



Equality between women and men in the EU:

Let's move forward!

Joint statement by civil society organisations calling on MEPs to support the report on Equality between women and men in the EU (2013)

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

Civil society and human rights organisations call on you to support the [Report on Equality between women and men in the EU \(2013\)](#) in the plenary vote on 10 March 2015.

This report addresses persistent or increasing deadlocks on gender equality and proposes actions on a wide range of issues: developing childcare facilities; combating stereotypes against female employment; reducing gender pay and pension gaps; establishing paid paternity leave to enable men and fathers to achieve a better work-life balance; raising awareness on violence against women with a European year dedicated to this issue and improving men and women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services - SRHR (i.e. family planning, contraception, counselling and information, antenatal, postnatal and delivery care, health care for infants and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases).

Several regressive anti-human rights organizations – like CitizenGo or European Dignity Watch¹ - have called MEPs to oppose the report under the false pretense that SRHR falls under the exclusive competence of EU Member States. Those are the same that have manipulated the concept of SRHR to impose their ultra-conservative agenda in the past and threatened Edite Estrela for her Report on SRHR in 2013 and Ulrike Lunacek for her Report on EU roadmap against homophobia in 2014.

We urge you to ignore this misleading argumentation and to note that the EU is bound to protect and improve health protection within the EU (Art. 168 TFEU). This objective cannot be reached if sexual and reproductive health and rights are ignored. Moreover, the paragraph 45 on SRHR within the broader report on Equality between women and men only reflects the situation which already exists in a vast majority of EU Member-States. There is indeed a broad consensus throughout Europe to ensure men and women can access

¹ But also the European Federation of Catholic Family Associations or Agenda Europe and Turtle Bay and Beyond

contraception, safe abortion services and reproductive healthcare and information on sexuality. This is the basis upon which people can make free and fair choices about their family life and composition.

Beyond SRHR, the report highlights other urgent needs in terms of gender equality. On the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action on women's rights, the European Parliament must lead the way on reducing gender-based discrimination in Europe.

On 10 March, we hope that you will firmly support the report, including its call for better sexual and reproductive health and rights in case of a split vote, and therefore commit to further actions on gender equality in Europe.

Signatories:

European Humanist Federation

Catholics for Choice

European Women Lobby

International Planned Parenthood Federation – EN

EPF- European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

ILGA-Europe

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