

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 September 2008

1. EPF leads parliamentary fact finding mission to Georgia on Emergency Reproductive Health Needs of IDPs

On 19-20 September, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) led a Fact Finding Mission of European Parliamentarians to Georgia to assess the situation of reproductive health of internally displaced persons and to evaluate the health infrastructure needs of the country in the aftermath of the conflict between the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation. The mission has been organised on the invitation of Hon. George Tsereteli MP, Vice Chairperson of the Georgian Parliament and Member of EPF Executive Committee with the cooperation of the United Nations Population Fund in Georgia.



In Tbilisi, the Parliamentarians visited the temporary shelters of internally displaced persons living in schools and other public premises. Currently there are 128,000 new internally displaced persons in Georgia. Although many of them will be able to return back to their homes, the Government and international organisations estimated that about 31,000 persons will remain long-term IDPs as their home are now in South Ossetian controlled territory. Adding up with the internally displaced population from previous conflicts (223,000 IDPs) this newly displaced, will leave the country with the total of 254,000 internally displaced persons.

Four UNFPA Mobile RH Teams are attending 22 collective IDPs centres and an additional 5th Mobile Team is urgently needed to meet the needs of the population in this state of emergency. At the office of EC/UNFPA Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in South Caucasus (RHIYC), Parliamentarians witnessed the assembling of UNFPA RH "dignity kits", compiled by UNFPA staff and youth volunteers. They held meetings with the representatives of Government, Parliament and UN Coordination Unit for Humanitarian Response. Georgia is one of the best examples of the ongoing UN reform of humanitarian crisis response, where 12 UN agencies and 45 NGOs have joined their effort to provide support to the population in need.

In Gori the mission members visited the tent city, monitored by UN agencies and international organisations, specifically UNHCR, UNFPA and Red Cross. The tent city currently houses 1,200 persons, out of them 800 young people (2-20 years old). UNFPA Mobile Team is providing RH services to IDPs: 7 women have in the mean time delivered babies, 11 are currently pregnant and attended by Mobile Team's doctors and nurses. The Parliamentarians witnessed the distribution of UNFPA RH "dignity kits" to the IDPs. Further Parliamentarians attended the opening ceremony of new Youth Friendly Reproductive Health Centre at the local Gori University, established and launched within the framework of EC/UNFPA Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucasus. The centre will offer RH information, counselling, services and supplies to young people in the town. The delegation also met with the representatives of the local City Council and learned from doctors and school head masters about the urgent needs of the population after the conflict.

The Members of Delegation found necessary:

- ✓ To ensure that the reproductive health needs of women, pregnant women and infants are met. This includes family planning services and supplies, hygiene supplies and psychosocial counselling and care for the victims of sexual violence.
- ✓ To establish and launch the 5th Reproductive Health Mobile Team to serve the IDPs needs and to be able to still attend the rest of the population. The launch of the 5th Mobile Team will allow to provide more services and supplies as well as medical and psychosocial counselling to the IDPs, including the victims of violence.
- ✓ To create the new employment and income generating opportunities to people who have lost their regular occupation, including young people and to avoid the increase of crime or drug use. This includes free time occupation for young people.
- ✓ In schools to ensure that the necessary inventory for classes such as school books and other necessary items as well as transportation from collective centres to schools is provided.
- ✓ To direct funds to rehabilitation and reconstruction of the health infrastructure in the affected territories to ensure the soonest re-opening and regular functioning of the health care facilities.
- ✓ At the upcoming Donors' Conference in Brussels scheduled to take place in October 2008 to ensure that humanitarian needs of IDPs, notably social, health and reproductive health needs are adequately reflected and addressed in the donor commitments and that donor efforts are well coordinated and not overlapping.

The delegation included: Hon. Kirsten Brosbøl, MP (Denmark), Chairwoman of the Danish Cross-Party Network for Sexual Health, Hon. Neena Gill, MEP (UK), Member of the Committee on Legal Affairs of the European Parliament, Hon. Carina Hägg, MP (Sweden), Member of Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Swedish Parliament, the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and EPF Executive Committee, Hon. Jean Lambert, MEP (UK), Member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and EP's Working Group on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Development, Hon. Hilde Vautmans, MP (Belgium), Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Belgian Parliament and EPF Executive Committee Member, Dr. Wolfgang Wodarg, MP (Germany), Member of the Health Committee of the Bundestag Chair of the Health Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Ms. Louise Lee-Jones, (UK), Representative of RAISE Initiative on RH Access, Information and Services in Emergencies of Marie Stopes International.

II. Parliamentary Leadership

1. EPF Malaria Taskforce members advocate for an increased Parliamentary mobilisation to make malaria a disease from the past.

EPF's Malaria Taskforce members Hon. Françoise Castex, MEP (PSE, FR), Hon. Stephen O'Brien, MP (Conservative, UK) and M. Neil Datta, EPF Secretary, were invited to the 2 day Conference entitled "To decide is to win – together, let's make malaria a disease from the past" held in Paris from 9th to 11th September 2008, to present and highlight the key role Parliamentarians play in the fight against malaria. The Conference was organised by Friends of the Global Fund Europe, EPF's partner within the European Alliance Against Malaria, in cooperation with the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and Malaria Consortium.



The Conference provided the Coalition with an opportunity to present their activities, ways of working, projects, successes and the challenges they face. As a success story, the Cameroon Coalition Against Malaria (CCAM) took as key example EPF's Parliamentary Study Tour on Malaria to Cameroon they hosted in August 2007. Dr. Esther Tallah, CCAM Manager highlighted how beneficial and useful hosting and accompanying EPF's Parliamentary Delegation had been. "We were very happy to host EPF' Parliamentary Delegation, it really enabled us obtaining an increased visibility, credit and access to public institutions." She emphasised the profits and the main improvements made since then. "We continue working and providing technical support and expertise to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Malaria created during your stay in Cameroon" Dr. Esther Tallah added. She also congratulated the Spanish Parliamentarian who introduced a bill in the Spanish Congress paving the way for Spain to start funding malaria prevention, treatment and diagnosis, upon return from the study tour to Cameroon.

M. Neil Datta emphasised that this study tour to Cameroon on Malaria was particularly successful as it had been mutually beneficial for EPF's Parliamentary Delegation and for CCAM, the host organisation. M. Neil Datta highlighted the key role Parliamentarians play as law makers responsible for holding their Government accountable to their commitments. "Parliamentarians have three qualities: they are forced generalists, committed to improving society and ambitious!" "They play a key role in adopting legislation, in exercising budgetary control and policy monitoring and oversight" he added. He also highlighted that Parliamentarians generate visibility and therefore are providing visibility for the fight against malaria. As a member of EPF's Taskforce on Malaria, Hon. Françoise Castex, MEP provided an overview of the lessons learned during the several study tours she participated to. She mentioned that "Most of the 500 000 cases of maternal morbidity could be avoided thanks to basic health care and prevention tools, such as the distribution of insecticide treated nets to thousands of women". Hon. Françoise Castex, MEP and Hon. Stephen O'Brien, MP provided examples of successful Parliamentary follow-up actions Parliamentarians can undertake. Hon. Stephen O'Brien, MP mentioned "I asked 160 Parliamentary questions in the British Parliament". "We need to advocate for more and better aid and invite our Governments as well as the European Council and the European Commission to intensify their efforts in order to achieve the MDGs, and particularly MDG 5 and 6" Hon. Françoise Castex, MEP said. Finally, they mentioned the importance of the role of partnerships between the North and the South and the necessity to increase Parliamentary mobilisation in the North and in the South to make malaria a disease from the past.

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

2. Numerous EPF Delegation Members engage in follow-up activities after XVII International HIV/AIDS Conference in Mexico

Hon. Antje Blumenthal, MP (Germany) and EPF Executive Committee Member reported on the conference outcome within her party circles and discussed the HIV/AIDS and prevention topics especially with regard to young people with various visitors she has received at the Bundestag. She also scheduled a meeting with the Senator for Social Affairs, Family, Health and Consumer Protection to take place in Hamburg to discuss and think about new projects focusing on prevention. In addition, MP Antje Blumenthal was interviewed by the German Radio and wrote several press releases.

Hon. Kenneth Gibson, MSP (Scotland) reported back to his cross-party group on sexual health and introduced a motion on AIDS 2008 in the Scottish Parliament.

Hon. Yvonne Gilli, MP (Switzerland) wrote several press releases and articles about her experiences in Mexico. She also gave a number of interviews and was guest in various TV sessions. During a recent meeting of the Swiss Parliamentary Group Caire+ Mrs. Gilli gave an overview of her impressions from the International HIV/AIDS Conference and reported on the programs and activities the Mexican Family Planning Association Mexfam provides to young Mexicans with regard to sex education and prevention. Mrs. Gilli is currently working on promoting a strategy in view of the 2010 AIDS Congress and is involved in the drafting of a new prevention law in Switzerland.



Hon. Heli Järvinen, MP (Finland) MP wrote an article about the AIDS 2008 Conference and the study tour.

Hon. Minna Sirno, MP (Finland) and EPF Executive Committee Member produced several press releases on HIV/AIDS and prevention. She has been interviewed by Finnish National Broadcasting Radio while in Mexico. A follow-up seminar gathering MPs, NGOs, as well as civil servants will be organised in the Finnish Parliament and hosted by the Finnish the All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development.



III. APPG Affairs

1. Finnish APPG discusses SRHR issues with President Halonen

A delegation of the Finnish All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (Hon. Minna Sirnö, MP, Chair, Hon. Janina Andersson, MP, Vice-Chair and Hon. Iikka Kantola, MP, Vice-Chair) and a representative of Väestöliitto, the Family Federation of Finland (Ms. Hellevi Hatunen, Head of International Affairs) had a meeting with the President of Finland Tarja Halonen on Thursday 18 September in the Presidential Palace. The aim of the meeting was to urge the President to take up sexual and reproductive health and rights issues in the UN High-level meeting on MDGs taking place in New York this week. In connection with the High-level meeting President Halonen is also co-chairing the special event on maternal and child health together with the President's of Chile and Tanzania. The Finnish All-Party Group found it important President Halonen in this event would specifically concentrate on the importance of promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights and universal access to reproductive health services as a key to achieving the MDGs.



President Tarja Halonen took an extremely positive stand to the requests made by the Finnish Parliamentarians and promised to take the issues up both in the High-level meeting and the side event. She also promised to take them up in her meeting with the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

For more information, please contact Hiikka Vuorenmaa, Senior Advocacy Officer at Väestöliitto at: hiikka.vuorenmaa@vaestoliitto.fi

2. Swiss Parliamentary Group Caire+ discusses SRHR issues with government representatives

As a result of Hon. Yvonne Gilli's participation in the EPF and Väestöliitto led parliamentary delegation to the XVII International HIV/AIDS Conference in Mexico she convened the Caire+ Group to discuss how the group could work with the Swiss government to put the fight against HIV/AIDS and the issue of Reproductive Health Supplies (RHS) on the agenda.

Members of the Parliamentary Group discussed various strategies to link the fight against HIV/AIDS with the need for better access to health services and the availability of RHS with representatives from the Swiss Development Agency (SDC) and the Swiss Ministry of Health (BAG). Nadine Krysostan, Senior Advocacy Officer at EPF provided input in the discussion and presented the work and activities of the Countdown 2015 Europe Project, a consortium of ten leading NGO's in the SRHR field and 8 collaborating partners whose aim is to enhance European Funding in the RHS sector.

For more information on the Countdown 2015 Europe project, go to: <http://www.countdown2015europe.org/>

3. Spain to formulate a liberal abortion law until 2009

At the beginning of September, the Spanish minister of equality announced that a new law on abortion will be issued by the end of 2009. There have been rumours over past weeks about the intention to reform the current law, but at the end a new one will be proposed to substitute the old one. For this purpose, an ad-hoc sub-committee of the equality committee of the lower chamber will be created and a group of "wise-men" has been appointed. The declared objectives are: to enhance the juridical security for both women and practitioners and to tackle territorial disparities in the access to services. The minister declared her intention to take the best of the existing legislation in other countries.


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. European Parliament launches EuroparITV

As of September 17th, the European Parliament has its own web TV channel.  Anyone with Internet access will be able to watch a regularly changing set of programmes based around the life of the Parliament. The aim of EuroparITV is to bring Parliament closer to European citizens in a modern and creative format. The tool is also designed to raise citizen's interest in the EU before the upcoming elections to the European Parliament in June 2009.

EuroparITV is not one channel but is split into four channels, each directed to a different audience: Your Parliament, aimed at those with a particular interest in politics at the EU level: informed citizens, industry groups, social partners, lobbyists, academics as well as those working in the EU institutions. Your Voice conceived for the general public and providing the possibility of featuring user-generated content.

Young Europe, aimed particularly at school-aged children, high users of the Internet and the European electorate of the future.

Parliament Live provides continuous coverage of live events in the Parliament, notably debates in the plenary sessions, with a link to the audiovisual archives of previous sessions, as well as in the coming months, the activities of the committees.

Watch EuroparITV at: <http://www.europarltv.europa.eu/StartPage.aspx>

2. EU citizen's awareness in European Parliament elections is low, Eurobarometer finds

75% of European citizens are not aware of the upcoming elections to the European Parliament in June 2009. This is the result of the latest Eurobarometer poll conducted between March and May 2008. The lowest awareness levels are registered in the UK and Finland, with 94% of respondents saying they "didn't know" when the elections would take place, followed by Bulgaria (90%) and Latvia (83%). The highest awareness levels were recorded in Luxembourg (53%), Greece (60%), Slovakia (62%) and Belgium (54%).



EUROBAROMETER

An additional 51% of those being polled declared that they were not interested in the elections. However, almost one in three Europeans (30%) answered that they would definitely vote. Looking at these numbers, it is important to bear in mind that the study was carried out more than a year ahead of the elections. The electoral campaign has not yet started in earnest

and the event has received little or no media coverage. This is reflected in the fact that 60% of the respondents who are not certain to vote declared that they do not know enough about the European Parliament's role.

The full report can be found [here](#).

2. Liberals and Democrats in the European Parliament start "Simple Language" Campaign

"Which language should Europe speak?", ask the European Liberals and Democrats in their recently started online campaign. "A Simple One", is the answer. European language is full of complicated abbreviations and acronyms that make it difficult for citizens to understand the European Union. Involving people in simplifying language and bringing EU institutions closer to the people is the reasoning behind the campaign.

All citizens inside and outside the EU are encouraged to participate in this campaign. By typing complicated words or whole sentences into a mask provided at the campaign's website, they can present proposals how to simplify wordings or expressions of the so-called "Eurojargon". The European Liberals and Democrats thus want to enhance awareness for the upcoming European elections amongst EU citizens.

To access the "Simple Language Campaign", go to: <http://www.simplelanguage.eu/>

3. Sweet as sugar – Czech's "sugar video" to raise attention for upcoming EU presidency

Czech President Vaclav Klaus, an outspoken EU critic, once warned that his nation would dissolve in the European Union like a sugar cube in a cup of coffee. Now that the Czechs are about to chair the European Union, the government has turned the cube into a sweetly subversive symbol of its scepticism toward the European Union.

The 30-second video, unveiled by Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek and his deputy for European Affairs Alexandr Vondra at the beginning of September, is meant to draw the public's attention to the six-month Czech presidency starting on 1 January 2009. The clip, however, says nothing about Prague's agenda for the 27-nation bloc.

Click [here](#) to watch the video. The 18-month presidency programmes for the French, the Czech and the Swedish Presidencies can be found [here](#).

4. European Parliamentarian's "Send2Women Campaign" fights for gender equality in EU top jobs

The initiative, Send2women, aims to raise a petition to make sure women occupy at least one of the EU's top jobs, such as the presidency of the commission or parliament or the post of EU high representative, by 2009. One of the MEPs behind the drive is Danish ALDE deputy Karin Riis-Jørgensen.

The campaign's website, www.Send2Women.eu, has produced a list of names of 25 women it says should be considered when influential jobs come up for grabs. Besides German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former Irish President Mary Robinson they include EU Commissioners Mariann Fischer Boel and Neelie Kroes, Tarja Halonen, the Finnish President, Christine Lagarde, French economy minister, former UK foreign secretary Margaret Beckett and Anne-Marie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, president of the ELDR party.

Anyone interested in backing the move is asked to sign an virtual petition on the campaign website. The names will be presented to EU leaders and heads of state at their summit meeting in Brussels in December.

IV. EPF – United Nations Relations:



1. 63rd UN General Assembly Session opens – Health issues on top of the agenda!

On 16 September 2008, the UN General Assembly will open its [63rd Session](#). The annual [General Debate](#) of the 63rd GA session begins on 23 September—under the Presidency of H.E. Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann—and concludes on 1 October, where over 130 Heads of State or Heads of Government will participate. In addition, a series of High-level Meetings are scheduled to take place around the Debate. On 22 September the Assembly will hold a [High-level Meeting](#) on “Africa’s development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward.” A [High-level Event](#) on the Millennium Development Goals (convened jointly by the UN Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly) will take place on 25 September. On 2 and 3 October, the Assembly will hold High-level plenary meetings for a [midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action](#)—a plan, negotiated in 2003, spelling out specific measures to help landlocked and transit developing countries overcome their geographical handicap.

Other highlights of the 63rd Session include the [Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus](#) will take place from 29 November to 2 December in Doha, Qatar and a commemorative plenary meeting on 10 December, devoted to the [sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).

Source: NGLS Update

2. New UN Human Rights Commissioner takes up post

At the beginning of September Navanethem Pillay, a renowned jurist from South Africa, began her duties as the top United Nations human rights official, taking over a growing office that now has 1,000 staff working in 50 countries. Ms. Pillay, a renowned jurist from South Africa, was appointed the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in July by the General Assembly, on the recommendation of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. She became the fifth High Commissioner since the office was created in 1993.

For more information, see:

http://www.unric.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19040&Itemid=42

V. Malaria News:

1. World Health Organization (WHO) released the World Malaria Report 2008, 18 September 2008, Geneva

The WHO's World Malaria Report 2008 provides updated data regarding malaria burden. The report emphasises that the global burden of malaria remains enormous, but that access to malaria control interventions, especially bed nets in Africa, increased sharply between 2004 and 2006, the period covered in the report.

Some highlights:

- New methods estimate the number of malaria cases is 247 million for 2006.
- Small children remain by far the most likely to die of the disease.
- Malaria deaths have declined in several countries, and a few nations in Africa have managed to cut malaria deaths in half by following recommended measures.
- As of 2006, increases in funding resulted in accelerated access of malaria interventions including bed nets and effective medicines
- Access in Africa to artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT), which is recommended by WHO, reached only 3% of children in need.

The World Malaria Report 2008 is available at: <http://www.who.int/malaria/mediacentre/wmr2008/>

2. Global Roadmap to end Malaria launched at UN Malaria Summit, 25 September 2008, New York

The Global Malaria Action Plan (GMAP), developed by the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership, is the first-ever single comprehensive blueprint for global malaria control and elimination. It outlines strategies, costs, goals and timelines designed to build on the trajectory of recent successes in malaria control, moving towards full malaria control and beyond in countries across the globe. Heads of state and government, major agencies and private sector representatives, faith and civil society leaders have united behind this plan to ensure full coverage of malaria interventions by 2010 and to achieve near zero preventable malaria deaths by 2015 as a major step towards ultimately eradicating malaria.

Some numbers:

- Malaria affects half of the world's population – 3.3 billion people in 109 countries – causing nearly 1 million deaths per year.
- According to GMAP's projections, more than 4.2 million lives can be saved between 2008 and 2015, if the plan is put into action.
- In addition, millions of dollars of lost GDP can be recovered and critical healthcare resources freed up in regions to tackle other health and social challenges
- Africa alone is estimated to lose at least \$12 billion per year in direct costs and much more in GDP losses. Achieving full control in all endemic countries, including strengthening health systems, will cost approximately \$5.3 billion in 2009, \$6.2 billion in 2010 and \$5.1 billion annually from 2011 to 2020.
- According to GMAP, research will cost at least \$750 million annually over the next ten years

The Global Malaria Action Plan is available at: www.rollbackmalaria.org/gmap

The mobilisation of Malaria advocates is particularly important and necessary in order to strongly advocate towards national, European and International bodies/Institutions for putting the plan into action. It should become the next priority for the international community as implementing the plan will help achieving six of the eight Millennium Development Goals.

VI. EPF Visibility:

1. Window of opportunity for passing progressive abortion legislation narrowing?

Under the title "The right to abortion: what is at stake for women in Europe?" the "Movement Français pour Le Planning Familial" organised a two day conference in Paris. In 6 roundtables the approximately 250 participants had the chance to discuss the legal, political, cultural but also religious and ethical implications for moving forward on progressive abortion legislation in Europe with parliamentarians, lawyers, practitioners and advocates.

Based on the findings of EPFs research project Political Party Mapping that, among other issues analyses the positions of political parties in Europe on abortion, Nadine Krysostan, representing EPF, was able to portray the repercussions the expected changes in the European political party landscape will have on progressive abortion legislation in Europe. Currently, 19 out of the 27 EU Members States have centre-right governments. In at least 4 out of the currently 8 social-democratic governed EU Member States the shift towards a centre-right dominated government is highly likely. The direct result of these changes is a centre-right dominated political party landscape across the EU. If we want to continue reaching majorities for the adoption of SRHR and also abortion legislation, better strategies on how to include centre-right Parliamentarians in these issues are urgently needed.



A declaration that called for a better co-operation of activities between the national and European level, to create more proximity and solidarity on the abortion issue between European countries, to include upcoming challenges such as conscientious objection, access to services for migrant women, and abortion tourism and to work on a better implementation on existing laws was presented at the end of the conference.

In view of the upcoming European Parliamentary elections, participants agreed on the necessity to work more coherently at the European political level and in cooperation with partners to engage with representatives of all political parties in advancing the equal access to abortion services and in promoting progressive abortion legislation in Europe.

Please contact Mme Dominique Audouze at: dominique.audouze@planning-familial.org for the declaration.

VII. EPF - European Parliament Relations:



1. European Parliament adopts strong Resolution on Maternal Mortality

Following the debate and vote which took place on 3 and 4 September 2008, the Resolution on Maternal Mortality ahead of the UN High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on 25 September 2008 was adopted by a clear majority of participating MEPs, gathering a majority of 64.6%, i.e. 394 votes in favour, 182 against and 34 abstentions, a resolution on

The resolution expresses strong concern over the fact that MDG5 on maternal mortality is the only MDG on which there has been no progress since 2000, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Over half a million women die in pregnancy or childbirth every year, and 99% of these deaths take place in developing countries. Women in sub-Saharan Africa run a lifetime risk of 1 in 16 of dying in pregnancy or in childbirth. The European Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission, ahead of the UN High Level Event on the MDGs, to prioritise realistic and evidence-based action to meet MDG 5 targets, including the promotion of access for all women to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services.



Hon. Neena Gill, MEP, Member of the European Parliament's Working Group on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Development (EPWG) and EPF Delegation member to Georgia during the plenary debate pointed out that maternal mortality "is one of the biggest social inequality issues in the world and I believe that the EU [...] has been very slow in addressing it".

Hon. Françoise Castex, MEP and EPF delegation member to Niger during the debate pointed out that "the failure in achieving MDG5 is affecting us because it has a negative impact on the improvement of women's empowerment worldwide. MDG5 must be a major political objective (...) because hundreds of thousands of women are still victims of ignorance, negligence and obscurantism".



VIII. EPF Research Tools:

1. EPF Vote analysis on EP Maternal Mortality Resolution reveals striking facts

EPF has undertaken an extensive analysis of the voting patterns on the MDG 5 Resolution in order to better understand where support for SRHR/Maternal Health exists in the European Parliament and which forces remain hostile. The analysis gives an overview of voting patterns according to political party, country, groups of countries and gender. The analysis offers some answers to the following commonly asked questions in European Parliament politics:

- Who are our supporters and detractors?
- Are the anti-choice united and how strong are they?
- Do women Parliamentarians vote differently?
- Is there a 'Catholic' or 'New Member State' block in the EP?

Amongst other findings, the analysis reveals that 50% of the votes against the Maternal Mortality Resolution came from only 3 Member States; women MEPs voted differently from their male counterparts and that defections from the party most hostile to the Resolution were necessary to obtain an absolute majority in the EP.

For the complete analysis, please contact the EPF website at: www.iefpd.org.

2. Europe cuts family planning aid for poor countries, EuroMapping 2008 Study shows

According to the latest available data, funding for family planning and basic reproductive health services fell by 7.8%, in real terms a loss of more than 160 million US\$. Euromapping 2008 is a joint study by the German Foundation on World Population (DSW) and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) that scrutinises EU countries' development aid for population assistance and reproductive health. It was presented on September 29th by DSW and EPF who called upon EU governments to reverse this worrying trend.



Hon. Anne Van Lancker, MEP and EPF President joined both organisations in their call: "The European Parliament has called for more funding for maternal health in its September 4 resolution and EU governments repeatedly affirm their commitment to reproductive health", she stated. "But where is the money to back up this rhetoric", Van Lancker asked during the press briefing that presented the study to Brussels-based journalists.



IX. Upcoming Activities: Outlook 2008

1. EPF Council Meeting, 19 October 2008, NH Hotel, Grand Sablon (tbc), Brussels
All EPF Members will be present to discuss parliamentary activities in 2009 and strategise about ICPD@15. In addition, the EPF Council will welcome new EPF members and will hold Executive Committee Elections.
2. Global Fund Parliamentarians Meeting on "The Future of Parliamentary Involvement in Global Health and Development", 20 October 2008, Palais d'Egmont, Brussels
In cooperation with the Belgian Parliamentary Group on the MDGs, SENSOA and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), EPF will organise a Parliamentarians meeting gathering European Donor Countries to discuss the new development aid architecture, the aid effectiveness and the role of leading actors of global health, such as the Global Fund. Participants will be able to share views and exchange best practices on global health and development related issues.
3. EPF Study Tour on Malaria Research, November 2008, Tanzania
EPF will organise a week-long study tour with a specific focus on Malaria Research. This study tour aims to provide Parliamentarians with an overview of malaria projects and a better understanding of the recent developments in Malaria Research in Tanzania, and particularly malaria vaccines. This study tour will also be the opportunity to emphasise the existing linkages between malaria and SRH.
4. Joint Meeting of Council of Europe's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population, UNFPA Geneva Office and EPF, 25 November, Palais des Nations, Geneva
The Seminar on "Interaction between Population Decline in Europe, Global Population Growth and Migration" will encompass three sessions: on fertility, on ageing and on migration, where participants will have an overview of the existing policies and take a closer look at country examples from Eastern Europe/Central Asia, Southern Europe and Northern/Western Europe. The Seminar will be concluded by roundtable discussion on three topics and elaborating future policy options to be recommended by PACE.
5. IPCI Steering Committee Meeting, 14 – 15 November 2008, Tunis, Tunisia
In preparation of the upcoming IPCI Conference that will most likely be held in Cairo, Egypt towards the end of 2010 EPF will be bringing two Parliamentarians to represent the Europe Region at the IPCI Steering Committee Meeting. Interested Parliamentarians should have experience of previous IPCI Conferences (Bangkok 2006).
6. Burkinabé Theatre Group in the European Parliament, 3 December 2008, Brussels
On December, 3rd EPF together with E&P and the EWPG will be hosting the Burkinabé Theatre Group in the European Parliament. The group's plays emphasise the dialogue between parents and children when it comes to education and sexual and reproductive health and contraception.
7. EPF Delegation to the Global Fund Partnership Forum, 8-10 December 2008, Dakar/Senegal
In cooperation with the Global Fund, EPF will be able to bring up to 10 Parliamentarians to the Global Funds' Partnership Forum which is a component of the Fund's governance structure.

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.

As of 1 December, 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)

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