboration of the HIV Justice Network, AIDS Action Europe, European AIDS Treatment Group and Global Network of People living with HIV (GNP+).

Strengthened collaboration between organisations

ICRSE joins European HIV and Hepatitis Testing Week (ETW)

Between 17-24 November 2017, ICRSE joined the European HIV and Hepatitis Testing Week (ETW) for the first time. The ETW offers regional key populations and civil society networks across Europe the opportunity to unite to increase awareness of the benefits of HIV and hepatitis testing among those who are at risk.
ICRSE collaborated with our partners to develop a joint statement in preparation for the week, titled "Safe, voluntary testing for key and most affected populations". The statement strongly condemns the laws and policies that criminalise sex workers, and lead to human rights violations justified as public health measures, such as, mandatory testing and public disclosure of test results. ICRSE welcomes the statements’ condemnation of criminalisation and other forms of legal oppression of sex work, and we encourage members to share it with their networks.

3. SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS AS LGBT RIGHTS

Publication
Launch of Intersection Briefing Paper on LGBT sex workers in Russian
On 5 January 2017, ICRSE published the Russian version of its intersection briefing paper “Underserved. Overpoliced. Invisibilised. LGBT sex workers do matter”. The briefing paper was first launched in 2015 and is the first in the 5-part series. It documents rights’ violations of LGBT sex workers in Europe.

Other activities
Participation at Community Workshop “LGBTIQ People and Sex Workers’ Rights” at Malta Pride Week
On 4 September 2017, Luca Stevenson, ICRSE Coordinator, and Boglarka Fedorko, Project Manager of Transgender Europe, attended a community event on LGBTIQ sex workers’ rights, an event part of the Malta Pride Week. ICRSE and TGEU representative informed participants about their respective work in relation to sex worker rights and provided insight about the demands and needs of sex workers, and how laws and policies could meet those. The participants and workshop facilitators discussed the impact of criminalisation - including criminalisation of clients - on sex workers’ access to health and justice and the intersection of LGBTIQ and sex workers’ rights.

![Boglaka Fedorko presenting on intersection of sex workers and LGBT rights at Malta Pride event](image)
Participation at ILGA Europe Annual Conference in Warsaw, Poland

For the fourth consecutive year, ICRSE joined the ILGA Europe Conference in Warsaw, Poland, from 1-4 November 2017. This year, the needs and demands of LGBTQI sex workers took a more prominent position as ILGA Europe continues to become more inclusive of people often ignored by the LGB movement, in particular, trans and non-binary people, Roma, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

ICRSE Coordinator Luca Stevenson joined Jonny Dzhibladze, activist from Coming Out and Coordinator of the Trans* Mission program and Monitoring Program, as well as lesbian feminist activist Alice Coffin, co-founder of the European Lesbian* Conference (EL*C), on the first panel of the Conference, titled “Real Change for Real People” and moderated by Dino Suhonic, Executive Director of the Maruf Foundation, which represents queer Muslims in The Netherlands and abroad. A video of the panel is available here.

ICRSE also supported the Queer Sex Worker Art Show at the conference with performances from sex workers’ rights activist and artists such as Maxime Maes, Marianne Chargois, Alice Therik and Mimi Aum Neko. A video of the session and other media about ICRSE’s presence at the ILGA Europe conference are available here.

Finally, ICRSE also facilitated a workshop on the inclusion of sex workers in the LGBTQI movement. The workshop was an opportunity for ILGA members to inform themselves on issues faced by LGBTQI sex workers and on the necessary steps to become more sex worker-inclusive. The workshops was moderated by Yuri Guaiana, Board member of ILGA-Europe, who announced the resolution of ILGA Europe to further support LGBTQI sex workers and the decriminalisation of sex worker with a policy to be launched by the next conference in 2018.
4. SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS AS WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Video release on the International Women’s Day: Migrant sex workers call for feminist solidarity

To mark the International Women’s Day on 8 March 2017, ICRSE published a short video highlighting some of the issues and demands of migrant sex workers in Europe. Migrant sex workers call for feminist solidarity and speak up against criminalisation, stigma, and violence. Their shared demand is for women’s rights activists and allies to listen to their voices and include them in their campaigning.

All speeches were recorded at the seminar “Surveilled, Exploited, Deported: Rights Violations against Migrant Sex Workers in Europe and Central Asia”, organised by ICRSE on the 16 of November 2016 in Brussels, Belgium. The video is available here.

5. SEX WORKERS’ RIGHTS AS MIGRANT RIGHTS

Publication

Launch of Intersection Briefing Paper on LGBT sex workers in Spanish

On 17 May 2017, ICRSE published the Spanish version of its intersection briefing paper “Surveilled. Exploited. Deported. Rights Violations against Migrant Sex Workers in Europe and Central Asia”. The briefing paper was first launched in 2016 and is the third in the 5-part series. It documents rights’ violations of LGBT sex workers in Europe. The Briefing Paper explores how criminalisation of migration, criminalisation of sex work and lack of economic and employment opportunities make migrant sex workers vulnerable to exploitation, violence and other human rights violations.

Video release: “Migrant Sex Workers Speak Out”

To mark the International Women’s Day on 8 March 2017, ICRSE published a short video highlighting some of the issues and demands of migrant sex workers in Europe. Migrant sex workers call for feminist solidarity and speak up against criminalisation, stigma, and violence. Their shared demand is for women’s rights activists and allies to listen to their voices and include them in their campaigning.

All speeches were recorded at the seminar “Surveilled, Exploited, Deported: Rights Violations against Migrant Sex Workers in Europe and Central Asia”, organised by ICRSE on 16 of November 2016, in Brussels, Belgium. The video is available here.
Other activities
Participation at Annual General Assembly and Working Groups of Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)

On 12-13 May 2017, ICRSE joined PICUM’s Annual General Assembly, the network’s main decision-making body. Held in Brussels, the meeting brought together around 80 PICUM members to strategise, mobilise and agree on actions to advance the rights of undocumented migrants.

ICRSE initiated discussions on the discrimination faced by undocumented migrant sex workers, particularly in countries where sex work is criminalised. Members agreed on more joint collaboration and building relationships with migrant sex worker groups as well as to share knowledge and information on the particular vulnerabilities of migrant sex workers.

6. OTHER CAMPAIGNS AND KEY EVENTS

Publications
Supporting national advocacy: Development and launch of briefing paper on German “Prostitutes Protection Law” (ProstSchG)

To mark the International Sex Workers’ Day on 2 June 2017, ICRSE launched a briefing paper titled “Professed Protection, Pointless Provisions – Overview of the German Prostitutes Protection Act (Prostituiertenschutzgesetz – ProstSchG)”. The briefing paper was developed by ICRSE in collaboration with Hydra e.V. and the Professional Association Erotic and Sexual Services (Berufsverband erotische und sexuelle Dienstleistungen, BesD e.V.). It aims to offer policy makers, sex workers, and sex workers’ allies an analysis of Germany’s new “Prostitutes Protection Act” and its expected impact on sex workers, and outline recommendations from the sex worker community.

As noted therein, ICRSE has serious concerns about the ways the “Prostitutes Protection Act” will significantly undermine many of sex workers’ fundamental rights. In the form that the law came into effect on 1 July 2017, it only pretends to protect sex workers. The regulations provided therein fail to support both sex workers and trafficked persons. Instead, the law will force sex workers into illegality, especially those working together at apartments as well as migrant, trans, and otherwise particularly vulnerable individuals in sex work. What is labelled as protection is in large parts simply a law aimed at repressing sex work. The briefing paper is intended for sex workers and policy makers and introduces recommendations from the sex worker community. It was officially launched at a press conference and community event in Berlin on 2 June 2017.
Publication of Book Chapter in “Assessing Prostitution Policies in Europe”

ICRSE is proud to have contributed to the academic anthology “Assessing Prostitution Policies in Europe”, edited by Hendrik Wagenaar and Synnove Janhsen. ICRSE’s chapter, co-written by Luca Stevenson and Agata Dziuban, focuses on the history and challenges of the sex workers’ rights movement in Europe and Central Asia.

With each chapter dedicated to a separate country and written by a national authority on the subject, “Assessing European Prostitution Policies” seeks to explore how prostitution is regulated in 21 European countries, thus drawing out important implications for an effective and humane prostitution policy. This innovative volume brings together systematic accounts of how national and local forms of governance influence the commercial market for sex as well as the lives of sex workers and third parties. All chapters cover the history of prostitution policy, national laws regulating prostitution, policy formulation and implementation, the national discourse on prostitution, the gap between national and local regulation, the impact of policy on the lives and rights of sex workers, and sex worker advocacy organizations. In addition to this, the authors examine and highlight how immigration, labour, fiscal and welfare law have as much impact on the sex trade as designated prostitution law.

“A unique interdisciplinary title that is comprehensive in its coverage, Assessing European Prostitution Policies will appeal to undergraduate and postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers, sex worker advocacy organisations and policy makers interested in fields such as Sexuality and Prostitution, Public Policy, Criminology and Gender Studies.” ICRSE strongly encourage students and researchers to ask their university libraries to order a copy.
Publication of Infographic “Stop Ignoring The Evidence – Client Criminalisation Endangers Sex Workers”

To mark the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers (IDEVASW), ICRSE launched an infographic to highlight the consequences of client criminalisation laws across Europe.

The infographic, using key statistics and quotes from sex workers, summarises the main effects of the criminalisation of clients in the European countries which adopted this legal framework. As warned by sex workers, health and human rights organisations, client criminalisation increases sex workers’ precarity, reliance on third parties and vulnerability to violence and HIV.

Other activities
Participation at “Displacing Sex for Sale” COST Conference at Aalborg University in Copenhagen, Denmark

From March 29-31 2017, ICRSE participated at the final conference of the 4-year-long COST Action Prospol (‘Comparing European Prostitution Policies: Understanding Scales and Cultures of Governance’), titled “Displacing Sex for Sale”. By focusing on the concept of displacement, the conference invited to reflections on the dynamic character of commercial sex, resulting from of political and economic changes, migration and mobility, the interconnectedness of global events, technological advances, and shifting racial, sexual, and gender norms, among others.
Participation at “Sex Work: Reality and Perspectives” Conference in Athens, Greece
On 25 May 2017, ICRSE joined other experts at a conference in Athens, organised by Red Umbrella Athens and Positive Voice to discuss the rights and working conditions of sex workers in Greece. Delegates unanimously agreed on the urgent necessity to change the current legal framework that restrict the rights of sex workers. The Conference was the first opportunity since 2004 to discuss the need to reform the current legislation on sex work. Although the current legislation allows sex work on premises, there are various obstacles to obtain legal work permit.

Thierry Schaffauser, representing the ICRSE, explained the different policy models implemented in France, Sweden, the Netherlands and New Zealand, highlighting the negative aspects of criminalising sex work.

Participation at “Putains de Rencontres”, National Gathering organised by STRASS in Marseille, France
From 1-3 June 2017, ICRSE Coordinator Luca Stevenson joined 150 sex workers from all over France and neighbouring countries to share knowledge and experiences and participate in workshops at the “Putains de Rencontres” Meeting at the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre in Marseille, France. The event was organised by STRASS, the French sex workers’ trade union and ICRSE member organisation.

Discussions centred on trade union organising, sex worker feminism, and law reforms in European countries, as well as on or how to improve sex workers’ safety and access to health services. Workshops taught both practical and theoretical skills. In the evenings, films and performances by sex workers were shown. On the last day, STRASS organised a rally in Marseille with participation of sex workers, sex workers’ rights activists and allies to protest against violence against sex workers.

B – A VIBRANT SEX WORKER RIGHTS MOVEMENT: BUILDING THE CAPACITIES OF SEX WORKERS IN THE REGION

1. Welcoming new members
In 2017, 9 organisations based in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Ukraine joined ICRSE, bringing its membership to a total of 99 organisations. 16 individual activists also joined ICRSE membership in 2017.
The new organisational members are Boysproject (Belgium), EATG- European AIDS Treatment Group (Belgium), Sexelancen (Denmark), PALOMA (France), Trans*sexworks (Germany), Red Umbrella Athens (Greece), HIV Ireland (Ireland), Ombre Rosse (Italy), and HPLGBT (Ukraine). The full list of organisational members of the ICRSE can be viewed at 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, Instagram 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 2017, ICRSE published a total of 22 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, including two new Intersection Briefing Papers in English – a guide for labour rights’ activists and a paper on sex workers’ right to health – as well as a Russian and Spanish translation of previous papers; one national advocacy paper in English and German on Germany’s new sex work legislation; two advocacy videos; and one infographic. All resources developed by ICRSE are available in open access.

By the end of 2017, ICRSE’s Twitter account had reached 3,900 followers and its Facebook account 2,600 followers.

ICRSE Website http://www.sexworkeurope.org
Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/pages/ICRSE/105375937644
ICRSE Twitter account https://twitter.com/sexworkeurope
ICRSE YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEJQn5D57Y_e-hXjQK-jYaw
3. ICRSE in the media: Examples from 2017

https://worldpolicy.org/2017/01/30/hungary-navigating-sex-work-regulations/

4. Advocacy video project: “Changing the narrative on sex work”

In collaboration with the Sex Worker Advocacy and Resistance Movement (SWARM; formerly known as the Sex Worker Open University), ICRSE coordinated the development of six national advocacy videos in six countries (France, Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Spain, and Ukraine). The programme, funded by the Open Society Foundations (OSF), included a first meeting on 7-8 May 2017 in Budapest with each organisation, followed by national activities, including the development of scripts, filming and editing. In 2018, the videos will be disseminated nationally and assembled into one European video representing the diversity of sex workers’ lives and experiences in the region.
The project aimed to strengthen European sex worker advocacy by enhancing the cooperation of sex worker collectives and creating short films that raise awareness on the intersections of sex workers’ rights with the struggles of other social movements at the local and European levels. To this end, a partnership of 6 sex worker collectives from Ukraine, Macedonia, France, Spain, Norway, and Serbia was formed during the project period, who were convened for a meeting on 7-8 May 2017 in Budapest, Hungary to map key issues affecting sex workers in their local context and to identify common themes for local and international video advocacy. In a collaborative process, the partnership defined local and international messaging strategies for the movies and contributed to developing joint guidelines for the production. Based on these, partners produced altogether 12 video clips by the end of 2017.

5. SWIT Roll-out in Serbia and Macedonia

Through the NSWP-led consortium funded by the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund (RCNF), ICRSE supported the rolling-out of activities related to the Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT) in Serbia and Macedonia, in partnership with Sloboda Prava and STAR-STAR. Activities in both countries included outreach and organizing of sex workers in different cities and regions, community-building and advocacy. This programme will continue in 2018.
6. Support development of sex worker led movement in countries with limited movement: trainings on community mobilisation and activism with sex workers and a roundtable with NGOs in Poland and Albania

In October and November 2017, ICRSE and SWAN hosted a first-ever 3-day training in Poland and a 2-day training in Albania on community mobilisation and activism. The trainings took place over two days and were then followed by roundtables with local NGOs.

The 3-day meeting in Poland, organised with Sex Work Polska, brought together sex workers of various genders, with different experiences across all types of sex work, coming from different parts of Poland and with various experience of migration to Western Europe. The group mapped various working conditions, chose certain issues they would like to mobilise around, defined potential activities to organise and pinned down potential allies for their movement. As part of this community gathering, on the last day, Sex Work Polska together with SWAN, ICRSE and allies such as Foundation for Social Policy Prekursor, Political Critique and Kampania Przeciw Homofobii organised an open seminar on the situations of sex workers in Europe and Poland. The seminar gathered interested parties and potential allies from other movements, LGBT and trans groups, local civil society groups which had a lot of insightful questions or comments to add. ICRSE also launched the first version of its Intersection Tool Kit in Polish. The Tool Kit to be launched in 2018 in English summarise the five Intersection Briefing Papers published between 2015 and 2017.
The 2-day training took place in Tirana, Albania at the office of Aleanca, an LGBT organisation. Albania is one of the countries where sex work is fully criminalised, and there is a lack of opportunity for sex workers’ self-organising. Although sex workers from various genders, with different experiences and types of sex work were invited, the training was mostly attended by trans and MSM sex workers, the majority of whom were young people, many of them homeless and living at the LGBT shelter, Streha. The first day included in-depth discussion and sharing about the main issues faced by sex workers which were categorised in three overlapping themes:

- Discrimination: both as trans/LGBT individuals (no access to education, bullying, lack of employment options, lack of housing….) and as sex workers.
- Health: limited access to health services (discrimination, refusal by officials to treat and care), limited access to condoms, bad treatments by doctors when HIV+ etc)
- Criminalisation and policing: legal framework (full criminalization); police violence; police corruption and bribe, police refusal to protect sex workers etc

These three themes were approved as main points of presentations for the round table on the third day with NGOs and five sex workers agreed to present on each points, focusing on their individual and collective experience.

The second day focused on access to justice with the presence of Ms Irma Baraku, Commissioner for protection of Discrimination who has expertise in legal support to marginalised communities, particularly LGBT. Sex workers were able to share their issues regarding discrimination and gained a better understanding of legal processes legally available to them.

On the third day, ICRSE and SWAN coordinated a round table with key stakeholders and NGOs including representatives of STOP AIDS, UNAIDS, Young Women Christian Association, Pro-LGBT, Aleanca LGBT, UNFPA, UN Women, Helsinki Committee and People Living with HIV Albania. Sex workers presented on the key-issues agreed on previous days. Every participants present agreed to further collaborate to improve the living conditions of sex workers in Albania.
C – A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE AND ACCOUNTABLE NETWORK - REPORT ON ICRSE’S GOVERNANCE

1. Our staff: An experienced team of dedicated activists

SECRETARIAT:

Coordinator: Luca Stevenson
Role: Planning and coordinating ICRSE’s activities, programmes and resources; liaising with steering committee 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 and Finance Officer: Yiğit Aydın
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

Campaign and Advocacy Officer: 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.

Consultants for the development of Briefing Paper on Germany’s new prostitution law: Angela Herter and Emy Fem. In 2017, ICRSE worked in partnership with Hydra and BesD for the development and launch of our Briefing Paper on Germany’s new prostitution law.

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, Germany, Hungary, 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.
2. Sex worker leadership: Election of steering committee members and annual board meeting

In 2017, ICRSE organised its annual board election. Board members must be members of ICRSE and are elected by sex worker-led member organisations of ICRSE.

This year, ICRSE’s Board Members included:

- **Kate McGrew**, Sex Worker Alliance in Ireland (SWAI), Ireland, ICRSE Co-Convenor
- **Sabrina Sanchez**, Aprosex, Spain, Co-Convenor
- **Kemal Ordek**, Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights, Turkey
- **Maxime Maes**, UTSOPI, Belgium
- **Borche Bozinov**, STAR-STAR, Macedonia, Treasurer

ICRSE held its annual board meeting in October 2017 in Dublin, Ireland, at the offices of the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI). Kate McGrew and Sabrina Sanchez were elected as Co-Convenors and Maxime Maes as treasurer.

**Session with Edel McGinley**

As part of its annual board meeting, ICRSE invited Edel McGinley, Director of MRCI and Chair of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM). McGinley delivered a presentation to the ICRSE Board about PICUM’s governance and what lessons could be drawn therefrom. She also provided an overview of different NGOs’ and community organisations’ governance and board models and an in-depth account of PICUM’s structure. In addition, the Board discussed ICRSE’s membership models and how to increase engagement with different stakeholders.

**Development and approval of organisational manual**

In 2017, ICRSE developed an organisational manual, a draft of which was discussed during the annual Board meeting before being finalised by the Secretariat and approved by the ICRSE Steering Committee in November 2017. The manual includes rules of the organisation and its operations, including on membership, the Steering Committee, the Secretariat, conflicts of interest, ICRSE’s code of conduct, grievance procedures, member consultations and meaningful involvement of sex workers, nomination principles and criteria to ensure adequate representation within the ICRSE, communications, and operations.

**Continued participation in Consortium led by NSWP with other regional networks**

In early 2017, ICRSE joined a meeting hosted by the Global Network of Sex Work Projects
(NSWP) and attended by regional networks that are part of the sex worker networks’ consortium. The goal of the meeting was to share experiences, discuss challenges and solutions, and plan the next year of the grants by the Robert Carr Fund for Civil Society Networks (RCNF) and Bridging the Gaps (BtG). The meeting helped participants to better understand reporting requirements and put systems in place to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluating mechanism to ensure the continued funding of their respective projects.

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 2017, ICRSE carried out its activities thanks to support from three donors (see below). Their generous grants allowed ICRSE to hire or continue to employ several staff and consultants and to coordinate, organise and publish numerous activities, campaigns, trainings, and resources as described in this annual report.

Funding Grants

ICRSE would like to thank the following donors for their financial contribution and support to our 2017 activities:

• Red Umbrella Fund, the first global fund guided by and for sex workers
• Open Society Foundations
• Robert Carr Fund for Civil Society Networks, through a consortium with other regional networks of sex work projects and led by the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)
## 4. FINANCIAL REPORT

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