

COVID-19 SRHR PRO BONO CLEARINGHOUSE:

**LEGAL ADVICE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS &
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND RIGHTS + COVID-19**

Across the European region, the COVID-19 public health crisis has had a serious impact on the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). It has led to challenges in the delivery of, and access to, good quality sexual and reproductive health care. It has seriously exacerbated the harm caused by pre-existing medically unnecessary legal and policy barriers in access to certain services. Some European governments have sought to take advantage of the crisis to restrict SRHR or to restrict the activities of human rights defenders and civil society.

Many civil society organizations and health professionals working in the field of SRHR are seeking legal advice or grappling with legal concerns as a result of the crisis.

In order to assist them the Center for Reproductive Rights has established the **COVID-19 SRHR Pro Bono Clearinghouse** comprised of global law firms with extensive legal practices in multiple European jurisdictions. These firms have agreed to provide **free legal advice** on a range of SRHR issues - including abortion, contraception, maternal health care, and assisted reproduction - to civil society organizations (CSOs) and health professionals working in Europe.

If you or your organizations are grappling with questions or concerns related to the COVID-19 + SRHR and would benefit from the services of a law firm, please contact us at: **geneva@reprorights.org**.

Include your name, title, organization, contact information, and a short summary of the legal issue or question at issue. Once we receive your inquiry, we will follow up with you to connect you directly with a law firm in all cases where legal assistance may be relevant or appropriate.

About the Center for Reproductive Rights

For almost 30 years, the Center for Reproductive Rights has used the power of law to advance reproductive rights as fundamental human rights around the world. The Center works with dedicated lawyers around the world who are critical to the success of our mission. Our Pro Bono Program matches law firms with short- and long-term projects that utilize litigation, research, and transactional skills.

FAQ

WHY A PRO BONO CLEARINGHOUSE?

The COVID-19 crisis raises complex legal questions for CSOs and health professionals working in Europe regarding the impact of the pandemic on the provision of SRHR services that may require legal counsel. In response, the Center for Reproductive Rights created the Pro Bono Clearinghouse to support CSOs and health professionals grappling with legal questions or concerns, by connecting them with a law firm that will provide pro bono (free) legal assistance.

WHO ARE THE PRO BONO LAW FIRMS INCLUDED IN THE CLEARINGHOUSE?

The Pro Bono Clearinghouse includes several global firms with legal expertise in a wide range of national European jurisdictions, as well as in EU law and European human rights law.

HOW WILL THE CLEARINGHOUSE WORK?

When an CSO or a health professional contacts the Pro Bono Clearinghouse, a Center staff member will assess the CSO's or health professional's legal needs. If it is determined that the organization or health professional would benefit from legal advice or counsel, a referral will be made to one of the law firms participating in the Pro Bono Clearinghouse. The referral process is overseen by the Center's Pro Bono Program and Europe Program, which will check in regularly to ensure the referral is advancing successfully.

WHAT WILL BE THE CSO'S OR HEALTH PROFESSIONAL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAW FIRM?

Once referred by the Center to a law firm, the CSO or health professional will be that law firm's client. All communications with the law firm will be confidential and will not be shared with the Center unless the CSO/health professional wishes to do so.

HOW DO I ACCESS THE CLEARINGHOUSE?

Please send inquiries to geneva@reprorights.org