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In the news

EPF NEWS

EPF President writes op-ed for World Contraception Day 2019: "Access to contraception remains a big challenge in Europe"
BRUSSELS, 26 September 2019 – On the occasion of World Contraception Day 2019, EPF President and Belgian MEP Petra De Sutter wrote an opinion piece in *The Parliament Magazine*.

Citing evidence from the [European Contraception Atlas](https://www.european-contraception.com/) and [White Paper](https://www.european-contraception.com/white-paper), she argues that access to contraception should be a key concern of European governments in empowering their citizens to plan their families and lives.

“Democracy, freedom and human rights”, foreign colleagues answer when I ask what Europe stands for. This does not apply to birth control. How “democratic” is a European country if it ignores the sexual and reproductive rights of its people? How “free” are you as a woman when there is a constant risk of unwanted pregnancy hanging over you?

[Read the article here](https://www.european-contraception.com/article)

**EPF Secretary Neil Datta warns of dangers of incorrect framing of Demography**

BRUSSELS, 30 September 2019 - Ahead of the Commissioner-designate hearings this week, EPF Secretary Neil Datta urges the Croatian nominee for the ‘Democracy and Demography’ portfolio, MEP Dubravka Šuica, to commit to reflecting the outcomes of the upcoming Nairobi summit in her first report in office.
In the opinion article published in *Open Democracy*, Mr Datta mentions the worrying trend of misappropriation of demography by "authoritarian, far-right and alt-right figures" as demonstrated, for example, at Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s *International Demographic Summit* in September.

*Demography is essentially the study of population dynamics and macro-trends of human behaviour in fertility, childbearing and family creation. If Šuica is confirmed as a commissioner, she will be the highest European-level politician with the potential to influence people’s sexual and reproductive choices.*

[Read the full article here](#)

**World Contraception Day 2019**

BRUSSELS, 26 September 2019 - For World Contraception Day 2019, EPF teamed up with *Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung* (DSW) and *International Planned Parenthood Federation* (IPPF) for a social media campaign testing the contraceptive knowledge of the general public as well as asking questions about their experiences such as the extent to which they learned about contraception at school.

In the week running up to World Contraception Day, testimonies were shared on social media as well as one general knowledge video per day:

- [Where did your country rank in the 2019 Contraception Atlas?](#)
• Have you heard of the IUD?
• Which is the most effective contraception against pregnancy?
• What percentage of women of reproductive age use contraception?
• Which country ranked top in the 2019 Contraception Atlas?

See the contraception testimonies here

Kenyan MPs briefed ahead of Nairobi Summit

NAIROBI, 12 September 2019 - Two months ahead of the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, local MPs gathered in Nairobi for a Parliamentarian's briefing. Organised by the National Council for Population & Development, parliamentarians were briefed on general and technical information about the Summit. EPF Consultant and Africa Focal Point, Caroline Kwamboka, briefed parliamentarians on the MP forum and the launch of the Global Parliamentary Alliance for Health, Rights & Development to take place alongside the Summit.
BRUSSELS, 23 September 2019 - Since its release in 2018, EPF's report, “Restoring the Natural Order”: The religious extremists’ vision to mobilize European societies against human rights on sexuality and reproduction, continues to receive international attention. The report reveals that anti-choice movements have been attempting to overturn existing laws on basic human rights related to sexuality and reproduction.

With the latest additions being the Spanish and German translations, the report is now available in the following 6 languages:

- Deutsch
- English
- Español
- Français
- Italiano
- Polski

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT NEWS

MEPsforSRR co-chairs release statement reacting to reports alleging US attempts to rollback women's rights
BRUSSELS, 25 September 2019 - MEPsforSRR co-chairs MEP Petra de Sutter and MEP Sophie in ‘t Veld released a statement asking the EU to stand united for the rights of women and girls. The statement, sent to Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, was a response to reports that the US administration sent a letter to other governments asking them to join a "growing coalition" of countries that advocate against the right to a safe and legal abortion.

In the MEPsforSRR statement, the co-chairs wrote:
‘This is a clear attempt by the US to undermine the international cooperation on SRHR and this attempt should be clearly rebuked by the EU and its Member States. The EU should stand shoulder to shoulder with women and girls all around the globe, and defend their rights, rather than undermine them.’

Read the MEPsforSRR letter here

APPG NEWS

BELGIUM:

Belgium: Alexander De Croo and Queen Mathilde ask for more ambition for the implementation of the SDGs

NEW YORK, 24 September 2019 - As Heads of State and Government review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in New York, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Development
Cooperation Alexander De Croo and H.M. Queen Mathilde voiced that the objectives would never be achieved by 2030 unless all countries accelerate implementation and financing.

"No single government can reach the SDGs on its own and governments alone will not be able to respond to all challenges. The active engagement of the private sector, civil society and engaged citizens is crucial to move to a sustainable and inclusive economy. Agenda 2030 must be an inclusive agenda with an eye for the most vulnerable, gender equality and the emancipation of women and girls."

The 2018 SDG Index and Dashboards Report ranked Belgium twelfth in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

De Croo has been championing SRHR for many years now, taking the lead in She Decides, and is seen as a possible future prime minister in the next federal government of Belgium.

Read more

NORWAY:

Sex og Politikk celebrates 50 years

OSLO, 26 September 2019 - Sex og Politikk, the Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Norway celebrated its 50th anniversary. A two-day conference brought together important partners to discuss both historical
political achievements from 1969 to present, but also challenges that remain in the work for sexual and reproductive health and rights in Norway and internationally: access to contraception and safe abortion. Important topics such as transgender health and rights, political guidance on sex work, as well as issues related to migration health and SRHR were also discussed. EPF Secretary Neil Datta attended the anniversary event and delivered a speech on the politics of SRHR.

SPANISH – CATALUNYA

Catalan APPG celebrates 10th anniversary

BARCELONA, 20 September 2019 - The Intergroup of Population, Development and Reproductive Health of the Parliament of Catalonia celebrated its tenth anniversary with a conference in the Parliament of Catalonia. The Association | Sexual and Reproductive Rights (L'Associació | Drets Sexuals i Reproductius), provides the secretariat of the Catalan APPG. The Intergroup is working to monitor and implement global human rights agendas (Cairo Plan of Action, Beijing Declaration 1995) and the new Agenda2030 framework for sustainable development.
During the event, the achievements of the intergroup including several parliamentary initiatives for the defence and guarantee of Sexual and Reproductive Rights were highlighted.

Parliamentarians that have worked closely with EPF such as Hon. Aurora Madaula and Hon. Martín Barra gave testimonies of their experiences during study tours or international delegations.

EPF Secretary Neil Datta attended the event and presented the report 'Restoring the Natural Order'.

UK:

**UK commits millions to support women and girls in the world’s poorest countries**

NEW YORK, 24 September 2019 - At the United Nations General Assembly, the UK announced its plan to provide:

- £600 million over 2020-2025 in family planning supplies for millions more women and girls in the world’s poorest countries each year.
- £515 million to help get over 12 million children – half of them girls – into school, boosting economic growth and improving women’s rights in some of the poorest countries around the world.

British International Development Secretary, Alok Sharma announced the new family planning funding which will:

- give over 20 million women and girls access to family planning per year. This is 5 million more women per year than the UK’s previous reproductive health supplies programme
- prevent more than 5 million unintended pregnancies per year
• prevent at least 1.5 million potentially fatal unsafe abortions per year
• save an estimated 9,000 women’s lives per year from complications in pregnancy or childbirth.

‘The world cannot achieve universal health coverage without prioritising universal sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) access for women and girls.’

Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the education funding which aims to empower girls by:
• teaching basic literacy and numeracy
• getting children living in conflict zones including the Sahel into school
• and mobilising an additional $5 billion of investment for education in Africa and Asia, with a focus on the most marginalised children

‘I want the world to stop wilfully neglecting the enormous benefits that accrue for everyone when girls are given an education and a job.’

The new funding represents a significant uplift in the UK’s already world-leading support for SRHR.

Read more on £600 million Family Planning aid
Read Alok Sharma’s speech on £600 million Family Planning aid
Read more on £515 million drive to get girls into school