

## SheDecides: Spotlight on Countdown 2030 Europe Countries

### In brief

- ❖ Over €84 million Euro committed by 6 Countdown 2030 European governments: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden
- ❖ Pledges are mainly additional funds to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) but unknown what commitments will be made in 2018 and beyond
- ❖ Nearly €19 million has been committed to different UNFPA funding mechanisms, and over €25 million of funds have already been allocated to international NGOs
- ❖ Following the SheDecides conference, Ministers have continued to advocate for the initiative, leading to broader political support and reinforcing SRH as a priority issue for ODA
- ❖ Countdown 2030 Europe applauds governments for their commitments and pledges so far, but more needs to be done to reverse the trend and address the funding crisis facing global SRH and family planning programmes.

### Background

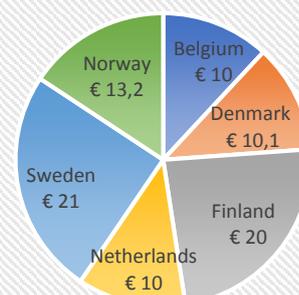
This report was commissioned by Countdown 2030 Europe - a consortium of leading European non-governmental organisations working in 12 European countries\* to ensure that Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and family planning (FP) are a funding priority for European donors and a policy priority globally. Countdown 2030 Europe holds donors to account for their commitments to SRH and FP and amongst other activities, the consortium partners track policy and financial trends in their respective countries\*\*. In the context of the recently launched *SheDecides* initiative, the objective of this report is to provide an **initial overview of the commitments to date by Countdown 2030 Europe' country governments as part of SheDecides.**

SheDecides was launched in early 2017 as a global movement to support the fundamental rights of girls and women to decide freely and for themselves about their sexual lives, including whether, when, with whom and how many children they have. It was initially launched the day after and in response to the reinstatement of the Global Gag Rule (GGR) by the US President Donald Trump's administration. The GGR is predicted to affect \$ 8.8 billion of global health funding. The launch began as an international crowdfunding campaign led by the Netherlands but soon three other countries (Belgium, Denmark and Sweden) joined the campaign, making it a wider movement to mobilise political and financial support for SRH. The four European countries co-organised the first SheDecides conference on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 which was attended by more than 50 governments and 450 participants from across the world. The global attack on SRH was a shared concern for those present. Pledges have since been made by multiple country governments and foundations.

### Overview of pledges by Countdown 2030 Europe Countries

Six **Countdown 2030 European countries** have pledged **over €84 million\*\*\*** as part of the SheDecides initiative: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. France has made a political commitment to SheDecides but has not financially pledged to date. These pledge amounts are from 2017 budgets, except for Finland where the pledge extends into 2018, and with funding disbursements planned in 2017 and, in several cases, into consecutive years. To date, no country has committed to any future funding pledges in 2018 or beyond.

**Funding pledges by Countdown 2030 Europe countries up to June 2017 (in millions)**



## Allocation of funding pledges

SheDecides funding is going through existing funding streams of their respective donors, so is not a new funding mechanism. Over half of the €84 million of pledged funds has already been allocated to specific funding streams by the respective country donors. Nearly €19 million has been committed to UNFPA, through a variety of funding mechanisms including UNFPA country offices, Core funding, and UNFPA reproductive health supplies (RHS). UNFPA has been drastically affected by recent cuts in funding; in April 2017, the Trump Administration announced it will discontinue all funding to UNFPA. Furthermore, over €25 million of the SheDecides pledges has already been promised to international NGOs. Based on evidence of the detrimental effects of the GGR, a number of international NGOs, including IPPF, have already announced they will not sign the policy. This means that, without alternative funding, there will be serious cuts to sexual health services around the globe.

## Political support linked to pledges

Following the pledges as part of the SheDecides initiative, several countries have been actively promoting the initiative at a national and international level. Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway have been especially active in taking the She Decides initiative forward from organising side events at the World Bank meeting in Washington, to Ministers including these discussions in stakeholder and parliamentary meetings and with the media, to further advance SRHR and gender equality at a political level. The pledges have also triggered broader political support in many of the countries, with increased interest from members of parliament and reinforcing SRH as a key priority as part of ODA. To facilitate taking the movement forward, a small support unit is housed at the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) in the UK, which will monitor the impact of the GGR, run the SheDecides website as the portal for the movement and support with communication and integration of SheDecides into other global initiatives.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The SheDecides initiative has galvanised Countdown 2030 European countries to increase their funding for SRH and FP to support life-saving work implemented by international NGOs who have been adversely affected by the GGR or through different UNFPA funding mechanisms. We applaud governments for their commitments and pledges so far. However, more needs to be done, and the current commitments will not be able to reverse the trend or address the funding crisis facing global family planning programmes.

### Countdown 2030 Europe therefore recommends the following:

1. **All governments, including European governments, have a crucial role to play and need to step in too.** The Global Gag Rule will not end in 2017, and even before its reinstatement, there were large gaps for SRH/FP services and supplies. Countries that have already pledged cannot take their foot off the pedal and should consider multi-year pledges and ensure their investments are sustained.
2. In the face of a changing political, economic and financial environment, **ensuring a continued progressive voice for Europe on SRH and FP** has never been more critical. Governments should not only pledge funding, but speak out on these issues in political processes and increase pressure in European and global spaces.
3. Where governments have not already done so, they **should provide more information and transparency on where the funding is going**, so we can celebrate the successes, look at the impact these funds have and address the remaining gaps.

Countdown 2030 Europe will continue to carefully track these pledged funds to identify when and how they are disbursed as well as continue advocacy for increased funding for subsequent years. It is hoped that the momentum gained thus far will garner additional European, and wider, support for 2017 and beyond.

\* Countdown 2030 Europe countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom

\*\* The latest Countdown 2030 Europe resources, research and donor tracking reports can be found on the website:

[www.countdown2030europe.org](http://www.countdown2030europe.org)

\*\*\* Pledged amounts from Denmark, Norway and Sweden were converted to Euro using exchange rates from 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017