EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2005 - 2006

With Highlights from the First Five Years of EPF
The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development believes that 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.
It is a great pleasure for me to present the annual report of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development which features highlights of the five years since EPF's establishment in 2000.

The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) is the newest regional Parliamentary network concerned with sexual and reproductive health and rights. It has filled a gap in SRHR advocacy in Europe by offering a pan-European platform for the exchange of information, experiences and ideas among Europe’s political decision-makers. Recent European leadership on SRHR would not have been possible without a group of well-informed and influential Parliamentarians who made the right decisions at the right time.

In the past five years, EPF expanded its membership from seven to twenty-five all-party Parliamentary groups (APPGs) and has built relationships with Parliamentarians and SRHR advocates in an additional nine countries in Europe. Altogether, by 2005 EPF had worked in 83% of European countries, with member APPGs in over half of the Parliaments in Europe.

EPF has mobilised Parliamentarians every time the ICPD Programme of Action has come under attack by opponents of free choice. I am extremely proud that APPGs around Europe have been instrumental in setting policies to integrate HIV/AIDS into a broader SRHR context, expand human rights protections to same-sex couples, mobilised additional funding for ICPD-related programmes and key actors such as UNFPA and IPPF, and that we have chosen to condemn policies such as the Global Gag Rule and funding cuts to reproductive health providers.

If we in Europe truly believe that individuals have the right to choose freely and responsibly about their own sexual and reproductive well-being, this consequently means that we as Parliamentarians must ourselves make choices regarding the policies, international agreements and funding that enable this right.

I hope this report will educate and inspire an ever increasing number of Parliamentarians that we can, individually and collectively, make a difference in the lives of many people around the world.

Ruth Genner,
MP Switzerland
“Through field visits and meetings with officials we have been concretely introduced to the big challenges [Ethiopia] is facing with regard to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the potential Ethiopian women represent. A lot still needs to be done to ensure women are educated and healthy actors in the development process.”


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.

Because Europe is home to 18 of the world’s 23 governmental donors of development assistance, Parliamentarians in Europe play a crucial role in making sure international funding commitments are met and programmes are available where they are needed the most. Domestically, these Parliamentarians work to improve the health and rights of their countries’ most vulnerable populations.

EPF’s expertise derives from its exclusive focus on Parliamentarians. Its core activities include conducting field visits to developing countries, supporting Parliamentary activities, organising conferences on key topics, and providing training to develop understanding and expertise in SRHR issues.

EPF provides a pan-European framework for Parliamentarians to forge consensus and collaborate on resource mobilisation strategies. In addition, EPF frequently works with UN agencies, inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations on the national, regional and international levels that have an interest in working with Parliamentarians.

EPF began as a project of the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network. It was legally registered in Belgium and recognised by Royal Decree in 2000. In 2004, EPF became a fully independent not-for-profit organisation.
Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is crucial in and of itself. It is also instrumentally important for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Achieving the health Goals – improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, promoting gender equality and combating HIV/AIDS – depends directly on making access to these services widespread (in fact, the target of achieving universal access to reproductive health by 2015 is included in MDG number five). Reaching the non-health Goals - reducing extreme poverty, making primary education universal and attaining environmental sustainability – is contingent on improving sexual and reproductive health and gender equality.

Making SRHR access more widespread would enable women to satisfy their desire for spacing or limiting childbirth. It would thus provide them with the ability to better balance household responsibilities (including childrearing) with activities outside the home, including economic, political and educational activities. Participating in community and political life, increasing educational attainment and expanding income-generating opportunities improve a woman’s ability to lead a more full and creative life by providing her with a greater voice in the choices that shape her life and that of her community.1

Avoiding unplanned births allows families to invest more in each child’s education, nutrition and health, and can reduce poverty and hunger for all members of a household. Smaller family size can help stabilise rural areas, slow urban migration and balance natural resource use with the needs of the population.2

Evidence shows that investments in and access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, are essential to breaking the cycle of poverty and freeing national and household resources for investments in health, nutrition, and education, promoting economic growth with tangible returns.3

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At the end of 2004 the world learned about the tsunami that brought tremendous death and destruction to Indonesia, Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. Hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless, traumatised and without access to medical services – including obstetric care.

In August 2005 EPF brought a delegation of women Parliamentarians on a field visit to Sri Lanka to learn first hand how the country was coping with the disaster. The delegation was particularly impressed by a visit to the Mahamodera Hospital in Galle, a maternity hospital that was devastated by the tsunami. Women were evacuated to a general hospital in the same district that did not have a maternity ward or labour room facilities. But with UNFPA support, the Mahamodera hospital was reopened. “I contacted members of the North South Committee in my party,” said Belgian MP Céline Delforge. “Reconstruction efforts in the Tsunami-struck areas should be higher on the political agenda.”

For some MPs the field visit was a completely new experience. “We used to concentrate on our own problems first,” said Katrin Saks, an MP from Estonia. “Now that my country has joined the EU we have become a donor country. This opens our eyes to a wider world. Global issues like a tsunami need to be addressed and we have to shape policies accordingly.”
FIELD VISITS

2006  PERU AND BRAZIL

In December 2005, EPF, in partnership with Catholics for a Free Choice, brought Parliamentarians from six European countries to Brazil and Peru to examine the relationship between women’s rights, sexual and reproductive health and the influence of the Catholic Church in Latin America.

The delegation met with local NGOs working on women’s rights and sexual and reproductive health (including HIV/AIDS) as well as representatives of UN agencies, government ministers and religious leaders.

The delegation found the experience to be both enlightening and disturbing. One participant commented, “To be female and poor in these countries means you have no rights. You are a second-class citizen without access to health care, education or decent housing. This is what is happening in Peru and Brazil, but particularly in Peru where 54 percent of families live in poverty, 17 percent in extreme poverty.”
WHAT WE DO:

Taking the Lead to Save Lives and Improve Health

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES FOR PARLIAMENTS AFTER FIELD VISITS

1. Be Accountable
   - Report back on your experience to your all-party Parliamentary group and the group’s secretariat.
   - Report back to the NGOs working on SRHR in your country.

2. Speak About Your Experiences
   - at meetings of Parliamentarians;
   - in committee debates;
   - to the hierarchy in Parliament or your political party;
   - to relevant Ministers.

2006  BANGLADESH

In February 2006 EPF, in partnership with UNFPA and DSW, brought a delegation of European Parliamentarians on a field visit to examine the UNFPA / European Commission Reproductive Health Initiative for Young People in Asia. The visit provided a unique opportunity to gain first-hand experience of this programme and its impact at country and community level.

The delegation visited projects in the Dhaka slum area, the Sylhet tea producing region and in the North of the country in Mymensingh and met with a wide range of local NGOs, including “Concerned Women for Development,” the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh, Marie Stopes, the Sylhet-Branch of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society as well as numerous young people and women’s groups. The delegation also discussed reproductive health policy issues with their Parliamentary counterparts, the Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, officials from the ministries of health, education and finance, local policy makers, representatives of the EU delegation and national embassies.

Field Visit - Bangladesh, 2006
FIELD VISITS

2006 ETHIOPIA

In May 2006, EPF organised a field visit for twelve Parliamentarians from eight European countries to Ethiopia to investigate the status of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Ethiopia’s extreme poverty and poor maternal health indicators made it a particularly relevant destination for Parliamentarians interested in the developing world.

The delegation met government officials, fellow Parliamentarians, representatives of the EU and European countries, local NGOs, UNFPA and other international organisations and recognised experts. The delegation visited hospitals, community-based reproductive health service projects, model clinics and advocacy and empowerment programmes. After their return, the Parliamentarians channelled their knowledge and experience into action: they initiated Parliamentary questions and hearings; opened dialogues with government ministers; conducted briefings for colleagues; expanded recruitment for their Parliamentary Group; spoke to the media and the public and planned future activities.

2006 THAILAND AND VIETNAM

In November 2006 EPF conducted dual field visits to Thailand and Vietnam for European Parliamentarians attending the bi-annual International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action in Bangkok. The delegations visited community based reproductive health projects.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS AFTER FIELD VISITS

3. Take Action

- Forward recommendations based on what you have learned to relevant Ministers.
- Pose Parliamentary questions.
- Introduce Parliamentary resolutions.
- Organise an event in Parliament.
- Take action not only in your national Parliament but also in other Parliamentary assemblies to which you belong (such as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe).

4. Create visibility

- Write a press release and organise a press conference upon your return.
- Write articles based on your study tour experiences and what you have learned for newspapers, parliament media, political party media and your constituencies.

5. Demonstrate your commitment

- Write and talk about participating in the study tour in your CV, on your website and websites of your political party.
ABOUT EPF PARLIAMENTARY ACTION

EPF members take action within Parliament by posing Parliamentary questions to their government, the purpose of which is to open a discussion with the government about an important issue or to send the government a message about the Parliament’s priorities.

Parliamentarians also offer Parliamentary resolutions to register their opinions about an issue, organise Parliamentary hearings, meet with government ministers, and participate in budget negotiations to mobilise resources.

:: WHAT WE DO:

Taking the Lead to Save Lives and Improve Health

2005  BELGIUM

Belgian APPG member Inga Verhaert submitted a resolution in the Belgian federal Parliament on SRHR and international cooperation. The resolution was signed by members of all the major political parties (Socialists, Liberals, Christian Democrats and Greens). The resolution requested that the government play a leading role in advocating for the empowerment of women and girls by recognising the right of every woman to SRHR as defined in the ICPD Programme of Action. It also requested additional funding for development aid for SRHR, which could be realised by increasing funding for UNFPA, initiating funding for IPPF and setting aside more funding for other NGOs active in this field. Ms Verhaert proposed the resolution after participating in the 2004 IPCI conference and EPF’s 2005 conference on the G-8 and international development in Edinburgh, Scotland.

2005  UNITED KINGDOM

The UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, chaired by the Hon. Chris McCafferty (a former member of the EPF executive committee), released its report “The Missing Link.” The report highlights the results of hearings held earlier in the year about the link between SRHR and HIV/AIDS.
Upon returning from the Ethiopia field visit, Belgian Parliamentarian Hilde Vautmans (a member of the Belgian All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development) posed Parliamentary questions to the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister / Minister of Justice about female genital mutilation and elements of Belgian policy and law (June).

Ms. Vautmans and her colleague Inga Verhaert, also a member of the Belgian Parliamentary group, met with the Belgian Minister of Development Aid; the result was a promise to look into directly funding IPPF and drafting a policy note specifically on SRHR. The MPs referred back to the resolution on SRHR in the Belgian international cooperation policy that was approved by Parliament in 2005 and insisted on the implementation of the recommendations therein. The Belgian Parliamentary Group also requested that the president of the Commission on Foreign Affairs organise a specific session with both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Aid to have a more in-depth discussion on SRHR and development aid. MP Vautmans participated in the EPF/CFFC study tour to Peru and Brazil in 2005 and the EPF study tour to Ethiopia in 2006, and MP Verhaert participated in the IPCI-Strasbourg Conference and G-8 Parliamentarians Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Senator Mary Henry, a member of the EPF Executive Committee and chair of the Irish all-party Parliamentary group, made a presentation to the Irish Parliament’s Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs on women’s rights in Afghanistan. Senator Henry also participated in a Senate debate about the Minister of State’s White Paper on Irish Development Aid. She spoke of the need to include in the White Paper more detail about sexual and reproductive health and rights and preventing the transmission of HIV (October).

A Parliamentary question was posed by MP Magdaelene Willame-Boonen, Belgian APPG member, on ICPD. also, Belgian MPs adopted a resolution on FGM.
2006 PORTUGAL

Parliamentarians Ana Manso (Social Democrat / centre right party) and Helena Pinto (Left Bloc), both members of the Portuguese All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development, called on the State Secretary for International Development to emphasise SRHR in the new Portuguese Development Policy. In her statement, Ms. Manso referred to her experiences on the field visit to Bangladesh. The MPs asked for concrete figures for Portuguese spending on population in its bilateral and multilateral budgets.

2006 SPAIN

MP Miguel Angel Martinez, upon returning from the EPF field visit to Ethiopia, persuaded his party (the centre-right Popular Party) to introduce the Call to Action developed and signed during the field visit as a non-binding proposal (September).

Field Visit - Ethiopia, 2006
HIGHLIGHTS  2001-2004 (continued)

2002  SPAIN

MP Carlos Aymerich posed a Parliamentary question about the outcome document of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, and on ODA funding for family planning. Mr. Aymerich was part of the EPF delegation to the Special Session. MP Carles Campuzano also posed a Parliamentary question on ODA funding for family planning. MP Michaela Navarra, posed a parliamentary question on Spanish intervention in the stoning of a Nigerian woman. All are members of the APPG.

2002  SWEDEN

APPG member Ulla Hoffman posed a Parliamentary question on Sweden’s commitment to SRHR development aid.

2002  UNITED KINGDOM

APPG member Viscount Craigavon, Peer, posed two Parliamentary questions on ICPD and UNFPA.

2003  FRANCE

The National Assembly Delegation on Women’s Rights held a Parliamentary briefing on UNFPA.

2004  UNITED KINGDOM

The APPG and EPF organised a conference in the House of Commons on contraceptive supplies and the MDGs.
What We do:

Building Consensus to Achieve the MDGs

2002 - 2005

In 2002, EPF brought together a group of Parliamentarians to attend the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS). EPF also organised a Parliamentary delegation to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on ICPD+10. These activities led to increased advocacy by Parliamentarians, who then posed Parliamentary questions, participated in briefings, and joined with the other regional Parliamentary networks in a statement on HIV/AIDS. In 2002, EPF also helped 21 members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) develop a declaration on U.S. development funding and UNFPA.

In 2003, EPF helped form a steering committee of Global Parliamentarians on ICPD. In 2004, EPF helped organise the participation of European Parliamentarians in two meetings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. EPF members also attended an expert meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. In 2004, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also accepted the report on SRHR in Europe issued by MP Christine McCafferty, a member of the UK APPG and former member of the EPF Executive Committee. Members of the EPF Executive Committee also participated in a Council of Europe seminar on Social Cohesion and Demographic Challenges.

In 2005, EPF joined with the Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Spanish Parliamentary Inter-Group on Population and Development, the Cervantes Institute, the UN Foundation, and the Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development to hold a meeting on Parliamentary Leadership in Promoting and Protecting Women’s Health. This session was organised to coincide with a meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. In another related activity, EPF Parliamentarians met privately with the leadership of UNFPA and UNIFEM to discuss the role of Parliamentarians in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. EPF also organised Parliamentary participation in a meeting of the UN Commission on Population and Development, and a UN High Level Meeting on the MDGs+5.

About UN and Council of Europe Advocacy

EPF members participate in international and regional organisations such as the United Nations and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Because they are the elected representatives of tens of thousands of people, Parliamentarians can make use of these opportunities to make their voices heard in a powerful way.

The EPF secretariat has helped Parliamentarians play key roles at all of the main UN ICPD+10 regional conferences as well as UN meetings related to sustainable development, women’s rights, population, HIV/AIDS and children’s rights.

Field Visit - Peru, 2005
2006

This year, EPF was granted special consultative status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). This means EPF may now designate official representatives to the United Nations headquarters in New York and offices in Geneva and Vienna. EPF’s representatives will be able to attend and in some cases participate in UN meetings previously closed to them.

As the only Parliamentary Network based in Europe to receive this designation, EPF will be able to involve Parliamentarians more closely in the work of the UN as it pertains to sexual and reproductive health and rights and other international development and global health issues.

Also this year, EPF was granted Participatory Status with the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe was Europe’s first inter-governmental organisation; it has 46 member states. The aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity and to seek solutions to problems facing European society, including gender inequality, poverty, trafficking in persons, violence and discrimination.

Organisations with Participatory Status in the Council of Europe work with the Council of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to develop policies, plan conventions, create recommendations and contribute to the decision-making process regarding the implementation of programmes.
WHAT WE DO:

Building Consensus to Achieve the MDGs

2005

The G-8 International Parliamentarians Conference on Development in Africa
This conference brought together more than 80 Parliamentarians representing the G-8, European and African countries as well as 50 members of leading international bodies and civil society organizations. It considered the G-8 agenda, particularly the recommendations from the Commission for Africa Report and sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS. It took place in the Scottish Parliament in June 2005.

The International Conferences of Young Decision Makers: Portugal and Spain

• “SRHR and the MDGs in Portugal and Around the World”
  Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, October 2005

  145 young leaders from political parties, non-governmental organisations and youth governmental bodies such as the Portuguese Institute for Youth and National Youth Council signed the Lisbon Declaration, which proclaims the signatories’ commitment to advancing sexual and reproductive rights and health for young people and calls on the Portuguese government to increase its investment in sexual and reproductive health and rights domestically and internationally.

• “Young Spanish Leaders and SRHR- Cairo POA in Spain and Around the World”
  Spanish Congress of Deputies, November 2005

  100 young leaders from youth sections of political parties, parliamentarian groups, national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), governmental bodies, such as the Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Spanish Youth Institute, Women’s Institute, National Aids Plan and international organisations as the Ibero American Youth Organisation (OIJ), signed the Madrid Declaration, an agreement to advance sexual and reproductive rights and health for all people, especially young people, both nationally and internationally.

HIGHLIGHTS 2002-2004

2002  WARSAW - POLAND

Roundtable for Central and Eastern European Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians from Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Austria and the EPF Executive Committee met in the Polish ‘Sejm’ (Lower House) to discuss SRHR in Central and East Europe.

2004  TBILISI - GEORGIA

South East European Parliamentarians Roundtable

This event included 60 participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Lithuania and Turkey who discussed ICPD and the MDGs in relation to regional challenges.

2004  LONDON - UNITED KINGDOM

Global Roundtable Countdown 2015

EPF served on the steering committee of this event, which marked the 10th Anniversary of ICPD and was attended by 500 Parliamentarians, field specialists, academics, and activists. Participants reached consensus on strategies for the next 10 years of ICPD.
CONFERENCES, ROUNDTABLES AND SEMINARS

2006

The Baltic/Finnish Roundtable on Development and SRHR (Riga, Latvia, January 2006)
This two-day meeting included MPs from Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, who developed a Statement of Commitment reaffirming the high priority accorded to SRHR in the development policies of their respective countries and EU Institutions. It was organised by the Finnish APPG and Väestöliitto, the Finnish Family Planning Association, in partnership with EPF.

Making the Media Work for You: Communicating Support for SRHR (Budapest, February 2006).
16 MPs from Austria, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Scotland, Spain, Sweden and Turkey participated in this training, which included topics like facing anti-choice journalists and communicating effectively with the news media. It was organised by EPF in partnership with Catholics for A Free Choice.

Regional Conference of South Eastern Europe Parliamentarians (Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina, April 2006).
This event focused on ways MPs could support reproductive health programmes for youth. MPs discussed the ICPD Programme of Action, national MDG strategies, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. MPs from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey and the EPF President participated.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL PARLIAMENTARIANS ORGANISATION
EUROPEAN CHAPTER

On 31 March and 1 April 2005, Parliamentarians with a medical background from 11 countries in Europe met in Dublin upon the invitation of the Chairmen of Houses of the Oireachtas, the Dail and Seanad as the European Chapter of the International Medical Parliamentarians Organisation (IMPO). IMPO is open to members of Parliament with medical, nursing and/or public health background and offers a unique platform where they can come together to share their knowledge of development and health issues around the world. The Dublin meeting of IMPO-Europe was organised by EPF and featured discussions with experts from UNFPA, WHO and non-governmental organisations regarding global health in general, the fight against malaria, banning smoking in the workplace, infertility, sexual and reproductive health and rights & HIV/AIDS.
Launch of the Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucases (RHiYC) (Azerbaijan, June 2006)
This event marked the start of a collaborative effort between EPF, UNFPA and the EU that will educate youth about their right to quality, comprehensive SRH services. It was attended by the First Lady of Georgia, the deputy health ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, representatives of the participating agencies and Georgian MP George Tseretelli, chair of the Georgian APPG.

Conference of the Young Decision Makers Initiative (Helsinki, September 2006)
42 young MPs and political leaders attended this conference, which focused on SRHR and the MDGs and was timed to coincide with the ASEM-6 meeting. The conference was arranged by Väestöliitto, the Finnish Family Planning Association, together with EPF under the patronage of the Finnish APPG.

Seminar on Health, Education, Reproductive Health Supplies and the European Development Policies (Brussels, October 2006)
This event featured two expert panels on European development policies and reproductive health. MEP Anne Van Lancker (Belgium), Chair of the EPWG and member of the EPF executive committee, played a key role in challenging the EU to do more to ensure vulnerable populations would not be left out of future decision-making on development. It was organised by a consortium of SRHR organisations including EPF.

HIV/AIDS in Eurasia and the Role of the G-8 (Moscow, June 2006)
MPs Nikolay Gerasimenko, (Russian Federation; also EPF Vice-President), Dr. Karl Addicks (Germany), Danielle Bousquet (France), Susan Deacon (Scotland), and Helene Mignon (France) took part in this event which built on the consensus developed at the 2005 Parliamentarians Meeting on the G-8, Africa and sexual and reproductive health and rights held in Edinburgh, Scotland. The momentum from this event will be carried forward to the planned 2007 G-8 Parliamentarians Conference in Berlin, Germany.
The International Parliamentarians’ Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI)

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the international community set a global resource target for population and reproductive health programmes, including family planning, for the year 2000 of $17 billion—$11.3 billion to come from domestic funding and $5.7 billion from external donor funding.

While many countries, both developed and developing, have increased their contributions to population and reproductive health activities since the ICPD, the target of $17 billion has not been met. This is one of the biggest challenges for the effective implementation of the recommendations of the ICPD Programme of Action.

It is against this background that the regional Parliamentary groups for Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa decided in 2002 to host the first International Parliamentarians Conference on Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI). IPCI has become a bi-annual event where Parliamentarians from around the world gather to assess the progress made towards achieving the goals of ICPD and develop strategies to address existing and emerging challenges. EPF represents the European region in the IPCI steering committee and coordinates the input of the 30+ Parliamentarians who form the European delegation to each conference.

IPCI: 2002 - 2006

2002  OTTAWA, CANADA

EPF sent a delegation of 30 European MPs to this conference held in the Canadian Parliament. The 100 MPs from 70 countries who attended signed a Statement of Commitment outlining specific actions they would take.

2004  STRASBOURG, FRANCE

EPF worked with UNFPA to organise this event which took place at the Council of Europe. It was attended by 130 MPs and government ministers from 90 countries. Participants signed the Strasbourg Statement of Commitment outlining specific actions they would take to promote ICPD.

2006  BANGKOK, THAILAND

This conference will take place on 21-22 November 2006. The conference will focus on taking stock of the progress made since Cairo and reaching agreement on a common strategy towards meeting the 2015 deadline set for achieving the goals of ICPD and the MDGs.

The conference is organised by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The Thai National Assembly and AFPPD are acting as local hosts on behalf of the other regional Parliamentary networks including EPF.
ABOUT PARLIAMENTARY DECLARATIONS

EPF coordinates the development and circulation of Declarations and Calls to Action by Parliamentarians on the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights in international development programmes.

Calls to Action represent a consensus among Parliamentarians that crosses national and party lines, and give Parliamentarians the opportunity to set priorities and coordinate joint efforts.

WHAT WE DO:

Building Consensus to Achieve the MDGs

2001

- Resolution of the Delegation Visiting Burkina Faso and Mali: 6 signatories from 6 Parliaments.
- Declaration on the Global Gag Rule: 200 signatories from 20 countries.

2002

- Declaration of Participants in the Second EPF Council Meeting (Moscow): 33 signatories from 20 Parliaments.
- Thailand Field Visit Declaration: 5 signatories from 5 Parliaments.
- Respecting and Protecting the Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Children Issued at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children: joint declaration of the four regional Parliamentary networks.

2003

- Lisbon Declaration on ICPD POA: Signatories from 20 European Parliaments

2004

- IPCI Strasbourg Statement of Commitment: 130 signatories from 90 countries.
- Parliamentary Statements at ECLAC (Chile) and ECLAC (Puerto Rico): Joint declarations of EPF and IAPG Parliamentary Network delegations
2005


The nearly 80 Parliamentarians in attendance seized the opportunity to act before the G-8 Summit in July 2005 to develop a declaration providing a clear sense of direction for the implementation, monitoring and ongoing support of G-8 Summit commitments.

The declaration includes six action points:

• improve the quality and quantity of aid to Africa
• strengthen African capacity to benefit from the international trading system
• agree on ways to expand debt relief
• place women’s rights at the heart of development policy
• address the specific health burdens of African countries
• strengthen partnership with African-led initiatives

Over 40 Parliamentarians also signed a personal appeal to President Bush and Prime Minister Blair on the need to strongly support and promote the goals put forth by the Commission for Africa as a blueprint for action at the G-8 Summit in Gleneagles.

VISIBILITY FOR THE G-8 INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARIANS CONFERENCE

“If one clear theme emerged from this morning it was the need to empower women in Africa and to have integrated strategies for sexual health to combat the scourge of HIV and AIDS.”

• Scotland Today (Scottish TV) 06 June 2005

The G-8 International Parliamentarians Conference attracted significant media interest. There were 50 press articles published in ten European countries and it was featured in the newswires and publications of media in Asia (China & Japan), Africa (South Africa, Zambia) and the USA.
SIGNATORIES TO THE 3 OCTOBER 2006 CALL TO ACTION


:: WHAT WE DO:

Building Consensus to Achieve the MDGs

European Union Parliamentarians
Call to Action
to Deliver on the Millennium Development Goals
3 October 2006

We, the undersigned Parliamentarians of the European Union Member States and the European Parliament, are deeply concerned about the financial allocations to health priorities within European development cooperation budgets at both the Member State and European Union levels.

We call on the European Union to ensure that:

Development policies at European and Member States levels reflect the European Consensus on Development (Dec 2005);

50% of the development cooperation spending be allocated to reach the Millennium Development Goals;

Development cooperation budgets prioritise activities in the sector of basic health and basic education, including allocating 10% for population and reproductive health programmes;

Member State Governments and the European Commission continue to work with partner Governments in the South towards achieving the MDGs, in particular the health and education related MDGs and the ICPD Programme of Action; and

Evidence is produced on how civil society organisations, in the North and the South, are included in the consultative processes for the development of the Country Strategy Papers and any other development policies and budget negotiations.

Parliamentarians of the European Union Member States and the European Parliament, concerned that gaps in reproductive health care account for 1/3rd of illness and death among women of reproductive age (15-44), and noting that meeting the global need for contraceptives would save the lives of an additional 1.5 million women and children each year, hereby resolve:
To give priority attention to filling the reproductive health supplies gap estimated at $3.9 billion each year; and

To become meaningfully and actively involved in the formulation of policies for development cooperation at both Member State and EU levels, to ensure a focus on poverty reduction, transparency and accountability of development aid; and

To create mechanisms to monitor the results of development policies and the allocation of the funds to ensure the accountability of aid with both donor and recipient.

We call on the Governments of the EU Member States and the European Commission to:

Take this Call for Action into account in the Council of Ministers’ discussions concerning all external relations instruments of the European Union within the context of the Financial Perspectives for 2007-2013;

Ensure that sufficient funding for priorities established in the MDGs are allocated in the financing instruments of Member States’ international development co-operation policies as well as in the EC’s Development Cooperation and specifically in the EC’s Human Rights and Democracy Instrument and the EC’s European Neighbourhood Policy instrument; and

Provide Parliaments with a breakdown of the allocations according to the priorities of this Call to Action in the yearly reporting.
ABOUT THE EPF COUNCIL

The EPF Council represents the all-party Parliamentary groups (APPGs) which make up the membership of EPF. Each member group chooses a representative to participate in the EPF Council.

The EPF Council meets each year to approve EPF’s budget and accounts, consider applications for membership from APPGs, elect the members of the EPF Executive Committee, discuss the strategic direction of EPF, share information about APPG activities, and host information sessions. Special Observers to EPF also send representatives to EPF Council meetings to provide consultative input.

EPF Council Meetings are an ideal venue for Parliamentarians active on behalf of SRHR to meet, share ideas and develop strategies. Because each Council member represents an active APPG, the ideas shared at Council meetings can be implemented, evaluated and improved throughout Europe.

:: WHAT WE DO:

Building Consensus to Achieve the MDGs

2000 PARIS, FRANCE

Launch of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

At this meeting, the newly constituted EPF Council ratified a Declaration of Intent calling on Parliaments of the world to support the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. The launch involved Parliamentarians from 23 European and 8 non-European Parliaments.

2002 MOSCOW, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Combating HIV/AIDS, Preventing Trafficking in Persons and Protecting Reproductive Rights

Meeting in the State Duma, MPs from 20 European countries welcomed new APPGs from Belgium, France, Russia and Turkey to EPF membership.

2003 LISBON, PORTUGAL

Overcoming Barriers to the Implementation of ICPD

This meeting was held in the Portuguese Senate on the invitation of the President of the Portuguese Parliament. MPs from 20 European countries adopted the Lisbon Declaration, which affirms the ICPD Programme of Action as the very basis for progress in international development.
EPF COUNCIL MEETINGS

2004  ANKARA, TURKEY

Women in Society - Towards the 10th Anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women

This meeting was held in the Senate Hall of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey upon the invitation of His Excellency, Hon. Bülent Arınç, and the Chair of the Turkish Parliamentary Group, Hon. Dr Mahfuz Güler. Parliamentarians from 25 European countries participated as did the Turkish Minister of State Responsible for Women and Family and the Turkish Minister of Health. Members of the Asian and the African Parliamentary networks, international NGOs, inter-governmental organisations, and 40 Turkish civil society NGOs were also in attendance.

2005  EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

G-8 International Parliamentarians' Conference on Development in Africa

The EPF Council meeting was held along the G-8 Parliamentarians conference, giving European MPs a chance to plan strategy for implementing the conference's outcomes. At this meeting Dr Nikolay Gerasimenko and Senator Mary Henry were re-elected to the executive committee and the membership of German, Norwegian and Scottish APPGs were approved.

2006  BANGKOK, THAILAND

Taking Stock of the European Model of Parliamentary Advocacy

On the eve of the International Parliamentarians Conference on ICPD Implementation in Bangkok, Thailand, European Parliamentarians will come together for an EPF Council meeting. On the agenda will be elections to eight of the 11 posts on the EPF Executive Committee, admission of new member all-party Parliamentary groups and updating EPF’s statutes.
:: WHAT WE DO:

Working in Partnership

The EPF Membership: the All-Party Parliamentary Groups

The 25 all-party Parliamentary groups throughout Europe that make up the membership of EPF are committed to increasing funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights through domestic health spending and international development. The groups are open to Parliamentarians from all democratic parties and usually include members of all the main political parties in Parliament.

Highlights of APPG Activities 2005 – 2006

DENMARK

In 2006 a new all party Parliamentary group to promote SRHR was formed in the Danish Parliament. All seven parties in Parliament are represented. The initiative for the group was taken at the “No Sex-06” conference which took place earlier in the year, where a panel of MPs agreed to make a joint effort across party lines to monitor the progress of the implementation of the strategy of the Danish Government on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT


EPF MEMBERS

Austria: Parteiübergreifende ParlamentarierInnengruppe zur reprodutiven Gesundheit (2000)
Denmark: Danish All Party Parliamentary Group to Promote SRHR (2006)
                     Assemblée Nationale: Délégation aux droits des femmes et à l’égalité des chances entre les hommes et les femmes (1999)
                     Sénat: Groupe d’études démographie et population mondiale (2000)

1 The date in parenthesis indicates the year the group was formed.
ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

FINLAND

In 2005 the APPG posed a Parliamentary question to the Finnish Government on how it planned to promote SRHR as part of the plan to accomplish the MDGs and organised a seminar on this topic which included Government ministers and NGO experts. In the second half of 2006 Finland held the presidency of the European Union; the APPG sponsored a conference of the Young Decision Makers initiative to raise the issue of SRHR, the MDGs and young people. The conference participants developed a resolution that was delivered to the Finnish Prime Minister in his role of EU President.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Honourable Nikolay Gerasimenko, MD, chair of the APPG and Vice President of the EPF Executive Committee, chaired a hearing in the State Duma called Health Reform Through Legislative Regulation in 2005. Also in 2005, Dr Gerasimenko also organised a meeting with journalists from 30 different Russian regions to discuss demographic concerns and was a key presenter at the 2006 conference HIV/AIDS in Eurasia and the Role of the G-8.

TURKEY

The members of the Population and Development Group of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (PDG GNAT) have been successful in changing articles in the new penal code and related items in the civil code related to women’s equality. PDG GNAT is currently focusing on a project called “Contributing to a Decrease in Maternal Mortality by Creating Multi-Sectoral Cooperation and by Ensuring Political Determination through Parliamentarians.” This project is funded by the European Commission through a grant to the Family Planning Association of Turkey, which acts as the secretariat to PDG GNAT.

EPF MEMBERS


Lithuania: Visuomenės plėtros, reprodukcijos sveikatos ir teisių parlamentarų grupė (2002)

Norway: Stortingetsgruppen for seksuell og reproduktiv helse og rettigheter (2005)

Portugal: Grupo Parlamentar Português sobre População e Desenvolvimento (2000)

Russia: Committee of the State Duma of the Russian Federation on Population (2001)


Sweden: Riksdagsgrupp om SRHR, gender och utvecklings-samarbete (1998)


EPF also works with individual Parliamentarians from countries without a formal all-party group: Albania, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Moldova and the Netherlands.
:: WHAT WE DO:

Working in Partnership

The EPF secretariat promotes the growth of all-party Parliamentary groups by connecting Parliamentarians who want to start an all-party group with Parliamentarians who have already done so. The secretariat provides technical assistance, organises trainings and develops tools to help Parliamentarians become better SRHR advocates. The EPF secretariat partners with NGOs on the country level who provide secretariat support for Parliamentary groups to organise events and involve individual Parliamentarians in regional and international activities.

The EPF secretariat works closely with international organisations such as UNFPA, regional organisations like the European Commission, and NGOs like International Planned Parenthood Federation.

The EPF secretariat also partners with the secretariats of its three sister networks:

- the Asian Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (AFPPD)
- the Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (IAPG)
- the Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAAPPD)

The EPF secretariat is based in Brussels. 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.

EPF Secretariat Staff:

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Saskia Pfeijffer  
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EPF HAS RECEIVED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM:

- The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development / Japan Trust Fund
- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- The European Commission
- The International Planned Parenthood Federation
- The International Planned Parenthood Federation EuroNetwork
- The John D. and Catherine T. Mac Arthur Foundation
- Population Action International
- The Royal Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Summit Foundation
- The United Nations Foundation
- The United Nations Population Fund
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
THE EPF SECRETARIAT

The EPF secretariat

EPF partners with the following NGOs who act as secretariats to the all-party Parliamentary groups:

- Associação para o Planeamento da Família (Portugal)
- APP-XY (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Association HERA XXI (Georgia)
- Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (Germany)
- Equilibres et Populations (France)
- Foreningen Sex & Samfund (Denmark)
- Federación de Planificación Familiar de España (Spain)
- Irish Family Planning Association (Ireland)
- Marie Stopes International (UK)
- Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial (France)
- Norsk forening for seksuell og reproduktiv helse og rettigheter (Norway)
- Österreichische Gesellschaft für Familienplanung (Austria)
- PLANes - Fondation Suisse pour la Santé Sexuelle et Reproductive (Switzerland)
- PRO FAMILIA Bundesverband (Germany)
- Riksförbundet för sexuell upplysning (Sweden)
- Russian Family Planning Association (Russian Federation)
- Seimos Planavimo ir Seksualines Sveikatos Asociacijos (Lithuania)
- Sensoa (Belgium)
- Türkiye Aile Planlaması Derneği (Turkey)
- Väestöliitto (Finland)

EPF HAS RECEIVED
IN-KIND SUPPORT FROM:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Catholics for a Free Choice
- Centre for Reproductive Rights
- Georgia: Parliament of Georgia
- The International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network
- Ireland: The Irish Seannad
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- Poland: The Sejm
- Portugal: The Assembly of the Republic
- Russian Federation: The State Duma of the Russian Federation
- Scotland: The Scottish Parliament
- Spain: Congress of Deputies
- Turkey: The Grand National Assembly of Turkey
- United Kingdom: The House of Lords
In 2006 EPF published a brochure describing the Young Decision Makers initiative. To obtain copies, please contact info@iepfpd.org.

-- SPECIAL INITIATIVES

YOUNG DECISION MAKERS

The Young Decision Makers (YDM) initiative focuses on Parliamentarians and leaders of political parties and non-governmental organisations who are under 30 years of age and share EPF’s vision of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all people. Through the YDM initiative, EPF organises conferences and study tours that highlight the issues faced by young people in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights. EPF has worked with YDMs from the Parliaments of Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the EU, and from political parties and civil society in Belarus, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

2005 Activities

PORTUGAL

The conference SRHR and the MDGs in Portugal and around the World was held in the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal in October 2005. 145 YDMs attended and signed the Lisbon Declaration on SRHR and youth.

SPAIN

The conference Young Spanish Leaders and SRHR - Cairo POA in Spain and Around the World was held in the Spanish Congress of Deputies in November 2005. At this event 100 YDMs signed the Madrid Declaration, an agreement to advance sexual and reproductive rights and health for all people nationally and internationally.

2006 Activities

FINLAND

Conference of the Young Decision Makers Initiative (Helsinki, September 2006). 42 young MPs and political leaders attended this conference, which was timed to coincide with the ASEM-6 meeting. The Conference was arranged by the Finnish Family Planning Association together with EPF under the patronage of the Finnish APPG.
Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in the South Caucases (RHIYC)

RHIYC is a collaborative effort between EPF, UNFPA and the European Commission, which aims to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. RHIYC will empower youth to advocate for their right to accessible, youth friendly and high-quality sexual and reproductive health services and supplies in order to reduce unwanted pregnancies, prevent the spread of STIs including HIV/AIDS, and eliminate gender-based violence. The launch of RHIYC was held in 2006 in Tbilisi, Georgia. It was attended by the First Lady of Georgia, the deputy health ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, representatives of the participating agencies and Georgian MP George Tsereteli, chair of the Georgian APPG.

European Alliance against Malaria

EPF has joined forces with the Red Cross EU Office and numerous civil society organisations to increase the level of political commitment to malaria control. Despite malaria’s enormous mortality, morbidity and economic burden, financial help has been inadequate. Yet for every USD 1 million in new malaria funding, 10,000 children’s lives are saved. This project will develop a cohesive partnership among civil society, private sector, media and advocacy specialists, decision-makers and Parliamentarians in the European Union Institutions and in four strategically selected European countries.

“I realised the influence of higher political developments on the resources for NGOs and the gap between politics and people in the field. Especially for young people it may be easier to build bridges to close these gaps. In these more conservative times I think it is important to join hands in making more people aware of all of the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights, therefore I wrote some articles about it for different (youth) magazines.

Also I worked for more funding for this specific subject during the development co-operation negotiations in the Dutch parliament and I am trying to get it higher on the agenda of my mother party.”

By: Jeltsje Kemerink, Representative of foreign trade cooperation of the Green Left Youth, the Netherlands
**EPF GOVERNANCE:**

The eleven member EPF Executive Committee oversees the implementation of EPF Council decisions, monitors the Secretariat’s annual budget and evaluates its progress within the multi-year strategic plan. In addition, Executive Committee members represent EPF at national, regional and international events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Anne Van Lancker</td>
<td>President, EPF</td>
<td>since 2006</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ruth Genner</td>
<td>President, EPF</td>
<td>2001-2006</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Marjatta Vehkaoja</td>
<td>President, EPF</td>
<td>2001-2003</td>
<td>Finland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Carina Hägg</td>
<td>First Vice President</td>
<td>2003-2006</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senator Mary Henry, MD</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>2002-2008</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Birute Vesaite</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>2003-2006</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Suat Caglayan</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>Senator Lucien Neuwirth</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>2001-2003</td>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Claude Greff</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>2003-2006</td>
<td>France</td>
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Dr Nikolay Gerasimenko, MD  
Vice President  
2002-2008  
Russia

Ms Christine McCafferty  
Treasurer  
2001-2003  
United Kingdom

Mr Eugenio Castillo  
Member  
2003-2006  
Spain

Ms Sonia Fertuzinhos  
Treasurer  
2001-2006  
Portugal

Ms Ulla Sandbæk  
Vice President  
2001-2004  
European Parliament,  
Denmark

Mr Mahfuz Güler  
Member  
2003-2006  
Turkey

Ms Elena Poptodorova  
Vice President  
2001-2003  
Bulgaria

Mr Martyn Jones  
Member  
2003-2006  
UK