

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 2009

1. EU surpasses US as top donor in population assistance, joint DSW/EPF Euromapping study reveals

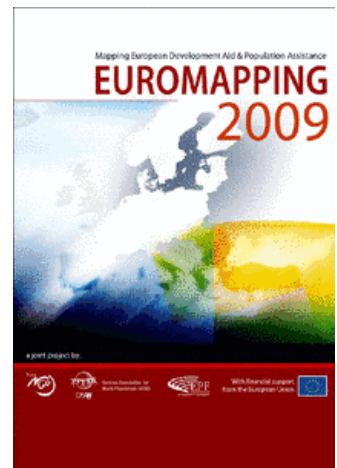
On 1 September, Hon. Sophie in't Veld, MEP, Ms. Susanne Weber-Mosdorf, Assistant Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Ms. Karen Hoehn, Vice-Executive Director of the German Foundation for World Population (DSW) and Mr. Neil Datta, Secretary of EPF held a common press release to launch Euromapping.

Euromapping is joint study by DSW and EPF that scrutinises EU countries' development aid for population assistance and reproductive health (sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, maternal death and disability, family planning, gender-based violence) commitments and disbursements. It "names and shames" good and bad performers, and includes specific recommendations to improve reproductive health and reduce poverty.

The research study revealed that the EU surpassed US as top donor in population assistance. It also showed an increase of 10% in global official development aid (ODA) during 2008. The bad news is a stagnation of the disbursements in health and a worrisome decrease in family planning funding. Moreover, the prospects for 2009 and 2010 show that the EU will hardly meet its own targets.

MEP Ms Sophie in't Veld pointed at the necessity to scale up efforts in the run-up to 2015, especially on maternal health. Ms. Weber-Masdorf stressed the link between maternal health and the lack of well-functioning health systems. The EU, with 63% of the total global ODA contributions, has a leading position in the donor community but a failure to meet its commitments will deliver a worrisome message, according to Mr. Datta. Ms Karen Hoehn pointed out that population assistance is imperative in a context of crisis that will impact developing countries most severely.

For more information on Euromapping, please contact: Miguel Ongil at Miguel@iepfpd.org or at: <http://www.eurosources.org/euromapping>



2. EPF and UNFPA Convene Second South Caucasus Youth Reproductive Health and Rights Forum in Batumi, Georgia

3 Years of EC/UNFPA Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in South Caucasus
12-13 September 2009, Batumi, Georgia

On 12-13 September, EPF and UNFPA Georgia organised the Second South Caucasus Youth Reproductive Health and Rights Forum, which took place in Batumi, Georgia and was hosted by the local Adjara Government and Batumi City Hall. More than 70 participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and other European countries, including Government representatives, Parliamentarians, international organisations, such as UN and EC, civil society representatives and young people gathered in Batumi. They presented achievements in improving the reproductive health situation of young people and their access to services as a result of the three year EC/UNFPA Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in South Caucasus, a partnership led by UNFPA with the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development, with the generous support of the European Commission.



Through inter-country and country activities, the project has greatly contributed to the expansion of sexual and reproductive health services in line with the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals. Within the three years, 78 youth reproductive health information and medical-information centres opened across the region; 1240 young peer educators received training and during the project duration already provided more than 40000 young people with information on their sexual and reproductive health and rights; over 2900 health care professionals received trainings on youth friendly reproductive health services and new legislative acts on reproductive health, family planning and healthy and harmonious education are in the process of development in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

As a project partner, EPF has contributed to the creation of Parliamentary leaders on SRHR and global health in each country. National Parliaments in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have formed permanent structures: All Party Parliamentary Groups on Population and Development, where leading Parliamentarians meet regularly and work on the implementation of ICPD Agenda. In Armenia, the All Party Group on Population and Development is working on amending the countries youth policies and including into it the SRHR issues; in Azerbaijan, the Working Group has elaborated the Law on Reproductive Health and Family Planning, which will be voted this autumn; in Georgia, the Working Group is working on a Concept of Harmonious and Healthy Education for Children, which will become the guidelines for the Government on provision of youth SRHR services as well as they work on inclusion of SRHR into the new country's youth policy.

The established All-Party Parliamentary Groups are members of EPF and EPF will continue to involve them in all activities on international and regional level as well as in international best practices exchange on advancing the ICPD Programme of Action.

The National Delegations from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have further developed frameworks of action for Youth SRHR for 2010-2015, which will serve as roadmap to develop and implement the actions targeted at sustainable improvement and development of youth SRHR in three South Caucasus Countries. This includes:

1. Developing and implementing youth policies and action plans in close collaboration between Parliament, Government, Civil Society, Private Sector and Donors;
2. Supporting sustainable improvement of youth awareness and knowledge on SRHR issues;
3. Supporting further improvement of services for youth and integration of youth friendly approaches in health care services

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3. EPF/EuroNGOs Workshop simulates Committee Session in the European Parliament

From 23 – 25 September 19 participants from 13 European Member States were given the opportunity to “transform” into MEPs. Under the title “How to work with the new European Parliament – a practical approach” EPF and the EuroNGOs Small Grants Facility (SGF) offered a workshop for European SRHR advocates to be confronted with the political realities and dynamics within the new European Parliament. The shift of majorities after the European Parliament elections towards the centre-right means that the traditional ‘pro-SRHR’ alliance has lost its absolute majority and will now depend to a greater extent on support from centre-right parties such as the European Peoples Party (EPP).



The workshop participants negotiated and adopted a Report on “Women’s and Girl’s Health and Rights in EU Development Cooperation” and experienced the need but also the difficulty in building a new set of alliances across political parties and especially including the centre-right to a greater extent.

A committee session in the European Parliament provided the framework of the workshop that was conducted as a simulation game and familiarised participants with decision-making procedures in the European Parliament, the introduction of amendments, negotiation and presentation techniques, but also with political party positions on SRHR at EU level.

In order to add greater realism to the exercise, MEPs were supported by political advisors, a committee secretariat as well as experts from UNFPA and the European Commission.

For more information on the workshop, please contact: Nadine Krysostan at Nadine@iepfpd.org.

II. Parliamentary Leadership

1. EPF President and Executive Committee Members receive Berlin Call to Action at Global NGO Forum in Berlin

EPF President **Hon. Carina Hägg, MP** (Sweden) and EPF Executive Committee Member **Hon. Birute Vesaite, MP** (Lithuania) represented EPF at the NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development that was held from 2-4 September 2009 in Berlin/Germany and hosted by the German Government and UNFPA.

Bringing together leaders of NGOs and Civil Society from more than 130 countries, working on sexual and reproductive health as well as International Organisations, major donors and Ministry Officials, this high-level event aimed to strengthen NGOs working in partnership to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights for sustainable development.



(Hon. Birute Vesaite, MP, (3rd left) and Hon. Carina Hägg, MP (4th left)

Speaking during the Interactive Session "Tackling the ICPD Messages: Sexy, Boring, or Just Plain Hard?", **Hon. Birute Vesaite, MP** voiced the need for better cooperation between NGOs and Members of Parliament to promote ICPD amongst decision-makers. "Many of my parliamentary colleagues have never heard about ICPD and in my country SRHR is still a sensitive issue to deal with", Hon. Vesaite pointed out before stating that there is an urgent need for clear and concise messages that can be adapted to the relevant political context.

Hon. Carina Hägg, MP emphasised the importance to "better include our U.S. counterparts in fora and during important conferences such as the upcoming International Parliamentarians' Conference in Addis Ababa". Hon. Hägg sees the need to build better platforms amongst Parliamentarians around the world but also between NGOs and Parliamentarians.

Finally, Members of Parliament from Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa symbolically received the Berlin Call to Action, a forward looking advocacy tool for NGOs with concrete suggestions on priorities for the last five years of the ICPD Programme of Action and beyond. Parliamentarians were asked to consider this document during the IPCI/ICPD Conference to be held in Addis Ababa from 27-28 October 2009.

For more information on the conference and the outcome documents, click [here](#).

2. Belgian EPF Malaria Taskforce member put forward Parliamentary questions to Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation

Upon return from the EPF follow-up study tour to Cameroon on malaria held in April 2009, Belgian **MP Katia della Faille** presented several oral and written parliamentary questions to M. Charles Michel, Belgian Minister for development cooperation. Recalling the importance to prioritise malaria in the development agenda, **MP Katia della Faille** asked about the amounts provided by the Belgian development aid over the past 2 years for the fight against malaria via bilateral and multilateral aid, and particularly to Cameroon. She also asked if the Minister was intending to increase its contribution to the Global Fund to fight AIDS,



Tuberculosis and Malaria and to the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, and if Belgium was considering investing in the innovative funding mechanisms called Affordable Medicines Facility for Malaria (AMFm) which aims at facilitating access to effective antimalarials. Finally, **MP Katia della Faille** asked the Minister to provide the amounts disbursed by Belgium on malaria research and to what extent the Belgian development cooperation is supporting African twinning/exchange research programmes with Cameroon Universities, particularly on malaria research.

III. APPG Update

1. EPF attends EPWG Planning Lunch

On 30 September 2009, the Working Group on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Development in the European Parliament (EPWG) held its first meeting after the European Parliament elections in June 2009. The EPWG, is an EPF member and is administered by the MSI Brussels Office. EPF was represented by its Secretary, Neil Datta, who gave an overview about EPF's work and activities for the coming weeks and months. Next to the election of the EPWG President (Hon. Sophie in't Veld, MEP from the liberal ALDE group) and the Vice-Presidents, **Hon. Françoise Castex, MEP** was elected as the new EPWG representative in the EPF Executive Committee.



2. Latvian MP speaks at the First Europe and Central Asia Faith Based Organisation (FBO) Forum on Population and Development

From 31st August – 2nd September, UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Division hosted the First Europe and Central Asia Faith Based Organisations Forum on Population and Development in Minsk. Fifty religious leaders and representatives of faith-based organizations from Europe and Central Asia discussed good examples and shared information on how to end gender-based violence, advance maternal health and committed to establishing connections among faith, modern medicine and community education.



Hon. Ingrida Circene, MP Latvia and Chair of the Human Rights Committee of the Latvian Parliament addressed the participants and expressed her delight in seeing the level of cooperation with FBOs already achieved in comparison to past experiences in discussing such matters as HIV/AIDS and people affected by this disease. Hon. Circene talked about her parliamentary work and the importance of national strategies with concrete budgetary measures to provide educational programs and contraceptive supplies. She strongly advocated for the need of education (in schools and youth centers) and access to contraception as the best way to avoid abortions, instead of laws and restrictions. With regard to abortion, she referred to Canadian legislation and praised how in this country, women's equality is guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedom (Constitution) and there should be no law regulating pregnancy, as it puts special obligation on women that is not placed on men. Hon. Circene encouraged all participants to continue the dialogue between religious organisations and RH specialists and to develop common messages – all aimed at fostering healthy families, educating youth and eliminating gender-based violence. She concluded by stressing that Canon Law demands respect for human rights, just as the International conventions do. During the meeting, Hon. Circene also met with **Ms Thea Fierens**, the new UNFPA Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.



IV. EPF Election Update

1. Elections in Germany and Portugal herald change

Both countries held parliamentary elections on 27 October 2009. In **Germany**, the elections resulted in the end of grand coalition between the centre-right Christian Democrats (CDU) and the Social Democrats (SPD) that governed the country for the past four years. Germany will now be led by a centre-right/liberal government formed by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) with Angela Merkel remaining Chancellor for another four years. The German Social Democrats saw a landslide loss of votes leading to the biggest percentage

Parties	Total seats		
	Total	+/-	%
Christian Democratic Union	194	+14	31.2
Christian Social Union of Bavaria	45	-1	7.2
Social Democratic Party of Germany	146	-76	23.5
Free Democratic Party	93	+32	15.0
The Left	76	+22	12.2
Alliance '90/The Greens	68	+17	10.9

loss of any party in German federal election history in 60 years and resulting in their worst ever result (23.5%). This is not only due to the fact that the Social Democrats failed to mobilize their voters (voter turnout was at 71% which is a loss of 6 percent compared to the last elections). They also lost a considerable part of their votes to the far-left party DIE LINKE. The election outcome resulted in the **loss of a number of SRHR champions** such as **Hon. Wolfgang Wodarg, MP**, **Hon. Karin Kortmann, MP** or **Hon. Christel Riemann-Hanewinkel, MP** (all SPD). **Hon. Antje Blumenthal, MP (CDU)** and EPF Executive Committee Member did not stand for re-election and **Hon. Karl Addicks, MP (FDP)** has not been re-elected. On the bright side, active MPs in the EPF member groups of the DSW Parliamentary Advisory Committee and the Parliamentary Forum on SRHR were re-elected, including: **Hon. Sibylle Pfeiffer, MP (CDU)**, **Hon. Angelika Graf, MP** and **Hon. Mechthild Rawert, MP (both SPD)**. At present, coalition negotiations between CDU/CSU and FDP are taking place and are expected to be finalized by 27 October 2009.

In **Portugal**, the Socialist Party led by incumbent Prime Minister José Sócrates, won the elections but lost its absolute majority. The Peoples Party is now the 3rd biggest political party in Parliament. The only political party that lost MPs was the Socialist Party. This outcome makes coalition negotiations difficult in Portugal since the Left Bloc and the Communist Party refuse any kind of agreement. So do the centre-right Social Democrats (PSD) who argue their programme has nothing in common with the Socialist Party. With this result, **the majority of the Portuguese All-party Group was re-elected**: **Hon. Maria Antónia Almeida Santos**, **Hon. Luísa Salgueiro**, **Hon. Sónia Fertuzinhos (PS)**, **Hon. Teresa Caeiro (CDS-PP)**, **Hon. Helena Pinto (BE)**, and **Hon. Bernardino Soares (PCP)**. In addition, the President of the National Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (Elza Pais) was elected and, for the first time, a leader of the LGBT movement will sit in Parliament.

Party	%	Change	Seats
PS	36.56	-8.4	96
PSD	29.09	0.3	78
CDS/PP	10.46	3.2	21
BE	9.85	3.4	16
CDU	7.88	0.3	15

V. EPF – UN Relations



1. UN General Assembly creates a new gender entity at the United Nations

On Monday, 14 September 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to create a new gender entity at the United Nations in order to strengthen the world body's work on gender equality and women's empowerment. The decision follows almost three years of negotiations and is part of a wider reform process called System Wide Coherence, which is aimed at making the UN's work in development more consistent and effective.

Parliamentary Members of the EPF Taskforce on the UN have followed this issue closely during various delegation visits to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2008 and the UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD) in 2009.

In essence, the resolution calls for the creation of a gender entity merging the UN Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The new entity will have a "substantial budget", will be led by an Under-Secretary-General and will report directly to the UN Secretary General.

Previously, women's issues have been dealt with separately by the above-mentioned UN bodies but none of these agencies – except UNFPA – were deemed to be major players in the UN system. The decision was widely welcomed by the international community and is expected to bring about essential improvements to the way the UN protects women's rights and promotes women's involvement in development and peace-building efforts.

VI. EPF Activities – Outlook 2009

1. Fourth International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, 27-28 October 2009, Addis Ababa/Ethiopia

The conference will be combined with an EPF Council meeting as well as a mini study tour and is preceded by a High-level Conference on MDG 5: Maternal Health hosted by the Dutch Minister for Development, H.E. Bert Koenders on 26 October 2009.

2. ICPD at 15 Regional Forum for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 12-13 November 2009, Istanbul/Turkey

Convened by UNFPA, in partnership with the UNECE, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF), the IPPF, and Turkey's State Planning Organization (SPO), this Forum will be held on 12-13 November 2009 in Istanbul/Turkey.

3. Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative (GAVI) Fourth Partners' Meeting, 17-21 November 2009, Hanoi, Vietnam

EPF will be bringing a Parliamentary Delegation to the Alliance's Fourth Partners' Meeting to take place from 18-20 November 2009 and combine it with mini field visits around Hanoi. The event will provide a forum to discuss the role of immunisation in achieving the health Millennium Development Goals, review lessons learned in the first 10 years of GAVI's existence and share best practices. Participants will reflect on the challenges and opportunities ahead, and the way towards fulfilling GAVI's mission to save children's lives and protecting people's health by increasing access to immunisation in poor countries.

The EPF Secretariat

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

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

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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