

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights need MEPs' support now!

Promoting and investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) saves lives, improves health and contributes to realising human rights and gender equality. The EU is one of the strongest supporters of SRHR overall, and family planning in particular, with SRHR being recognised as an important area in EU development policies. The EU is also one of the main donors for SRHR in terms of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

WHY YOUR SUPPORT FOR REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM, SAFETY AND DIGNITY IN EU EXTERNAL POLICIES IS NEEDED?

• TODAY AROUND THE WORLD:



ABOUT 830 WOMEN DIE FROM PREGNANCY - or childbirth - related complications every day.¹



214 MILLION WOMEN WANT TO PREVENT OR POSTPONE PREGNANCY but do not have access to modern methods of contraception.²



AROUND 25 MILLION UNSAFE ABORTIONS are estimated to take place every year.³



MORE THAN 200 MILLION GIRLS AND WOMEN have been **FORCED** to undergo **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)**.⁴



4 IN 10 WOMEN AGED 20-24 in Sub-Saharan Africa were **MARRIED** before the age of 18.⁵



1 IN 3 WOMEN HAVE EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE, mostly by an intimate partner.⁶



THERE ARE NEARLY 1.8 MILLION NEW HIV infections every year.⁷

• SRHR ARE KEY TO ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND REALISING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL:

- **RIGHT TO PHYSICAL INTEGRITY** and to the highest attainable standard of health;
- **RIGHT TO EQUALITY** and non-discrimination;
- **RIGHT TO DECIDE** the number and spacing of one's children;
- **RIGHT TO CONSENSUAL SEXUAL RELATIONS** and to consensual marriage;
- **RIGHT TO INFORMATION** and vital skills developed through relationships and sexuality education.

• SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SAVES LIVES AND IS COST-EFFECTIVE:

- **FULLY MEETING THE NEED FOR MODERN CONTRACEPTION** in developing regions and ensuring that pregnant women and their newborns receive essential care would result in⁸:
 - **67 million fewer unintended pregnancies**
 - **2.2 million fewer newborn deaths**
 - **224.000 fewer maternal deaths**
- **ACCESS TO SRHR** improves health, promotes gender equality, increases productivity and income. **Every \$1 invested in family planning can save governments up to \$6⁹.**

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CHAMPION REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM, SAFETY AND DIGNITY IN EU EXTERNAL POLICIES?

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have a critical role in promoting SRHR in EU external action and upholding the right of young women and men around the world to lead safe and dignified lives, free from coercion and harm. **As an MEP, you can:**

• ENSURE ADEQUATE BUDGET FOR SRHR:

MEPs can ensure that the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the EU Annual Budget include **adequate funding for SRHR** and promote gender equality, including through budgets that take gender into account (**gender budgeting**).

• HOLD POWER TO ACCOUNT:

MEPs can hold the European Commission accountable, ensuring that the EU is standing by its **commitments on SRHR, gender equality, human development and health** through tools such as **parliamentary questions**.

• SPEAK OUT:

MEPs can use their role to **champion SRHR, through reports, resolutions and parliamentary questions**, in their committee work and in plenary.

• LISTEN TO THOSE MOST AFFECTED:

MEPs can **listen to individuals and organisations** who are the most impacted by decisions on SRHR policies, including through **participating in field visits and organising events**.

TAKE ACTION! ENSURE EU SUPPORT TO REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM, SAFETY AND DIGNITY THROUGH:

- Supporting an ambitious new EU Multiannual Financial Framework and a **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INSTRUMENT** (currently called NDICI) that are in favour of SRHR and gender equality;
- Upholding the EU commitment in the European Consensus on Development to ensure that, within each EU annual budget, at least **20%** of EU Official Development Assistance (ODA) is allocated to **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**, hence contributing to the promotion of SRHR globally;
- Ensuring the EU continues to dedicate adequate funding to the **EU-UN SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE** on violence against women and girls;
- Ensuring a **RENEWED GENDER ACTION PLAN** for the period post 2020, to continue putting gender equality and SRHR at the heart of EU external policies and ensure the implementation and monitoring of this plan;
- Ensuring that the new **EU ACTION PLAN ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY** includes SRHR and women's rights, and mentions the need to provide protection and support to women's human rights defenders and their organisations;
- Making sure the future **EU'S RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES FROM AFRICA, CARIBBEAN AND THE PACIFIC (ACP)** includes strong provisions for the promotion of SRHR and women's and girls' rights;
- Asking questions to candidate Commissioners during the **HEARINGS** to ensure the new College of European Commissioners will uphold SRHR and gender equality during their mandate;
- Promoting the language and commitments of the **EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON DEVELOPMENT** on SRHR and gender equality in all EU external policies (see box 2 on the right).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

In 2018, a holistic, new definition of SRHR going beyond the commonly recognized components of sexual and reproductive health was presented in the Guttmacher Institute and the Lancet Commission in their report titled "Accelerate progress – sexual and reproductive health and rights for all": "Sexual and reproductive health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Therefore, a positive approach to sexuality and reproduction should recognize the part played by pleasurable sexual relationships, trust and communication in promoting self-esteem and overall well-being. All individuals have a right to make decisions governing their bodies and to access services that support that right."¹⁰

EUROPEAN CONSENSUS ON DEVELOPMENT AND SRHR

"The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context. Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services."¹¹

1. WHO, 2018. Factsheet on maternal mortality. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>
2. WHO, 2018. Factsheet on family planning and contraception. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/family-planning-contraception>
3. WHO, 2018. Factsheet on preventing unsafe abortion. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preventing-unsafe-abortion>
4. <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/fgm/prevalence/en/>
5. Right by Her, 2018. The State of African Women report. <https://rightbyher.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SOAW-Report-FULL.pdf>
6. WHO, 2017. Factsheet on violence against women. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>
7. UNAIDS, 2018. Global HIV & AIDS statistics. <http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/fact-sheet>
8. <https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2017/greater-investments-needed-meet-womens-sexual-and-reproductive-health-needs>
9. UNFPA, 2017. Investing in family planning is a best buy. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/FINAL_UNFPA_infographic_080817.pdf
10. Guttmacher-Lancet Commission report, Accelerate progress, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all, available at Guttmacher-Lancet Commission report, <https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights>
11. European Consensus on Development, 2017, available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626_en.pdf



Countdown 2030 Europe (C2030E) is a Consortium of 15 leading European non-governmental organizations advocating towards European donors for increased funding and support to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), including Family Planning (FP), in international development cooperation. Consult C2030E website and join us on twitter for more information on SRHR in EU policies, including the latest figures on European donor support to SRHR.

 **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**
@C2030Europe

For more information on Countdown 2030 Europe, please visit our website at www.countdown2030europe.org or contact us at countdown2030europe@ippfen.org.