

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).

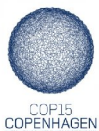
Enjoy the reading!

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I. EPF Activities December 2009/January 2010

1. COP 15 Parliamentarian's Working Lunch on Population and Climate Change - 15 December 2009



EPF, together with the Danish All Party Group on Reproductive Health and Rights, the Danish Family Planning Association Sex and Samfund and the Population and Climate Change Alliance organised a Parliamentarian's working lunch as a side event to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference (COP 15), in December 2009. The working lunch aimed to draw Parliamentarian's attention to the linkages between Population and Climate Change as an important but often neglected component in climate change discussions. More than 60 MPs from over 25 countries around the world took part in the

lunch. The event was kindly supported by Countdown 2015 Europe.

Meeting the basic human needs of growing populations depends on a healthy and sustainable environment. Demographic factors, such as rapid population growth combined with poverty and lack of access to resources in some areas and unsustainable consumption and wasteful production patterns in others, cause problems of environmental degradation, resource depletion, and climate change. Over 200 million women want, but currently lack access to modern contraceptives. As a result, 76 million unintended pregnancies occur every year. Meeting this demand for voluntary family planning could slow high rates of population growth, thereby reducing demographic pressure on limited resources.

The UN Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change provided an important opportunity to draw attention to the centrality of women in this policy field. The urgent need for increased rights-based family planning development assistance – including through integrated sexual and reproductive health, malaria and HIV/AIDS programmes – as an important addition to international efforts to assist least-developed countries to adapt to climate change was discussed as a core topic during the event.

For more information please contact **Saskia Pfeyffer** at saskia@iepfpd.org

2. French MEPs host a GAVI lunch briefing in the European Parliament

Last November 2009, EPF brought a Parliamentary Delegation to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) Partners' Forum to which **MEPs Véronique Mathieu** and **Michèle Striffler** had expressed interest in participating, but could not attend. Given their interest and commitment to health-related issues, EPF suggested organising a lunch briefing to their attention and invited experts from the GAVI Alliance to come and present the Alliance's mission, achievements and challenges.



Launched in 2000, the GAVI Alliance is a public-private global health partnership committed to saving children's lives and protecting people's health by increasing access to immunisation in poor countries. While GAVI Alliance is celebrating its tenth anniversary, it was emphasised that the Alliance members achieved substantial objectives such as accelerating the uptake of underused and new vaccines, strengthening countries' capacity to deliver immunisation and other health services, increasing the predictability and sustainability of financing, and shaping markets for vaccines.

The MEPs congratulated the GAVI Alliance which prevents millions of deaths worldwide and contributes to the achievement of MDG 4 (Reduce Child Mortality). The lunch briefing enabled discussions on strategic and concrete initiatives to undertake in order to increase awareness, resource mobilisation and political climate towards more ambitious contributions from the Member States and the European Commission.

For more information please contact **Silvia Theodoridis** at silvia@iepfpd.org

3. Young Decision Makers produce strong declaration on reproductive health, supplies and family planning – 30-31 January 2010

The Danish Family Planning Association, Sex and Samfund (S&S) and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) organised a Young Decision Maker's seminar on 30-31 January in Copenhagen, Denmark that was held in the framework of the Countdown 2015 Europe Project, of which EPF and S&S are members. The seminar brought together more than 30 Young Decision Makers in leadership positions in the youth sections of their political parties across Europe.

The seminar was a follow-up on the delegation of 9 European Young Decision Makers, who participated in a study tour to Uganda (1-8 August 2009). The aim of the trip was to study the unmet needs in reproductive health supplies and services in Uganda and the resulting impact on global human development.

The YDM meeting in Copenhagen focused on the global necessity of investing in reproductive health services and supplies as an essential precondition to reach the Millennium Development Goals as agreed on at international level. During the two days, the Young Decision Makers focused their discussions on the still unacceptably high numbers of maternal mortality especially in sub-Saharan Africa and the need for family planning programmes meeting the needs of young people. An initial discussion was also held on the linkages between SRHR and Climate Change.



Young decision-makers have shown leadership in their actions for global development, especially for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and are in a position to influence youth issues both nationally and internationally. During the seminar the young decision makers felt the real need for working together on the above-mentioned topics which led to the development of a strong declaration on family planning, reproductive health supplies and sexual and reproductive health and rights that was signed by representatives from all political parties. In addition, a Facebook group named "YDM on SRHR" was created to facilitate

communication and to be able to better advocate for the focus areas discussed within and across political parties.

For more information on the declaration or the Young Decision Makers Initiative, please contact **Saskia Pfeyffer** at saskia@iepfpd.org.

II. Parliamentary Leadership

1. Dutch MP increases SRHR funding by € 12.5 Million while ODA slashed

Dutch MP, **Hon. Chantal Gill'ard** (Labour Party), a member of the EPF Executive Committee, introduced calls to increase the SRHR budget line of Dutch development and increased the Dutch contribution to UNFPA to previously pledged levels in the October/November reading of the Dutch 2010 ODA budget. While having previously committed to sparing SRHR from any of the cuts which must be made in the 2010 ODA Budget, Dutch Minister for Development Koenders further reacts to MP Gill'ard's call by restoring € 4 million to UNFPA and increasing the SRHR budget line by € 8.5 million, which includes the SALIN budget line (funds for non-Dutch NGOs).



2. Swedish Liberal Party introduces motion for resolution on women's rights during Liberal International Congress

Just a few days after the International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI/ICPD) held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) last October 2009, **Hon. Cecilia Wikström, MEP** and former Chair of the Swedish APPG, encouraged the presentation of a Motion for Resolution entitled "Women's rights are Human rights (Cairo +15)". The Motion was presented by the Liberal Party of Sweden, led by **Hon. Jan Björklund, MP** and adopted during the 56th Congress of the Liberal International in Cairo on 30-31 October 2009. Recalling the key provisions expressed in the IPCI Programme of Action, the Resolution stresses the importance of freedom of choice, family planning services, sexual education and the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights as a woman's human right to have control over and decide freely on matters related to her own body. It calls upon the member parties to deal openly and forthrightly with unsafe abortion as a major public health issue and also calls on them to respect and protect women's rights in their political work, including women's sexual and reproductive rights.



The resolution is available at (p.16):

<http://www.liberal-international.org/contentFiles/files/Cairo2009AdoptedResolutionsEnglish.pdf>

3. French MEP puts forward question on health MDGs and the ICPD during 18th ACP-EU JPA Meeting in Luanda/Angola

During the 18th Session of the ACP-EU JPA Meeting held in Luanda (Angola) from 30 November- 3 December 2009, EPF's champion **MEP Michèle Striffler** asked the European Commission (EC) how it intends to ensure that the European Union's development cooperation policies contribute effectively to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on health - particularly those relating to maternal and reproductive health, family planning, and the needs of young people. She also asked to what extent these measures would be complementary to and coordinated with those Member States that have given a clear priority to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD PoA) held in Cairo in 1994.



In its written answer, the EC expressed its full commitment to the fulfilment of the health-related MDGs and the implementation of the ICPD PoA in partnership with the

ACP States, the EU Member states and other development partners and relevant UN agencies. Recalling the adoption of the EU Agenda for Action on the MDGs by the European Council in June 2008, **the EC emphasised that the EU would collectively increase its support by € 8 billion in 2010 of which almost € 6 billion would be for Africa.** The EC highlighted that “In support of the ICPD Programme of Action and the attainment of the MDGs the aim of EC cooperation programmes and activities in the health domain is the support of the development of reliable and efficient health systems able to respond to the health needs of their population. Our support to reproductive health programmes, including MDG 5, must be considered within this context. And the same applies to our support to child health (MDG 4) and the combat of HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB (MDG 6).” Finally the EC recognised that in order to be successful, partner countries need to prioritise sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality in their national development policies.

The Parliamentary question is available on the following link (page 7):

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/acp/qo/772/772517/772517en.pdf

The EC’s answer is available on the following link (pages 18-20):

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/acp/dv/772/772000/772000reven.pdf

4. Belgian Senator tables Parliamentary Question to Minister for Development Cooperation around World AIDS Day

The Chair of the Belgian APPG “Parliamentarians for the MDGs” **Senator Alain Destexhe** addressed Mr Charles Michel, Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation with a series of questions around the Belgian contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The questions put forward centred around progress made on the implementation of the Belgian policy note on HIV/AIDS in development cooperation, and about the need to adopt a transversal and mainstreamed approach of HIV/AIDS within Belgium’s bilateral cooperation. He also questioned the Minister about the reason of the recent cut in funding to the International Partnership for Microbicides, emphasising the need to prioritise HIV/AIDS prevention in development cooperation. In addition, he inquired about the amounts allocated by Belgium to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the framework of its development cooperation policies and whether the funding would increase in the future. Finally, he asked which MDGs will be prioritised and if priority would be given the most off track MDGs such as MDG5.



In his answer, the Minister recalled that Health is a key priority area for the Belgian development cooperation and that the fight against HIV/AIDS and the promotion of SRHR is necessarily mainstreamed with the idea of strengthening global healthcare. He emphasised that for aid effectiveness reasons, it was decided to limit the number of partner organisations in the multilateral cooperation to 21. Finally, he highlighted that priority is given to prevention and treatment and that for 2010 5.000.000 Euros should be allocated to reach the MDGs, but that no specific funding had been decided yet for SRHR.

III. APPG Update

1. World Aids Day Seminar in the Finnish Parliament



The Finnish All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), chaired by **Hon. Minna Sirnö, MP** who is also a member of the EPF Executive Committee, organised a seminar in Parliament around World Aids Day with the theme "Sexuality Education in the Heart of HIV and AIDS Prevention". The keynote speaker Mr. Mark Richmond, Global Coordinator for HIV and AIDS and Director for Educational Priorities of UNESCO, introduced the new UNESCO sexuality education guidelines and the controversy around it. Other topics of the Seminar included sexuality education and its role in HIV prevention in Finland and Russia. The Seminar was attended by over 60 participants representing the Finnish educational sector, civil servants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Members of Parliament as

well as NGOs.

2. Finnish APPG members and Väestöliitto meet with Minister of Development

As part of the campaign of the "Service Center of Development Cooperation" and its member organisations a delegation of Finnish APPG members and a representative of Väestöliitto, the Finnish Family Planning Association met with the Finnish Minister of Development to discuss the integration of the status of women as well as women's rights, including reproductive health and reproductive health supplies, into all Finnish development cooperation. The campaign, directed to political decision-makers calls upon the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to produce strategies for the implementation of cross-cutting themes indicated in the development policy programme. These issues are: promotion of the rights and the status of women and girls, and promotion of gender equality; promotion of the rights of marginalised groups such as children, disabled, indigenous people and ethnic minorities; and combating HIV and AIDS.

3. Russian All-Party Parliamentary Group conducts three advocacy events in the Russian State Duma

On December, 8, 2009 the Russian All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development under the leadership of its Chair **Hon. Saliya Murzabaeva, MP**, who is also a member of the EPF Executive Committee, organised and held a Roundtable at the State Duma entitled "On the protection of reproductive health of the population of the Russian Federation - Legal Aspects". This event encouraged a broad discussion of this issue between the representatives of legislative and executive bodies of the Russian Federation, Subjects of the Russian Federation (that is Republics, Territories, Provinces and Districts), civil society, leading institutes, scientific and academic structures.



During a second event in December, the Russian APPG held a Workshop with the participation of Ms. Gunta Lazdane, Regional WHO Advisor and Ms. Rita Columbia, regional UNFPA Advisor. The Workshop was jointly conducted by the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation, UNFPA, and WHO and attracted more than 40 participants. It was organised for the members of the State Duma Working Group on the elaboration of the draft law on "the protection of reproductive rights of the citizens of the Russian Federation", as well as for the representatives of Subjects of the Russian Federation and civil society organisations.

Thirdly, on 21 December 2009, Members of the Russian APPG, supported by the Assistant Representative of UNFPA in Russia, Ms. Lidia Bardakova, actively advocated for the implementation of the ICPD goals during the Conference "Health and Rights - Investments into the Future" conducted by the Russian Association "Population and Development".

The Parliamentary Group has also begun to integrate information about EPF activities into the internal information system of the State Duma, which is accessible to all Parliamentarians of the State Duma. The group also plans to systematically update the section "European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development" with relevant materials from Parliamentary conferences as well as EPF research papers and analysis.

4. Belgian Senator Marleen Temmerman nominated for the Lifetime Achievement Award of the British Medical Journal (BMJ)

Senator Marleen Temmerman, member of the Belgian All Party Parliamentary Group "Belgium Parliamentarians for the MDGs" has been **nominated for the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award of the British Medical Journal (BMJ)**. The BMJ is an international peer reviewed medical journal and this award is one of the eleven awards issued in honour of individuals who have made a unique and real contribution to the improvement of healthcare during their lifetime and career; either in respect of hospital work, public health, health policy, medical training or research.

Marleen Temmerman is an expert in women's health and has managed to successfully combine politics and medicine to make a significant impact on healthcare. She is currently Professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the Ghent University Hospital in Belgium, Head of the obstetrics and gynaecology department at the Ghent University Hospital, Director of the International Centre for Reproductive Health and a Senator in the Belgian Parliament. During her career as gynaecologist, she led a 5 years long research project on AIDS at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and worked in a hospital in the slums of Nairobi, facing the reality of maternal mortality. During her time as a Senator she has participated in the Global Fund conference, organised by EPF in 2008, and has taken numerous initiatives to put SRHR on the political agenda.



Public online voting:

Senator Marleen Temmerman is one of nine candidates chosen from 117 nominees. The winner of this award will be chosen by BMJ readers via an online poll. **We would like to encourage all of you to register your support for Senator Temmerman by voting online at www.bmj.com**. On the home page in the right column you can find the online poll, where you will be able to vote. Voting started on Monday 4 January, and winners of all the awards will be announced on 10 March.

For more information, visit <http://groupawards.bmj.com/>

IV. Malaria Update

1. EPF Catalanian Malaria Taskforce member presents a motion on Malaria at the Liberal Democrats' Congress in Barcelona

From 19-20 November 2009, the European Liberal Democrats (ELDR) organised its 30th Annual Congress in Barcelona, Catalonia, hosted by the ELDR member party *Convergència Democràtica*. The Congress was attended by 500 delegates and guests from ELDR member parties as well as people from the wider European liberal network, including party leaders, European Commissioners as well as national and European Parliamentarians. **Liberal EPF Malaria Taskforce member Hon. Maria Rosa Fortuny i Torroella, MP (Catalonia, Spain)** presented a motion on malaria which was unanimously adopted during the Congress. The resolution is calling European donor countries to keep their international financial commitments by increasing funding for malaria control. The Resolution specifically points out the need to address the difficulties of access to effective and affordable malaria prevention and treatment; urges Governments to ensure the effectiveness of aid and to invest in health system strengthening; to increase the level of support to the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and the Global Malaria Action Plan as well as to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other international innovative financing mechanisms. Finally, the resolution calls for strengthening financial support for malaria research in order to enable further testing and research related to vaccines, malaria drugs and insecticides.



All the resolutions adopted at the ELDR Congress are available:

- **in English:** http://www.eldr.eu/media/cms/Adopted_resolutions_EN1.pdf (see page 26)
- **in French:** <http://www.eldr.eu/media/cms/adopted%20resolutions-FR.pdf> (see page 30)

For more information, please contact **Ms Silvia Theodoridis**, EPF Advocacy Officer at silvia@iepfpd.org

V. EPF – Council of Europe Relations

1. Important ICPD @15 Victory: Council of Europe adopts ICPD at 15 Report and Resolution

On 29 January 2010, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), adopted a landmark Recommendation and Report on “Fifteen years since the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development”, adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.



The Assembly noted that “while some progress has been made, achievements on education enrolment, gender equity and equality, infant child and maternal mortality and morbidity and the provision of universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning and safe abortion services, remain mixed”.

Following the proposals by the Rapporteur, **Hon. Christine McCafferty, MP**, the Assembly called on European governments to

- “Review, update and compare Council of Europe members states’ national and international population and sexual and reproductive health and rights policies and strategies”, as well as to
- “Review and compare funding to ensure the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action by 2015”

The Report became the subject of the most aggressive anti-choice campaign we have ever witnessed in the Council of Europe. The voting had to be re-scheduled twice, the representative of the Holy See formally protested against the report and a band of anti-choice Parliamentarians from Italy, Ireland, Malta and San Marino introduced over 60 amendments for the plenary debate. During the Assembly vote, however all anti-choice amendments were soundly defeated and the report overall gained a significant majority of 2/3 of votes cast, meaning that it will be sent to the Committee of Ministers the executive body of the Council of Europe for formal consideration and a response.

In its recommendations, the Parliamentary Assembly also urged the Council of Ministers to agree on priority actions to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights by 2015 and to start developing a European convention on sexual and reproductive health.

2. Portuguese Centre-Right MP introduces Beijing + 15 Motion for a Resolution at the Council of Europe

The new Chairperson of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), **Hon. José Mendes Bota, MP** (EPP, Portugal) introduced a new Motion for a Resolution entitled “Europe and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: 15 years later” during the Assembly’s January Session held in Strasbourg.

The Motion, which is the first step in initiating a new parliamentary report, notes the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action - the global community’s most comprehensive policy document for the empowerment of women and gender equality - in most of the Council of Europe Member States. Areas of progress have been women’s participation in the labour market; women’s political participation at local level, new and strengthened legislation to combat violence against women and domestic violence as well as improved institutional mechanisms on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

However, progress has been uneven and the motion raises a range of persistent challenges of de facto implementation of gender equality in Council of Europe Member States. These include the gender pay gap, implementation of gender equality legislation, the situation of migrant women and women belonging to

minority groups, persisting gender stereotypes especially in the media and in education, the lack of sex-disaggregated and qualitative data and the lack of gender-sensitive indicators.

In its requirements, the Assembly urges the Committee of Ministers to examine the progress made by the Member States on the twelve areas of concern mentioned in the Platform for Action and to present concrete measures to fulfill their commitments in the coming years. It also calls upon its members to further develop the annual review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to use existing indicators and reports as a basis for new initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality. Finally, it urges Member States to systematically implement and monitor gender mainstreaming in legislative, budgetary and other important processes, strategies and programmes.

The Motion of a Resolution has been signed by 20 Parliamentarians from across Europe and including the whole political spectrum, which entitles it to be considered by the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly in April 2010. Once approved by the Bureau the Motion will be referred to the corresponding Committee for drafting the Report and the Resolution.

The online version will soon be available here:

http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/DocListing_E.asp (Parliamentary Assembly Working Documents)

For more information on the Council of Europe developments, please contact: Marina Davidashvili at: Marina@iefpd.org

VI. EPF – Visibility

1. Joint DSW/EPF Study EuroMapping launched in Romania

On 10th December 2009, the Society for Contraceptive and Sexual Education (SECS) which is the Romanian implementing partner of the EPF/DSW Euromapping project, organised and hosted a Conference entitled “Romania’s ranking among official development assistance donor states”. During the Conference, the participants examined the results of the EuroMapping 2009 study, which provides an overview of comparative contributions and detailed information about the EU and its member countries’ individual performance in terms of Development Aid and Population Assistance over the years. The study was presented by Mr. Miguel Ongil, EPF Programme Officer. In his contribution to the debate, **Senator Șerban Rădulescu**, Member of the Sub-committee for Population and Development and Member of EPF’s Malaria Taskforce, mentioned the initiatives of the Sub-committee’s which aim to raise awareness on Romania’s new role and responsibilities as ODA donor country. He underlined the need for Romania to increase and expand the scope of its ODA for health and to make efforts to increase the number of beneficiary countries. In this context, **Senator Rădulescu** shared his knowledge, experience and lessons learnt following his participation in the Parliamentary follow-up Study Tour to Cameroon on Malaria, and to the 2009 International Parliamentarians’ Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action that was held in Cairo. He also expressed the commitment of the Sub-committee’s members to develop a closer relationship with Romanian civil society organisations in promoting the Cairo Agenda and MDG 5.



For more information about EuroMapping 2009, please contact **Miguel Ongil**, EPF Programme Officer at: Miguel@iefpd.org or visit <http://www.euroresources.org/euromapping>.

2. EPF features in the Cameroon Coalition Against Malaria (CCAM) Magazine

In its bi-annual Magazine entitled "About Malaria", a double page article highlights CCAM's activities over the past three years, including a specific mention of EPF study tours to Cameroon hosted by CCAM in August 2007 and March 2009.

The article's picture specifically highlights the warm welcome EPF's Parliamentary Delegation received in Akonolinga with EPF's Malaria Taskforce members **Hon. Katia della Faille, MP (Belgium)** and **Senator Serban Radulescu (Romania)** enjoying the local music. The article is also quoting EPF's Malaria Taskforce member **Hon. Heli Järvinen, MP (Finland)** who participated in EPF's follow-up study tour to Cameroon on malaria, emphasising the need for Cameroon to be more transparent in terms of budget management.

SPECIAL REPORT
CCAM'S 3-YEAR MARATHON

After 3 years, is CCAM winning the war against malaria in Cameroon? Akere-Maino J. Ano-Ebi reports

THE GREAT FIGHT Against malaria, the world's deadliest disease, has been a long and arduous journey for the Cameroon Coalition Against Malaria (CCAM). In its third issue, the magazine "About Malaria" highlights the progress made over the past three years, from the initial formation of the coalition to the implementation of various control strategies. The article, written by Akere-Maino J. Ano-Ebi, details the challenges faced by the coalition, including limited resources and the need for greater transparency in budget management. It also features a photograph of EPF's Malaria Taskforce members, Hon. Katia della Faille and Senator Serban Radulescu, enjoying local music in Akonolinga.

3. EPF work and initiatives presented to Belgian MPs engaged in global health issues

On the initiative of **Hon. Hilde Vautmans**, Belgian MP and EPF Executive Committee Member, EPF Secretary Neil Datta introduced the Forum's work, priorities and initiatives to a selection of MPs already engaged in development cooperation and global health issues (**Hon. Maya Detiège, Hon. Jean Cornil, Hon. Georges Dallemagne and Hon. Xavier Baeselen**). The meeting specifically focused on a range of political parties which remain underrepresented within the All Party Parliamentary Group "Parliamentarians for the MDGs" chaired by Belgian Senator Alain Destexhe such as the Socialist Party, as well as the centre-right CDH and MR.



The above-mentioned MPs were particularly interested in activities centering around climate change, the criminalisation of homosexuality in developing countries as well as on EPF's approach on working with local parliamentarians. The meeting also provided a good opportunity to illustrate the influence and benefits of interparliamentary cooperation while Hon. Hilde Vautmans insisted on the remaining need for increased visibility and recalled the coming challenges and priorities for the Belgian parliamentary group in line with the 2010 Belgian EU Presidency (2nd semester of the year).

Concluding the event, EPF representatives advocated for an increased parliamentary engagement on population and development issues for they are at the heart of developing countries' lives and therefore must be at the heart of poverty reduction strategies.

VII. EPF – EU Affairs

1. New Working Group on Innovation, Access to Medicines and Poverty-Related Diseases established in the European Parliament

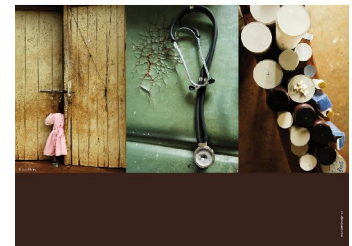
On 27 January 2010, the launch of the new EPWG on Innovation, Access to Medicines and Poverty Related Diseases gathered approximately 100 people, including members of the European Parliament (MEPs), representatives of the European Commission, international organisations, UN agencies, pharmaceutical industries, as well as health-related experts and civil society organisations. This new EPWG aims to serve as a discussion forum between MEPs, the European Commission and civil society so as to better integrate the European Union's response on health related issues, specifically on HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other neglected diseases, as well as to ensure coherent policies on these topics.

European Parliament
Working Group on Innovation,
Access to Medicines
and Poverty-Related Diseases

Putting Patients' Needs First:
Supporting better innovation, access to medicines
and healthcare to combat poverty related diseases

The key objectives of this working group are to:

- provide a forum for innovation, access to medicines and health issues related to HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other neglected diseases
- create a focal point for MEPs and policy officials where civil society can act as a source of information sharing field and policy experience
- better integrate the EU response on HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria and health-related issues
- raise the profile of poverty-related diseases amongst EU policy makers and third parties



In the near future, round tables will be organised quarterly on specific issues such as access to medicines, Research & Development into new drugs for neglected diseases, the seizure of generics in transit by customs officials, the UNITAID HIV drug patent pool, and free trade agreements.

The Chair of this new Working Group is **Hon. David Martin, MEP (S&D, UK)** and the Co-Chairs are **Hon. Kader Arif, MEP (S&D, FR)**, **Hon. Niccolò Rinaldi, MEP (ALDE, IT)**, **Hon. Carl Schlyter (Greens/EFA, SE)**, and **Hon. Eleni Theocharous, MEP (EPP, CY)**. The Secretariat will be provided by Médecins Sans Frontières' Access to Essential Medicines Campaign and Global Health Advocates.

2. European Parliament fails EU Commissioner-designate for Humanitarian Aid during Commission hearings



The "grilling" of the Commissioner's-designate by the European Parliament is one of the highlights during the Parliamentary term. During most of January, Members of the European Parliament were busy questioning the new Commissioner's-designate during 3 hour sessions about their priorities, their portfolio knowledge and their vision for the coming 5 years (the duration of a Commission's term). The aim of these hearings is to examine whether the 27 individuals (one per EU Member State) that will eventually make up the College of Commissioners have the necessary qualifications and personality for this task. The candidates are proposed by their respective Member States and have to be approved by the European Parliament. The College of Commissioners can only be approved as a whole which means that all candidates have to prevail before Parliament. As in past years, several Commissioners were re-questioned after an unsatisfactory performance and one candidate, the Commissioner-designate for Humanitarian Aid, Ms Rumiana Jeleva (Bulgaria) had to withdraw after the majority of political parties had signalled not to support her candidacy. The new Bulgarian candidate, Ms Kristalina Georgieva, currently Vice-President of the Worldbank passed the hearing on February, 3rd with bravour. On 9 February, the European Parliament will approve the new European Commission which will then start working immediately. Commissioners important for our policy field include:

- **Mr. Andris Piebalgs** (Latvia), Commissioner for Development Cooperation (previously Commissioner for Energy)
- **Ms Kristalina Georgieva** (Bulgaria), Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response (former Vice-President of the Worldbank)
- **Ms Catherine Ashton** (UK), High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission (Former Commissioner for International Trade)
- **Mr John Dally** (Malta), Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy (Former Minister for Health)
- **Ms Viviane Reding** (Luxemburg), Vice-President, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights, and Citizenship (Former Commissioner for Information Society and Media)

For a complete overview of the new College of Commissioners, their portfolios and their profile, click [here](#).

VIII. EPF Activities – Outlook 2010

- 1. Parliamentary Conference on Global Health, 1-3 March, Brussels/Belgium in co-operation with Action for Global Health (AfGH).** EPF will organise a one-day Parliamentary event on 1 March bringing together European MPs and Members of the European Parliament to discuss the role of MPs/MEPs in global health.
- 2. EPF Delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW), 1-12 March, New York/USA.** In the framework of the EPF Taskforce on the UN, EPF will bring a small parliamentary delegation to participate in the UN CSW and to learn more about how SRHR is being dealt with at UN level.
- 3. Women Deliver 2nd Global Conference, 7-9 June, Washington D.C./USA.** EPF will bring a parliamentary delegation to this high-level meeting in Washington D.C. to participate in a parliamentary side event.
- 4. G8/G20 Parliamentarians' Conference on Reproductive Health Supplies, 10-11 June 2010, Ottawa/Canada.** This 6th International Parliamentarians' Conference will bring together numerous MPs from around the world to discuss on Reproductive Health Supplies featuring in the G8/G20 Meeting of Heads of State and Government.
- 5. World AIDS Conference, 18-23 July, Vienna/Austria.** EPF will bring a parliamentary delegation to the World AIDS Conference and is currently exploring the possibility of organising a parliamentary side event around the World AIDS Conference.

Please note that the 2010 activities can be subject to change.



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.iefpd.org.

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

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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.

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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