

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 March 2009

1. Conference on Climate and People: To what extent are climate change and population dynamics interrelated and what can European policy makers do about this?" Oslo, Norway



From 23-24 March 2009, more than 60 Members of Parliament across Europe and Asia, representatives from International Organisations such as UNFPA, and researchers on SRHR gathered in Oslo/Norway to discuss: To what extent are climate change and population dynamics interrelated and what can European policy makers do about this?

The conference was organised in the framework of Countdown 2015 Europe, by the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF), the Norwegian All-Party Parliamentary Group: Norsk forening for seksualitet, samliv og reproduktiv helse and the Norwegian Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (NSRR). The 2-day conference generated an understanding of the need to include health issues and family planning in the discussion about climate change, in order to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

The links between population and climate change are complex and varied. While looking at the production of carbon dioxide and population growth in the countries, it is apparent that the wealthiest countries have the slowest population growth but the highest emissions of carbon dioxide. Conversely, the developing countries with a rapid population growth have the lowest emission in carbon dioxide. However, in the long run slowing down population growth will also have an impact. Large and poor families put pressure on the environment with an increasing need for fuel such as wood, and also water and other basic needs. Unintended pregnancies is the factor in population growth most open to programme and policy interventions. Preventing

unwanted pregnancies through voluntary family planning and guaranteeing people's right to reproductive health supplies can help slow population growth and moderate its environmental impact.

Members of Parliament from Laos (Hon. Phommasack Ty) and Iran (Hon. Ahmad-Ali Keikhah) shared their experience of dealing with the effects of climate change in their respective countries, making the link between the increasing demand for water and population growth and the need for Reproductive Health Supplies and Family planning in order to tackle the increasing impact of climate change in certain regions of the world. Members of Parliament from Bulgaria (Hon. Latchezar Toshev) and Austria (Hon. Yvonne Gilli) shared best practices in tackling the unmet need for family planning, strengthen health systems and integrate population factors into their strategies on the environment and climate change.

For more information about the conference, please contact Saskia Pfeijffer at: [Saskia@iepfpd.org](mailto:Saskia@iepfpd.org)

## II. Parliamentary Leadership

### 1. Irish MP questions Minister of Foreign Affairs on family planning and reproductive health services

Hon. Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, TD posed a parliamentary question (PQ) to the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs questioning him on the amount of funds allocated through Irish Aid for the provision of family planning, reproductive health services and commodities in the years 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008. A second question dealt with the steps the Minister has taken to achieve the new 2005 Millennium Development Goal target 5B of universal access to reproductive health care.

In answering, the Minister underlines that "the Government's 2006 White Paper on Irish Aid outlines our commitment to supporting the specific health needs of women within our overall approach to health in developing countries. It makes clear that addressing women's health needs, particularly in the areas of basic healthcare and maternal and reproductive health, must lie at the heart of an effective overall response to improving health in developing countries".



The minister also highlighted that "the Government, through Irish Aid, works with several partner agencies in the UN system to address maternal health issues. One of the main obstacles to the achievement of universal access to reproductive health is the lack of empowerment of women in developing countries. The issues involved form the core mandate of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with which Irish Aid has a close relationship. In recognition of its important mandate, the Government has contributed substantially to the core funding of UNFPA in recent years - €2.9 million in 2005, €3.1 million in 2006, €4.5 million in 2007 and €4.5 million in 2008. In 2006 the Government also contributed €0.5 million to the UNFPA Trust Fund for Global Reproductive Health Commodities Security, with further contributions of €1 million in 2007 and €1 million in 2008. In 2007, we also contributed €2 million to the UNFPA Trust Fund on Maternal Health, €0.5 million to the Fistula Thematic Trust Fund and €0.5 million to a joint UNFPA and UNICEF project on Female Genital Mutilation. In total, over the three years 2005 – 2008, Ireland has contributed €20.5 million to UNFPA".

The minister concluded by stating that "in recognition of the importance of its work on gender, reproductive health, maternal mortality and HIV and AIDS, Ireland is one of five international donors to have signed a multi-annual framework agreement with UNFPA to recognise shared objectives and ensure predictable funding for the years 2008 -2011".

### 2. Hon. Christine McCafferty, MP questions UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on UN CPD and UN CSW

In light of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW) that was held from 2-13 March at UN Headquarters in New York and the upcoming UN Commission on Population and Development (UN CPD) that will be held from 30 March - 3 April in New York, Hon. Christine McCafferty, MP questioned the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on his department's objectives for both Commissions, on who will represent the UK during the sessions and how the department intends to report back to MPs on the results of both meetings.



In replying, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs stated that for the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development the Government aims to ensure that the UN is effective in promoting the International Commission on Population and Development (ICPD) Platform of Action in order to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, girls, men and boys worldwide. In particular, during this Commission on Population and Development, the UK aims to:

- highlight the importance of focusing, during Millennium Development Goal (MDG) processes in 2010, on the key contribution that MDG target 5b (on universal access to reproductive health) makes to the achievement of not only MDG 5 but also goals pertaining to women's empowerment, poverty, child health and the environment;
- emphasise the need to re-invigorate the family planning agenda and to address unmet needs for family planning; and
- call attention to the value of and need for the full participation of all sectors-public, private and civil society-in processes and actions to achieve the ICPD goal of universal access to reproductive health by 2015.

The full answer to the questions can be found in the Annex to this newsletter.

### 3. Global Parliamentary Call to Action for ICPD+15 issued by a range of European APPGs

This year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ICPD. On this occasion, EPF in cooperation with Marie Stopes International (MSI) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) have drafted a "Global Parliamentary Call to Action for ICPD+15" in form of a parliamentary question that will be submitted by Members of Parliament to their Ministers for Development all over the world. The aim of this global call is to increase the awareness amongst governments - in donor and recipient countries - about the importance of access to reproductive health and family planning as international agreed development objectives. It is planned to present the Minister's answers to this Global Parliamentary Question on ICPD during the International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD that will be held from 27-28 October 2009 in Cairo/Egypt.

A range of European APPGs have already taken action and submitted the call to their relevant Ministers. Amongst them, Hon. Yvonne Gilli, MP who submitted the call on behalf of the Swiss Parliamentary Group Caire+, Hon. Petra Bayr, MP who submitted the call on behalf of the Austrian Parliamentary Group, Hon. Malahat Ibrahimkizi, MP has discussed the call within the Azeri Parliamentary Group and will submit it to the relevant Ministry and the Finnish Parliamentary Group is also committed to raise this question with their relevant Minister.

## III. APPG Affairs

### 1. Meeting of the Swiss Parliamentary Group Caire+ on ICPD+15

On Tuesday 10 March 2009, the Swiss parliamentary group Caire+ held a meeting with ICPD+15 as a main theme. The meeting gathered 19 group members and other guests such as representatives of the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Federal Office for Gender equality, the Swiss Aids Federation as well as a journalist of the news agency Infosüd. As a key speaker, Ms Leyla Alyanak from UNFPA Geneva provided parliamentarians with additional information about the ICPD Programme of Action, evaluated the situation and defined the challenges for the remaining five years to go connected to MDG5. Referring to this, Ms Nathalie Vesco from the SDC presented the situation and related activities of Switzerland. She mentioned that since the reorganisation of the SDC in 2008, the long-term strategies of the SDC regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights still remain an open question.



Following the meeting and with the support of 44 other parliamentarians, MP Yvonne Gilli, co-president of Caire+, deposited an interpellation to the Bundesrat about the activities of Switzerland regarding ICPD+15 and MDG5 as well as the financial commitments of Switzerland in this area.

To view the press release, please see: [http://www.plan-s.ch/IMG/pdf\\_MedienmitteilungKairo\\_Mar2009.pdf](http://www.plan-s.ch/IMG/pdf_MedienmitteilungKairo_Mar2009.pdf)

### 2. Spanish APPGs' Working Lunch on Malaria with Dr Pedro Alonso

On Tuesday 17 March 2009, the Spanish Federation for Family Planning (FPFE) organised a working lunch with a specific focus on malaria for Spanish Parliamentarians who are members of various APPGs throughout Spain. As a guest speaker, Dr Pedro Alonso, Researcher and founder of the Manhica Health Research Centre in Mozambique, provided Parliamentarians with a clear description of the current prevention and treatment strategies for malaria control as well as with an overview of the current status of malaria research, including the challenges towards the development of a malaria vaccine. "Why hasn't anyone developed a malaria vaccine before now? The problem is that the parasite is so biologically complex that it's difficult to prime the immune system to fight it off and part is that most of its victims are so poor that drug companies are reluctant to take experimental vaccines out of their lab and into the field for human trials" he said. Dr Pedro Alonso highlighted that even if there is a malaria vaccine developed in the near future, it should be used in combination and in addition to existing malaria control strategies.

The discussions enabled to highlight that despite some progress in reducing child and maternal mortality, much more efforts still need to be provided by Spain and the international community. Dr Alonso stressed the necessity to promote innovative funding mechanisms and increase countries' contribution to the Global Fund. Regarding Spain, Dr Pedro Alonso emphasised that there is a clear lack of funding and health experts in the Spanish Development Agency (AECI): "AECI needs an additional 3 million Euros for long-term and sustainable funding for health-related programmes" he said. In addition, MPs mentioned that good governance and lack of transparency of the funds channelled through general budget support were among key issues they would like to look into.



MP Carmen Monton and Senator Elvira Velasco Morillo attended, as well as EPF Malaria Taskforce member MP María Rosa Fortuny who was invited to share her experience and lessons learned during EPF's study tour to Tanzania on malaria research, held in November 2007. Since then, MP María Rosa Fortuny became an outspoken advocate on the fight against malaria in the Catalan Parliament. Participating Parliamentarians included MP Fatima Aburto Baselga, MP Carles Campuzano i Canades, MP Alberto Fidalgo Francisco, MP Maria Antonia Garcia Valls, MP Adolfo Luis González Rodríguez, MP Carmen Montón Jiménez, MP Maria Rosa Fortuny i Torroella, MP Gervasio Josu Iñaki Erkoreka, Senator Elvira Velasco Morillo, and MP Jordi Xucla i Costa.

### IV. EPF - European Parliament Relations



1. MEPs adopted a European Parliament resolution on an approach to "EC development assistance to health services in sub-Saharan Africa"

During the plenary session held on 12 March 2009 in Strasbourg, MEPs adopted a non-binding resolution on an approach to "EC development assistance to health services in sub-Saharan Africa". The motion was initiated by Hon. Josep Borrell Fontelles MEP on behalf of the Committee on Development following the critical Court of Auditors Special Report No 10/2008 on "EC Development Assistance to Health Services in sub-Saharan Africa" aiming at assessing how effective EC assistance has been since 2000 in contributing to improving health services in sub-Saharan Africa in the context of the EC's commitments to poverty reduction and the MDGs. The European Parliament resolution which was adopted with a very large majority (555 votes in favour, 8 votes against, and 11 abstentions), emphasises the need for the EC to increase funding for health, and particularly health services in Sub-Saharan Africa. Among key recommendations, MEPs recalled the importance of strengthening health systems, ensuring sufficient health expertise, staff resources and capacity in EC Delegations in order to provide technical assistance support to the Global Fund at country level. MEPs also emphasised the need for a greater parliamentary scrutiny and oversight of development spending by bringing the EDF within the EU budget, and making a greater use of general and sectoral budget support for strengthening healthcare, using better monitoring tools and indicators. Finally, they stressed the importance of building capacity in the South, encouraging partner countries to select health as a focal sector and donor countries to implement a better division of labour.



In addition, MEP Josep Borrell Fontelles, Chair of Development Committee submitted an "oral question with debate" to the European Commission on "the Court of Auditors Report N° 10/2008 on the EC Development Assistance to Health Services in Sub-Saharan Africa" to be discussed in the next plenary session.

The full text is available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0138+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

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## V. EPF – Council of Europe Relations

1. EPF invited as an Expert to the first reading of the Draft Report “15 years since the Programme of Action of ICPD” of the PACE Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ICPD PoA, Hon. Christine McCafferty, MP and Chair of the PACE Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee drafted a report and a recommendation on advancing the Cairo Programme of Action in the Council of Europe Members states and in the developing countries, which are recipients of donor aid. EPF cooperated with the PACE in providing evidence to the report and participated as an expert at the first exchange of views at the Committee Meeting, which took place on 11 March in Paris. Neil Datta, EPF Secretary represented EPF at the hearing and addressed the Parliamentarians on the persisting challenges in achieving the goals of ICPD PoA. In particular he spoke about the gaps in funding for ICPD PoA and stressed that more than 100



million married women in developing countries have an unmet need for contraception. At the same time in the number of Council of Europe Members states, such as Albania, Azerbaijan and Russian Federation, maternal mortality is still high. Neil Datta drew the attention of Parliamentarians to the fact, that while the population assistance of OECD Members states dramatically increased from 1995 to 2005, most of it went to HIV/AIDS and funds for family planning represent the second smallest percentage of the total. Other invited experts included IPPF EN and UNFPA. More than 25 Parliamentarians – Members of the Committee debated about the draft report and agreed that in spite of financial crisis, the levels of development aid should be kept and the earlier made commitments fulfilled. With regard to the situation in the Council of Europe Member States, Parliamentarians noted the urgent need to introduce more family friendly benefits to allow families to reconcile work and family life.

The text of the Motion for a Recommendation is available:

<http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/workingdocs/doc08/edoc11750.htm>

The text of the Draft report will soon be available at PACE website:

[http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Search/PACEWebItemSearchDoc\\_E.asp](http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Search/PACEWebItemSearchDoc_E.asp)

For more information, please contact Marina Davidashvili at: [marina@iepfpd.org](mailto:marina@iepfpd.org)

## 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. EU Parliament launches €18m election campaign

The main aim of the Parliament's campaign, developed by a Berlin-based advertising firm, is to encourage the public to vote in the upcoming European elections. In the last election, in 2004, turnout fell to a low of 45.5 per cent although in five Member States it increased compared to previous elections. This included the UK where participation rose from 24 per cent in 1999 to 38.5 per cent.



Carrying the slogan, "European elections: it's your choice", the campaign will feature a range of events, including road shows in the UK and Ireland and adverts on 15,000 billboards and public transport in all EU member states. A total of 36 video recording booths where citizens can record a message about what they think of the EU, and the parliament in particular, will be moved around different countries. The messages will be relayed to the parliament for a response from leaders of the each of the political groups on EuroparTV, the institution's own TV channel. For more information on the election campaign, including a communication toolkit, click [here](#).

### 2. UK Tories will leave the European Peoples Party in the European Parliament

The UK's Conservative Party has confirmed to the European People's Party - the main centre-right grouping in the European Parliament - that it intends to leave and form a new political grouping in the chamber. Tory leader David Cameron in 2005 during his leadership campaign had pledged to leave the parliament's centre-right political family due to his party's disagreement with its support for the Lisbon Treaty and, more generally, for its euro-federalist orientation.



Though the British Tories are committed to remaining in the European Union, euroscepticism has long flourished amongst their members of parliament, their voters and the conservative press in the UK. The move would also severely restrict the UK Tories participation in considering European legislation. The EPP is the largest grouping in the parliament and is expected to remain so after the June European elections. Outside the EPP, the UK party will have considerably reduced influence in the chamber. The UK public broadcaster reports that it has been told that the Tories intend to leave the EPP in May ahead of the

elections and will form an entirely new political grouping in the parliament after the results are known. The new political family may be called "European Conservatives".

Until now, speculation had suggested that if the Tories were to leave the EPP, they might join the second conservative grouping in the parliament, the Union for a Europe of the Nations (UEN). The UEN is an collection of centre-right parties such as Ireland's Fianna Fail and hard-right parties such as Italy's xenophobic Northern League and the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale. However, Fianna Fail is set to leave the UEN after the elections and join the centrist Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe (ALDE), while the two Italian parties have merged themselves with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's People of Freedom party, which is a member of the European People's Party, and will thus join the EPP in July.

Source: EU Observer.com

### 3. Flash Eurobarometer: Women think that European politics still is a male dominated world

On the eve of International Women's Day (8 March) and with the approaching European elections in June 2009, the European Parliament and the European Commission decided to carry out an in-depth study on female voters. The aim of this Flash Eurobarometer, conducted on a sample of more than 35,000 women and 5,500 men, was to discover the perception that women have of politics in general, on balancing work and personal life, their perception of the European Union, the role of the European Parliament, as well as their motivations when voting. In the majority of answers, two characteristics are evident: large differences between Member States and a relatively high share of "Don't Know" answers. The results of that study proved that women are more selective in their choice of priority policies to be defended by the EP.



In addition, the poll showed that most women want the next European Parliament to guarantee equal pay for equal work, promote day care facilities for children, include child-minding years as pensionable years and combat violence towards women. Differences in this area persist on a national basis, with women in Slovenia, the Netherlands and Romania considering that their personal lives were least hindered by work obligations, and at the other end of the spectrum women in Greece, France and Slovakia finding it the hardest. Those with highest education levels were the ones most likely to say they find difficulties in reaching an adequate balance. Even though the poll shows significant variations among countries, a common view is that European politics is a male-dominated world, the percentage being especially high in the Czech Republic, Poland and Portugal. Additional research published on Wednesday showed that women also give priority to consumer protection and public health measures.

Most respondents would like to see more women in politics, up to half of the interviewees wishing to see at least 50% of MEPs being women, but only a minority, 10%, considering the use of mandatory quotas to be effective. When choosing a candidate, the most important factor for women is experience in European issues, 10 points above political orientations. In deciding their vote, 37% says they decide on the basis of campaign issues, while 29% says that they always vote for the same party. For 25% of respondents, the personality of the candidates was the key factor. Men tend to give the same weight to experience and political orientation, according to the survey.

Please click [here](#) for the full results of the Flash Eurobarometer.



#### 4. New EU campaign to tackle gender pay gap

Latest figures show that on average across the EU women earn 17.4 per cent less than men. Launching the initiative in Brussels on 3 March, employment and social affairs commissioner Vladimír Špidla demanded action "at all levels" to address the problem. "In today's economic climate, equality between men and women is more important than ever. Only by reaping the potential of all our talents can we face up to the crisis," he said.



As part of the campaign, which comes ahead of international women's day on 8 March, the commission has launched the results of a new study on representation of women in European politics. The commission's report shows that women make up just 31 per cent of all parliament's 736 MEPs, 24 per cent of national parliaments and 25 per cent of national governments. According to the report, the central banks of all 27 member states are led by a male governor and the key decision-making bodies of these organisations comprise 83 per cent men and just 17 per cent women. In addition, "under-representation" of women at the top level is heightened in big business where men account for nearly 90 per cent of board members in leading companies - a figure which, it adds, has "barely improved" in recent years.

The commission says that, as well a gender pay gap, women still suffer "ongoing discrimination" in the labour market and that pay inequalities causes poverty in later life. According to Špidla "significant" gaps still remains in several areas. While the employment rate of women has risen steadily - 58.3 per cent for women against 72.5 per cent for men - women still work part-time more often than men - 31.2 per cent for women and 7.7 per cent for men.

Source: TheParliament.com

### VI. EPF Visibility

#### 1. EPF participates at the First UNFPA Regional Planning Meeting for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Bratislava on 17-19 March

Within the framework of the regionalisation of UNFPA, the Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia held its first Regional Planning Meeting, which took place in Bratislava from 17-19 March. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce and to mainstream new working modalities, discuss the region's specific nuances and the dynamics of the European Union and to liaise with regional partners. The meeting gathered UNFPA Headquarters staff, including UNFPA Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, over 33 regional UNFPA Heads of country offices as well as the newly created Bratislava Office Team. The new Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Ms. Thea Fierens, lead the meeting and the discussions.



Within the Roundtable on "ICPD+15" Neil Datta, EPF Secretary provided latest information on the political developments in terms of achieving the goals of ICPD and alerted the participants on negative developments in terms of development aid in several EU countries. During the "External Workshop", Marina Davidashvili, EPF's Network and Knowledge Sharing Facilitator shared lessons learned in parliamentary advocacy in Eastern and Central Europe and especially referred to a number of success stories drawn from the 3 years EC/UNFPA Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in South Caucasus, to which EPF is a partner.

For more information, please contact Marina Davidashvili at [Marina@iepfpd.org](mailto:Marina@iepfpd.org).

## VII. EPF – United Nations Relations:

### 1. EU fails to speak with one voice during the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW) in New York

From 2-13 March, governments and civil society gathered at the United Nations to discuss “The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in care giving, including in the context of HIV/AIDS”. For the first time in some years, the United States government showed a renewed commitment towards advancing women’s human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. The United States reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Moreover, the United States fully recognized the 2005 World Summit and the Millennium Development Goals. The governments of United States, New Zealand and Canada took the lead in pushing for explicit language on comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in the context of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men as well as in care-giving and HIV/AIDS. Countries that supported these proposals were: Switzerland, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, and Turkey. Countries that opposed this language were: Syria, Iran, Qatar and Yemen, and to a lesser extent the Africa Group led by Egypt and the European Union. Like in 2008, Malta successfully blocked EU consensus on strong SRHR language.



It is important to note that the Africa Group as led by Egypt obstructed efforts to increase the visibility of the issues faced by Africa where women, often elder women, and girls, bear the disproportionate burden of caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS. Egypt took its usual position, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group, to limit strong language on women and girls’ rights, SRH, and sexuality education. An interesting fact at this CSW was the lack of facilitation skills of the facilitator himself, from Armenia, who got into virtual screaming matches with Syria, did not propose text to help advance the negotiations and wanted to drop all the paragraphs that had not been agreed upon at midday on the last day. These areas included the Gender Equality Architecture Reform paragraph, language around protecting women and girls from violence, gender stereotypes, and human rights.

Source: IWHC, IPPF WHR

## VIII. EPF Activities – Outlook 2009:

1. Study Tour to Cameroon on Malaria and EU Development Policy, 28 March – 4 April  
From 28 March until 04 April 2009, EPF is organising a Parliamentary study tour to Cameroon, offering insights into the latest progress and findings on reducing the malaria burden in the country. The study tour will provide an invaluable experience on the new methods and strategies in place to tackle the disease and will enable participating Parliamentarians to gain first-hand experience of the reality of the situation in a developing country.
2. Parliamentary Delegation to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development, 30 March – 3 April, New York, USA  
This delegation will take part in the framework of EPF's Parliamentary Taskforce dedicated to the UN 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. Next to the official CPD session, EPF will arrange a number of briefing meetings with UNFPA and UNDP representatives, the EC Delegation and NGOs.
3. Parliamentary Study Tour to Burkina Faso on Reproductive Health Supplies, 6-10 April, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso  
This study tour for French-speaking MPs is co-organised with Equilibres & Populations in the context of Countdown 2015. The study tour looks at the unmet SRHR needs of the Burkinabé population and places a special emphasis on the availability and access to reproductive health supplies.
4. 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.
5. APPGs' Secretariat Meeting on Parliamentary Advocacy on Malaria, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.
6. 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".
7. Fourth International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action Conference, 27-28 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 26 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).

As of 1 September, 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 European Alliance against Malaria
- Countdown 2015 Europe
- The Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus (RHIYC)
- The Steering Committee of the International Parliamentarians' Conference of the Implementation of the IPCI Programme of Action (IPCI/ICPD)
- The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition
- The Women Deliver Advisory Group

### EPF

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

## ANNEX

Parliamentary Questions by Hon. Christine McCafferty, MP on the UN CSW and the UN CPD

### United Nations

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what objectives his Department has set for outcomes from (a) the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and (b) the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development. [260459]

Gillian Merron [holding answer 4 March 2009]: The Government's overall objective for the 53rd Session on the UN Commission on the Status of Women is to evaluate progress on gender equality internationally, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide. This is particularly important in the current economic climate.

Throughout the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women, the Government will also be working to promote discussion of this year's priority theme on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, particularly in relation to the interrelated issues of care-giving and the gender pay gap.

For the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development the Government aims to ensure that the UN is effective in promoting the International Commission on Population and Development (ICPD) Platform of Action in order to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, girls, men and boys worldwide. In particular, during this Commission on Population and Development, the UK aims to:

- highlight the importance of focusing, during Millennium Development Goal (MDG) processes in 2010, on the key contribution that MDG target 5b (on universal access to reproductive health) makes to the achievement of not only MDG 5 but also goals pertaining to women's empowerment, poverty, child health and the environment;

- emphasise the need to re-invigorate the family planning agenda and to address unmet needs for family planning; and

- call attention to the value of and need for the full participation of all sectors-public, private and civil society-in processes and actions to achieve the ICPD goal of universal access to reproductive health by 2015.

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who the Government representatives at (a) the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and (b) the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development will be. [260460]

Gillian Merron [holding answer 4 March 2009]: The Government will be represented at the 53rd Session on the UN Commission on the Status of Women by officials from the Government Equalities Office, as the lead Department. They will be supported by an official from the Department for International Development (DFID) and a Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) official from the Our Mission to the UN in New York.

As in previous years the Government will be represented at the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development by FCO officials from the Our Mission to the UN in New York. They will be supported from London by DFID officials. The Government will be represented at the 53rd Session on the UN Commission on the Status of Women by officials from the Government Equalities Office, as the lead Department. They will be supported by an official from DFID and an FCO official from Our Mission to the UN in New York.

As in previous years the Government will be represented at the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development by FCO officials from Our Mission to the UN in New York. They will be supported from London by DFID officials.

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how he plans to report to hon. Members the outcomes of (a) the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and (b) the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development. [260458]

Gillian Merron [holding answer 4 March 2009]: The main outcome document of the UN Commission on the Status of Women is the agreed conclusions on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS. This will be disseminated across relevant Government departments. This and all other outcome documents are publicly available on the UN Commission on the Status of Women website at:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/agreedconclusions.html>

The outcome document of the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development will be disseminated to relevant Government departments. This document will be publicly available on the UN Commission on Population and Development website at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2009/comm2009.htm>

I will arrange for copies of the Outcome documents of the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the 42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development to be placed in the Library of the House.