

This newsletter presents monthly highlights of EPF's and our member parliamentary groups' work and gives an overview of legislative and Parliamentary initiatives on sexual and reproductive health and rights and international development in Europe and around the world on the part of the global community of Parliamentarians committed to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

Enjoy the reading!

Contents

I.	EPF Activities April 2009	1
II.	Parliamentary Leadership	6
III.	EPF Malaria Update	8
IV.	APPG Affairs	13
V.	EPF – European Parliament Relations	15
	EPF – EU News Supplement: EP Election Update	17
VI.	EPF Activities – Outlook 2009	19
VII.	Annex	21

I. EPF Activities April 2009

1. EPF brings European Parliamentarians to 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development (UN CPD) in New York, 30 March – 3 April 2009

The parliamentary delegation visit to New York was organised in the framework of EPF's Parliamentary Taskforce dedicated to the UN which was launched at the beginning of 2008 and which focuses on supporting Parliamentary involvement in UN decision-making and ensure that a Parliamentary perspective supporting SRHR is heard in relevant UN settings.

This year's main theme of the UN CPD was "The contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) " which is of direct importance for parliamentary involvement given this year's 15th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).



Next to the participation in the official programme of the UN CPD, EPF arranged a number of side meetings with relevant stake-holders and SRHR decision-makers in the U.S. Delegation members met with Executive Directors and senior officials from UNFPA, UNIFEM and UNDP.

During a meeting with Dr. Scott R. Radloff, Director of the Office of Population and Reproductive Health in USAID, delegation members were updated on the latest developments and initiatives on SRHR in the U.S. as well as the impact of the financial crisis on ODA spending, discussed the implications of the Obama Administration on advancing the SRHR agenda, and talked about possibilities for future cooperation on reproductive health and family planning issues between the US and European Governments. Meetings with representatives of the EU Delegation of the European Commission to the UN and NGO experts from IPPF Western Hemisphere Region, Population Action International (PAI), the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) and Catholics for Choice (CFC) enabled Delegation members to get a solid overview about

the role of Parliamentarians in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, first hand information about the work of International Organisations on SRHR, health, women's rights, democracy promotion and women's empowerment at UN and country level as well as the European Union's challenge to speak with one voice on sexual and reproductive health matters at UN level.

One of the highlights of this year's EPF Delegation visit was the oral statement Hon. Lyn Brown, MP (UK) gave on behalf of the EPF parliamentary delegation during the UN CPD plenary session. During her intervention, Hon. Lyn Brown, MP emphasised that "we believe that the promotion of women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality is absolutely fundamental to the fight against global poverty". In addition, she urged donor governments to maintain current levels of aid to developing countries. "Anything else would cost more lives and (...) will in the long run cost more money. The cost - human and financial - is too great for us to stop now", she warned.



Being the only Members of Parliament present at this year's Commission on Population and Development, the EPF delegation also called on governments to revitalise the Cairo Programme of Action that lays out a detailed plan to reduce maternal and child mortality, to increase access to reproductive health supplies, to strengthen women's rights as well as the access to reproductive health services.

Being aware that political will is essential to achieve the set goals, members of the EPF delegation have pledged to sensitise their governments about a number of reproductive health issues such as the importance to ensure universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, to increase funding to population and sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes, to actively involve parliamentarians as representatives of their people, in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of their national strategies and actions and to urge donors to provide assistance and support to nationally owned strategies.

The EPF delegation was composed of Hon. Armen Melykian, MP (Armenia - Prosperous Armenia Party), Hon. Yvonne Gilli, MP (Switzerland - Green Party), Senator Elvira Velasco Morillo (Spain - Popular Party), Hon. Iikka Kantola, MP (Finland - Social Democratic Party), Hon. Yolande Avontroodt, MP (Belgium - Flemish Liberal Party), Hon. Lyn Brown, MP (UK - Labour Party), who is also a member of the EPF Executive Committee, as well as Neil Datta, EPF Secretary and Nadine Krysostan, Senior Advocacy Officer at EPF.

The full text of Hon. Lyn Brown's, MP statement can be found in the Annex of this newsletter. More information on the EPF delegation to the 42nd Session of UN Commission on Population and Development may be requested by contacting Nadine Krysostan at: nadine@iepfpd.org.

2. European Parliamentary Forum Follow-up Study Tour to Cameroon on Malaria, 28 March – 04 April 2009

As a member of the European Alliance Against Malaria (EAAM), EPF organised a week-long study tour to Cameroon held from 28 March – 04 April 2009 that focused on following-up the country's efforts at combating malaria. The study tour was hosted by the Cameroon Coalition Against Malaria (CCAM), the Cameroon Affiliate of Malaria Consortium based in the UK. CCAM works on reducing deaths and suffering due to malaria in Cameroon by increasing mobilisation efforts to secure a comprehensive and sustained response to the disease. The study tour offered a deep insight into the malaria burden, and enabled the Delegation to assess the progress, the needs and remaining challenges in the fight against malaria. The study tour provided an invaluable experience on the new methods and strategies in place to tackle the disease and enabled participants to gain first-hand experience of the reality of the situation in a developing country.



At the beginning of the week participants were received by the Permanent Secretary of the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) in order to be introduced to the new strategic plan for 2007-2010 to fight against malaria in Cameroon. The Delegation visited a village project in Akolo supported by Plan, focusing on raising awareness amongst the village people, and particularly women and children, about malaria prevention and treatment. The Delegation was very impressed by the women's community work as well as their strategies and mobilisation efforts for reducing malaria burden in the district through education and home to home information. Participants recognised that women's groups and volunteers are vital partners in local community based development initiatives. Participants visited houses in the community and noticed that the houses had bed nets, but not the last generation ones (long-lasting).

The Delegation visited the District Hospital in Akonolinga and could notice the paucity of medical and health supplies as well as the lack of hygiene and human resources. After visiting the Hospital's labs, EPF's Delegation regretted that not every patient can have access to a rapid diagnostic test or a clinical diagnostic testing emphasizing that medical diagnostic is not sufficiently reliable for identifying malaria cases. The Delegation could see a case of severe malaria and regretted that the patient was not sleeping under a long-lasting insecticide treated net (LLINs) in the hospital. Medical Doctors explained that they used to have bed nets in the hospital, but that "patients always take them with them when they leave"...Being raised as a major concern, Parliamentarians emphasised the need to ensure sufficient stock of LLINs for all the hospitals in Cameroon for covering all the beds and enabling their distribution to every pregnant women coming to the hospital for pre-natal consultations.



Traveling to the South West region of Cameroon, the European Parliamentary Delegation could have an in-depth presentation of the regional strategic plan and were impressed by the collection and the reliability of the data presented. After a stopover at the research center of the University of Buea, the Parliamentary Delegation visited a Global Fund malaria project near Buea where they also visited communities' houses. Most of the houses visited had bed nets, in others they were available but not yet put up, and some houses did not have any. Upon return from South West Province, participants visited the Biotechnology Center of the University of Yaoundé where Cameroonian Researchers gave a presentation on malaria research. Delegation members also had the chance to observe the different stages of development of the malaria parasite under the microscope.



In addition, meetings were held with the Prime Minister of Cameroon, the new Minister of Public Health and the new Minister of Finance.

These meetings enabled EPF Delegation members to congratulate Government officials for prioritising health in their political agenda and for the efforts made since 2007 in the fight against malaria, including the issue of tax exemption on bed nets and the insecticides stocked in the port of Douala. Despite some progress, it was highlighted that there are still remaining challenges and that more support is needed. The Parliamentary Delegation also had the chance to exchange views and share best practices with the members of the Cameroonian All-Party Parliamentary Group on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, which was initiated during EPF's last field visit to Cameroon.

At the end of the week during the press conference, European Parliamentarians observed that despite progress made, Cameroon is still facing some key administrative, financial and management challenges. Parliamentarians consequently committed to report back on these challenges to their own Government and Parliament in order to help try and shape future development aid policies.



The members of EPF Delegation included Hon. Katia Della Faille, MP member of the Belgian Foreign Affairs and Public Health Committee (Liberal Party), EPF's Malaria Taskforce member Hon. Maria Rosa Fortuny i Torroella, MP and Catalan spokesperson for the Committee of Foreign and European Affairs (Liberal), EPF's malaria Taskforce member Hon. Heli Järvinen, MP member of the Finnish All-Party Parliamentary

Group on Population and Development (Green Party), Hon. Fazil Mustafayev, MP member of the Azeri All-Party Parliamentary Group "Future Generation" (Liberal Party), as well as Senator Serban Radulescu, member of the Romanian Sub-Committee on Demography, Population and Development (Democratic-Liberal Party).

For more information on the study tour to Cameroon or EPF's Parliamentary Taskforce on Malaria or the EAAM, please contact Ms Silvia Theodoridis, EPF Advocacy Officer at silvia@iepfpd.org

3. Joint EPF/E&P SRHR Study Tour to Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya, Ziniaré 5-11 April 2009

As members of Countdown 2015, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) and Equilibres and Populations (E&P) jointly organised a week-long study tour to Burkina Faso held from 5-11 April 2009 that focused on country's efforts in promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. The study tour was hosted by the Ouagadougou office of Equilibres & Populations which works at reducing maternal deaths and suffering in sexual and reproductive health by increasing efforts to secure a comprehensive, sustained response to maternal health issues. The study tour offered a deep insight into Burkina Faso's demographic challenges, and enabled the Delegation to visit programmes, assess needs and remaining challenges in the fight for access to care, gender equity, institutional efficiency and aid effectiveness. The study tour provided an invaluable experience on new aid modalities and strategies in place to tackle health problems. The tour also enabled participating Parliamentarians to gain first-hand experience of the reality of the situation in a developing country.



At the beginning of the week participants were received by the Burkinabe Parliamentary Network on Population and Development and the UNFPA mission in Burkina Faso where they learned more about the country's demographic situation and the national legislative framework on population and development as it stands today. The Delegation started by visiting a community project in Tanguin supported by the French Movement for Family Planning (MFPF) and focusing on raising awareness amongst women, and particularly mothers and children, about the use of contraceptives and family planning methods. The Delegation was very impressed by the women's community work as well as their strategies and mobilisation efforts for reducing malaria burden in the district through peer training and group meetings. Participants recognised that women's groups and volunteers are vital partners in local community based development

initiatives. Participants expressed concerns with regards to the affordability of alternative contraceptives such as the female condom.

The Delegation also visited the District Hospital in Ouagadougou and could notice the importance of medical and health supplies as well as of hygiene and human resources. After visiting the Hospital's maternity ward, EPF's Delegation regretted that the hospital does not have any blood bank at its disposal but was pleased by the availability skilled birth attendants and obstetric services. Doctor Ouedraogo, an obstetrical surgeon in the hospital, explained how they implement government funds to help reduce patient fees and care for the ones who cannot afford to pay. Being raised as a major concern, Parliamentarians emphasized the need to ensure sufficient coverage of such quality services among hospitals in Burkina Faso for covering all areas and enabling access for every pregnant women intending to go the hospital for pre-natal consultations. Expressing concerns about the sustainability of its sterilization system (autoclave often out of use), the medical staff of the CMA (Medical Center with Chirurgical Antenna) raised parliamentarians understanding in the medical, financial and environmental complexity of large-scale development of RH services.



In addition, the delegation was invited by the Italian Association for Women in Development (AIDOS) and its local partners at the Centre pour le Bien-être des Femmes et la prévention des mutilation genitales 'Gisèle Kambou' (CBF) which won the Health category at the prestigious World Architecture Festival Awards in 2008.

The visit aimed to show parliamentarians the extent to which AIDOS and local NGOs are involved in developing a multidisciplinary approach (through medical, judicial, psychological and vocational assistance) to sustain women's welfare and empowerment in a sector still suffering from poor access to some basic commodities such as electricity.

Traveling to the North Province of Burkina Faso, the Parliamentary Delegation received in-depth presentation of the regional strategic plan and was impressed by the collection and the reliability of the data presented. After visiting the rural maternity ward of Boursouma, the Parliamentary Delegation was faced with the lack of health workers in the region, the importance of skills transfer and the challenge decentralisation is posing to the general strengthening of the national health system. A visit to the Province Governor as well as to the Minister in charge of relations with the Parliament preceded a field visit in the provincial capital (Ouahigouya) on infrastructural projects funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency. While the province suffers from drought and chronic floods, the members of the Delegation were interested in the links between maternal health, RH services and supplies and the environmental pressures of various kinds that impoverished vulnerable local populations.



Meetings were held with the Ministries of Health, the Promotion of Women, Social Action and National Solidarity, Youth and Employment as well as with the French and Dutch embassies, the EC Delegation, the French, Swiss and German Development Cooperation Agencies, along with extraordinary active civil society organisations towards women and youth. These meetings enabled the EPF Delegation to welcome policies which mainstream gender equity and promote awareness-raising on family planning in national health programmes. Despite some progress, it was highlighted that there are still remaining challenges and that the Burkinabe population needs more support. The Parliamentary

Delegation also had the chance to exchange views and share best practices with the coordinator of the Sanitary Development Support Plan during the Delegation's visit to the Embassy of the Netherlands where a strong emphasis was put on the availability of medical supplies and in particular on reproductive health supplies.

At the end of the week during the press conference, Parliamentarians observed that despite progress made, prioritizing health in Burkina Faso is still facing some key administrative, financial and management challenges. Parliamentarians deplored the chronic lack of access to RH supplies (on both grounds of availability and affordability) and consequently committed to report back on these challenges to their own Government and Parliament in order to help try and shape future development aid policies according to the expressed needs of the population for better access to family planning and modern contraceptive methods.

The members of EPF Delegation included Hon. Danielle Bousquet, MP and EPF Executive Committee Member (France, Socialist Party), Hon. Martine De Maght, MP member of the Belgian Foreign Affairs Committee (Belgium, Liberal Party), Senator Francesca Marinaro (Italy, Democratic Party), Hon. Genevieve Gaillard et Philippe Tourtelier, MPs (France, Socialist Party), Hon. Thérèse Frösch, MP (Switzerland, Green Party), Hon. Antonia Garcia Valls and Hon. Carmen Monton Gimenez, MP Members of the Spanish Equality Committee (Spain, Socialist Party).

For more information on the study tour to Burkina Faso or EPF's activities in Sexual and Reproductive Health Advocacy, please contact Vincent Villeneuve, EPF Advocacy Assistant at vincent@iepfpd.org.



II. Parliamentary Leadership

1. Hon. Kirsten Brosbøl, MP questions Danish Minister of Development on Pope's Statement on Condoms

Hon. Kirsten Brosbøl, MP, Chair of the Danish EPF Member Group and the Danish Social Democratic Party's spokesperson on gender equality questioned the Minister for Development if the Danish government plans any specific activities such as the spontaneous donation of 1 million condoms to Africa to counter the Pope's statements whereby condoms increase the spread of HIV/AIDS. Although the Minister "strongly dissociates" herself from the Pope's statements and emphasized the importance the Danish Ministry for Development attaches to preventive work in combating HIV/AIDS, no specific activities in reaction to the statements have been planned.



Danish Development Minister Ulla Tørnæs will, however, "express the Danish position on the Pope's statements to our African partners during future occasions and support the countries not to change course in relation to the prevention of HIV/AIDS".

2. Hon. Antje Blumenthal, MP supports changes in the law of late-term abortions

Several motions, concerning late-term abortions are presently discussed in the German Bundestag. Hon. Antje Blumenthal, MP (Germany), Member of the DSW Parliamentary Advisory Council, Member of the German Parliamentary Forum for SRHR and EPF Executive Committee Member supports the motion, which focuses on more individual consultations of parents, being confronted with the decision to give birth to a disabled baby.

Hon. Antje Blumenthal, MP: "The number of expectant mothers using prenatal diagnostics is continually rising. But oftentimes, parents are not prepared for negative results. They fall into deep conflicts, if they have to decide, whether to bear or to abort their child. I think that it is very important to stand by these women and families and show them their options. This also includes the possibility to live with a disabled child. We do not want these mothers and fathers to bear this responsibility all alone."



Therefore, according to Hon. Antje Blumenthal, MP, physicians should advise the expectant mothers and fathers about different options and the medical consequences. She considers it also very important that parents are psychologically supported. Thus, women shall be compulsory informed about pregnancy advice centres. MP Blumenthal also states that parents should have the possibility to get to know families, who decided to live their life with a disabled child. Today, parents are often rushed to abort a disabled child. They should have a three-day thinking period to make a thorough decision, whether to abort or to give birth to their disabled child.

3. Senegal releases gay activists

EPF welcomes the release of nine HIV/AIDS workers in Senegal, who were sentenced for their sexual orientation in January this year. On 20 April, a court in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, annulled the judgement of the men, each sentenced to eight years in prison along with fines, on charges of "membership of a criminal organization and engaging in acts against the order of nature".

Hon. Anne Van Lancker, MEP and Hon. Françoise Castex, MP, as well as Belgian Senator Alain Destexhe and Hon. Sophie In't Veld, MEP had expressed their concern and supported their Senegalese counterparts advocating for the immediate release of the AIDS activists.

Saluting the fact that these men may now return to their families and continue their invaluable work in the fight against HIV, EPF continues to deplore the upholding of laws which allow the criminalization of homosexuality, and calls on the government of Senegal, and other countries with similar regulations, to overturn these in the interests of public health and human rights. Homosexuality remains punishable by up to five years in prison in Senegal.

III. EPF Malaria Update

World Malaria Day 25 April 2009

Despite being preventable and treatable, malaria causes more than 1 million deaths and app. 300 million cases a year. The disease primarily affects children under five and pregnant women in Africa, and vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, the poor and mobile populations in Asia. Malaria affects 40 percent of the world's population – putting 3.3 billion people at risk in 109 countries."

25 April is a day of unified commemoration of the global effort to provide effective control of malaria around the world. This year's World Malaria Day marks a critical moment in time. The international malaria community has merely two years to meet the 2010 targets of delivering effective and affordable protection and treatment to all people at risk of malaria, as called for by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon.



World Malaria Day represents a chance for all of us to make a difference. Reducing the impact of malaria would significantly propel efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. These include not only the goal of combating the disease itself, but also goals related to women's and children's rights and health, access to education and the reduction of extreme poverty.

EPF's Malaria Taskforce members were mobilised and organised several events all over Europe on the occasion of World Malaria Day.

1. European Parliament

World Malaria Day, Working Lunch Buffet, 23 April 2009, European Parliament, Strasbourg

On 23 April 2009, on the occasion of the second World Malaria Day, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) organised a working lunch buffet in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, hosted by EPF's Malaria Taskforce member Hon. Thierry Cornillet, MEP (ALDE, FR). Gathering around 20 participants, MEP Thierry Cornillet recalled that "every year, Malaria causes more than one million deaths worldwide, affecting particularly young children and pregnant women. Every 30 seconds an African child dies from Malaria". He emphasised that it is Parliamentarians' responsibility to urgently address this issue.



The guests included M. Jason Peat, Senior Health Officer, Malaria, International Federation of Red-Cross and Red-Crescent Societies (IFRC-RC) whose presentation focused on Malaria prevention and the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) 2010 targets. He recalled that by 2010, particularly in the two lowest economic quintiles, 80% of people at risk from malaria should be protected, 80% of malaria patients should be diagnosed and treated within one day, and Malaria burden should be reduced by 50% compared with 2000. Recalling that the IFRC-RC is coordinating the Alliance for Malaria Prevention, which is a subgroup of the RBM Partnership representing more than 20 partners, including government, business, faith-based and humanitarian organisations, M. Jason Peat mentioned that IFRC-RC supported several mass Long-Lasting Insecticides treated mosquito Net (LLIN)

distributions in African countries, which contributed to a substantial scale-up of LLIN's coverage and use. He emphasised that there is a real challenge in terms of LLINs' hanging-up and that volunteers' mobilisation to help and empower communities is crucial. Among the key challenges to meet the 2010 targets, M. Jason Peat emphasised that there is a need to increase funding, make sure it is available, accessible, and set with a precise timeframe. "Even if now there is an operational and effective model to expand net's ownership, it is still necessary to improve and ensure net's usage via post distribution hang up activities" he said. Finally, M. Jason Peat highlighted that other challenges include the lack of technical support, the need for standardisation of data collection and a proper follow-up in tracking commodities as well as a clear definition and ownership of targets to be reached by the recipient country.

Dr Jan Van Erps, Senior Adviser to the Executive Director Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM) presented an innovative financing mechanism to scale-up access to effective anti-malarials: The Affordable Medicines Facility-malaria (AMFm). Reaffirming the targets articulated in the Global Malaria Action Plan, he emphasised that by 2010, 80% of malaria patients are diagnosed and treated with effective anti-malarial within 24 hours after the first fever. "One of the greatest challenges in the fight against malaria is drug resistance", he said. Dr Jan Van Erps informed participants that a new drug, the artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) combining artemisinin with another antimalarial drug, now provides a highly effective alternative medicine to treat malaria and slow resistance. He explained that the drawback in a widely use of ACTs in malaria endemic countries is cost. An adult dose of ACT costs around USD 6-10. In comparison the cheapest previously used antimalarial, chloroquine, only amounts to USD 0.2-0.4. Another obstacle to wide spread use of ACTs is the patient's inability to promptly access health facilities where free drugs are distributed. Thus, 60% of patients rely on the private sector for treatment against malaria. "Purchase of ACTs through the private sector is too expensive and this is the reason why patients turn to cheaper and less effective medicine putting their lives at risk" he added. Dr Jan Van Erps highlighted that the AMFm, previously known as the "Global Subsidy for ACTs", was developed as an innovative financing mechanism to solve this dilemma. The Global Fund Board agreed to host and to manage the AMFm as a business line within the Global Fund. Its objective is to make affordable ACTs available to first line buyers in malaria endemic countries who purchase their drugs either in the public, the private or the non-profit sector. "The AMFm has the potential to reduce the cost of effective antimalarials to USD 0.2-0.5 for most patients" he said. Moreover, it is expected that the AMFm has the ability to more than triple the use of ACTs to a projected 360 million treatment courses per year and at the same time reduce the number of purchases of less effective treatments. Finally, Dr Van Erps mentioned that the AMFm will promote the use of ACTs and thereby drive out ineffective monotherapies from the market of malaria endemic countries. This will be achieved by reducing the price of ACTs for malaria patients to an affordable level through price negotiations with manufacturers and through co-payments. The AMFm will negotiate with manufacturers a reduced price of USD 1 for all first-line buyers of ACTs. Then, the AMFm will lower the price for buyers of ACTs by providing a co-payment of around USD 0.95 per treatment. The objective is to subsidise ACTs to the extent that the price of USD 0.2-0.5 per treatment is comparable to the price of chloroquine.



M. Pierre Delval, Anticounterfeiting Advisor, Expert in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe gave a presentation on the enormous scourge of counterfeit malaria drugs, particularly in Africa. He recalled that counterfeiting can apply to both brand name and generic products, where the identity of the source is mislabeled in a way that suggests that it is the authentic approved product. M. Pierre Delval highlighted that according to WHO estimates, the scale of counterfeit medicine represents 10% in Russia, 25% in India, 35% in Lebanon, 40% in Peru, 48% in Nigeria, and 70% in Angola. He added that 200 000 patients' lives could have been saved each year. "In Africa, one third of the antimalarials have been estimated to be inefficient" he said. In 2008, 225 samples of antimalarial drug taken from 6 random cities in Nigeria were analysed. It appeared that 37% of these drugs had no active ingredient or were under dosed. Out of 12 antimalarials used worldwide, 8 are being counterfeited. Malaria drugs are among the highest counterfeited medicines. Emphasising that it is not only an intellectual property rights' issue, he called



decision-makers to fill the penal legal gap. M. Pierre Delval highlighted that even if the European Union and the Council of Europe are strengthening criminal sanctions with regards to counterfeiting and infringements of intellectual property, it appeared that intellectual property rights are inefficient in 60 countries around the world. M. Pierre Delval stressed that it is still necessary to enhance preventive and repressive control at national level in order to protect efficiently patients. "Counterfeit drugs do not only refer to the intellectual property rights, we are facing a criminal situation" he said. Concrete recommendations included the creation of a Technical Operational Governmental Center in charge of controlling medicines delivery, the packaging, the labeling, and in charge of marking each product according to a very specific adapted and harmonised security process. Then unmarked or suspicious products could be immediately seized. Finally, he emphasised the real need to elaborate particularly dissuasive criminal sanctions for these "criminals".

Ms Sally Ethelston, Director for Communication and Advocacy, PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI) gave a presentation on the "Next steps in malaria vaccine development". Created in 1999 through initial grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ms Ethelston recalled that the mission of PATH MVI is to accelerate the development of malaria vaccines and ensure their availability and accessibility in the developing world emphasizing that malaria is responsible for almost a million deaths and costing Africa USD 12 billion every year. Ms Sally Ethelston explained that MVI works with the private sector, scientists, academic institutions, endemic country partners and donors in order to develop malaria vaccine candidates, develop sites and conduct clinical trials, develop and refine vaccine evaluation tools, but also in assisting countries to prepare for the introduction of a new vaccine. She added that key priorities include advocacy for increased global spending, policy and financial support for malaria vaccine and Research & Development. She mentioned that PATH MVI develops and manages collaborations, elaborates commercialisation strategies, serves as neutral broker and catalyses broader field of malaria vaccines. Ms Sally Ethelston highlighted that the world's most clinically advanced vaccine candidate today is the RTS,S. She mentioned that PATH MVI is working in collaboration with several partners, including GSK Bio (Belgium), 11 study centres in 7 African countries, and Northern institutions. She specified that key progress were made emphasizing that the phase 3 trial of the RTS,S vaccine candidate is expected to begin soon, and that 3 research study centres are specifically working on this in Africa. She added that there is a second vaccine candidate developed by Sanaria Inc. based on an attenuated whole-parasite approach and which was approved for first-in-human trial in the United States. She mentioned that the vaccine goals in sight for 2015 include 50% efficacy against severe disease, lasting more than one year, and complementing the other existing malaria control tools. "The next-generation vaccine could be in the pipeline now, lasting longer than 4 years, blocking the transmission, and combined with all the other existing malaria control tools, it will contribute to malaria elimination and eradication" she said. Finally, Ms Sally Ethelston emphasised that a vaccine can cost up to half a billion dollars, therefore it is necessary to mobilise additional partners, supporters, and resources for research & development and for preparing the vaccine's introduction.



World Malaria Day in the Parliament Magazine

On the occasion of World Malaria Day commemorated on 25 April, the Parliament Magazine dedicated 4 pages on the issue of malaria, providing an opportunity to increase awareness on this terrible killer disease. Recalling that despite being preventable and treatable, malaria kills an African child every 30 seconds and in just one year it takes more than one million lives in Africa. The message targeting EU decision-makers called for increased efforts and mobilisation for malaria prevention, treatment and research: "In the countdown to 2010, we call upon the EU and the European Parliament to join the global World Malaria Day commemoration and to encourage country implementation of the control measures specified in the Global Malaria Action Plan". In addition, EPF's Working Lunch hosted by MEP Thierry Cornillet in Strasbourg was also advertised.

This special edition of the Parliament Magazine is available online: <http://www.e-pages.dk/dods/126> (see p. 3, 38, 39, 41)

2. Germany



On 22 April 2009, Hon. Dr. Karl Addicks, MP member of DSW's Parliamentary Advisory Committee (PAC) and EPF's Malaria Taskforce member organised a Parliamentary Evening on "New Ways in Treating and Eliminating Malaria". The Parliamentary evening was held in the Representation of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg to the Federal Government in Berlin, and gathered approx. 50 participants. It was organised in cooperation with the Association of Research-based Pharmaceutical Companies (VfA) and the key speakers included representatives from RBM, Novartis, MMV, and Sanofi-Aventis who highlighted the need to increase resources in order to achieve

universal coverage and access to effective malaria drugs. Participants were given a presentation on the latest innovative financing mechanism to scale-up access to effective anti-malarials: The Affordable Medicines Facility-malaria (AMFm).

On April 24th, DSW and German Red Cross (our partners in the European Alliance Against Malaria) organised a press conference with BMZ's Parliamentary State Secretary, Ms Karin Kortmann. During the press conference Ms Kortmann will launch the campaign "Knitting Nets". The objective of the campaign is to call upon all German Parliamentarians to find 50 people in their constituencies to donate a bed net and to contribute to the fight against malaria. In particular, this campaign aims to highlight development issues in the run-up to the German Parliamentary Elections in September 2009. The campaign was supported by members of DSW's PAC, Hon. Sibylle Pfeiffer, MP and Hon. Dr. Karl Addicks, MP.



3. Belgium



Hon. Katia della Faille, MP (Belgium), member of the Belgian Foreign Affairs and Public Health Committee in the Belgian Federal Parliament participated in EPF's Study Tour on Malaria held from 28 March-04 April 2009 to Cameroon. Upon return, she joined EPF's Belgian APPG member "Parliamentarians for the MDGs" as well as EPF's Taskforce on Malaria. MP Katia della Faille shared her first experience to Africa in publishing a summary of the study tour on her website. In order to mark World Malaria Day, she gave an exclusive interview to the newspaper De Huisarts, a well known Dutch (Flemish) health/medical magazine. The article released on the 30 April 2009, provides an overview of the study tour visits related to malaria prevention, treatment and research, including MP Katia della Faille's impressions, lessons learned, as well as the progress and remaining challenges in the fight against Malaria, particularly in Cameroon. She also mentioned that despite some progress, it is necessary to increase support and resources for the fight against malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa. To this extend, MP Katia della Faille mentioned some concrete upcoming follow-up actions she is willing to undertake, such as asking Parliamentary questions to M. Charles Michel, the Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation and presenting a motion for resolution on Malaria in the Belgian Federal Parliament.

4. Finland

EPF's Malaria Taskforce member Hon. Heli Järvinen, MP and member of the Finnish All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development, also participated in the above mentioned study tour to Cameroon on Malaria. Upon return, she wrote an article to share her experience and her impressions as well as the outcomes of the field visit. The article was published on the internet and in various newspapers in



Finland. In her article, MP Heli Järvinen provided an overview of the sites visited and the meetings held pointing out some of the principal remaining needs. She emphasised that Cameroon is facing strong difficulties and that more efforts and resources are still necessary in order to tackle the disease in Cameroon. She recalled that on 25 April it is World Malaria Day and that it is necessary to think ahead for long term solution in order to fight against this killer disease. MP Heli Järvinen mentioned that she will be focusing on calling for an increased contribution of Finland to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

5. Georgia

On 16th April 2009, the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) of Georgia conducted a meeting including discussions regarding the implementation of the Malaria project “Consolidation of the Results Achieved: Containing further an Epidemic of Malaria” supported by the Global Fund. As a member of the CCM, EPF’s Malaria Taskforce member Hon. George Tsereteli, MP (Georgia), Deputy Chairman of the Georgian Parliament and member of EPF’s Executive Committee, participated in this meeting chaired by the First Lady of Georgia H.E. Sandra Roelofs. Other activities around World Malaria Day in Georgia included field activities in the endemic areas – Signagi and Marneuli districts carried out by mobile teams of the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC). Meetings were held with local public health personnel and population, preliminary medical examinations were made to patients with fever, and leaflets were



distributed among the local population.

6. Romania



Romanian Senator Serban Radulescu, member of the Sub-Committee on Demography, Population and Development in the Romanian Senate, participated as well in EPF’s study tour to Cameroon. Upon return, he joined EPF’s Taskforce on Malaria and published a summary of the study tour on the Senate’s website. During the last plenary session held on 21 April 2009, Senator Serban Radulescu made a Political Declaration for commemorating World Malaria Day. In his statement, he recalled the malaria burden worldwide, and emphasised that the European Union has a key role to play in the fight against the disease. He mentioned that as a member of the European Union, Romania is concerned and has the responsibility to contribute to global efforts and supporting the fight against malaria. Senator Serban Radulescu emphasised that despite the remaining internal health challenges in Romania, “we do not have the right to remain indifferent to the suffering of others from other parts of the world” he said.

7. Spain

EPF’s Malaria Taskforce member Hon. Maria Rosa Fortuny i Torroella, MP (Catalonia, Spain) spokesperson for the Committee of Foreign and European Affairs in the Catalan Parliament, who participated in EPF’s study tours to Tanzania and Cameroon undertook numerous follow-up actions upon return. She established the contact between the Etto Foundation (Etto is a footballer playing at the Barça) and the Cameroon Coalition Against Malaria (CCAM) to explore the possibilities of joint collaboration in the fight against malaria. MP Maria Rosa Fortuny i Torroella will be visiting the Barcelona Centre for International Health Research (CRESIB), a new global health research institute developed by some of the leading academic and biomedical research institutions in Barcelona, where she will be explained in detail the latest malaria vaccine developments. On 14 May 2009, MP Maria Rosa Fortuny i



Torroella will organise a meeting in the Committee for Development Cooperation of the Catalan Parliament with a specific focus on Malaria Research. Key guest speakers include the well-known Researcher Dr. Pedro Alonso and a representative of the pharmaceutical Company Novartis. On the occasion of World Malaria Day, MP Maria Rosa Fortuny i Torroella released an article highlighting her impressions and her increased knowledge on malaria after both experiences in Tanzania and Cameroon. She emphasised differences and similarities providing examples of various sites visited, mentioned the success and the difficulties to overcome the disease and finally called for increased awareness, support and resource mobilisation for malaria control. "Malaria is everybody's business", she said. MP Maria Rosa Fortuny i Torroella will be presenting a non-binding resolution addressing the need to establish effective measures to fight against malaria and is currently exploring together with the Spanish Family Planning Association (FPFE) the possibility of creating an All- Party Parliamentary Group to focus on development related issues and particularly on malaria.

8. UK

EPF's Malaria Taskforce member Hon. Stephen O'Brien, MP (UK) Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases (APPMG) hosted a meeting in the House of Commons on 23rd April 2009. The meeting focused on "The contribution of Malaria Control to reaching the MDGs". The guest speakers included Ms Michèle Barzach, Chair of the Friends of the Global Fund Europe, Prof. Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Executive Director of RBM, and Prof. Chris Whitty from DFID. In addition, an exclusive UK exhibition of William Daniels' photograph collection, *Mauvais Air*, was presented to celebrate World Malaria Day 2009. The photo exhibition vividly illustrates the critical role that civil society organisations are playing in 'Counting Malaria Out' to achieve the ambitious goal of near-zero deaths from malaria by 2015. The exhibition will open daily at the gallery@oxo on London's South Bank between 22nd April and 10th May. The exhibition is hosted by Malaria Consortium and Friends of the Global Fund Europe and supported by Sumitomo Chemical and the European Alliance Against Malaria.



For more information on Malaria and EPF's Parliamentary Taskforce on Malaria, please contact Ms Silvia Theodoridis, EPF Advocacy Officer at silvia@iepfpd.org

IV. APPG Affairs

1. Portuguese Parliamentarians focus on MDG 5 during Study Tour in Guinea Bissau

From 17 – 23 April 2009 the Portuguese FPA led a parliamentary delegation including journalists to Guinea-Bissau. The study tour was made possible due to an official invitation to the Portuguese All-Party Parliamentary Group and the Portuguese Family Planning Association APF by the National Parliament of Guinea-Bissau as well as the local UNFPA Representative. The main focus of the study tour was on MDG 5 (Maternal Health) and other sexual and reproductive health issues. In light of the elections that will be held in Guinea-Bissau next June, this study tour has been an important opportunity to receive first hand information on SRH developments, initiatives and needs in the country.

Portuguese Family Planning Association involved in Female Genital Mutilation project

The Portuguese FPA was one of 15 European NGOs involved in a Daphne Project with Euronet on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The main aim of the project was to develop a national Programme of Action on FGM together with different official entities. The Programme of Action was launched on 6th February 2009 in

Lisbon. The Portuguese Programme on FGM is now part of the III Plan of Action for Equality. On 15th April the Programme of Action was presented in the European Parliament in Brussels.

2. German Parliamentary Forum for SRHR celebrates its 5th anniversary

In the framework of its 5th anniversary, the German Parliamentary Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights initiated a meeting with the Counsellor of the Embassy of the Czech Republic to Germany and current representative of the EU Presidency, Hana Havlova and H.E. Ruth Jacoby, Ambassador of Sweden to



Germany. With the upcoming European elections being just four weeks away and only 5 more years to go before the 20 year Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) ends, the German Parliamentary Forum on SRHR in cooperation with pro familia who provides the Secretariat to the Parliamentary Group discussed which actions and initiatives the current EU Presidency is taking to improve gender equality in Europe and to foster the implementation of the Cairo goals.

In opening the meeting, Hon. Caren Marks, MP and Chairwomen of the Parliamentary Group thanked the group members for working tirelessly to keeping sexual and reproductive health and rights issues on the agenda of German MPs and emphasised the

importance of cross-party co-operation to better influence decision-making processes on this often sensitive issue. The past 5 years have contributed to a better understanding of SRHR topics also due to concrete activities the group organised such as a meeting with Dr. Paul Hunt, then UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health to generate awareness and parliamentary commitment for these issues. Counsellor Havlova, whose country is currently holding the EU Presidency acknowledged the difficult situation the Czech Republic is currently in after the internal government crisis. She confirmed, however, "that all Presidency Program initiatives will be implemented". With regard to gender equality, H.E. Ms Jacoby emphasised that in Sweden, gender and sexual and reproductive health are not only women's issues. Men are equally affected and need to be included in the debate. Sweden has been a successful example for realising gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all policy fields and the upcoming Swedish Presidency is committed to adequately address gender equality and SRHR related issues during their six-month term starting in July 2009. Nadine Krysostan, representing EPF as the European umbrella organisation for parliamentary networks congratulated the German Parliamentary Forum on SRHR on their efforts and initiatives to raise awareness for and advance sexual and reproductive health and rights at home and abroad. In her brief statement Ms Krysostan emphasised the important role MPs play in the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action and the necessity to establish a constant political dialog between MPs at national and European level, Governments and civil society organisations to ensure a holistic and coherent approach in implementing the Cairo goals and in advancing SRHR at all levels.

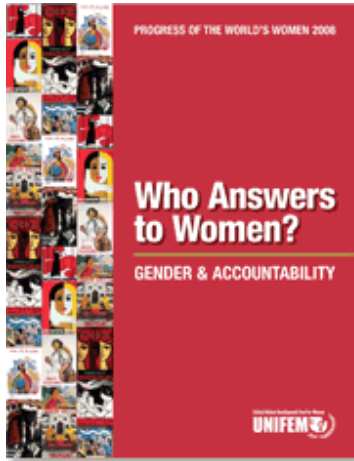
For more information contact Margit Miosga at: presse@deutsches-parlamentarisches-forum.de

3. EPWG and UNIFEM present UNIFEM Progress of the World's Women Report 2008/2009 in Brussels

In cooperation with the UN Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Working Group on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Development in the European Parliament (EPWG) presented UNIFEM's bi-annual flagship report: "Who answers to women? – Gender and Accountability". In presenting the main findings and outcomes of the report, UNIFEM Executive Director Ms Joanne Sandler emphasised that the report shows that "realising women's rights and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) depends on strengthening accountability for commitments to women and gender equality". One of the main findings in the examples highlighted throughout the report shows that for women's rights to be translated into

substantive improvements in their lives, and for gender equality to be realised in practice, women must be able to fully participate in public decision-making at all levels.

Chairing the meeting, EPWG and EPF President Hon. Anne Van Lancker, MEP emphasised the important



role Parliamentarians can and have to play in holding governments accountable on their commitments towards improving women's health as well as their participation in decision-making processes worldwide. The shift in delivery of aid at EU level where general and sector budget support have taken over from project support necessitate better coordination and cooperation between MEPs and MPs in developing countries to be able to set the right priorities in for example the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) that determine the areas of funding from the EU. At the same time, Hon. Van Lancker emphasised the important findings of the recent Court of Auditors report on "Financing for health in sub-Saharan Africa" which shows problems in the delivery of aid as well as the necessity to better focus on the importance of investing in health within the European Commission. Hon. Anne Van Lancker, MEP who was instrumental in writing the European Parliament's response to the Court of Auditor's Report urged the European Commission to live up to their health commitments and to improve their capacity with regard to health personnel at country level but also within EU Headquarters.

For more information on the UNIFEM Report click [here](#).

More information on the meeting can be obtained from Arben Fetai, MSI Advocacy Officer at: arben.fetai@mariestopes-org.be

4. Dutch APPG Group and EPF meet on HIV/Aids in The Hague.

This meeting was set up by Hon. Chantal Gill'ard, MP, Member of the APPG Group on HIV/AIDS and EPF Executive Committee Member, together with the Chair of the APPG, Hon. Kathleen Ferrier, MP, Hon. Janneke Schermers, MP and the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) on 23rd April 2009. During this brief meeting EPF discussed the possibility of future cooperation regarding Aid Effectiveness with members of the Dutch All-Party Parliamentary Group and AWEPA, as well as upcoming events.

For more information, please contact Saskia Pfeijffer at: Saskia@iepfpd.org

V. EPF - European Parliament Relations

1. European Parliament's Women's Rights Committee (FEMM) wants to extend maternity leave to 20 weeks

The Women's Rights Committee adopted MEP Edite Estrela's report on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

Members of the EP Women's Rights Committee are proposing that maternity leave be extended to 20 weeks. They also say a new EU directive on these matters should require 100% of salary to be paid for six weeks after birth, at least 85% of salary for the rest of the leave period and the introduction of paternity leave. The text adopted by the committee will be put to a vote by the full Parliament in May.

Main elements of the report include:

To extend the duration of maternity leave to at least 20 weeks. At present such leave varies in the EU between 14 and 28 weeks. In some cases it can be as much as 52 weeks, of which only part is paid. In addition, of the 20 weeks, six weeks will have to be taken after the birth to encourage women to breastfeed as long as possible. On 3 October 2008 the European Commission proposed increasing maternity leave to 18 weeks, of which six would be taken after the birth.

Full salary to be paid for six weeks

To avoid penalising women who have children, most MEPs are proposing that it be compulsory to pay them their full salary for 6 weeks after giving birth. For the remainder of the period, 100% of salary should be paid, with a minimum figure of 85%. In addition, fully paid additional maternity leave should be granted in the case of premature childbirth, stillbirth, caesarean section, multiple births or children with disabilities. The European Commission proposed the payment of a monthly salary during maternity leave equivalent to 100% of the last monthly salary or the average salary, but this would not have been compulsory.

Paternity leave

A majority of the committee voted in favour of introducing paternity leave. This paternity leave - or co-maternity leave to take account of different family structures, an idea over which MEPs were divided - would be a compulsory minimum two weeks after the birth.

No sacking of new mothers

MEPs also want to ensure no one can be dismissed from their job during maternity leave. Any sacking in the following 12 months would have to be justified in writing and not linked to maternity. Lastly, MEPs approved amendments designed to enable women to have "equivalent" work on their return from maternity leave and to have flexible working arrangements.

EPF – EU News Supplement Election Update

To keep our members and readers up to date, EPF will issue a regular news supplement on the upcoming elections to the European Parliament to be held in all EU Member States from 4-7 June 2009.

The supplement features amongst others reports about the latest developments, initiatives and facts with regard to the pre-election period and intends to provide views and background information in the run-up to this event.

Enjoy the reading

1. Who to vote for in the European Parliament Elections?

4 weeks prior to the European Elections from 4-7 June, various tools and compasses have been developed by research institutes, NGOs, civil society organisations or business and other associations that allow citizens across Europe to find their political identity.

Here is a selection of various election tools:

EU Profiler:

EU Profiler was designed and set up by a consortium consisting of the European University Institute (Florence), Kieskompas, a Dutch company that has made similar tools in the past, and the Zurich-based NCCR Democracy/Politools network.

According to its initiators, EU Profiler is the first tool of its kind to appear in the EU political landscape, and should give voters some interesting food for thought as they go to the ballot boxes. Logistically, the task was unique, with more than 120 academic collaborators from across Europe – four assigned to each of the 30 countries – participating. The tool was built without any EU funding, guaranteeing the initiators' independence and credibility.

The true innovation of the profiler is to show electors, once they have answered a 30-question poll, not only the party that is closest to their beliefs in their home country, but also their ideological 'home party', wherever that may be in Europe. <http://www.euprofiler.eu/>

Electioncampaign.eu

This campaign is a collaborative project by four independent policy networks, Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (ALTER-EU), the European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ), the



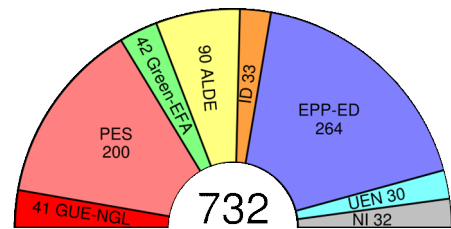
Seattle to Brussels Network (S2B) and the European Attac network, summing up more than 400 non-governmental organizations from all across Europe. The campaign covers four policy areas, „Lobbying Transparency and Ethics“, „Reforming Financial Architecture“, „Just EU Trade Policy“ and „Corporate Accountability“. In all four areas, the campaign initiators pose demands on all candidates which they can decide to support, not to support or remain neutral until shortly before the European Elections date. <http://www.electioncampaign.eu/>

European Small Business Associations' (ESBA) Campaign

ESBA offers voters a practical tool to test MEPs' knowledge of the difficulties faced by the European business economy and allows voters to test the knowledge of potential Members of the European Parliament on a range of small business issues, ranging from how many firms there are in Europe to some of the largest barriers faced by small firms throughout Europe. <http://www.esba-europe.org/>

2. What will the next European Parliament look like?

This is the question that the internet tool „Predict09.eu“ is looking into. Developed by three leading political scientists, Simon Hix (London School of Economics), Michael Marsh (Trinity College Dublin), and Nick Vivyan (London School of Economics) the tool is a prediction of the outcome of the June 2009 European Parliament elections and the resulting make-up of the next European Parliament. The prediction is based on a statistical model of the performance of national parties in European Parliament elections. According to the data collected, the centre-right EPP would remain the biggest political group in the European Parliament despite the leaving of members from the Czech ODS and the British conservatives. The authors of the study predict that the social democrats will be able to slightly increase its number of MEPs, remaining the second largest group in the new parliament. The extreme left and right wing groups will not be able to gain much ground to play an important role.



<http://www.predict09.eu/default/en-us.aspx>

3. EPF President gets top rating by De Morgen for her parliamentary engagement

The influential Belgian newspaper De Morgen rated EPF President Hon. Anne Van Lancker, MEP as one of the top performers amongst Belgian MEPs during the past legislature of the European Parliament from 2004-2009. Only two other Belgian MEPs received four stars – the highest „grade“ that was given. De Morgen especially valued Hon. Van Lancker as one of the most active MEPs with a broad knowledge on difficult and technical dossiers.



VI. EPF Activities – Outlook 2009:

1. Study Tour to Zambia on Reproductive Health Supplies, 16-23 May, Lusaka, Zambia
This study tour is organised in collaboration with RFSU under the Countdown 2015 project. It will raise awareness and educate MPs on the unmet SRHR needs of the Zambian population and places a special emphasis on the availability of and access to reproductive health supplies.
2. APPGs' Secretariat Meeting on Parliamentary Advocacy on Malaria, 2nd June, London, UK
This meeting aims at providing key tools and examples of successful Parliamentary advocacy on malaria to NGOs acting as secretariat for APPGs on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), HIV/AIDS, population and development. It will provide APPGs' Secretariat with guidelines for starting working and mainstreaming malaria in their advocacy work. This meeting will also enable discussion and exchange of best practices.
3. G8 Parliamentary Meeting on Reproductive and Global Health, 22-23 June, Rome, Italy
This year's G8 Parliamentary Meeting will focus on the "Strategic Investment in times of crisis. The rewards of making women's health a priority".
4. Fourth International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action Conference, 26-27 October, Cairo, Egypt (tbc)
The conference will be combined with EPF Executive Committee and Council meetings, and is preceded by a High-level Conference on MDG 5: Maternal Mortality hosted by the Dutch Minister for Development, H.E. Bert Koenders on 25 October 2009.

The EPF Secretariat

The EPF secretariat is based in Brussels and is responsible for implementing all EPF activities. EPF maintains a website with information about its activities and a monthly News Update on the activities of Parliamentarians, SRHR and development policy and related items. It can be found at www.iepfpd.org.

The EPF Secretariat staff is composed as follows (in alphabetical order):

EPF Secretariat Staff:

Neil Datta
Secretary
ndatta@iepfpd.org

Marina Davidashvili
Network and Knowledge Sharing Facilitator
Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South
Caucasus
marina@iepfpd.org

Nadine Krysostan
Senior Advocacy Officer
nadine@iepfpd.org

Miguel Ongil
Programme Officer
miguel@iepfpd.org

Saskia Pfeijffer
Programme Associate
saskia@iepfpd.org

Silvia Theodoridis
EU Advocacy Officer
silvia@iepfpd.org

Vincent Villeneuve
Advocacy Assistant
vincent@iepfpd.org



EPF's Mission

The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development believes Parliamentarians have the opportunity and the responsibility to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality, which are core elements of human dignity and are central to human development.

About EPF

The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development is a Brussels-based Parliamentary network that serves as a platform for cooperation and coordination for the 25 all-party groups in Parliaments throughout Europe that focus on improving sexual and reproductive health and rights at home and abroad through national and regional health and foreign aid budgets.

EPF Contact Details:

European Parliamentary Forum
Rue Montoyer 23
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 02 500 86 50
Fax +32 02 511 67 62
secretariat@iepfpd.org
www.iepfpd.org

EPF is a member of:

- The Steering Committee of the International Parliamentarians' Conference of the Implementation of the IPCI Programme of Action (IPCI/ICPD)
- Countdown 2015 Europe
- The Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus (RHIYC)
- The European Alliance against Malaria
- The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition
- The Women Deliver Advisory Group

EPF

- has Special Consultative Status with the United Nation's Economic and Social Council
- has Participatory Status with the Council of Europe
- is an Associate Member of EuroNGOs

ANNEX: EPF Statement at the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development by Hon. Lyn Brown, MP

Hon. Lyn BROWN, MP
House of Commons, UK
European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development
42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development
01 April 2009, New York

Madam Chairperson,

It is an honor for me to address this distinguished audience on behalf my six parliamentary colleagues present today. We are here representing the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development - a Parliamentary network that serves as a platform for cooperation and coordination in 25 Parliaments throughout Europe and focuses on improving sexual and reproductive health and rights at home and abroad.

We want to state at the outset that we believe that the promotion of women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality is absolutely fundamental to the fight against global poverty and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Our commitment to this cause is intellectual – we know that without gender equality, including the right and ability for women to control their fertility, the Millennium Development Goals cannot and will not be realized, but our commitment is also emotional.

In my second year as an MP I had an unforgettable experience. I visited Bangladesh and received an education from a number of fabulous young people in why the politics of sexual and reproductive rights is so very important. I had the privilege to meet a young mother. She was married at ten years of age and gave birth a year later. She wanted to talk to me about her desire to be a doctor. She explained patiently to this uncomprehending MP that she had to find a career path now. Because now she had the knowledge and wherewithal to control her fertility she would live longer – and therefore needed a career. She was matter of a fact - she broke my heart. As we said goodbye she made me promise to remember her and help others like her in Bangladesh and elsewhere to give others what she now had – a real hope for a brighter future for her and her family. I promised and that is why I am here. My colleagues have very similar stories to tell – hence our commitment to these issues.

Let's face it - there has been clear progress in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. There are many people like her – touched and changed by the programmes we support. More children are enrolled into schools in the developing world than ever before. Child mortality has declined globally.

But there is so so much more to do:

- In the short time it will take me to speak to you today – 7 women will have died from treatable and preventable complications during pregnancy and childbirth. An estimated half a million women a year.
- The number of people dying from HIV/AIDS worldwide is increasing. An estimated 2.9 million died in 2006. More than 15 million children have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS.
- And despite this - access to contraceptives remains low particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa - just 21 per cent.

I know these issues are familiar to you – these figures are ones we use on a daily basis – but this agenda is not about figures or percentages – it is about people – it is about that little girl in the Dhaka slum and millions of others like her across the world.

If we are to realize our Millennium Development Goals then we need to re-commit and re-vitalise.

And we know it is not going to be easy. The European Union is the largest donor of official development aid worldwide. My country, the UK, is one of the largest bi-lateral donors to population assistance on a global scale and a political and financial supporter of UNFPA. But I and my colleagues are too well aware that in real terms the EU's ODA decreased by 1.6bn EUR between 2006 and 2007.

We are in an extraordinary difficult economic situation. The financial crisis has hit us all hard. But we must maintain current levels of aid. Anything else would cost more lives and in the end – let us be honest – will cost more money. No condoms – more HIV – more retroviral drugs, more orphans, more poverty.

We, myself and my colleagues, think that the cost, both human and financial, is too great for us to stop now – so we have pledged to go back home and campaign for the following six actions by our government:

- To ensure universal access to comprehensive SRH information, education and services.
- An allocation of 10 per cent of ODA to population and sexual and reproductive health and rights policies. This sum has been agreed in the past – it is nothing new and simply reflects the Parliamentary Statements of Commitments made in Ottawa 2002, Strasburg 2004 and Bangkok 2006.
- To encourage the inclusion of the new MDG 5 target in country health plans and ensure that there are corresponding budget lines.
- To address the democratic deficit and actively involve parliamentarians as representatives of their people, government officials, civil society, private sector and donors in formulation, implementation and evaluation of their national strategies and actions to implement MDG 5.
- Improve access to Reproductive Health Supplies with a particular emphasis on the provision of a variety of family planning methods to suit different populations and
- Finally, to urge donors to provide assistance and support of nationally owned strategies and live up to the principles of the Paris Declaration.

We know what it takes to fight global poverty successfully. Let us strengthen our commitment to guarantee that women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are improved and safeguarded worldwide. Let's do it because the cost is too great not to – let's do it for the children in the slums of Dhaka – let's do it for those in poverty everywhere.