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NEWSLETTER in NUMBERS

33 MPs and MEPs demand action against US-backed ‘misinformation’ network
12 European donor countries gave an estimated 845 million Euros to SRH/FP in 2018
Delegation of 17 MPs participate in 9th African Conference on Sexual Health and Rights in Nairobi

In the news

EU lawmakers demand action against US-backed ‘misinformation’ network, targeting vulnerable women and girls
BRUSSELS, 11 February 2020 - Following a nine-month investigation, openDemocracy revealed that a major US anti-abortion group with ties to the Trump administration has backed a global network of ‘crisis pregnancy centres’ (CPCs), many of which give women distorted and false information about abortion and, in some cases, contraception. In Europe, openDemocracy undercover reporters contacted Heartbeat-affiliated centres operating in Spain, Italy, Ireland, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Ukraine.

In response to openDemocracy’s findings, lawmakers and health experts have today called for action. Over 30 European MPs and MEPs have written to the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, calling on them to “take firm action” against “unethical and harmful crisis pregnancy centres,” and to “help fight disinformation and propaganda”.

MEP Fred Matic, the European Parliament’s Special Rapporteur on Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health, says the findings are “deeply concerning”. This “misinformation” he adds, is “undoubtedly a violation of human rights, a grave risk for the lives of women and a serious threat to democracy”.

Neil Datta, Secretary of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights said it is “shameful and disturbing” that foreign groups are involved in projects in Europe that are “proactively attempting to deprive women of their legal rights to access the healthcare of their choosing by deliberately deceiving them.” “This is a rule of law issue,” he said. “Every politician, whether or not they agree with a women’s right to abortion, should be very concerned that their country’s laws are being circumvented through disinformation, emotional manipulation and outright deceit specifically targeting pregnant women”.

Download:
- Letter to Stella Kyriakides, Health and Food Safety Commissioner
- Letter to Dunja Mijatovic, Commissioner for Human Rights

Website:
Read openDemocracy’s coverage here

MP Delegation participates in 9th African Conference on Sexual Health & Rights

NAIROBI, 11-14 February 2020 - A Global Parliamentary Alliance (GPA) delegation of 17 parliamentarians from 14 countries across Africa participated in the 9th African Conference on Sexual Health and Rights (ACSHR).
Over the four days, MPs took part in panel discussions, press briefings, media interviews and parliamentarian-only sessions, where they discussed advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls in urban informal settlements in Africa and the need to advance family planning policy and financing.

During the one-day MP Forum, family planning experts and UNFPA representatives engaged with the parliamentarians and participated in the first consultation of 'The Global Contraception Atlas for Africa'.

The delegation also left the conference centre for a field trip with Miss Koch Kenya, a not for profit and youth empowerment organisation with the aim of addressing youth vulnerability in Korogocho slums. Visiting the local hospital, youth radio centre and Nairobi river, parliamentarians got a closer look at both the urgent need for universal health coverage and access to family planning services as well as some ongoing initiatives at achieving those goals.

See the delegation photo album here

See media coverage below
Website:
The Star - Post-abortion care costs more than safe abortion, states told
PD - African youth call for policies on sexual reproductive health
Xinhuanet - African lawmakers urge action on sexual violence in urban slums

Global Parliamentary Alliance Advisory Group meets in Geneva

GENEVA, 25 February 2020 - Hosted at the WHO headquarters, the second Global Parliamentary Alliance for Health, Rights and Development (GPA) Advisory Group Meeting gathered 18 participants from 13 countries. The participants reviewed the GPA Advisory Group
meeting in Nairobi and its subsequent actions and discussed the future direction of GPA. After the discussion, the Advisory Group members had a chance to take part in a tour around the WHO headquarters, including a confidential briefing in the famous emergency SHOC room monitoring the current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

**MP Delegation attends conference on 'The Right To Enjoy The Benefits Of Science - An African Perspective'**

ADDIS ABABA, 25-26 February 2020 - The interaction between science, the scientific method, evidence-based debates and the decision-making process in full respect of the international Rule of Law has always been at the centre of the five meetings of the World Congress organised since 2004 at the Italian and European Parliament by the Associazione Luca Coscioni.

In 2020, EPF and GPA in Africa, in collaboration with The Associazione Luca Coscioni and Science for Democracy organised a parliamentary delegation to attend the 6th meeting of the World Congress for Freedom of Scientific Research in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 25 to 26 February 2020. The event was co-sponsored by the Commission of the African Union in the person of Sarah Mbi Enow Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Science and Technology.

The congress was convened to precede and contribute to the United Nations group of experts discussions towards finalisation of the “General Comment” on Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which will address what, for some time, have been called the “right of” and the “right to” science.

The four participating parliamentarians in their submissions shared that in the Context of Africa, evidence-based policy was key in making well-informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects in Africa. The advancement of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Policies in Africa was cited as a key example that has largely benefitted from evidence.

Placing research at the heart of policy development was however noted as challenging and the parliamentarians made key recommendations to mitigate the a myriad of societal factors, including values of the policy-makers and the socio-political context. Translating research evidence into policy they said, requires effort and the emotive component of persuading the legislators, policy makers and decision makers.

**Website:**
[Final Recommendations of the 6th Meeting of the World Congress for Freedom of Scientific Research](#)
European donor countries care about sexual and reproductive safety and freedom

BRUSSELS, 4 February 2020 - Opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights in Europe has significantly increased in recent years, and we stand at a critical moment in European history with a new populist rhetoric of fear, national self-interest and conservatism. Still policies and funding for global development and SRH/FP were solidified and championed in many global fora.

Countdown 2030 Europe analysis concluded that ten out of twelve key European donor countries sustained or increased their funding for SRH/FP with Ireland and Spain seeing the most significant increase and the UK, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden remaining the largest donors.

On the policy side, European donors have strongly increased their commitment and focus on SRH/FP.

For more details read the full report.

And explore the data through the new online tool.
BUDVA, 27-29 February 2020 - Together with its British partner Oak Foundation, the Belgrade based Trag Foundation organised a three-day regional assembly of women's organisations called UdruZENE (women united).

During the event, participants discussed plans and strategies on how to support and strengthen women's organisations and build a strong women's movement in the next few years. EPF Policy Officer Remigiusz Bak took part in a panel session on understanding anti-gender movements in Europe.
ROME, 28 February 2020 - In the 2019 Contraception Atlas, Italy ranked just 26th out of 46 countries.

AIDOS, the Italian Association of Women for Development decided to take the Atlas one step further and create their own regional contraception atlas for Italy, which launched today. The Italian atlas highlights huge regional discrepancies with the north generally having better access than the south, partially due to the decentralised political system.

Under Secretary at the Italian Ministry of Health, Sandra Zampa, attended the launch and said, "With Italy's discrepancies in access to contraceptive supplies, you'd think you are in different countries. Gender-biased medicine is an unacceptable phenomenon in our country. SRHR is a basic human right and we have to do all in our power to provide this right to people."

EPF Lead in International Advocacy & Partnerships, Marina Davidashvili presented the European Atlas to attendees, highlighting the need to provide accurate information and contraceptive supplies to all in Europe, regardless of location or situation.

**Website:**
View the atlas here
Media coverage
Croatian MPs call for inquiry into ‘crisis pregnancy centres’

ZAGREB, 24 February 2020 - 20 Croatian MPs from nine political parties have called for a parliamentary inquiry into ‘crisis pregnancy centres’ following an openDemocracy special investigation that revealed numerous examples of “deliberate disinformation” targeting vulnerable women around the world.

At a press conference, MPs announced their call for a parliamentary commission to be established to “to identify all the facts” about these centres in Croatia including their financing, practices and impact on women’s reproductive and sexual rights and health. This inquiry should also investigate links between centres in Croatia and “international associations and networks aimed at taking away women’s right to an abortion”, the MPs said, comparing disinformation in this area to that around vaccines that has had “significant impact” on public health.

At the press conference, EPF Executive Committee member Hon. Bojan Glavašević, MP denounced practices that “deprive women of access to health services as well as access to accurate, evidence-based information”.

Croatian MEP Fred Matić, who is also the European Parliament’s special rapporteur on sexual and reproductive rights and health, added that openDemocracy’s findings are “undoubtedly a violation of human rights, a grave risk for the lives of women and a serious threat to democracy”.

Website: Read openDemocracy’s coverage here
Continuing the momentum of the Nairobi Summit in Poland

WARSAW, 21 February 2020 - Together with FEDERA, UNFPA and the Polish APPG group on SRHR, EPF organised a Nairobi Summit follow-up meeting at the Polish Parliament. The meeting was attended by the representatives of NGOs, activists, journalists and three Polish parliamentarians. The main aim was to brief participants about the outcomes of the Summit and to dispel the misinformation around the event by the extreme-right in Poland.

New APPG constituted in Spain

MADRID, 19 February 2020 - The Parliamentary Intergroup on Population, Development and Reproductive Health held its first session of the new legislature, reuniting former members and welcoming new ones.
Estelle Wagner, head of advocacy at the Geneva office of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), highlighted how it is a crucial year to place sexual and reproductive health on international agendas, with the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994 and the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995, as well as being 10 years from the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

**Website:**
http://intergruposalud.es/comienza-la-andadura-del-intergrupo-en-esta-legislatur...