

15 years

of the

**SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS
ADVOCACY NETWORK !**

Community Mobilization and Capacity Building
in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

I've had the immense honor to be involved in SWAN in various capacities since 2008. As a nascent network in 2006, SWAN was eager to be included, eager to learn and eager to carve out a place for sex worker voices from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia to be heard. Over the years, we've had many accomplishments and successes, we've expanded, our members have expanded, there are new organizations and activists springing up; we've had some setbacks and we've also had losses. We have matured into a network that is able to step back, prioritize, sometimes say no and stick to our values, mission and strategic goals. Through this 15 year journey, we've restructured, we've reorganized, rearranged, reassessed and we came out a strong, vibrant network with a distinct characteristic: we're loud and we're principled.

Although we continue to face challenges in our work and there are still strides to be made in meaningful involvement of sex workers in decision making and access to rights-based programming, we have demonstrated what can be achieved when we come together as a community. In this report, we highlight our successes and achievements over the last 15 years.

We share a vision in which sex workers can live their lives without stigma, discrimination and human rights abuses; a world where sex worker voices are heard and respected; a region where our input is recognized and where sex workers are acknowledged experts on issues that directly affect their lives and livelihoods.

On this occasion, when we are marking 15 years of our existence, I would like to thank each and every one of our members, activists, allies, friends and partners. A special thank you goes to our SWAN Secretariat for the collegiality, team work, support, humor, dedication and endless patience. Thank you for the pedantry, the immovable loyalty to our membership, the commitment to fight like hell to uplift the voices of sex workers in our region and ensure their meaningful involvement.

Happy Birthday to SWAN!

Staša Plećaš, SWAN Executive Director

MILESTONES

2006

- 1st SWAN Kick-off Budapest Meeting with 16 members from 15 countries, including the only sex worker led group in the region

- 1st Edition of the SWAN Newsletter brings sex work-related news from CEECA to broader audiences

2007

- 2nd SWAN Kyiv Regional Meeting entitled 'Sex Workers' Voices' boosts membership with ten more sex workers joining the network

- Advocacy training program for sex workers kicks off with its first session in Kyrgyzstan

- “Rights, Not Violence!” Launch of the first December 17th regional campaign!

Rights not Violence campaign

- * Super SWANs, elected group of 6, develop a unique slogan and details of the campaign
- * SWAN and members conduct regional survey on police violence against sex workers
- * Members submit regional petition to police authorities nationally
- * SWAN and members organize press releases and strong media presence nationally and regionally
- * SWAN and members organize poster and e-card public campaigns nationally and regionally
- * Members organize the first ever street actions and flash mobs with red umbrellas across the region

2008

- Media sensitization projects initiated in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Russia, Serbia, and Slovakia, joined by Albania and Czech Republic in the next years

- Human Rights Abuse Documentation Projects known as HRADP established in Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, and Ukraine, joined by Tajikistan (2013) and Kazakhstan (2014)

2011

- 4th SWAN Budapest Meeting approves first organizational strategy and structure

- 1st SWAN Steering Committee is elected

Nataliia, Irina, Alexey, Staša and Rayna, thank you for your work!

- Sex workers' recognition as valuable partners is growing. SWAN and members are presenting at the UN In-Reach training on Key Populations in Chisinau and the Civil Society Hearing at the UN High-Level Meeting in New York

2010

- Video Advocacy Projects launch in Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine

- SWAN has a booth, video advocacy panel, members posters, presentations and workshop for journalists at Vienna's XVIII International AIDS Conference

“This was my first ever experience of participating in such a huge conference. My biggest impression comes from a meeting of sex workers with journalists. There were 4 sex workers from the EECA region and 60 journalists from all over the world. I was really scared before the meeting, I was nervous, I was jittering; however when the meeting started, the fear disappeared, I got excited and readily explained everyone, what the situation of sex workers in our country looked like.”

Dinara, Kyrgyzstan

2009

- Sex-worker led initiatives grow! 3rd SWAN Ohrid Meeting hosts 18 sex workers from nine countries and trained on activism, media relations and HRADP

- ‘Arrest the Violence’: the first community-led regional research on police violence against sex workers

2012

- SWAN is officially registered as a Foundation. We have our own office in Budapest

- Sex workers from the region continue to amplify their voices and build community visibility. Activists from Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Serbia, and Tajikistan participate at the Sex Workers' Freedom Festival in Kolkata

- Sex worker activists join the UNDP Regional Dialogues on HIV and the Law and AWID Forum in Istanbul

2013

- SWAN/UNFPA Occupational Safety Training-for-trainers hosts 33 sex workers from 13 CEECA countries in Antalya, which leads to more sex worker led groups joining the network

- SWAN starts its work with the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

- * SWAN and IRAW initiate collaboration and support for the first sex worker led submissions on behalf of Hungary and North Macedonia in 2013
- * SWAN and IRAW organize regional training for Russian speaking activists and framing sex workers' issues under CEDAW in 2014
- * SWAN, IRAW and members organize a Thematic Briefing on Rights of Women Sex Workers with CEDAW Committee members, in 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland
- * SWAN publish "Reporting from the Shadows", guidance/tool for members in 2015
- * SWAN and IRAW organize a Regional training on follow-up advocacy for sex worker and drug user groups in 2016
- * SWAN attends the Global meeting in Bangkok in 2016 and participate in finalizing the Framework on rights of sex workers under CEDAW
- * Members engage with CEDAW on ongoing basis, SWAN provide technical assistance (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine)
- * SWAN and members engage in the discussion around General Recommendation on trafficking and migration (written submissions, oral statement, commentaries, letter of concern) in 2019-2021

2014

- SWAN Secretariat strengthens procedures and policies and gains a more sustainable structure. More sex workers join the Secretariat

- Sex Workers' Mentorship Program starts

- * 5 sex workers get internships
- * 8 sex worker led groups participate in study visits
- * More than 30 training and mentoring sessions exchanged between sex worker activists and groups

2017

- SWIT & GFATM capacity building initiatives result in sex workers' election to GFATM CCMs in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia

- More and more sex workers join local and national bodies and dialogues

- SWAN continues to improve the governing policies and practices through program evaluation and new strategic planning for 2018-2022

2016

- SWAN & ICRSE Regional SWIT Training hosts 30 sex workers in Budapest and fosters using SWIT as a normative guidance on national level

- New Rules of Organization & Operation guarantee sex worker leadership of the network

- New Membership Structure upholds the importance of sex worker members

- Management Committee established with minimum 80% of sex worker representation striving towards 100%

- Global and regional communities meet in Amsterdam to lay groundwork for stronger relationships and collaboration based on solidarity

Regional collaboration

- * EECA Regional Communication Platform
- * Regional GF EECA Cities Initiative
- * Chase the virus, not people! regional campaign
- * Various multi-network fundraising opportunities
- * Regional RADIANT program

2015

- SWIT 2015-2021 Program is established

- * 9 sex worker led groups in 8 countries (Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Ukraine, Serbia, North Macedonia, Armenia) take part in national roll-out of the Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT) in the period of 6 years
- * more than 300 community sessions, trainings and fora organized
- * more than 20 regional convening and exchange of knowledge organized
- * more than 70 technical assistance provided
- * overall more than 2700 participants took part in the activities

- Global Fund Capacity Building 2015-2020 Program established

- * 3 regional experts on Global Fund processes trained in the course of 2 years;
- * 4 sex worker led groups in 4 countries (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Georgia) trained and empowered to engage in GFATM led processes on national level in the 5 year period;
- * more than 50 community trainings delivered
- * more than 10 regional convening and exchange of knowledge organized
- * more than 30 technical assistance provided
- * overall more than 500 participants took part in the activities

2018

- SWAN's 5-year Strategic Plan prioritizes capacity building and the meaningful involvement of sex workers

- SWAN conducts a sex worker regional convening, facilitates exchange between two countries, organizes capacity building trainings in five countries and provides technical assistance in four countries

2019

- SWAN programs around SWIT, GFATM and advocacy continue

- SWAN organizes two regional sex worker convening, facilitates exchange between four countries, organizes capacity building and community mobilization trainings in seven countries, provide technical assistance in three countries

2020

- COVID pandemic severely affects our communities. SWAN adapts, persists, and works with donors to support members in their tremendous efforts to provide support to those most in need. CEECA sex worker communities show their resilience and ability to reorganize, prioritize and adapt to meet COVID-related needs

2021

- We are still here! Creating sustainability for our network and members, moving forward united and resilient into this changing global and regional context, turning challenges into opportunities!

PUBLICATIONS



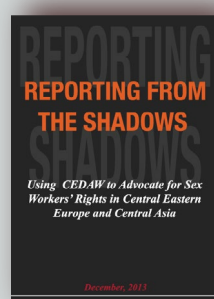
2009

Arrest the Violence!
Community research on police violence among sex workers



2010

To See Our Power!
Sex workers stories of fighting for their rights in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia



2013

Reporting from the Shadows:
Using CEDAW to Advocate for Sex Workers' Rights!



2014

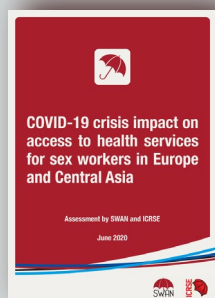
Stronger Together:
Addressing Violence Against Female, Male and Transgender Sex Workers in CEECA!



A Guide for Sex Worker Human Rights Defenders!

COVID - 19 Crisis Impact on Access to Health Services for Sex Workers in Europe and Central Asia
Assessment by SWAN and ICRSE

2020

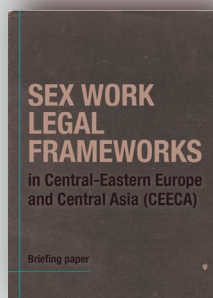


Nothing about Us, Without Us!
A brief Guide on Meaningful Involvement of Sex Workers and Their Organizations in CEECA

2019

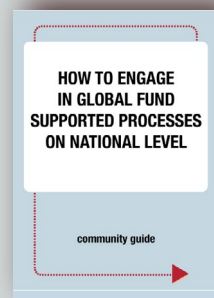


Sex Work Legal Frameworks in CEECA
briefing paper



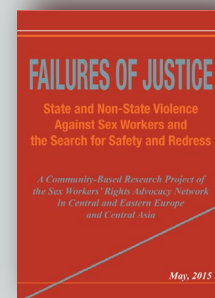
How to engage in Global Fund supported processes on national level
Community guide!

2017

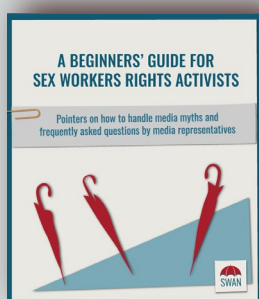


Failures of Justice!
State and Non-State Violence Against Sex Workers and the Search for Safety and Redress!

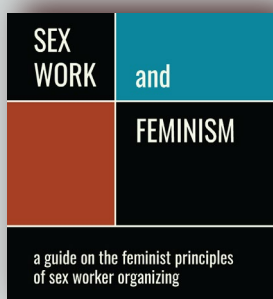
2015



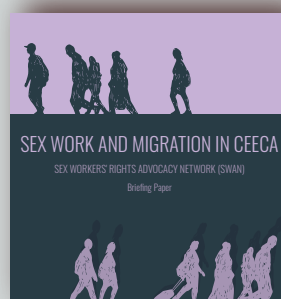
2021



A Beginner's Guide for Sex Workers' Rights Activists:
pointers on how to handle media myths and frequently asked questions by media representatives



Sex Work and Feminism:
A Guide on the Feminist Principles of Sex Worker Organising



Migration and Sex Work in CEECA
Briefing paper



SWIT multimedia tool/videos

ACHIEVEMENTS: Influence and impact!

With this report we want to highlight the last 15 years of sex worker organizing and capacity building work, and honor SWANs' and our members' efforts to build a resilient, dynamic and open community-led movement in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA).

The CEECA region was lagging behind in recognizing sex workers as an existing community with specific needs. Only around the year 2000, the first services for sex workers were established, mostly through existing harm reduction programs. Until 2006 most of the organizations working with and for sex workers were actually HIV prevention projects, scattered around the region, working isolated from each other, focusing on health-related issues/ condom distribution and without much information about the situation across the region. Human rights and advocacy strategies were limitedly introduced and used. The involvement of sex workers in projects was occasional. Self-organized movement and empowerment strategies of sex workers were almost nonexistent. On the other hand, stigma, exclusion, lack of access to information, and services and high levels of violence were increasingly reported by existing organizations.

Around that time, the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU) and the Open Society Foundation realized that uniting and networking across the CEECA region could support existing organizations to consolidate their work, provide opportunity for information and experience exchange, strengthen internal capacities of the organizations, foster empowerment and leadership of sex workers and provide a platform for joint advocacy and support.

Consequently, a call of interest was sent out across the region, for organizations to join an informal network with a focus on sex workers rights and advocacy. In 2006 the first meeting was held in Budapest, Hungary, and the informal Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN) was launched with 16 member organizations, from 15 countries. In these beginning phases, there was only 1 sex worker led organization in the entire region. Up until 2012, the SWAN Secretariat was based within HCLU, functioning on a project basis. Eventually, due to internal growth, strength and expressed needs from the members for its consolidation, confirmed through 2 years of strategic reviewing and building process, SWAN became registered as an independent entity in 2012.

Balazs Denes from HCLU explains how the idea for SWAN was born:

"It was a combination of opportunity and answering the needs of the community. HCLU already had experience of international drug policy and harm reduction organizing/capacity building. While working with harm reduction organizations we received a lot of information on abuses among sex workers (sex workers who used drugs mainly). We established communication with the OSF public health program who had an interest in these issues.

The main idea was to provide communication and advocacy assistance, without forcing organizations what issues to focus on. We wanted to provide safe space for organizations, and see what they will do, what will happen, how it will develop. My personal vision was to see a self-led coordination network, useful for the members, not only for technical assistance but also for fundraising. SWAN did meet expectations and provided valuable assistance to groups and individuals. Since then - international organizations are taking sex work issues/organizations more seriously, activists from this region do have access to other fellow activists, peer supported learning, communication elements (web, newsletters, fb). And the empowerment and mobilization of sex workers activists – it is the most important contribution of SWAN. It gives credibility and legitimacy to the network. Also the human rights-based approach as a base for work, different from the purely public health approach."

About first steps into community mobilization and involvement:

"From the very beginning, we relied heavily on members for them to reach out and communicate with sex workers. It was one of the tasks for the member organizations (15 out of 16 being service providers), looking out and supporting potential activists and motivating them to come to meetings and community events. At that time, ICRSE coordinator Petra Timmermans and our consultant Anna Lousie Crago played a great role in this process. Both Petra and Anna Lousie held workshops, helped build connections with the community and brought the concept of self-organizing and involvement closer to the people of our region. We made short visits to Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan to hold workshops, which was a big boost for the community. We were also paying small fees to members for communication, to organize and report on 17th of December events, to participate in regional SWAN newsletter by covering national stories and actions."

Aliya Rakhmentova, the first SWAN coordinator





Connecting and Learning


Sex workers are everywhere, but stigma and criminalization often prevent sex workers from connecting with others and contributing to the isolation they experience. Therefore, we knew acting as a platform that links sex workers, and their organizations to each other were imperative to build a community, empower individuals, and enhance the peer learning process. With this goal in mind, SWAN prioritized helping sex workers' rights activists apply for conferences and scholarships and develop skills such as preparing posters and presentations, public speaking, and working with media. SWAN also acted as a space for enabling experience exchange between activists and organizations so that the flow of information could benefit all and unlock the potential for mobilizing.

"My first connection with SWAN was in 2009. It was my first experience travelling abroad. I was very impressed because, for the first time, I met sex workers from different countries. Participation at SWAN events contributed a lot to build my capacity. I have learned a lot, expanded my knowledge and skills, and met new interesting people and sex workers from different countries around the world. This knowledge is instrumental in my current work in my organization."

Dinara, Tais Plus, Kyrgyzstan

"SWAN helped me a lot in my personal development as a leader, an activist and an expert. Acting as a Chairman of the Steering Committee and gaining experience in administrative matters, I grew up as an activist and became a leader of a Ukrainian organization. I understand the structure processes, and I can set goals and objectives."

Natalia Isaieva, Legalife, Ukraine



"For me, it is crystal clear how SWAN contributed to my personal development as an activist. As my knowledge grew and my perspective changed, I became much more confident. My involvement in SWAN enabled me to grow and become the activist I am today."


Trajche Janusev, SWAN Program Officer

"The importance of SWAN is that without this network, we would not be able to meet, people from different countries would not be able to share good practices, bad practices, good examples, their expertise -- all of which can inform your further steps. It is also important that SWAN has created a neat internal structure; they have a secretariat and a steering committee, a neat structure, and of course, this attracts people. People are also attracted by the fact that SWAN sees the leadership of sex workers as its main goal. Today, SWAN has a certain percentage of sex workers in leadership roles, but they would like to see SWAN completely sex worker-led and even have a sex worker as a SWAN director. That's a great example of how you should work with communities. And, of course, when you see this approach to a community, you can't help trusting and respecting these people. And I can list a million examples of how SWAN was useful to me."

Nata Kopaliani, Woman for Freedom, Georgia

"If it wasn't for SWAN, we never would have known there were people like us very close to our country who face the same everyday problems and who have the same everyday fights! We could never have this way of understanding sex work and sex workers!"

Rayna Dimitrova, HESED, Bulgaria



"We have been members of SWAN since its inception and this was the first experience when we were able to see how sex workers from different countries can unite for a common goal and fulfillment of tasks to support and advocate for the interests of sex workers both domestically and internationally. SWAN is a great opportunity not only to learn something interesting and new, but also to share what you know yourself, and this gives you the opportunity for your own growth. Publications produced by SWAN in consultation with the communities help us in our work."

Shahnaz Islamova, Tais Plus, Kyrgyzstan

"It has been a great pleasure and privilege to work and collaborate with SWAN over the last 10 years. SWAN has been critical in advancing sex workers rights in CEECA region and in particular supporting the development of national sex worker-led organizations and ensuring that the voices of sex workers are heard in various policy platforms. The resources produced by SWAN in particular on police violence and more recently on migration have also helped strengthen the knowledge necessary to advance sex workers' rights and evidence-based policies."

Luca Stevenson, ESWA, formerly ICRSE



Building the capacities of our community and increasing community involvement

We advocate for the meaningful involvement of sex workers in all processes: sex workers are experts in various issues relevant to their work and well-being and should be treated as such. However, there are many practical and structural barriers to sex workers self-organizing. In the past 15 years, SWAN tried to identify and address them by prioritizing community empowerment, leading to an effectively mobilized community. Over the years, SWAN organized national and regional training sessions and provided resources to empower sex workers and community-led organizations in many countries. We also worked with other service providers and community-led organizations to build alliances and stress the importance of enabling sex worker participation in programming and decision-making processes.

"It seems to me if there was no SWAN, our organization wouldn't exist. Thanks to SWAN, new groups and organizations appeared in the EECA countries. They all came together with the same idea, moving in one common direction to improve the conditions of sex workers. SWAN helped us in our formation and development by providing assistance in writing funding applications and searching for donors. We also received so much knowledge from SWAN that we could hardly get somewhere. SWAN united us and gave us the strength to move on and never give up when obstacles appeared in our path. We feel like we are part of a huge and strong movement of sex workers, and that means a lot because it's true that together we are stronger!"

Natalia Isaieva, Legalife, Ukraine

"When we were still a newborn organization, SWAN was an important motivator both for the sex worker community and for us in Georgia as a whole. So we were surprised when a representative from our organization was elected for the Steering Committee of a SWAN. It was a vital source of motivation. And after that point, the community started to gather around us."

Natalia Kopaliani, Women for Freedom, Georgia

"The key factor for SWAN's success was that people were very enthusiastic from the beginning. We had small projects here and there and a lot of personal communication, which kept us close and connected. It was new for everyone, maybe even for donors. We succeeded because of people."

Aliya Rakhmetova, the first SWAN coordinator

"We have been cooperating with SWAN since the hardest times for us: pandemic outbreak. We have never faced so many challenges throughout these months, but we have never given up. Now we have an infinite power cause we as a group of sex workers with similar interests have got together to work toward the same goals and we know the power of cooperation."

Right Side NGO, Armenia

SWAN



Increased visibility and amplified voices

Sex workers are everywhere, and their opinions matter. Since the beginning, contributing to sex workers' visibility and amplifying their voices on issues that affect their lives have been crucial to SWAN. Like other regions globally, in the CEECA region, sex workers often find themselves outside of conversation regarding policies and laws affecting their lives. Creating spaces that give sex workers opportunities to talk about their demands and needs is one of the most critical factors that enable sex work mobilizing. That is what SWAN tried to do throughout the years.

"Over the past 15 years SWAN has played a critical role in amplifying the lived experiences and voices of sex workers in the CEECA region, and strengthening the capacity of sex worker leaders and sex worker-led organizations in the region. It has ensured those experiences and voices are also represented within the global sex worker movement."

Ruth Morgan Thomas, NSWP Global Coordinator

"Over the years, SWAN promoted meaningful engagement and community participation for sex workers in the decision-making process at the national and regional levels. But also in its structure too."

Kristina Mahnicheva, member of SWAN Management Committee



"SWAN helped to introduce the issues regarding sex workers rights and also the term sex work in the region."

Aliya Rakhmetova, the first SWAN coordinator

"SWAN is one of the reasons that sex workers are able to raise their voices to talk for the interest of their community. For this, SWAN should be proud."

Balazs Denes, HCLU

"In the past years, SWAN has helped us in promoting our research and publications, which were continuously shared on our website, through which other members and general visitors of the network can get more information about the activities and efforts of STAR."

STAR, North Macedonia



MOVING FORWARD

While we leave a challenging but the most inspiring 15 years behind, we asked our members where they would like to see SWAN in the upcoming 15 years. Evaluating and learning from the past is half of the job, and we must dream, plan and organize. Everyone we talked to wants to see SWAN continue its journey to becoming a more vigorous community-led advocate for the rights of sex workers and a hub for knowledge. Our continuous aim is to maintain and strengthen our role as a supporter and enabler of sex work mobilizing and an open place where different ideas and experiences meet for mutual learning and growing.

"We hope that SWAN can keep up the good work of bringing organizations together based on common values of freedom and acceptance and continue to create tools that can help its member organizations to grow and take part in social changes."

Odyseus, Slovakia


"SWAN will hopefully continue to play a critical role in strengthening the capacity of sex worker leaders and growing the number of sex worker-led organizations and national sex worker movements in the region over the coming years."

Ruth Morgan Thomas, NSWP Global Coordinator

"I hope SWAN continues to develop and support sex worker-led organizations including in countries with limited or no sex worker-led initiatives. Structural factors such as criminalization or poverty should continue to be explored and addressed by SWAN and their members: only then will sex workers live lives free from stigma, discrimination and violence."

Luca Stevenson, ESWA, formerly ICRSE





"I expect from SWAN that the network will continue to become stronger and more influential at the regional level. I will do everything in my power to help."

Natalia Isaeva, Legalife, Ukraine

"Most importantly, I want to see the sex worker community in our region strong and fully engaged in all SWAN activities! It is so important to have a strong and sustainable network of sex work organizations in the EECA region."

Trajche Janusev, SWAN Program Officer

"In the future, SWAN will be expanded, and will have its own independent expertise and funding. Sex workers are united and can stand up for their rights and change legislation on their own and with each other's support for better living conditions for sex workers."

Shahnaz Islamova, Tais Plus, Kyrgyzstan

"We hope for the strengthening of the network and cooperation, we want to expand our work in the region to impact the life of sex workers positively and promote the protection of their rights fully."

Right Side NGO, Armenia

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: 15 years of partnership and friendship!

We've been advocating and promoting the human rights of sex workers for 15 years. We could not make it without the immense support, inspiration and friendship we received from many sex workers and sex workers' rights activists, organizations and allies from all over the region and world. We can't express our gratitude enough for the power and endurance we engulfed through our community and supporters. We are truly stronger together.

We also express our gratitude to our funders who have been there for us and enabled us to act on our vision.

We would like to use the opportunity and give a very special thanks to the:

- **Organizations we partnered with;**

Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU)

Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)

European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA),
formerly the International Committee for the Rights
of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE)

Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)

Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM)

Eurasian Womens' Network on AIDS (EWNA)

Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs (ENPUD)

International Women's Rights Action Watch
Asia Pacific (IWRAW)

AFEW International

- **Our donors;**

Open Society Foundation

Red Umbrella Fund

Robert-Carr Fund

Global Fund for Women

Mama Cash

Global Fund to fight HIV, Malaria
and Tuberculosis (GFATM)

- **Our technical partners;**

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

EECA Communication Platform

- **Our friends, mentors and allies;**

Balazs Denes, our founder, host and supporter through all these years;

Aliya Rakhmetova, our first Coordinator and Director, the soul and leading engine of the network in the first 8 years;

Rachel Thomas, OSF, supporter, mentor and most of all, friend who cared, listened, guided;

Anna-Louise Crago, our greatest friend and teacher on community advocacy, research, documentation, reporting, laws, visibility and presentation, our source of strength, our rock in difficult times. When we say A-L, we mean love and gratitude;

Nebojsa Radic, our unforgettable media consultant, who shaped the work of SWAN and members during the first several years;

Petra Timmermans, our loving mentor, trainer, friend who boosted our community mobilizing efforts and helped us shape community campaigns, e-cards, community newsletters and actions;

Tim Sladden, UNFPA - we like to think of him as one of our early fans!

Ruth Morgan Thomas, NSWP, our endless source of support and mentor, whose structured conversations, engagement, mentoring, insights and knowledge guide us throughout our journey, and who always stands up for sex workers from CEECA ; the list goes on and on..

Luca Stevenson, the (now ex) coordinator of our sister network ESWA, our friend and partner with whom we shared many productive arguments, tears, laughs, hugs and an abundance of love and understanding for SWAN.

- All our wonderful SWAN members! The reason and basis for all that SWAN is, and ever will be!

