

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 June 2009

1. G8 Parliamentarians' Conference urges G8 Leaders not to reduce ODA levels in light of the economic crisis and to deliver on commitments in women's and girl's health

Two weeks before the G8 Summit in L' Aquila, Italy, more than 100 Parliamentarians, representatives and experts of International Organisations and civil society organisation gathered for the fifth annual G8 Parliamentarians' Conference, held in Rome, Italy from 22-23 June 2009. This year the participants from the G8-countries, as well as from Africa and Asia, focused their discussions on "Strategic Investments in Times of Crisis – The Rewards of Making Women's Health a Priority".



This conference stands in the tradition of four respective Parliamentary Conferences in conjunction with the G8 Presidency of the UK (2005), Russia (2006), Germany (2007) and Japan (2008). It was kindly hosted by the Italian Parliamentary Working Group on Global Health and Women's Rights and organised by GCAP Italy, Action Aid, the Italian Association for Women in Development (AIDOS), the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) in co-operation with Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD), the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) and Interact Worldwide. The Conference provided a unique opportunity for the Parliamentarians present to interact and strategise on meeting G8 commitments with fellow devoted Parliamentarians from around the world, as well as Government representatives and international organisations such as UNFPA, WHO, IPPF, Population Council and the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC).

In her opening speech, Hon. Danielle Bousquet, MP, France and Member of the EPF Executive Committee warned that the current economic and financial crisis must not be used to compromise on the fight against poverty, hunger and women's and girl's sexual and reproductive health and rights in developing countries. Hon. Sibylle Pfeiffer, MP chairperson of DSW's Parliamentary Advisory Committee from the ruling German Christian Democratic Party, and Hon. Wakako Hironaka, MP and Vice-Chair of the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population delivered speeches on the outcomes of the G8-Summits 2007 and 2008 in Heiligendamm and Tokyo respectively and the actions which have been undertaken on improving global health, sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. Italian Senator Francesca Marinaro, Chair of the Italian Parliamentary Working Group on Global Health and Women's Rights emphasised that the outcome document will be submitted to the Italian G8 Sherpa to ensure adequate consideration by the G8 Heads of State and Government. Hon. Keith Martin, MP and Hon. John Rafferty, MP, both from Canada announced they would ensure G8 leaders will be held accountable to their health-related commitments and progress will be mapped at the upcoming G8 Summit which is planned to take place in Canada in 2010.

The parliamentarians concluded with a very strong and forward-looking statement, entitled the "Parliamentary Appeal to G8 Heads of State and Government" which will be delivered to the G8 Heads of State and Government and will also be published in the International Herald Tribune at the beginning of July. The declaration amongst others calls upon the G8 Heads of State not to reduce ODA levels in light of the economic crisis and to reaffirm existing commitments to fund US\$ 60 Billion through Official Development Assistance for addressing the health-related needs in development countries over five years including support for health systems strengthening and efforts to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and malaria based on concrete action plans and clear timetables, to invest in maternal and infant health as being the most cost-effective way to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and to promote gender equality by enacting development policies which protect young girls and their rights, educate young girls and boys, empower women and involve men in becoming active participants in the above.

More information about the conference, including the Parliamentary Appeal can be found at: [www.iepfpd.org](http://www.iepfpd.org)

## 2. APPGs Secretariats' Workshop on SRHR & Malaria in the House of Common, London, UK, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009

As a member of the European Alliance against Malaria, EPF organised a half day workshop on SRHR & Malaria aiming at providing key tools and examples of successful Parliamentary advocacy on malaria to NGOs acting as secretariat for EPF's member All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) on SRHR, HIV/AIDS, population and development. The meeting was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009 in the House of Commons and hosted by the Secretariat of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases (UK APPMG) in London, UK.

Gathering 15 participants, the workshop provided APPGs' Secretariats with a detailed technical briefing on the existing linkages between SRHR, HIV/AIDS, and malaria as well as with key tools for successful Parliamentary advocacy on malaria. WHO Expert, Dr Razia Pendse presented the existing linkages between SRHR and malaria, focusing specifically on the impact of malaria in pregnancy, while the researcher Dr Colin Sutherland highlighted the linkages and interaction between malaria and HIV/AIDS. The technical presentations were complemented with examples of EPF's Malaria Taskforce members' key achievements, including specific highlights from France, Spain and the UK. Recalling his complete passion for the issue of malaria, EPF's malaria Taskforce member and Chair of the UK APPMG, Hon. Stephen O'Brien, MP emphasised that before him, nobody was talking about malaria in the British Parliament. "There is a clear need to set the issue of malaria as a priority in the UK's development cooperation political agenda and in order to do this we need the support of people, and for me it is important that my constituents understand why I am engaged in



the fight against malaria. Most people want to know that you are sincere, honest and they want to be proud of their MPs”.

The workshop also emphasised possible advocacy strategies and approaches to integrate SRH, AIDS and Malaria in EU Policies and provided participants with guidelines and recommendations for mainstreaming malaria in their advocacy work. The workshop enabled participants to ask questions to technical experts, to exchange best practices, to increase their knowledge about successful parliamentary initiatives on malaria around Europe. Finally, it enabled participants to have a concrete overview of coherent and efficient advocacy tools and strategies towards achieving health MDGs.

For more information, please contact Ms Silvia Theodoridis, EU Advocacy Officer at: [Silvia@iepfpd.org](mailto:Silvia@iepfpd.org)

## II. APPG Affairs

### 1. 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting of the World Population Conference, Bucharest, Romania

On 17 June 2009, the Senatorial Subcommittee on Population and Development, under the high patronage of the President of the Senate of Romania and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) organised a meeting commemorating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Population Conference, Bucharest.

Members of the Parliamentary Subcommittee, experts on population and development issues (health, work, family and social protection, human rights and religious minorities, defence, public order and national security), academics and representatives from the Romanian Presidency and Government, the European Commission, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development, the United Nations and relevant national civil society organisations participated in the meeting.



The conference focused on of the World Population Conference and its impact on population policies, demographic growth since 1974, progress and prospects for the world population and development cooperation policies, the role and contribution of Parliamentarians and parliamentary structures as well as the impact of the financial crisis. Hon. Danielle Bousquet, MP (France) and EPF Executive Committee Member spoke about the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights as an important aspect of population policies that needs to be placed high on the political agenda. The conference also emphasised the important role parliaments have in shaping the new development aid architecture.

For a full report of the Conference, please contact Vincent Villeneuve, EPF Advocacy Assistant at: [Vincent@iepfpd.org](mailto:Vincent@iepfpd.org)

### 2. Finnish APPG meeting on the implementation of the Finnish development cooperation programme

On June 4<sup>th</sup> 2009, the Finnish APPG held a meeting on how the cross cutting issues identified in the Finnish development policy programme (rights and status of women and girls, gender equality, rights of vulnerable groups (esp. children, ethnic minorities, disabled) and fight against HIV and AIDS) have been implemented in the Finnish development cooperation programme. There have been two evaluations recently on this issue and the lead evaluator of both evaluations were heard as well as representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) who highlighted how the Ministry will take the recommendations of the two evaluations into consideration. Participants to the meeting included Parliamentarians and development NGOs.



Both evaluations showed that Finland has not been successful in the implementation of the cross cutting issues. The MFA is now intensifying its efforts to get proper protocols and instructions, resources, monitoring and evaluation systems in place to improve the implementation.

Executive Committee member Hon. Minna Sirnö, MP was selected as “Sexiest MEP” candidate in an IPPF EN campaign in which Väestöliitto participated. This campaign aimed at informing EP candidates about the need for a strong engagement in SRHR at European level and generated a lot of media attention before and after the actual award giving event which took place on 2 June 2009.



### III. Malaria News

#### 1. EAAM End of Project Event - "Counting Malaria Out: What role for EU stakeholders in meeting the global malaria action plan's objectives?"

In the past decade the malaria landscape has been transformed due to greater and innovative funding, collaboration and scaling up of control efforts. The European Union has taken an important role in these reaffirmed commitments. Malaria as a global health issue has been integrated in the European development agenda and some EU Member States have taken the lead in promoting new mechanisms and initiatives to combat the disease. Yet, despite progress in reducing illness and death, each year hundreds of thousands of women and children continue to die from this preventable and curable disease and malaria continues to impose an enormous economic burden on families, communities and entire countries in Africa.



A few days before the G8 summit in Italy and one year before the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership's target for halving the malaria burden and reaching universal coverage, the need to encourage stronger funding and policy commitments for the fight against malaria and the achievement of the Global Malaria Action Plan for a malaria-free world (GMAP) by the European Union, the major donor on development issues, is greater than ever. In order to support the existing momentum around malaria in Europe and promote the need for increased funding and better programming, the European Alliance Against Malaria held a conference entitled "Counting Malaria Out: What role for EU stakeholders in meeting the global malaria action plan's objectives?"

The event took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> June, at the IFRC headquarters in Geneva. It offered malaria advocates a great opportunity to share experiences and to focus on the contributions made by EU Member States and institutions to the fight against malaria, ways to improve on progress made and coordinate at international level to further meet the GMAP objectives and on the challenges and opportunities for European donors in terms of financial and political commitments. More than 90 participants from all over Europe attended this very fruitful event which resulted in a list of key recommendations to the European donor countries and a draft strategy for future malaria advocacy in Europe.

EPF's Malaria Taskforce member Hon. Karl Addicks, MP (Germany) and Senator Elvira Velasco, member of the Spanish APPG on Population and Development attended the Seminar. Despite the end of the EAAM Project, EPF's Malaria Taskforce will remain the focal and unique setting for Parliamentarians engaged in the fight against malaria.

EPF will be releasing a publication on "Successful Parliamentary Advocacy on Malaria" highlighting key achievements and the best practices from EPF's Malaria Taskforce. The publication will be available in English, French, German and Spanish.

For more information, please contact Ms Silvia Theodoridis, EU Advocacy Officer at: [Silvia@iepfpd.org](mailto:Silvia@iepfpd.org)

## IV. European Parliament – Special Elections

European Elections signal loss of tradition “pro-SRHR base”.

The European Parliament elections which have just taken place signal a set of new dynamics between political parties in the European Union and reveal many important lessons which advocates for the ICPD agenda and more broadly for global health and women's rights would be wise to take note of. At a practical level, the new composition of the European Parliament will have a significant impact on how SRHR are handled at EU level, requiring building a new set of alliances across political parties.

While the conservative/centre-right parties, despite some losses, were the clear winners in 21 out of the EU's 27 Member States, centre-left socialist/social-democratic parties are the clear losers of the elections. Where they are in government such as Spain and Portugal, they did not succeed in mobilising their voters sufficiently resulting in centre-right victories. Where the centre-left is in opposition such as France and Italy, they failed to convince voters to support them. The centre-left party which suffered the most was the UK's Labour party coming in 3rd after the Conservatives and the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party. Significant gains are made by Green parties across many Member States and Liberal parties also fared very well. Unfortunately, populist and sometimes extremist parties made significant inroads in a number of countries, most noteworthy in the UK, the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Austria.



### What do these developments mean for SRHR advocacy in the new European Parliament?

Support in the EP for SRHR has traditionally come from well known sources and over the past few years a clear voting pattern emerged, best exemplified by the vote on the EP Resolution on MDG5 in October 2008. The pattern of support for SRHR required a socialist-liberal-green-left alliance, combined with an equally important division within the centre-right (EPP) and right. With the clear swing in favour of the centre-right, the traditional 'pro-SRHR' alliance of socialists-liberals-greens-left will have 44% in the EP, compared to 51% in the 2004-2009 period. Therefore, the traditional 'pro-SRHR' will have lost its absolute majority and will now depend to a greater extent on support from centre-right parties such as the EPP.

For the first time, to win a simple majority vote in the EP on SRHR will require a defection to a pro-SRHR position by at least 44 members of the EPP (or other centre-right parties such as the UK Tories or others currently 'non-aligned'). With the departure of the UK Conservatives, the EPP is now perhaps a more 'homogenous' political group, raising questions about the possibility of generating significant defections from party positions.

While there are no clear party positions on SRHR within the EPP group, the largest constituent members of the EPP are the German CDU/CSU (42), Italian PdL/UDC (35), French UMP (30) and Polish PO/PSL (28) and can therefore be expected to take on a leadership role within the EPP. The German, Italian and Polish conservative parties in the EPP have all shown on previous occasions a nearly unanimous voting record against SRHR.

Discussions and negotiations are still taking place about which individuals will take up their seats in the European Parliament when it convenes for a first time on 14 July. EPF will follow up with an analysis of the MEPs who are coming in, coming back and leaving the EP who are important for the ICPD, SRHR and global health community.

More information on the results of the European Parliament elections can be found on our website at: [www.iepfpd.org](http://www.iepfpd.org) or at <http://www.elections2009-results.eu/>.

Here is a brief overview about who of our partners in the European Parliament we have worked with are

BACK	IN FOR THE FIRST TIME	LEAVING
Thijs Berman, MEP (PSE, Netherlands)	Eleni Theocharus, MEP (EPP, Cyprus)	Anne Van Lancker, MEP (PSE, Belgium)
Françoise Castex, MEP (PSE, France)	Cecilia Wikström, MEP (ALDE, Sweden)	Glenys Kinnock, MEP (PSE, UK)
Ana Gomes, MEP (PSE, Portugal)		Lissy Gröner, MEP (PSE, Germany)
Sophie in't Veld (ALDE, Netherlands)		Neena Gill, MEP (PSE, UK)
Jean Lambert, MEP (Greens, UK)		
Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, MEP (ALDE, Germany)		
Miguel Angel Martinez Martinez, MEP (PSE, Spain)		
Veronique Mathieu, MEP (EPP, France)		
Raul Romeva i Rueda, MEP (Greens, Spain)		

## V. EPF Activities – Outlook 2009:

### 1. Young Decision Makers Study Tour 31 July – 9 August 2009, Uganda

This study tour is organised in collaboration with Sex and Samfund under the Countdown 2015 project. It will raise awareness and educate Young Decision Makers on the unmet SRHR needs of the Uganda population and places a special emphasis on the availability of and access to reproductive health supplies.

### 2. Fourth International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, 26-27 October 2009, Addis Ababa/Ethiopia

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](http://www.iepfpd.org).

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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