About YouAct

Vision and Mission

YouAct is an independent organisation that aims to empower young people to advocate for their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, by joining forces in Europe to make our voices heard. We believe that active and meaningful youth participation is essential to reach the following goals: We envision a world where sexuality is accepted as a positive aspect in life and where the SRHR of young people are realised, where young people have access to accurate information and youth friendly services and can decide freely and responsibly about all aspects of their sexuality and reproductive lives.

Sexual and reproductive rights are universal human rights and essential for better health and well-being. They ensure dignity, respect, equality and integrity. Sexual and reproductive rights should apply to young people as much as they apply to adults. YouAct believes it is essential that young people are aware of the full scope of their rights and entitlement. Therefore it is necessary that conditions to realise these rights be guaranteed.

We believe that young people have the right to:

**Choose:** this includes the right to choose from a full range of contraceptives, the right to access safe and legal abortion, and the right to decide if, when and how many children to have.

**Know:** this includes the right to access comprehensive, accurate, unbiased, information on sexuality in order to make informed choices about one’s sexual and reproductive life.

**Freedom:** this includes the right of individuals to develop themselves and live free from stigma, discrimination and judgement, the right to express one’s sexuality, and the right to freely choose one’s partner or partners.
**Health Care:** this includes the right to Sexual and Reproductive Health services that are safe, accessible, youth friendly and provided by skilled health care providers, and the right to access reproductive health supplies.

**Safety:** this includes the right to live free from physical or psychological harm, threat of harm; and the right to be protected from all forms of violence, coercion and harmful practices.

**Privacy:** this includes the right to protected privacy including personal space and confidentiality, including in health service provision and the right to choose freely over one’s sexual and reproductive life.

**Youth Participation:** this is the right of young people to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

**Equality:** the recognition that Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights apply to everybody equally, without discrimination or stigma.
History

YouAct was founded in 2004 to strengthen and unify the voices of European youth advocating for the realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Europe is a region where young people’s Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights have been realised according to varying degrees. YouAct’s focus is mainly on SRHR within European and national contexts, however we also direct advocacy activities towards SRHR internationally, ensuring that the voice of European young people is present at all levels.

The position of YouAct as a European youth network is a significant one, as a region with slightly better opportunities for young people to be involved in policy development and decision making, this gives the organisation and its members a platform to build from to ensure young people’s voices are heard. Nationally, members continue to experience different levels of opportunity for participation and YouAct aims to ensure that there is a high level of youth participation in decision making on SRHR across Europe as a region and within the Council of Europe countries.

While Europe is home to many championing countries that are championing in the field of SRHR, there are also many countries within the region where youth still struggle to exercise their sexual rights. Due to religion, patriarchal discourses and lack of political will and commitment in many European countries, and where governments present opposition to advancing sexual rights at the global level, there is a lack of comprehensive sexual education available to youth. Subsequently, there is a low usage of contraception, high HIV rates, and a lack of access to safe and legal abortion. Gender gaps and inequality continues to persist, and thus gender based violence is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the region. It is clear that Europe still faces many gaps within in the field of SRHR, and YouAct aims to tackle these problems through youth activism and advocacy.
Executive Summary

This year was filled with great achievements not only for YouAct, but for the international development arena as a whole. 2015 saw the fruition of a key milestone in the development agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As an organisation, YouAct has been very involved in the whole process, attending inter-governmental sessions to ensure the voice of youth and SRHR is being heard within the planning and implementation of the goals and targets.

The SDGs are and will continue to be key in improving SRHR worldwide, as they provide far-ranging and all-encompassing goals and targets to be accomplished by 2030. More importantly, the SDGs acknowledge that SRHR is inextricably linked with larger development goals and cannot be seen as separate and independent. Gender equality is central in the whole document, with specific mention in Goal 5: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Another incredible achievement is the specific mention of SRH & RR (sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights) in Goals 3 and 5. Several other goals also specifically mention the importance of gender equality in education, sustainable development and poverty alleviation. YouAct representatives had attended three sessions of the UN Post-2015 negotiations, ensuring that youth participation in key decision making processes is taken seriously and respected. We have played a key role in disseminating information about the SDGs to youth, through social media campaigns, workshops, trainings and meetings.

Alongside our work on the regional and international levels to ensure the SRHR of our peers in the global south are realised, gaps remain in the realisation of young people’s SRHR in Europe. In terms of national and European level advocacy, four key areas for YouAct to focus on in 2012-2015 were the right of young women to access to safe and legal abortion, the right of LGBT youth to live free from stigma and discrimination, the need for effective comprehensive sexuality programs for young people across Europe, and the right of young people to participate meaningfully in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs that impact their lives.

In 2015, YouAct sought to address these issues through joint campaigns and projects, with other European Youth networks. An important focus for 2015 has been to join forces and collaborate with other youth organisations in order to strengthen our voice and efforts. YouAct worked with other European NGOs and international partners to find strategic entry points and aimed to increase the advocacy capacity, skills and outputs of European youth-led organisations and young people through effective trainings and working in partnership. In light of this, back-to-back with the YouAct Annual General Meeting in Bucharest, the organisation hosted a strategic meeting with fellow European youth advocates. The meeting aimed to bring together YouAct members and fellow youth-led organisations (CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, YSAFE, Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Y-PEER) to share up-to-date with key information related to development cooperation and global policies among European advocates and the broader SRHR community, to understand and find strategic entry points and contribute to joint actions.

YouAct’s work at international, regional, national and organisational levels of policy is informed by our firm equality-driven approach. YouAct will continue to engage young people who
are enthusiastic about bringing about change, who can provide YouAct with a strong background and commitment. In an effort to build an organisation that is ever-increasing in its diversity by reaching out to progressive youth of all gender, sexual and ethnic or racial identities, as well as youth of varying abilities, migratory, socioeconomic, health and HIV status. We hope to empower youth advocates from marginalised communities, enhance awareness that the term ‘youth’ refers to a group of immense diversity, and build a cohesive network of highly knowledgeable, critical and skilled young people who can carry forward sexual and reproductive health and rights advocacy efforts in Europe.

We continue to strive for our goals and are eternally grateful for all the support we have received.

Steering Committee 2015-2016
Evie, Charoula, Camila, Anna and Cristina
Advocacy Highlights

International Advocacy

Post-2015 UN Negotiations

YouAct has been actively engaged in the front lines of the Post-2015 UN Negotiations, a process that resulted in the development of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were implemented in September 2015. YouAct’s participation has been crucial in advocating for SRHR and ensuring that the youth voice is being heard in important decision-making processes. YouAct was in New York for three rounds of intergovernmental negotiations. The March session was attended by our newest member, Frederik Felding from Denmark. In this round of negotiations, YouAct worked with UNFPA, different national missions to the UN and a range of other civil society organisations. The Action Campaign for sexual and reproductive health rights was kicked off just before the negotiations, with YouAct taking part in the strategy session on the campaign. The campaign include among other a deeper cooperation between organisations to oversee the final negotiations on the SDGs and intervene when necessary.

YouAct member, Cecilie Morville, attended the May session of the UN Post-2015 Intergovernmental negotiations. This meeting was about the follow up and review of the Post-2015 development agenda. The negotiations during this session were focused on the technical aspects of the document, with an emphasis on the accountability of the SDGs - some countries found it to be very problematic to give enforce more reporting processes, and preferred to make it voluntarily for member states to decide whether or not they want to report. If this gets decided, YouAct hopes that there will be peer-pressure that push for member states to report on progress and challenges.

In July, YouAct, represented by Ana Rizescu, joined the civil society advocates at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Session (IGN) for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The negotiations focused on the draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Thorough the 2 weeks, Ana has attended the intergovernmental negotiations and many side-events and side-meetings, to ensure coordination and joint strategising with fellow SRHR activists. Meetings with the Women’s Major Group and the Major Group on Children and Youth usually start early in the morning, before the negotiations – and coordinating
with them is highly important, as the Major Groups are the main platform for civil society voices in UN processes. Together with colleagues, we have pushed for specific language that guarantees human rights, particularly the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all people everywhere; brings gender equality and women's rights to the forefront; recognises young people's role as key agents of change; and includes the active participation of civil society in shaping global development, both at country and global levels.

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Have You Seen My Rights? Campaign
YouAct has also played a key role in raising awareness on youth rights to SRHR in the new Sustainable Development Goals. In January 2015, around 40 organisations from all over the globe met in Oslo to develop an international campaign that would educate youth about the Post-2015 Agenda and what that means for youth and SRHR. The meeting was convened by International Women’s Health Coalition (IWHC), UNAIDS, UNFPA, the PACT (and ACT!2015, an initiative of the PACT) and Restless Development. The meeting lasted three days, from the 27th until the 29th of January and YouAct was represented by Anna Johansson Dahl, our member from Sweden.

The campaign builds on ACT!2015, a movement that is supporting ten key countries to ensure their commitment to SRHR, harm reduction services and ending the AIDS epidemic. The
A campaign founded in Oslo is trying to broaden the initiative to a global movement, making member states commit to young people's SRHR and youth friendly HIV responses in the post-2015 agenda. In the opening speech, Malayah Harper, Chief of Gender and Diversity Division at UNAIDS, underlined what Ban Ki Moon wrote in the synthesis report: "Young people will be the torch bearers of the next sustainable development agenda through 2030. We must ensure that this transition, while protecting the planet, leaves no one behind." During the three days, participants learnt more about the post-2015 process, its key milestones and how to advocate and make their voice heard.

Experts from UNAIDS, International Women's Health Coalition and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs shared their view on how to advocate for advancing SRHR in the final phase of the post-2015 process. From that starting point the group discussed how to build a campaign, emphasising on civil society's role in achieving SRHR priorities. The meeting offered an opportunity to get a better understanding of how to influence the process taking place until September, when the post-2015 agenda will be adopted. The outcome of the meeting was the creation of a new campaign called Have You Seen My Rights (HYSMR)\textsuperscript{?}. You\textsuperscript{Act}, along with the other organisations present in the meeting continued to be part of the creation and implementation of the campaign.

With the SDGs in place, You\textsuperscript{Act} has hosted two national workshops to promote the Have You Seen the Rights Campaign and raise awareness about the post-2015 agenda amongst young people. The first workshop was held in Stockholm, Sweden on 22nd and 23rd of October. It was organised by our members, Anna Johansson Dahl and Johanna Selander in collaboration with the Swedish Association of Sexual Education (RFSU), and consisted of two key activities, a workshop and a breakfast-seminar. The workshop focused on reaching out to young people with information and knowledge about the SDGs. Participants discussed how young people have been instrumental in influencing the goals and how we want to continue this work in the implementation process. Based on three of the five pledges from the HYSMR campaign, we talked about what needs to be done in Sweden to improve comprehensive sexual education and youth-friendly health services. Members also discussed how Sweden can be a global leader in youth and adolescent health and rights. The seminar was a good way for young persons, politicians, representatives from civil society and experts on SRHR to meet and discuss how young people can participate in a meaningful way in the implementation of the SDGs. They discussed the different potential options and forms of collaboration between different actors. The suggestions included: creation of a SRHR platform for organising different actors from civil society and politicians to work together in the implementation, awareness raising and knowledge distribution of SDGs within organisations and political parties; young people getting opportunities to be part of references groups who can work with the implementation of the goals.

The second workshop, organised by Camila Ochoa Mendoza, took place in December 2015, with students from the University College Utrecht, in the Netherlands. The aim of the workshop was to create a safe space for youth to discuss and analyse how sexual health and rights are addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals. It was an opportunity for students to brainstorm and learn about different issues regarding SRHR that are currently present, and some of the root causes. As a way of raising awareness about sexual health and rights, the last half of...
the workshop was dedicated to creating a stop motion film where students could use their creativity to show what they learnt during the workshop and share a message.¹

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Youth Voice Regional Campaign

The Youth Voice Regional Campaign is another platform that aims to raise awareness about the Post-2015 agenda amongst youth. The Youth Voice Regional Campaign aims to place young people at the centre of the future development agenda, by mobilising young people from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to bring their voice and advocate for their priorities in the ongoing discussion around the Post-2015 agenda and by supporting them to reach out to the decision makers in their country.

¹ Links to the stop-motion videos created:
Youth Advocates: https://youtu.be/1dp6dKnAkhh
SRHR: https://youtu.be/nGpfhWHDi7E
YouAct is part of the Regional Youth Leadership Group along with ASTRA Youth, PETRI Centre Sofia, Y-SAFE, Y-PEER, and Youth Coalition. The group was engaged in the overall design and implementation of the campaign by defining, planning and coordinating various youth-led communication and advocacy actions in the region and support in reaching out to youth networks and members from the region. The implementation of the campaign is done in coordination and with the support of the UNFPA EECA Regional Office and UNFPA Country Offices.

The Youth Voice Regional Campaign was launched in October 2014 and gathered 80 organisations from 23 countries from the region of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Across the 17 countries, more than 7,500 young people have been engaged in the consultation process and contributed to shaping the youth vision for the future they want. In all countries, young people voiced their needs and recommendations and agreed on the priorities they would like to present to their national stakeholders and further advocate for their inclusion within the post-2015 development agenda. Though there are variations in the youth priorities identified by the youth organisations or networks in each country, the overarching ones mentioned in all 17 country reports are related to investments in young people’s education, health and employment, while ensuring meaningful participation, including youth-adult partnership and opportunities for all.

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Young Leaders for Population and Development

More than 50 young parliamentarians, representatives of governments, private sector representatives, journalists and civil society activists attended the ‘Young Leaders for Population and Development’ conference, which took place on 11-12 May in Chisinau, Moldova. The conference aimed to gather young leaders from diverse sectors to discuss the progress made since the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) and identify the remaining gaps that need to be addressed. The two-day debates focused on population issues namely, migration, population ageing, fertility, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and gender equality. Day one of the conference was concentrated on assessing of progress in population dynamics in the last 20 years. Participants discussed innovative solutions for burning issues in the area of population dynamics, SRHR, gender equality and meaningful youth participation while broken up into working groups. The regional focus was also raised during the overview of ICPD for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and debates on controversies around issues of population and development also characterised discussions. The conference participants also had the opportunity to visit institutions working on population and development in Moldova such as the youth friendly clinic Neovita, HIV/SRH centre ‘Positive Initiative’ and Gender Equality centre. On the second day the sociological review of population dynamics was presented, which drew attention to the reasons for low fertility
rates. Following panel discussions reflected on the contribution of media, private sector and young leaders to the advancement of ICPD Programme.

**YouAct** was represented by 3 members, Cecilie from Denmark, Anna from Sweden and Gosia from Poland, who actively participated in all the discussions and group work. Cecilie and Gosia presented the results of the working groups’ session on gender equality and changes in population and development. **YouAct** members were also engaged in discussions during the plenary panel sessions and actively participated in study visits.

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**International Day of Action for Women’s Health Campaign**

**YouAct** joined the International Day of Action for Women's Health Campaign on May 28th, with a series of micro blogging posts reflecting on institutional violence against women’s rights and health in European countries, coordinated by Luciana, from Romania. By engaging on social media, sharing information and images, **YouAct** aimed at raising awareness about the issue of gender-based violence.

Institutional violence is not only about conflict, extreme poverty or religious extremism, but also about corruption, indifference, bureaucracy, and inequality. These gaps affect member states and often hide behind economic welfare or technological progress. We know that Europe is not free from human rights abuse and we would like to highlight the fact that women in many European countries are still ignored, neglected or not listened to. Each **YouAct** member contributes to the campaign through a one-phrase personal reflection highlighting the situation in his/her country of origin. Some of the statements include: “I witness institutional violence against women’s health and rights when I hear about the 12 women a day who are forced to travel abroad to obtain a safe and legal abortion as they are being denied access to services in Ireland” (Ruth, Ireland), “I witness institutional violence against women’s health and rights when I hear about teen mothers quitting school as early as the 8th grade in Romania” (Luciana, Romania), and “I witness institutional
violence against women’s health and rights when I hear about 17,700 sexual offences and over 6,000 rapes reported to the police in 2013 in Sweden” (Anna, Sweden).

We hope that this is just the beginning of a longer and deeper conversation about gender equality and sexual and reproductive health rights in Europe and beyond.

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UN High level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment

On the 1st of June, a High Level Event was held at the UN on the demographic dividend and youth employment. As one of the youth experts on young people’s rights and bringing youth SRHR perspectives, YouAct’s member Anna Johansson Dahl was invited to attend the High Level Event as a YouAct representative. In preparation for the event, YouAct and YouthMovements.org gathered youth opinions about the world of work, the demographic dividend and youth employment patterns in Europe and Northern America. The consultation was organised as an online chat room discussion and also received input via email and social media comments on Facebook and twitter which were using the #workwewant hashtag.

The UN High Level Event started with a plenary where the countries explained how they are reaping the benefits of the demographic dividend. Most of the countries shared how they provided programs for empowering young girls and women and how they provide access to education for every young person. The countries giving speeches acknowledged the right to reproductive health and family planning and the right of the demographic dividend to be fulfilled. They recognised the right to comprehensive sexuality education especially for young girls and women.

Companies from the private sector also attended the High Level Event in both the interactive breakfast and lunch, addressing high technology as one of the growing most important
sectors. Young people also attended these meetings and have seen similar ideas when they collected inputs from their peers around the globe in the e-consultations that had taken place before this meeting.

During the breakfast meeting, Anna talked about young people’s rights to qualitative education, as an important factor that equips young people with the knowledge and skills that will translate into realising their full potential.

During the High Level meeting there were two interactive panels, the first on how to harness the demographic dividend and the second on what policies need to be introduced in order to create opportunities for youth employment. Having a youth delegation that hosted online consultations and collected opinions on the topics discussed during the event, led to a deeper understanding of the topics. Anna felt that young people attending the interactive discussions and contributing with their speech in the plenary was a good indication that for the member states, the private sector and the other NGOs, young people’s input is valuable and valued. With this participation, young people showed how they can be involved in the process and work to attain the benefits of the demographic dividend. For YouAct, being an organisation that works for the realisation of sexual and reproductive rights, attending this event was of the highest importance. Anna brought youth perspectives on SRHR and highlighted the importance of youth involvement in such processes and of investments in human capital as key elements for harnessing the benefits of the demographic dividend.

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Mobilising support for the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s, and Adolescent’s Health

YouAct, represented by Ana Rizescu, along with other youth networks representatives went to New York and participated in a meeting hosted by UNFPA and co-convened by UNFPA and the UNAIDS Secretariat as the adolescent work stream of the SG’s Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent’s Health “Every Woman Every Child”.

YouAct joined the meeting of civil society, youth organisations and UN agencies, to discuss and explore the priorities moving forward and to strategise on mobilising commitments in support of the SG’s Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent’s Health. During the meeting, several presentations laid the ground for understanding the key programmatic principles, sharing examples and brainstorming for the mobilisation, participation and commitments of adolescents and youth.

Ana was one of the speakers on a panel discussion about young people mobilising, advocating and holding governments accountable for adolescent health. She presented some examples and reflected on the challenges and achievements that YouAct has faced that could be used as lessons learned for future initiatives.
The first case study was the European Dialogue for Youth Rights project of YouAct, Choice, Restless Development and Hope XXL, in particular the Hearing at the European Parliament and the Advocacy Handbook developed by YouAct. The Advocacy handbook is aimed at supporting and empowering young people in Europe with information, tools and inspiration to meet with their decision makers, particularly their representatives at the European Parliament.

Ana also presented the Eastern Europe and Central Asia “Youth Voice” campaign that mobilises and links global/regional to country realities and advocacy with national decision makers. The campaign provides a platform for youth voices to be heard and supports them to reach out to the decision makers in their country, to advocate for their priorities and to contribute to the debates that will shape the country's position vis-a-vis the youth components of the post-2015 development agenda. The online platform provides insight in the campaign activities and its engagement and coordination mechanisms.

The SG’s Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent’s Health has been launched in September, more information as well as the commitments can be found at http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/

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Supporting Abortion Rights and Fighting Abortion Stigma

September 28th was Abortion Rights Day, and YouAct participated in the Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion. Our member, Anna Johansson Dahl was in Dublin and attended the March for Choice. The march was an initiative from the Abortion Rights Campaign and together with many other activists, Anna demonstrated for the legalisation of abortion in Ireland. Today Ireland is one of three countries in Europe where it is still illegal to have an abortion; the other two are Poland and Malta. During her trip to Dublin, Anna also met Nessa Childers and Marie Arena, Members of European Parliament, former Member of European Parliament Zita Gurmai and Spanish Pro-Choice activists to discuss what the march was about, and why abortion should be legal. While the discussions covered many aspects of SRHR, it kept going back towards the fundamental issue of Women’s rights.

2 http://youact.org/2014/10/20/youact-launches-european-youth-advocacy-handbook/

3 http://eecayouthvoice.org/
Other YouAct members also joined the fight against abortion stigma and discrimination by engaging in the #BustTheMyths initiative, emphasising the importance of abortion as an essential social good and a human right, and demanding that governments uphold their human rights commitments. By uploading images and information on social media, YouAct members raised awareness about certain myths regarding abortions that are still prevalent, as an attempt to change people’s conceptions and provide correct information.

10 Days of Activism Campaign
As part of the International Advocacy Campaign 10 Days of Activism, the Y-PEER Network organised a webinar titled "Global to Local: Bring the UNSG’s Strategy Every Woman Every Child to local level, tackling the importance of adolescents in the decision making as a mean of sustainable development of each nation". YouAct’s coordinator, Ana Rizescu was one of the webinar speakers, along with UN and CSO experts and activists. Ana talked about the work that YouAct is doing to advocate for adolescents and youth meaningful participation and shared her reflections on the opportunities and challenges that the new 2030 Agenda brings.
Regional Advocacy

EuroNGOs Conference
Anna Johansson Dahl and Ana Rizescu attended the 2015 EuroNGOs conference hosted by Sex og Politikk, the Norwegian Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and had the opportunity to meet, network, exchange and disseminate ideas, information and resources for advocacy.

YouAct’s Coordinator, Ana Rizescu was invited as a speaker in one of the sessions. She shared an analysis of the 2030 agenda outcome document from a youth perspective and highlighted the issues that have been left out. In her reflections about opportunities and challenges for young people and youth SRHR organisations to engage in the implementation, follow up and review, she highlighted that addressing the youth development issues requires a multi-sectoral approach and having youth-adult partnerships as key elements. Ana also emphasised the importance of continuously supporting the capacity building of young people in developing skills that will allow them to better advocate on their own behalf, create programs and activities that will engage other youth and contribute to the ongoing processes related to the new development agenda.

Together with representatives of other youth networks, including CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, SAIH and YSAFE, YouAct and partners prepared and used the momentum created by the EuroNGOs conference to emphasise the right of young people to meaningfully participate, to stimulate more youth-adult partnerships and work together with other stakeholders on the new agenda. “Framing meaningful youth participation in the SDGs” was the initiative that gathered photos with messages focusing on meaningful youth participation in the implementation, follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals, using the hashtag #MYPintheSDGs.

David Donoghue (Irish UN-Ambassador and Co-facilitator for Post-2015 Negotiations), Babatunde Osotimehin (UNFPA Executive Director) and Lambert Grijns (Special Ambassador for SRHR/HIV/AIDS of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) were among those who showed their support to ensure meaningful youth participation in the 2030 agenda implementation, follow-up and review.

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Writing letters to MEPs: EU resolution on gender equality

The resolution on progress on equality between women and men in the EU in 2013 was voted at the plenary sitting on Tuesday, the 10th of March. The report analyses the progress on gender equality and underscores the need for policies improving women's position in decision-making processes as well as work/life balance; highlighting the influence of the economic crisis on women as well as paying attention to the improvement of child care systems, maternity and paternity leaves. It also calls for the realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to contraception and abortion as well as noting that the sexual and reproductive health of young people should be ensured.

YouAct members from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland, Poland and Romania have written letters to their MEPs asking for a vote in favour of the resolution and confirming their support to the resolution, which clearly calls for the realisation of women’s SRHR. Altogether, YouAct sent 101 letters. The advocacy action undertaken by YouAct contributed to the positive result of voting: the resolution passed by 441 votes to 205 with 52 abstentions. YouAct members have reached out to MEPs who have supported the resolution, thanking them for expressing their support for gender equality and SRHR. Some MEPs responded, confirming their support and expressing their will for future cooperation.
**Internal Highlights**

**YouAct** conducted their yearly recruitment round in May, and is delighted to have welcomed 8 new members on our team this year: Cecilie Morville (Denmark), Camila Ochoa Mendoza (Spain), Cristina Moreno (Spain), Ivy Miltiadou (Cyprus), Johanna Selander (Sweden), Victor Vladut (Romania), Mary Jobava (Georgia), and Uarda Petriti (Albania). Every year we seek to engage passionate and enthusiastic youth to strengthen our network.

![Members and Partners who joined us at the Annual General Meeting in Romania](image)

**YouAct** hosted their Annual General Meeting in August in Bucharest, Romania. This was an opportunity for members to meet face-to-face to discuss the structure of the organisation, and plan our next steps in regards to advocacy and resource mobilisation.
During the AGM, YouAct members elected the new Steering Committee. The new Steering Committee includes Ivy Militadou as Chair, Anna Johansson Dahl as Internal Communications Officer, Camila Ochoa Mendoza as External Communications officer, Charoula Matthaiou as Resource Mobilisation Officer, and Cristina Moreno as Secretary. The new Steering Committee is very excited to work together in the next year.

You Act also took this as an opportunity to meet with partners to discuss joint events. YouAct invited partner youth organisations - CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, Y-PEER and the PETRI Sofia Center, Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights and YSAFE to share their experiences and involvement in the post-2015 related processes and advocacy initiatives. Daniela Draghici, an experienced advocacy consultant and trainer and EuroNGOs Steering Committee member, joined the youth group and presented various models of working in partnership for European advocacy, with examples from ASTRA, ASTRA Youth and EuroNGOs.
Publications

YouAct Newsletters

Our bi-annual newsletters are sent out to partners and posted on our website in order to share our recent activities.


Eastern Europe and Central Asia Youth Voice Campaign Bulletin

The publication includes news from the national level as well as regional updates from youth advocates who were involved in processes related to the new development agenda. YouAct’s work is illustrated in the newsletter in several occasions, such as the contribution to the online consultation on the Draft Sustainable Development Goals Declaration, where our members from seven countries across Europe: Romania, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Armenia, Moldova, Russia have shared their input, advocacy work conducted at the last Intergovernmental Negotiations in New York, the Joint Youth Statement on the 2030 Agenda developed in partnership with fellow youth organisations and networks and others.
Joint Youth Statement

On 25-27 September, the world's governments will adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Youth organisations called upon governments to recognise and emphasise the right of young people to meaningfully participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda and to acknowledge the SRHR of young people and adolescents worldwide.

Cyprus’ Cosmopolitan Magazine

Our member Ivy was featured in the December issue of Cyprus’ Cosmopolitan Magazine. The article is about myths and facts on SRHR, and Ivy talks about her experience working in the field (where she mentions her work with YouAct). Ivy discussed the importance of women and girls empowerment and the need for society to realise SRHR.

EntreNous WHO Publication

Our members Ivy Miltiadou and Gosia Kot co-wrote an article with fellow partners in the 83rd issue of EntreNous. The title of the article is “Youth Matters! Why invest in young people’s and adolescents’ sexual and reproductive health and rights?” and discusses different issues within SRHR and why it is important to invest in young people’s health, and prioritise and involve them in all the processes related to SRHR.
**Partners**

**YouAct** wishes to thank all partners and funders for their collaboration and support in 2015.

ASTRA Network  
ASTRA Youth  
Choice for Youth and Sexuality  
Civil Society Platform to Promote SRHR Beyond 2015  
EuroNGOs  
Daniela Draghici  
International Planned Parenthood Federation  
International Planned Parenthood Federation – European Network  
International Women’s Health Coalition  
Restless Development  
RFSU (Swedish Association for Sexuality Education)  
Rutgers  
Staupendahl & Partner  
Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Youth Leadership Working Group  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) - Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office  
Y-PEER  
Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights  
YSAFE
A special thank you to all our members for their hard work and time, it is their passion and commitment that keeps pushing YouAct forward.

Ana Rizescu, Romania
Anna Johansson Dahl, Sweden
Anush Hayrapetyan, Armenia
Camila Ochoa Mendoza, Spain
Cecilie Morville, Denmark
Charoula Matthaiou, Cyprus
Cristina Moreno, Spain
Daniela Alexeiciuc, Moldova
Frederik Felding, Denmark
Gosia Kot, Poland
Ivy Miltiadou, Cyprus
Johanna Selander, Sweden
Lois Murray, UK
Luciana Grosu, Romania
Martin Karadzhov, UK/Bulgaria
Mary Jabova, Georgia
Ruth Ennis, Ireland
Sotiris Koulermou, Cyprus
Uarda Petriti, Albania
Victor Vladut, Romania