New report exposes the money behind network intent on overturning laws related to sexuality and reproduction in Europe

- Report identifies USD707.2 million in anti-gender funding over the 2009–2018 period originating from the United States, the Russian Federation and Europe.
- Annual anti-gender spending in Europe has increased by a factor of four starting from USD22.2 million in 2009 to reach USD96 million in 2018.
- Largest European-based anti-gender funders include actors in France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Poland.
- Links to anti-abortion initiatives in France, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and at EU level.
- Links to anti-gay marriage movements in Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Finland, Italy, Slovakia and Romania.
- Report researched and written by the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF).

BRUSSELS - A new report released today reveals the funding system which supports the anti-gender actors’ efforts to roll back human rights in Europe.

While the rise of ultra-conservatism in Europe has been apparent for several years, precisely how these actors are organising, fundraising and attempting to exert influence across national borders or issue areas has not been clear. This report attempts to fill this gap by painting a transnational picture of the clandestine funding system which supports the anti-gender actors’ deliberate strategy to roll back human rights in Europe.

The report examines 54 anti-gender funding actors active in Europe as well as the main channels through which the religious extremists generate funding and how it circulates. The picture that emerges is of a transnational community of likeminded religious extremists and related alt- and far-right actors making strategic funding decisions across international borders.

The carefully orchestrated strategy is producing concrete results, such as the 2020 de facto ban on access to safe abortion in Poland, bans on equal marriage in several Central European countries and over a dozen comparable acts at national level and in European institutions aiming to limit women’s and LGBTI rights.

Austrian MP Petra Bayr, chair of the equality committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, said: "Being aware and understanding this ultra-conservative movement is essential for those who want to safeguard a modern, inclusive and tolerant Europe. She added that the funding described in the report has potential for "disturbing" real-life repercussions: "Progressive politicians have to mobilise in order to not fall prey to these religious extremists’ legal and publicity stunts and send a strong message that the worldview they are attempting to impose has no place in this millennium.”

Dutch MEP Sophie in ‘t Veld said that the amount of money documented in the report is "staggering" and cause for serious concern. "We need to face the hard truth: a well organised and well financed yet small group of ultra-conservatives are on a crusade by stealth to destroy our rights and freedoms. In Europe we have been naive and blind to this problem for far too long, now we need to expose them”.

Members of the European Parliament will be voting on the first European Parliament Report specifically dedicated to the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights in almost 10 years at the end of June 2021. In the lead up to the vote, rapporteur for the European Parliament Report Croatian MEP Predrag Fred Matić has been spammed with political hate mail by
organisations investigated in the Tip of The Iceberg. He said, “To those who obstruct us along the way I can only say that the protection of human rights is above petty political interests and that this is the first step in stopping the attacks on women’s rights across Europe. I can only say that these messages make me even more certain that I am doing a good job and the right thing.”

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Notes to the editor

- The European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF) is a network of members of parliaments from across Europe who are committed to protecting the sexual and reproductive health of the world’s most vulnerable people, both at home and overseas. We believe that women should always have the right to decide upon the number of children they wish to have, and should never be denied the education or other means to achieve this that they are entitled to.
- Author of the report Neil Datta is the Secretary of EPF. He founded EPF with a select group of parliamentarians in 2000, and has been responsible for its growth a network of over 30 all-party parliamentary groups on population and development issues. Throughout this period, he has also conducted in-depth research on anti-choice activity in Europe, publishing a report in 2018, *Restoring the Natural Order: The religious extremists’ vision to mobilize European societies against human rights on sexuality and reproduction* and in 2020, *Modern Day Crusaders in Europe*, that continue to receive worldwide media attention.
- The report can be found on our website [here](https://www.epfweb.org) from 14:00 on Tuesday 15 June 2021
- To attend the report press briefing on Monday 14 June, [please register here](https://www.epfweb.org).
- To attend the report launch on Tuesday 15 June, [please register here](https://www.epfweb.org).