The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) works to ensure that the voices of sex workers are heard, listened to and respected. We strive to raise awareness about the social exclusion of female, male and transgender sex workers in Europe, to promote the human and civil rights of all sex workers at national, regional and global levels and to create strong alliances with key partners, including sex workers and their organisations around the world, NGOs and other civil society organisations. ICRSE also works to build political relationships with key players at the level of European Union policy and decision-making.

ICRSE opposes the criminalisation of sex work and the conflation of sex work and trafficking. It aims to raise awareness of the harmful impact of the conflation of sex work with trafficking in policy and practice and seeks to put forward a vision in which sex work is recognised as work and respected in law, policy and the public imagination as such. This includes the granting of labour rights to sex workers alongside the upholding of human and health rights for sex workers of all genders.

ICRSE believes that sex workers have the right to self-determination, and that self-organisation can be an empowering and powerful tool. Sex workers can and do effect change; solidarity among ICRSE members will ensure that the needs and voices of female, male and transgender sex workers should be addressed equally.
2014 – ACHIEVEMENTS

The year 2014 was an important one for ICRSE, following a period with limited funding and organisational capacities. ICRSE aimed to successfully reach its strategic aims as defined in our Strategic Plan 2011-2014.

- To create a sustainable organisation providing leadership in European sex worker activism.
- To challenge policy and legislative barriers that prevent the fulfilment of sex workers’ human and labour rights.
- To establish ICRSE as an influential body in the European policy forum.
- To build a movement of and for sex workers in Europe – building capacity for activism and advocacy.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS:
ICRSE membership is composed of organisations and individuals working or living in Western, Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Organisation members are sex worker-led collectives and associations, service providers working directly with sex workers and other organisations supporting sex workers’ rights. Individual members are sex workers, academics, human rights activists, feminists, and trade unionists.
A. CREATING A SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN EUROPEAN SEX WORKER ACTIVISM

In 2014, ICRSE greatly strengthened its capacities through the development of a more transparent, democratic and accountable governance structure, diversification of its funding and the development of a secretariat responsible for overseeing activities and development of the network.

a. A more transparent, democratic and accountable governance structure

In 2014, ICRSE organised its first Steering Committee (SC) elections. Members of our communities – both sex workers and dedicated allies – were invited to nominate themselves with the support of a sex worker-led organisation for the posts of SC members. Sex worker-led organisations were invited to vote for four candidates who joined the SC.

For 2014, ICRSE welcomed Carina Edlund (Sweden), Stasa Plecas (Serbia), Morgane Merteuil (France) and PG Macioti (Germany), who joined Borce Bozhinov (Macedonia), Anastasia Ryan (Scotland) and Pye Jakobsson (Sweden) on the ICRSE SC.

ICRSE held its annual SC meeting in Amsterdam in June 2014. At this meeting, the members approved the reports prepared by the Coordinator, the workplan for the activities and the budgets. The SC also looked at how to improve the governance of the network and diversify its fundraising capacities.

b. An increased and diversified budget

ICRSE successfully applied to the Red Umbrella Fund, the first global fund guided by and for sex workers. ICRSE also joined several other regional networks of sex worker projects and the Global Network of Sex Work Projects in a consortium for a successful application to the Robert Carr Fund for Civil Societies Network. These two grants will help support the sustainability of ICRSE by providing core and activities funding, in particular for the development of a secretariat and for our first Regional Capacity-Building Training on Sex Work, HIV and Human Rights for our members (see page 12).
c. A competent and dedicated team

In order to implement our Strategic Plan and related activities, ICRSE hired/continued working with several dedicated and passionate sex workers and human rights activists and professionals.

**Luca Stevenson** (France-UK) remained Coordinator, responsible for overviewing the different development of the organisations in areas of governance, fundraising, management of consultants, increase of membership, communication and advocacy.

**Dr Agata Dziuban** (Poland) joined ICRSE as Policy Officer, responsible for the development of Community reports on key issues related to sex workers’ rights. Agata also developed training material and facilitated training sessions on Sex Work, Health and HIV during ICRSE Regional Capacity Building Training.

**Zsuzsanna Nyitray** (Hungary-UK) was hired as Administration and Finance Officer, with the responsibilities of overseeing all administrative and financial duties.

**Dennis van Wanrooij** (Netherlands-Brazil) joined the ICRSE team as Consultant on Sex Work and Human Rights for our Regional Training on Sex Work, HIV and Human Rights.

**Boglarka Fedorko** (Hungary/Germany) was hired for the organisation, coordination and evaluation of ICRSE’s Regional Capacity Building Training Sex Work, HIV and Human Rights.

ICRSE benefited extensively from the exceptional breadth of expertise, knowledge and dedication to sex workers’ rights that each consultant brought to its work.
B. TO CHALLENGE POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE BARRIERS THAT PREVENT THE FULFILMENT OF SEX WORKERS’ HUMAN AND LABOUR RIGHTS AND TO ESTABLISH ICRSE AS AN INFLUENTIAL BODY IN EUROPEAN POLICY FORUMS

CHALLENGING POLICIES AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

In January and February 2014, ICRSE led a vocal campaign against the European Parliament report on Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation (the “Honeyball Report”), which equated all forms of sex work with violence, and sought to (non-bindingly) recommend the Swedish model of client criminalisation to all EU member states. ICRSE issued a letter to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) which was endorsed by 560 organisations. The letter was translated into 12 different EU languages and sent individually to targeted MEPs from different parties and committees, urging them to vote for an alternative resolution, drafted in consultation with ICRSE. A critique of the resolution was also signed by 94 social researchers and public health academics. This earned ICRSE increased visibility among European progressive NGOs and MEPs, which ICRSE is actively consolidating and building upon.

(One of the images used during the ICRSE campaign against the Honeyball resolution, image courtesy of © Matt Lemon https://researchprojectkorea.wordpress.com/tag/mary-honeyball/)

ICRSE drafted and published several statements in relation to policy developments at European and national level, which were shared amongst members, stakeholders and policy makers:


ICRSE published a total of 20 news reports and statements on its website, increasing the visibility of our members and supporting their advocacy at national level. These reports related to sex workers' rights, advocacy and activism in Belgium, Turkey, Germany, France, the UK and Norway, as well as regarding policy development in the International Labour Organization, Council of Europe and European Parliament and publications by The Lancet.
INCREASING MEMBERSHIP

In 2014, ICRSE approved the applications of seven organisations as well as 26 individuals.
Organisations joining us this year are based in Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Serbia.
The many individuals joining us this year are sex workers, academics and researchers as well as activists and members of various NGOs working in related fields.

The list of organisation members of ICRSE can be seen here: http://www.sexworkeurope.org/node/464

BUILDING ALLIANCES WITH PROGRESSIVE ORGANISATIONS – PARTICIPATION IN KEY EVENTS

ICRSE participated in many events organised by other regional networks and national organisations working in human rights, LGBT rights or other related fields.

ICRSE strengthened its collaboration with Transgender Europe (TGEU) and supported the participation of trans sex workers from Germany and France who facilitated a workshop on “The needs of trans sex workers” at TGEU’s annual council in Budapest, Hungary. For the first time, ICRSE joined the European International Lesbian and Gay Association ILGA – at their annual Conference in Riga, Latvia and co-facilitated a workshop on “Addressing the needs of LGBTQ sex workers”.

ICRSE continued its collaboration with European Cooperation on Science and Technology (COST) with its Action “Comparing European Prostitution Policies: Understanding Scales and Cultures of Governance” (ProsPol). ICRSE participated in two action-meetings in Athens, Greece and Salamanca, Spain. ICRSE will publish a chapter on sex workers’ self-organising in Europe and Central Asia in a COST resource and participate actively in ProsPol working groups on sex work policy.

The increased collaborative efforts of ICRSE also included a strengthened relationship with the Sex Workers Rights’ Advocacy Network in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SWAN), its sister network in the region. ICRSE and SWAN joined forces in coordinating a two-day networking and training meeting for sex workers from both networks prior to the ICRSE regional capacity-building training in Budapest.
ICRSE consultants and board members also coordinated the participation of sex workers, or themselves participated, in several key events, meetings and conferences. These included the Amnesty International UK AGM (Edinburgh), a meeting with the Guardian International Development Editor (London), a UK Parliament public event on decriminalisation (London), and the Congress of Sex Work (Berlin).

COMMUNICATION

ICRSE continues to fulfil its role as a regional network facilitating the sharing of information by our members through our listservs, website and social media. The campaign against the “Honeyball resolution” in particular is proof of how effective these methods of communication can be in order to collect endorsements from individuals and organisations or coordinate rapid community translation.

Our communication tools:

ICRSE manages a website where news, events, statements and resources such as community reports, advocacy tools and videos are regularly uploaded.
http://www.sexworkeurope.org/

Our members communicate and share information through different platforms, including a listserv and closed groups on Facebook. ICRSE is also in the process of launching a listserv for academics and researchers.

ICRSE communicates with the public through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter and a recently launched a YouTube channel, and publishes a regular newsletter sent to stakeholders and other interested individuals. Our statements and resources are often shared by other networks and organisations including INPUD, Correlation – European Network Social Inclusion & Health, and AWID (Association for Women in Development).
https://www.facebook.com/pages/ICRSE/105375937644
https://twitter.com/sexworkeurope
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEJQn5D57Y_e-hXjQK-jYaw

Another successful ICRSE media campaign coordinated by ICRSE and aimed at the European Parliament (EP) was the campaign against “Report on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality” submitted to EP by Labour MEP for London Mary Honeyball. This resolution on prostitution and sexual exploitation conflated prostitution (both “forced” and “voluntary”) with slavery, and called for member-states to criminalise the purchase of sex. ICRSE drafted a letter
to MEPs that was signed by 560 entities including HIV, women’s rights, LGBT, and anti-trafficking organisations, such as the Correlation Network – European Network Social Inclusion & Health, the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network, La Strada International, and Transgender Europe. An academic critique analysing the factual errors of the resolution was signed by 94 social researchers and experts on sex work.
http://www.sexworkeurope.org/campaigns/tell-european-parliament-vote-against-criminalisation-clients

ICRSE has been increasingly quoted in media such as radio and newspapers in particular in relation to our most visible campaign against the Honeyball Resolution.

ICRSE IN THE MEDIA

Links to some articles:

https://www.mixcloud.com/discover/prostitution+city:busan/
http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2014/02/26/parlamento-europeo-prostituzione_n_4856590.html
http://www.labottegadelbarbieri.org/criminalizzare-i-clienti-un-appello-urgente/
http://www.vice.com/read/ibiza-sex-workers-have-for-med-spains-first-prostitution-union
C. TO BUILD A MOVEMENT OF AND FOR SEX WORKERS IN EUROPE – STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR ACTIVISM AND DEVELOPING RESOURCES

DEVELOPING THE CAPACITIES OF OUR MEMBERS: ICRSE’S FIRST REGIONAL TRAINING ON SEX WORK, HIV AND HUMAN RIGHTS

“It was a beautiful experience, where I felt affirmed in my convictions and strong and able to continue this fight as worthy and great.”

Sex worker, participant in the regional training

Still image from ICRSE’s video “Sex workers are part of the solution”, filmed at the Regional Training on HIV, Sex Work and Human Rights, Budapest 2014.
ICRSE successfully obtained support from the Robert Carr Network Fund (RCNF) to organise a regional training session on Sex Work, Human Rights and HIV. The session brought together 22 sex workers from eight different countries (France, Ireland, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey) and was held in Budapest in October 2014.

This event included a two-day joint meeting with more than 20 members of SWAN – Sex Workers Rights’ Advocacy Network, which made it possible for sex workers to share expertise on regional issues. The participatory sessions focused on exchange between sex workers on themes of HIV and human rights and enabled participants to focus on and share experience related to three key topics: migration, criminalisation of clients and structural violence against sex workers. The latter workshop and participants’ input informed ICRSE’s Community Report on Structural Violence: http://www.sexworkeurope.org/resources/community-guide-structural-violence-2015. A workshop on global priorities and mobilisation strategies was also conducted by NSWP – the Global Network of Sex Work Projects.

Several interconnected training sessions have been developed by Training Consultants Dennis van Wanrooij and Agata Dziuban in order to adequately address the health needs and concerns of sex workers in the European region, provide them with knowledge on HIV, STIs and other health concerns, identify human rights barriers which compromise sex workers’ health and safety and contribute to their vulnerability to HIV, and strategies in challenging these barriers. The aims of these modules were the following: mitigation of the impact of HIV and AIDS among sex workers in the European region by increasing knowledge about sex workers’ health needs and concerns; determining standards of occupational health in sex work; raising awareness about work-related risks and other – social, structural and economic factors contributing to sex workers’ vulnerability to HIV globally and in the European region; increasing knowledge about HIV-related prevention, testing and treatment opportunities for sex workers in the European region and barriers to sex workers’ access to these HIV-related services in Europe; increasing knowledge and understanding of community empowerment approach to HIV prevention among sex workers.

The training session focusing on the nature and content of human rights introduced key rights in a global context. Sex workers who attended the session familiarised themselves with the mechanisms they can use to demand state accountability. The training also intended to address both European and international treaties signed and ratified by European states. As for the practical lessons learnt, the participating sex workers gained the ability to identify human rights violations on the ground, collect evidence and develop strategies to overcome these barriers, through partnering with other sex workers, stakeholders and networks. Furthermore, the workshops concentrated on the present situation of sex work across Europe. They highlighted the current trends and debates on legal frameworks, trafficking and migration, providing some concrete examples on how these discourses impact on sex workers’ human rights.
The on-the-spot feedback session and online follow-up evaluation revealed that the most beneficial aspects for participating sex workers were the diversity of sex workers present, the co-creation of a safe space where they could share experiences and knowledge on various local situations in a meaningful way, and the increased understanding of the connection between HIV and human rights. Furthermore, they had the chance to talk to sex workers from regions from which they usually do not meet activists. Very positive feedback was given on the accompanying cultural programmes, e.g. Trans Cultural Festival.

“Seeing the diversity and strength in our community was amazing. Overall brief, to-the-point information; it was good we also did a lot of teamwork and exchanged information on the situation of sex work in different countries and the activities of activists and organisations.”

Sex worker participant in the regional training.

Still image from ICRSE’s video “Sex workers are part of the solution”, filmed at the Regional Training on HIV, Sex Work and Human Rights, Budapest 2014.
On an organisational level, ICRSE also gained valuable insights from the regional training session, which laid the foundations for further work with the membership and more detailed information on local situations and rights violations. Information on structural violence in local contexts shared at the meeting helped ICRSE conceptualise its Community Report on Structural Violence, and an advocacy video shot at the training – launched on 17 December 2014 – also contributed to raising the visibility of sex worker organisations from Europe and their work connected to human rights and HIV.

**B. DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES: COMMUNITY REPORT ON STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE**

In 2014 ICRSE developed its first Community Report on Structural Violence. ICRSE’s Community report Structural Violence: Social and Institutional Oppression Experienced by Sex Workers in Europe focused on structural violence as it aimed at identifying the main forms and contexts of structural violence experienced by sex workers, namely stigma, silencing and misrepresentation of sex workers, criminalisation, or institutional oppression. Furthermore, it highlighted several strategies that could be used by sex workers – and have been successfully used by numerous sex worker collectives in Europe – to challenge structural violence, e.g. community building and collective mobilisation, attempts to challenge stigmas against sex workers, advocacy for legal reform, awareness raising around discrimination and violence against sex workers, supporting sex workers’ access to justice, forging alliances with other oppressed communities, etc. As such, this report not only informs sex workers and other stakeholders (including policy makers and funders) about the non-direct violence sex workers are subjected to, but also provides sex worker organisations and their allies with know-how on advocacy and activism for sex workers’ rights and against structural oppression. Upon publication, this report was uploaded on the ICRSE website and Facebook page and circulated among members through ICRSE’s listserv (members have also published it on their sites and social media profiles). The community report was also sent to all ICRSE’s partners and allies, including NSWP. The report was well received by members, both organisations and individuals, as well as partners and allies (feedback through emails, Facebook page and personal communication). Moreover, it was discussed at the SexGen Seminar: Sex Work in the North, a sex work research seminar organised by the Centre for Sex, Gender and Sexualities and St Aidan’s College, Durham University on February 18th 2015.
Structural violence

Social and institutional oppression experienced by sex workers in Europe
### International Committee for the Rights of Sex-workers in Europe (ICRSE)
#### FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2014

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