

Perspectives on anti-choice lobbying in Europe

Study for policy makers on opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights in Europe

by Elena Zacharenko

This study has been commissioned by [Heidi Hautala](#),
Member of the European Parliament.



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Executive summary

After decades of steady progress on women's rights, the early-2000s saw the opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights, or the anti-choice movement, become increasingly visible at the international, European and national levels. The movement's emergence, with the support of the conservative Bush administration (2000–2008) in the United States, resulted in increased attempts to influence policy also on the European political arena.

At the international level, anti-choice organisations have played a key role in constructing a coalition of conservative states, which promote an agenda aiming to undermine the consensus on equality and respect for minority rights, which lies at the heart of the global human rights treaties. This coalition, led by Russia and supported by Central Asian, Muslim and African states, has recently begun attracting support from European countries.

At the level of EU member states, anti-choice activity further intensified as part of a wider reaction to the global economic crisis and the growing social dissatisfaction with liberal democratic values. The lack of socio-economic security and the perceived low democratic accountability of European states have resulted in a rise of movements calling for regressive policies and anti-modernist solutions as part of an organised opposition to the liberal democratic values and the global human rights agenda.

In Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain in particular, these movements began to organise in opposition to sexual and reproductive health and rights. These mobilisations, at times capable of activating tens of thousands of supporters, have on a few occasions led to the anti-choice actors influencing policy developments at EU level.

There are clear links between the anti-choice actors in individual countries, at the European and at the international levels, as demonstrated by their use of similar tactics and argumentation within these different settings.

To oppose the proliferation of anti-choice movements, political leaders must tackle the root causes – the dual crisis of the economy and the liberal democratic system – at the political level. It is crucial that progressive actors present concrete solutions to these challenges that are in line with their values, to effectively counter the vision put forward by conservative political forces. In order to achieve this, the needs of citizens, particularly those most marginalised, must be placed at the centre of political programming.

Introduction

Throughout my career in development cooperation and human rights, it has always been clear to me that sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), women's rights and gender equality play an enormous role in ensuring fair, prosperous and equal societies. As Finland's Minister of International Development, I ensured, e.g. direct support for health services to women and girls in Afghanistan. There I have been able to hear first-hand accounts from women whose lives were vastly improved thanks to the provision of SRHR services.

However, it is necessary to be aware of the existence of forces opposed to these rights and values. Despite the clear progress towards enhancing women's reproductive choices both in the developed and developing countries, at national, European and international levels, there are those who aim to move backwards.

With Trump's election as the president of the USA, we can well anticipate initiatives to hinder SRHR work as a part of a wider strategy against women's rights on the UN level as well as on the national level. On another front, we recently saw an attempt by 53 African nations to cease the work of the newly appointed UN independent investigator Vitit Muntarbhorn on LGBTI rights. On supporting side of Mr Mutarbhorn's work were Latin American states, Western nations and South Africa.

A further example of a strong anti-choice voice is the recent rejection of the report "Children's rights related to surrogacy" in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The opposition's story line has been that they stopped legalising surrogacy, while the report's contents were actually about stopping a general ban on international surrogacy and worked to start a debate on how to regulate this practise.

Within the European Parliament, anti-choice forces have increased their efforts to push their ideas further into the political mainstream, mobilising through social media campaigns and co-opted moderate political group members to their cause. It is crucial to call out these tactics and those who apply them, in order to make the wider public aware of them.

It is useful to gain more insight into these organisations and understand what drives their support. This study presents the networks and identifies the actors who are part of the anti-choice movement that is active in the EU, and shows the questionable ways of promoting their cause. Most importantly, I believe it is crucial for pro-choice forces across the political spectrum to mobilise together to defend the rights we have fought so hard to secure.

My warmest thanks to Elena Zacharenko, the author of this report, and to all those working in this field that have given their contributions to this work.

Brussels, 24 November 2016

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Hautala', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Heidi Hautala

Member of the European Parliament

*Co-Chair of the European Parliament Working Group on Reproductive Health,
HIV/AIDS and Development*

1. Who is this study for?

This study is primarily intended for progressive politicians and policy makers. It aims to provide the tools to help identify conservative actors working to oppose sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) at EU level and proposes a positive counter-strategy. The findings of the study will also be useful for media and civil society actors working on the subject of SRHR.

The research relies on the growing body of academic literature analysing the emergence and motivations of the anti-choice, and more widely, anti-gender movement. However, the purpose of this study is primarily to influence political strategy and policy-making, and is therefore pragmatic rather than academic in nature.

The study aims to

- (I) raise awareness and build knowledge of anti-choice actors and agendas by gathering information on their structure and tactics,
- (II) support advocacy and communications by collecting examples of tactics and arguments used by the anti-choice movement, and
- (III) contribute to the development of a positive pro-SRHR political agenda.

Section two of this study presents the historical and political context in which the anti-choice organisations and actors on the international and EU levels have become active, and points towards some of the factors accounting for their ability to mobilise popular support.

Section three presents the main anti-choice actors operating at EU level and lists organisations aiming to influence the policy process in Brussels, be it through lobbying, campaigning or activity at member state or international levels. A list of supporters among MEPs and other EU staff and representatives is included.

Section four describes the tactics applied by anti-choice organisations at EU level in order to influence policy and legislative work or to hamper the work of organisations working on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Section five presents a set of recommendations as well as best practice examples of actions for pro-choice policy-makers to allow them to work in a pro-active and strategic manner with the challenge posed by anti-choice actors.

The annexes provide background information on the international legal basis for sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as the EU's position on SRHR in the global and the EU context. A list of resources for further reading is also provided.

2. What drives the anti-choice movement?

Political agenda and policy objectives

The movements, organisations and individuals described in this study as ‘**anti-choice**’ are entities with a **political and policy agenda, which aims to oppose the implementation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)**.

These entities are far from being the grassroots, apolitical organisations representative of wider religious movements they like to present themselves as. They should not be seen as speaking on behalf of all religious or faith-based organisations.

They are rather political initiatives – often of the far right – that have a clear goal of entering the political mainstream to **enforce a restrictive policy agenda on all of society on all matters which are not compatible with their beliefs**. Anti-choice actors are part of a wider **anti-gender movement, which gathers groups opposed to feminism, LGBT rights, gender studies, gender mainstreaming, the fight against gender-based violence as well as contraception, abortion, sexual education, civil partnerships and same-sex marriage**.¹

**Anti-choice actors
are part of a
wider anti-gender
movement**

The proponents of the anti-choice agenda lump these issues together under the umbrella term ‘gender ideology’ or ‘gender theory’, which was coined by the Vatican in response to the outcomes of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, and the 1995 Fourth International Women’s Conference in Beijing.

The conclusions of the two conferences, which explicitly recognised the importance of reproductive health as a driver of sustainable development and called for the empowerment of women, went against the Vatican’s negotiating position. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church thus presented an alternative interpretation of this outcome, stating that it had been motivated by a ‘gender ideology’, an ideological project attempting to start an anthropological revolution negating sexual difference and gender complementarity.

¹ David Paternotte, ‘[Habemus Gender! Autopsie d’une obsession vaticane](#)’, p.14

‘Gender theory’ was, along this line of argumentation, designed by feminists, LGBT activists and gender studies scholars and supported by Western powers. The Vatican presented this as a political project aiming to impose Western values on citizens in the rest of the world by international institutions such as the UN, and later also the EU, attempting the neo-colonisation of ‘traditional’ societies.²

Anti-choice organisations have embraced this rhetoric, and use it to promote their policy agenda by presenting themselves as grassroots opposition initiatives representing citizens and their concerns *vis-à-vis* the political elites attempting to force a ‘new form of colonial rule’³ upon them.

In the anti-choice discourse, SRHR and women’s rights organisations are presented as lobbying for the ‘vested interests of small (...) pressure groups (...) to impose a new moral and social order.’⁴ Such accusations are a clear attempt to misrepresent the objectives of organisations working on SRHR, LGBT and women’s rights, which – as opposed to the anti-choice – operate in line with the principles of transparency and democracy, holding positions based on international human rights frameworks and jurisprudence.

More importantly, this discourse aims to create a false us vs. them dichotomy between social groups and fuel citizens’ discontent with the political system as such.

Wider political context

The topics and issues that trigger a reaction from the anti-gender actors are not targets in and of themselves. Rather, **‘anti-genderism’ provides a common platform and allows for different conservative actors to unify and to challenge the values underlying European liberal democracies.** The growing popularity of these movements should thus be seen as part of a protest against the *status quo* and the current political and socio-economic system, with much in common with the rise of far-right, nationalist or xenophobic movements in Europe more widely.

2 For more, see David Paternotte, ‘[Blessing the crowds. Catholic mobilisations against gender in Europe](#)’

3 Agenda Europe, About Us: <https://agendaeurope.wordpress.com/about/>, accessed 29/06/2016

4 Agenda Europe, About Us: <https://agendaeurope.wordpress.com/about/>, accessed 29/06/2016

In the face of crises of both the economy and democratic representation, focusing on a common enemy, in this case – ‘gender ideology’, gives a tool for engaging also some disenfranchised citizens to voice their dissatisfaction and feel a sense of agency. The solution presented by the anti-gender actors is the re-drawing of the balance of power and reversing the social order to what they consider a ‘traditional’ way of life, based on their conservative and anti-modernist values.

While not all citizens will automatically be drawn to this re-interpretation of the world, their disappointment with the liberal democratic system, which seemingly fails to offer them the solutions they are seeking, means that they are not likely to be drawn by a progressive mobilisation against conservative forces.⁵

Seen from this point of view, it is clear that addressing the challenge presented by anti-gender movements is not simply a policy problem but a political one. Consequently, the reaction from the progressive end of the political spectrum cannot be limited to reacting to anti-gender activity, but must present its own positive agenda and narrative as an alternative to that of the conservative groups.

This approach must be continuously worked out in cooperation between the different targets of the anti-gender movement (women, LGBT persons, secular movements) and all democratic political actors, to demonstrate that attacks on their rights are attacks on the human rights of all.

Identifying and addressing the root causes of the rise of anti-gender movements requires a great deal of strategic reflection, a process that is already on going. It is crucial that the conclusions drawn from these reflections are put in practice.

Politicians and policy makers must be more vocal about the need for democratic accountability as well as economic and social security while drawing links to the necessity of moving forward with the rights-based agenda and of safeguarding the values underpinning our societies.

5 For more, see Weronika Grzebalska, ‘[Anti-genderism and the crisis of neoliberal democracy](#)’, accessed 29/06/2016

3. Who are the main anti-choice actors?

At international level

Until the late 1990s, progressive views on SRHR dominated the international agenda, with the vast majority of NGO actors active at UN level supporting women's and reproductive rights. The single most influential actor opposing SRHR at the UN was **the Vatican**.

The Holy See's influence can be attributed both to its special permanent observer status, which has not been afforded to any other actor, and to its long-standing history of participating in UN-level NGO activities. The Vatican led an opposition coalition composed of Argentina, Guatemala, Iran, Libya, Malta and Nicaragua at the 1994 ICPD conference. As a result, a year later it was able to present a coherent response to the ICPD gains at the Fourth International Women's Conference in Beijing.

In the Catholic Church hierarchy's re-interpretation of human rights treaties, the **family** is presented as a basic unit of society and the **right to life** implies protection from the moment of conception. Furthermore, **religious freedom** and **free speech** are seen to protect homophobic religious speech, religiously rooted discrimination, as well as conscientious objection by professionals e.g. against performing abortion.

Under this interpretation of international human rights treaty law, SRHR and the right to non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity are not included into the definition of human rights. They would therefore have to be established as 'new' rights, which only individual states would have the power to do.

By the late 1990s groups that subscribe to this interpretation of the human rights system began forming with a purpose of lobbying the UN. Interestingly, many of these new organisations do not however belong or identify with the Catholic Church, and in many cases are more radical in their policy agenda. The majority of these organisations originated in the US and remain associated with the 'New Christian Right' tied to the **US Republican Party**.

The multiplication of these actors during the presidency of George W. Bush (2000-2008) suggests a link to the administration's own agenda on women's and reproductive rights. This agenda included the reinstatement of the 'global gag rule' requiring any organisation applying for US funds to agree neither to inform about nor provide women with abortions.

While anti-choice organisations represent a relatively small minority among NGOs accredited to the UN, they have been able to exert a certain amount of influence at the international level. To achieve this, these organisations have worked to facilitate the building of a permanent conservative bloc of UN member states, dedicated to shifting the international consensus on SRHR.

Following the path set out by the Vatican, the anti-choice actors stress the centrality and importance of the family as a natural unit, and the only venue for addressing issues concerning sexuality, thereby appealing to the opinions held by conservative leaders worldwide. Furthermore, anti-choice organisations call on states holding ‘traditional values’ to uphold their sovereignty by opposing the implementation of SRHR – the ‘new’ rights which they had never agreed to.

This approach has resulted in the creation of a loose traditionalist, anti-gender coalition collaborating across national and religious divides to counter a set of issues where they identify common concerns or threats, e.g. SRHR and LGBT rights.

The ability of the anti-gender coalition to mobilise was demonstrated in 2009, when the UN General Assembly voted on deleting a reference to gender identity and sexual orientation as categories of non-discrimination from a resolution thanks to votes of **Muslim and African states and parts of the English-speaking Caribbean**.

At the same time the government of **Qatar** founded the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development, intended as a cross-religious, cross-regional collaboration promoting ‘traditional family values’. Qatar has subsequently presented to the UN General Assembly a conservative resolution on the family that was accepted without a vote. However, several delegates disassociated themselves from it citing the omission of language, previously accepted at the international level, recognizing that family structures can take various forms.

The anti-gender coalition of states has increasingly been led by **Russia** and supported by **Central Asian, Muslim and African states**. They all voted in favour of adopting a resolution challenging the universality of human rights and placing the importance of ill-defined ‘traditional values’ over women’s and LGBT rights in the Human Rights Council in September 2012.⁶ On that occasion the European states – traditionally champions of the universality of human rights, including SRHR – were joined by the US and Canada in their opposition to this resolution.

6 Maggie Murphy, 2013, [“Traditional values” vs human rights at the UN](#)

However, in 2016 Russia and these Muslim states were joined also by **Poland** in successfully removing language that urged for the worldwide decriminalisation of homosexuality from a UN General Assembly resolution calling for an end to the AIDS pandemic.⁷

In another major attempt to undermine progress on SRHR, in November 2016, **a coalition of African states led by Botswana** attempted to overturn the mandate of the newly appointed UN independent expert charged with investigating violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.⁸ The move was blocked by the US and EU delegations.

At EU level

At the European level, while opposition to SRHR has been present for many years, its foray into the mainstream of EU politics is a relatively new trend. Anti-choice mobilisations began taking place in the early 2000s, gaining particular support in **Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia** and **Spain**.

Across the continent, nearly 500 anti-choice movements and organisations have been identified in over 30 countries.⁹ These movements, while diverse and spread across different EU member states, are interconnected and at times capable of uniting to oppose or promote particular issues or developments.

As a consequence of an increased presence in the European public and policy debate, the anti-choice actors have occasionally managed to divide opinions within and between political groups (which represent the European political parties in the European Parliament) enough to water down and even block statements and policies in support of SRHR.

With regards to EU policy, anti-choice organisations' primary focus is to **advocate for the exclusion of language supportive of sexual and reproductive rights and women's rights from the European Parliament resolutions as well as the Council conclusions. Additionally they advocate for the limitation or complete eradication of EU funding to SRHR work from EU's development aid.**

7 Radio Free Europe, 9 June 2016, '[Russia Leads Effort To Strip Gay Decriminalization From UN Measure](#)'

8 The Guardian, 7 November 2016, '[African nations attempt to suspend UN's LGBT rights monitor](#)'

9 Based on the research of [European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development \(EPF\)](#)

Anti-choice activity in Brussels became particularly visible on two occasions in the early 2000s. In 2002, the European Parliament passed the Belgian MEP Anne Van Lancker's report on SRHR¹⁰ in the context of the upcoming Eastern enlargement of the EU. The process saw strongly voiced objections and coordinated mass emailing and faxing to MEPs by anti-choice organisations from France, Germany, Poland, Canada and the US.

In 2004, European Commissioner-nominee Rocco Buttiglione's candidature was withdrawn under pressure of the European Parliament due to his conservative views on the role of women and on homosexuality. These were deemed incompatible with the role of the Commissioner on Justice, charged with the portfolio on fundamental rights. This occurrence provoked a mobilisation among anti-choice organisations, which have since begun applying an ever more organised and structured approach to influencing EU policy. For this they have drawn inspiration from their UN-level counterparts both in terms of rhetoric and tactics.

The organisations and networks described below are some of the most visible actors aiming to influence the EU institutions – the list is however by no means exhaustive, especially given the fact that some organisations are active primarily at international or national levels and only occasionally engage with EU policy.

These actors often employ a tactic of establishing seemingly new entities, which unite individuals already active in existing anti-choice organisations, thereby creating an impression of a multitude of voices supporting the cause.

For the purpose of this study, the entities have been divided into two groups:

- I) lobbying organisations are registered as interest representatives in the Transparency Register and are therefore assumed to carry out direct advocacy, even if they lack a permanent presence in Brussels;
- II) supporting actors are not presumed to access the EU institutions directly on a regular basis but provide a legal, research, organising or information exchange platform to the others.

¹⁰ [Report on sexual and reproductive health and rights](#) (2001/2128 (INI))

Lobbying organisations in Brussels

ADF International (Alliance Defending Freedom)



One of the largest conservative Christian legal advocacy organisations in the world, ADF International is effectively the advocacy branch of the US-based Alliance Defending Freedom. This organisation uses judicial litigation to 'defend religious freedom, the sanctity of life, and marriage and family.'

In Europe, under its more neutral-sounding acronym, ADF International operates from headquarters in Vienna. Its Brussels advocacy office is headed by **Sophia Kuby**, who is also a board member of another anti-choice organisation, the **European Dignity Watch** (see below). ADF's Senior Legal Counsel, **Roger Kiska**, is on the citizens' committee of the anti-LGBT European Citizens' Initiative **Mum, Dad and Kids**.¹¹

ADF has been active in European courts, especially the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, where it has been involved in the case of *Lautsi v. Italy*¹² by representing 33 MEPs¹³ and the case of *A, B and C v. Ireland*.¹⁴ According to Buzzfeed, ADF spent over €660 000 on its European programmes in 2012.¹⁵

11 Registered in December 2015, the [European Citizens' Initiative 'Mum, Dad & Kids: European Citizens' Initiative to protect Marriage and Family'](#) calls for an EU regulation that would define marriage as a union between a man and a woman and the family as based on marriage and/ or descent when referred to in EU legislation. The stated objective of the initiative is to exclude marriages and registered partnerships between same-sex partners from EU regulation and policies, which apply to recognised couples or relate to parenting rights.

12 The case of [Lautsi v. Italy](#) concerned the display of crucifixes in school classrooms which the applicant claimed resulted in indoctrination and violated the right of parents to ensure their children's education in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions. On 18 March 2011 the ECtHR ruled that the requirement in Italian law that crucifixes be displayed in classrooms of state schools does not violate the European Convention on Human Rights.

13 ADF, [European Court of Human Rights: Crosses can stay in Italy's classrooms](#), accessed 28/09/2016

14 In the case of [A, B and C v. Ireland](#) the applicants complained about Ireland's failure to implement its existing abortion law and challenged the restrictive law as such. The ECtHR ruled that Ireland's abortion law did not violate the European Convention on Human Rights. However, it held that in circumstances in which abortion is legal in Ireland, which is the case when a pregnancy poses a threat to the life of a woman, the country had failed to adopt legislation and establish an effective and accessible procedure for women to access lawful abortions, violating the right to respect for private life.

15 The Rise of Europe's Religious Right, https://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/the-rise-of-europes-religious-right?utm_term=.tv4bqje52#.jxwnEvBPp

ADF International has been at the frontlines of the #DefundIPPF campaign (see box 4). It co-hosted in collaboration with the **EPP Working Group on Bioethics and Human Dignity**,¹⁶ an event at the European Parliament in October 2015 designed to slander the **International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)** (figure 4).

ADF International promotes itself as an NGO genuinely concerned with human rights through its campaigns on the freedom of religion and freedom of conscience. It regularly organises events on the *situation of Christians in the Middle East* ('Genocide by Isis: Urgent need for International Action'¹⁷ in February 2016). Another theme of ADF International events is the *fundamental right to the freedom of conscience* in the EU¹⁸ - in this case, however, interpreted as protecting the freedom to homophobic religious speech, religiously rooted discrimination and conscientious objection by professionals, e.g. against performing abortion.¹⁹

In April 2016, ADF launched a 'Declaration on the Importance of Strengthening the Fundamental Right to Freedom of Conscience'²⁰, which is signed by 21 MEPs from across political groups.

16 The European People's Party (EPP) [Working Group on Bioethics and Human Dignity](#) gathers EPP group members to organise events with an anti-choice perspective.

17 ADF International, [Stop genocide now: book launch of Never Again](#), accessed 27/09/2017

18 ADF International, [Event at EU Parliament: Restrictions on Conscience Rights in Europe and Beyond](#), accessed 27/09/2016

19 For more on the use of the concept of conscientious objection by anti-choice movements, see section 4.

20 ADF International, [Declaration on the Importance of Strengthening the Fundamental Right to Freedom of Conscience](#), accessed 22/09/2016



Figure 1. Screenshot of the website of the Alliance Defending Freedom (www.adflegal.org), the US-based parent organisation of ADF International

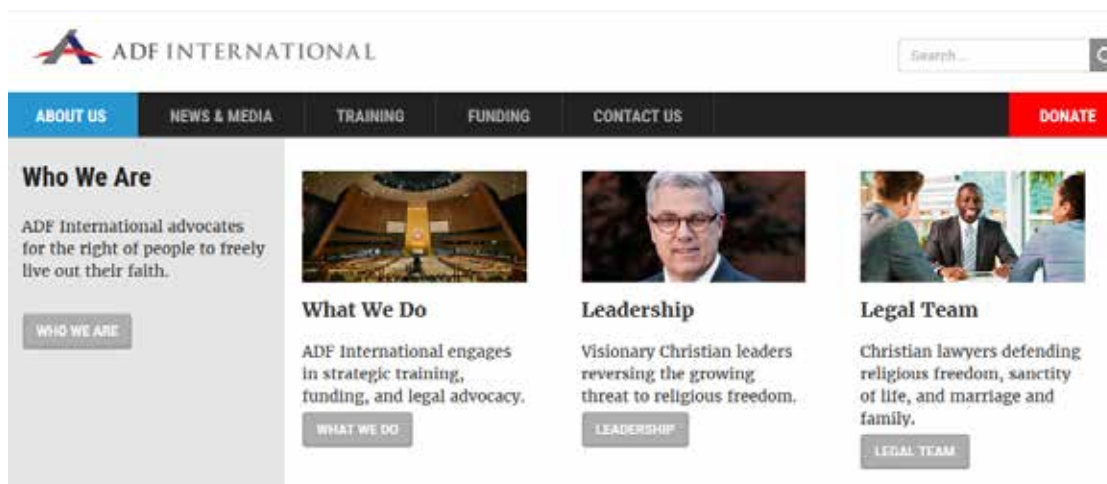


Figure 2. Screenshot of the website of ADF International (www.adfinternational.org).



"Maternity traffic": how to stop surrogacy business

Guest speakers:

Nicola Speranza,
Policy Officer at FAFCE, Brussels

Lorcán Price,
Legal Counsel at ADF International, Strasbourg

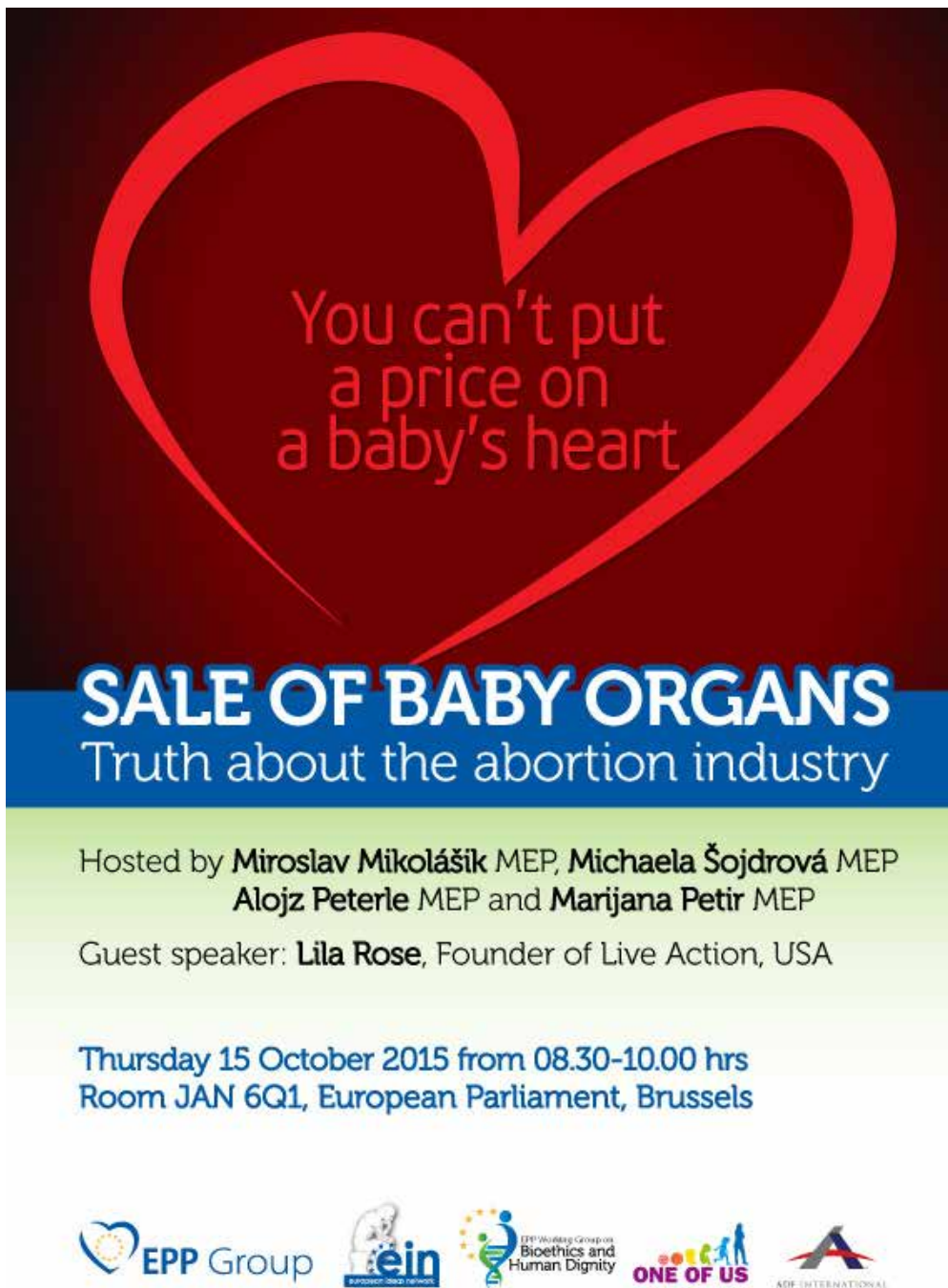
Interpretation:
FR DE EN ES

Tuesday 25 October 2016 from 16.00-17.00 hrs
Room SDM-S3, European Parliament, Strasbourg

Registration at EPP-Bioethics@europarl.europa.eu until 21 October 2016



Figure 3: ADF and FAFCE event on surrogacy, October 2016



The poster features a large red heart outline on a dark red background. Inside the heart, the text "You can't put a price on a baby's heart" is written in a light red, sans-serif font. Below the heart, a blue horizontal band contains the title "SALE OF BABY ORGANS" in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, followed by the subtitle "Truth about the abortion industry" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The background of the lower half of the poster is a light green gradient. The text "Hosted by **Miroslav Mikolášik** MEP, **Michaela Šojdrová** MEP, **Alojz Peterle** MEP and **Marijana Petir** MEP" is in black, sans-serif font. Below this, "Guest speaker: **Lila Rose**, Founder of Live Action, USA" is also in black, sans-serif font. The event details "Thursday 15 October 2015 from 08.30-10.00 hrs" and "Room JAN 6Q1, European Parliament, Brussels" are in blue, sans-serif font. At the bottom, there are five logos: the EPP Group logo (a blue heart with a yellow circle inside), the ein logo (a blue and white graphic of a person), the EPP Working Group on Bioethics and Human Dignity logo (a blue and green graphic of a person), the ONE OF US logo (a colorful graphic of a person), and the ADF INTERNATIONAL logo (a red and black graphic of a person).

You can't put
a price on
a baby's heart

SALE OF BABY ORGANS

Truth about the abortion industry

Hosted by **Miroslav Mikolášik** MEP, **Michaela Šojdrová** MEP
Alojz Peterle MEP and **Marijana Petir** MEP

Guest speaker: **Lila Rose**, Founder of Live Action, USA

Thursday 15 October 2015 from 08.30-10.00 hrs
Room JAN 6Q1, European Parliament, Brussels

 **EPP Group**   **EPP Working Group on
Bioethics and
Human Dignity**  **ONE OF US**  **ADF INTERNATIONAL**

Figure 4: Poster advertising an ADF International and One of Us sponsored event in the European Parliament specifically targeting IPPE, October 2015

Alliance VITA



A French association created in 1993 by **Christine Boutin** of the Christian political party 'Force Vie', which gained notoriety due to its stance against same-sex marriage and misleading websites presenting anti-abortion propaganda as 'counselling' to pregnant teenagers.

While Alliance Vita has a lobbying office registered in Brussels, the address provided is shared with the **European Institute for Bioethics** (see below). The records of its activities at the EU level are not publicly available, suggesting a lack of a permanent presence in Brussels.

European Dignity Watch



Described as a network of NGOs and experts, whose names or contact details are not provided, the European Dignity Watch engages in policy analysis, research and lobbying on anti-discrimination legislation and bio-ethical issues from an anti-choice perspective. It also provides training on its approach to advocacy, such as the advocacy academy it held in 2012 for 70 religious lobbyists from across Europe.

European Dignity Watch played a central role in the **One of Us** European citizens' Initiative (see below) by providing the background research into the specific allocations of EU funding to pro-SRHR initiatives in the developing world. This was a follow up to its 2012 report 'Funding of Abortion through EU Development Aid', which accused SRHR organisations such as **IPPF** and **Marie Stopes International** of misusing EU funds.

It is also a key driving force in coordinating the signing of letters by European conservative Christian NGOs to EU officials to protest pro-SRHR and LGBT rights initiatives at the EU level. **Sophia Kuby**, Director of EU Advocacy at **ADF International**, is one of the founders and a former Executive Director of EDW; she currently serves as a board member.

BOX 1. Extract from the ‘Funding of Abortion through EU Development Aid’ report by European Dignity Watch ²¹

‘(...) one is tempted to wonder whether in the current situation the EU’s development policy is not “fighting the poor” rather than “fighting poverty”, or whether development aid should not be directed at providing food, drinking water, health, and education, to children in need, rather than reducing their numbers through abortion.’

Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE)



A conservative lobby group and umbrella organisation representing 14 European Catholic organisations at the Council of Europe and EU level. FAFCE supported the **One of Us** European Citizens’ Initiative and co-signed a letter protesting the Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation with like-minded organisations such as **European Dignity Watch**.

FAFCE launched a Vote for Family pledge²² ahead of the 2014 European elections, in which it called candidates to ‘respect life at all its stages, including the unborn’.

21 European Dignity Watch, [Funding of Abortion through EU Development Aid](#), 2012, p.19, accessed 26/09/2016

22 Vote for Family, www.voteforfamily2014.eu/manif_en, accessed 28/09/2016

Federation Pro Europa Christiana



Part of an ultra-conservative movement called Tradition, Family, Property (TFP), whose members call for a XXI century crusade to bring about a Christian revolution, this umbrella organisation and EU lobby group seeks to influence the moral and social development of Europe with Christian values.

It condemns same-sex unions, divorce, relationships outside of marriage and abortion. The Federation organises seminars, produces policy papers, lobbies EU institutions and organises retreats for (all male) youth to counter the harmful influence of the 'predominantly lay and neo-pagan culture'.²³

The director of the EU office is **Paul Herzog von Oldenburg**, who is related to MEP **Beatrix van Storch** (EFDD).

One of Us Federation for Life and Human Dignity



In 2012, anti-choice organisations from 16 EU member states came together to launch a European citizens' Initiative (ECI)²⁴ entitled **One of Us**,²⁵ calling for an end to EU financing of activities which presuppose 'the destruction of human embryos', in particular in the areas of research, development aid and public health.

23 Federation Pro Europa Christiana, www.federation-pro-europa-christiana.org/gpage4.html, accessed 29/06/2016

24 See European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>

25 One of Us ECI, <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/successful/details/2012/000005>, accessed 26/09/2016

The petition surpassed the necessary quorum of one million signatures, with a total of 1.74 million signatures collected, but was rejected after the European Commission found its proposals to be inadmissible. The organisers decided to take this decision to the European Court of Justice (General Court case ‘One of Us vs EU Commission’), which is in the process of deciding on its verdict.

In the course of the European Court of Justice deliberations, classified documents, which had been submitted to the court by SRHR organisations **IPPF** and **Marie Stopes International** as interested parties, were made public by an anti-choice blog **Agenda Europe** (see below).

The individuals involved in the original launch of the European citizens’ initiative are predominantly well-known anti-choice organisations and activists. The initiative was the brainchild of MEP **Carlo Casini** (2006-2014, EPP, IT), Honorary Member of the Vatican’s **Pontifical Academy for Life** and the founder and President of the Italian **Movement for Life** (Movimento per la Vita).

The German organisers, **Familienschutz.de**, are part of the **Zivile Koalition e.V.** network, founded by MEP **Beatrix von Storch** (EFDD). **Grégor Puppinck**, Director of the **European Centre for Law and Justice** (see below), served as the initiative’s president, while its EU representative, **Tobias Teuscher**,²⁶ had previously been employed by anti-choice MEPs **Dana Scallon** (1999-2004, EPP, IE) and **Anna Zaborska** (EPP, SL). At European level, the initiative was supported by the **European Christian Political Movement** (see below).

Since its rejection as an European citizens’ initiative, One of Us has been transformed into a federation of European anti-choice actors. The federation hosted its first annual Policy Forum in Paris in March 2016; the organisers claim it attracted 1200 participants.

The forum’s speakers included on the minister level the Hungarian Minister for Family and Youth Affairs, **Katalin Novak**, former Spanish Minister of Justice **Alberto Ruiz Gallardon**, former Spanish Minister of the Interior (of the EPP-affiliated Partido Popular), Polish Minister for European Affairs, **Konrad Szymański** (of the ECR-affiliated PiS), Italian Minister of Health, **Beatrice Lorenzin** (of the EPP-affiliated Nuovo Centrodestra), and former French Minister for Culture **Philippe de Villiers** (of the conservative Mouvement pour la France).

26 One of Us Policy forum programme, www.oneofus.eu/one-of-forum-program/, accessed 26/09/2016

On the deputy level there were French MP **Jean-Frédéric Poisson** (from the Christian Democratic Party), Slovak MEP **Miroslav Mikolasik** (of the EPP-affiliated KDH), MEP **Jaime Mayor Oreja** (of the EPP-affiliated Partido Popular) and former Italian MEP **Carlo Casini** (of the EPP-affiliated Christian Democratic Group). The speakers list included also the former Slovak European Commissioner and current special envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU, **Jan Figel** (of the EPP-affiliated KDH) as well as representatives of the anti-LGBT **La Manif pour Tous**, **ADF** and the **European Centre for Law and Justice**.

Despite its registration in the Transparency Register, the federation has no staff accredited to the EP. Its secretariat has been listed as based in the same location with the Catholic Church of the Fathers of the Holy Sacrament in Brussels, while the phone number provided on its website begins with a French country code. The federation seems to attempt to create an impression of being more active and present in Brussels than it actually is.

[Profesionales por la Ética \(PPE\)](#)



While this Madrid-based organisation is primarily active in the Spanish national context, it is accredited to the EP, the Fundamental Rights Platform of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna and the OSCE. In close alliance with other anti-choice organisations such as **ADF** and **European Dignity Watch**, the PPE focuses on working with parliamentarians, and has overseen the organisation of the Parliamentary Forum at the World Congress of Families in Madrid in 2012.²⁷ Speakers at the forum included former Spanish Minister of the Interior and MEP **Jaime Mayor Oreja** (EPP) and MEP **Anna Zaborska** (SL, EPP).

²⁷ Congreso Mundial de Familias, <http://congresomundial.es/el-wcf-vi-madrid/foro-parlamentario/>, accessed 07/11/2016

World Youth Alliance Europe (WYA Europe)



The World Youth Alliance was started during UN meetings for the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+5) in opposition to the Youth Coalition – an international coalition of young people supporting advancement of sexual and reproductive health and rights. **Anna Halpine**, WYA's President and co-founder, is a former intern of anti-choice MEP **Dana Scallan** (1999-2004, EPP, IE).

While it presents itself as a youth organisation with a general interest in health and education and a particular focus on the family, women and children, the WYA has a clear anti-choice agenda. It has published a set of advocacy white papers and fact sheets outlining its positions, which contradict international jurisprudence, stating for example that abortion and contraception do not fall under the terms 'reproductive health' or 'family planning services' (see figures 5 and 6 below).²⁸ This line of argumentation is an excellent example of the attempts to reinterpret international standards in line with ideological beliefs.²⁹

WYA Europe provides internships and organises annual Youth Leadership Training Camps, summer camps, European leadership training conferences and other training programmes on the dignity of the person, some of which are **co-funded through the EU's Erasmus+ Programme**.³⁰

28 World Youth Alliance white papers: www.wya.net/publications/white-papers/, accessed 26/09/2016

29 For a detailed list of international legal standards in support of sexual and reproductive health and rights, see Annex 1.

30 WYA [Europe Emerging Leaders Conference 2015](#), co-funded through Erasmus+, accessed 26/09/2016



International law does not include abortion as a component of reproductive health.

International human rights treaties do not include abortion as a component of reproductive health.

- Treaties are binding instruments of international law for the States that both sign and ratify them.
- CRPD mentions reproductive health (art. 23) but does not define the term.
- No other treaty mentions reproductive health at all.
- No treaty even mentions abortion.

Figure 5.

Calls for abortion and contraception are not helpful to reduce maternal mortality. They do not address the situations of women who want to have children, and do not protect mother and baby throughout pregnancy and childbirth. Additionally, they do not address the reality that the high MMR is due in large part to poor medical infrastructures that would not allow for women to undergo abortions safely.

Figure 6.

Parts of World Youth Alliance fact sheets on reproductive health (fig. 5) and maternal health (fig. 6)

Supporting actors

Agenda Europe

Agenda Europe



An anonymous blog promoting an anti-SRHR and anti-LGBT agenda at the EU level. While it has low levels of followers, the author(s) appear to follow the developments in Brussels and Strasbourg very closely and frequently report on the activities of SRHR and LGBT organisations working on the EU scene. Links to the **One of Us** European citizens' initiative and **CitizenGO** (see below) petitions are prominently displayed and personal attacks against EU-level SRHR and LGBT actors are frequent.

European Parliament: baby-killer lobby liaises with fake “religious leaders”

SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 ~ ADMIN



In the aftermath of the **Planned Parenthood scandal** the abortion industry (or rather its proxy inside the European Parliament, a so-called “Working Group on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Development”) is desperately trying to polish its image and regain respectability – quite bizarrely through seeking closeness with “religious leaders in favour of family planning within their communities”.

Figure 7: A screenshot of an Agenda Europe post³¹ on an event of the EPWG on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Development in September 2015.

31 Agenda Europe, [European Parliament: baby killer lobby liaises with fake ‘religious leaders’](#), accessed 26/09/2016



HAZTEOIR.ORG
la web del ciudadano activo

HazteOir is an online petition platform generating public donations and support for campaigns aimed at furthering a conservative Christian agenda, frequently featuring anti-choice causes. It was launched in 2001 and is primarily targeting Spanish-speaking constituencies in Spain and Latin America. Its database contains the contact details of over 700 000 citizens³² supporting the anti-choice agenda through petition signatures; its budget, raised through individual donations, was over €2.5 million in 2015.³³ The website offers its subscribers the possibility to email their national or European parliamentarians about specific issues and has been one of the actors behind the flood of emails targeting the Estrela report in 2013 (see box 2). Ahead of the 2014 European elections, as part of its ongoing campaign Vota Valores (Vote for your Values), HazteOir produced an information sheet³⁴ detailing different candidates' positions on issues such as access to reproductive healthcare and LGBT rights, awarding the highest marks and encouraging a vote for those who opposed these.

In 2013, HazteOir's president and founder, Ignacio Arsuaga, has gone on to found the international and multi-lingual version of the platform, CitizenGo. The focus of CitizenGo is very much still on promoting the anti-choice agenda, but it does this aiming directly at the EU and UN levels. CitizenGo's board of trustees includes **Luca Volonte**, former Italian parliamentarian and EPP President at the Council of Europe, CEO of the **Novae Terrae Foundation** (see below) and chair of **Dignitatis Humanae Institute** (see below). Its 2015 revenue was reported as over €1 million the result of donations and fundraising.³⁵

³² <http://hazteoir.org/>, accessed 05/11/2016

³³ Press release 'La asociación cierra 2015 con récord de usuarios y presupuesto', 2 January 2016, http://hazteoir.org/sites/default/files/adjuntos/ndp20160102_hazteoir.org_record_de_usuarios_en_2015.pdf accessed 05/11/2016

³⁴ Vota Valores voting guide, European elections 2014, <http://votavalores.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Europeas-2014-guia-de-voto-2014.pdf>, accessed 05/11/2016

³⁵ CitizenGO, http://www.citizengo.org/sites/default/files/citizengo_financial_statements_en_1.pdf, accessed 05/11/2016

Hemos incluido en esta Guía de Voto a los partidos que, según las encuestas publicadas, tienen posibilidades de obtener representación en el Parlamento europeo (*).

Significado de los colores:

Si No A medias

1. Aborto: ¿qué votó en el informe Estrela? (**)						
2. "Matrimonio" homosexual: ¿qué votó en el informe Lunacek? (***)						
3. ¿Rechaza que el aborto sea un derecho?						
4. ¿Ha aprobado o propone medidas legislativas que rectifiquen las leyes de género del Gobierno de Zapatero?						
5. ¿Ha aprobado o propone medidas legislativas de apoyo al matrimonio natural, o que impidan la adopción de niños por parejas homosexuales?						

Arias	Valenciano	Meyer	Tremosa	Sosa	Nart	Vidal-Quadras
PP	PSOE	IU	CIU	UPyD	C's	VOX

Figure 8: HazteOir's 2014 European elections voting guide

CITIZENGO

HOME ABOUT US CAMPAIGNS PRESS OFFICE DONATE

EU COMMISSION: NO MORE MONEY TO INT'L PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION

EU Commission: STOP funding Int'l Planned Parenthood Federation

SIGN THIS PETITION NOW!

First name * Last name *

Email *

United States Zip code

SIGN

CitizenGO will protect your privacy and will keep you informed on this and other campaigns.

Defund Int'l Planned Parenthood Immediately

FOR the Attention of EU Commission President, M Jean-Claude Juncker:

Recently, Commissioner Neven Mimica replied to several MEPs' questions, revealing that the Commission had given a **massive €20 Million to IPPF between 2005 and 2015.**

By CitizenGO · 03/01/2016

Late last September, a group of MEPs contacted the EU Commission to ask how much money the Commission has given to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) over a ten-year period.

In light of the fact that one of the IPPF's member associations, Planned Parenthood Federation of America (or, better known, simply as "Planned Parenthood") now stands accused of **selling foetal**

Figure 9: A CitizenGo petition³⁶ calling for an end to EU funding of IPPF, March 2016

36 CitizenGO, [EU Commission: stop funding IPPF petition](#), accessed 26/09/2016

Dialogue Dynamics on Human Identity and Global Governance

A Brussels-based non-profit organisation producing policy briefs and research papers on global developments relevant to global health, development policy and SHRH from an anti-choice perspective. The founder and director is Marguerite Peeters, a well-known anti-gender academic and activist.

Dignitatis Humanae Institute (DHI)



DHI is a think tank aiming to ‘protect and promote human dignity based on the anthropological truth that man is born in the image and likeness of God.’³⁷ It conducts research, monitors EU-level policy developments and coordinates parliamentary working groups in the UK, Lithuania and Romania. It further promotes its own ‘Universal Declaration of Human Dignity’, which it encourages European and national parliamentarians to sign.

The founder and president of DHI is **Benjamin Harnwell**, former assistant to MEP **Nirj Deva** (ECR) and current board member of the **European Christian Political Movement** (ECPM). MEP Deva is meanwhile the president of the DHI-launched **International Committee on Human Dignity**.

DHI’s Director of Operations and Parliamentary Relations is **Leo van Doesburg**, also Director of Advocacy at the **ECPM** (see below). DHI’s chairman is **Luca Volonte**, former Italian parliamentarian and EPP President at the Council of Europe, CEO of the **Novae Terrae Foundation** (see below) and board member of **CitizenGo**.

³⁷ DHI, [About the institute](#), accessed 28/09/2016

European Christian Political Movement



The ECPM is an alliance of small Christian political parties with a distinctly anti-choice stance. Started in 2002 with representatives from political parties of 15 countries, it registered its activities in 2005 and has been **receiving European Parliament funding as a political party** since 2010.

Currently, five sitting MEPs are members, all within the ECR group – **Bas Belder** (NL), **Peter van Dalen** (NL), **Branislav Skripek** (SL), **Arne Gericke** (DE), **Marek Jurek** (PL). While it is a political party and not a lobbying organisation, the ECPM Brussels office employs three staff members headed by a Director of European Affairs, **Leo van Doesburg**, who is also Director of Parliamentary Relations at the **Dignitatis Humanae Institute**.

The ECPM maintains a research foundation called the **Christian Political Foundation for Europe (CPFE)** and a youth branch, called the **European Christian Political Youth (ECPY)**, which organises summer schools and academies for activists.

European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ)



Founded by the US extremist Christian televangelist **Reverend Pat Robertson** in Strasbourg in 1998 as a European off-shoot of the **American Centre for Law and**

Justice (ACLJ), the ECLJ is a Christian legal advocacy organisation. It presents legal analysis to institutions such as the European Court of Human Rights, the Council of Europe and EU bodies on key cases relating to SRHR and religious freedom.

The African arm of the ACLJ, the **East African Centre for Law and Justice (EACLJ)**, has supported anti-abortion and homophobic initiatives in several African countries which the EU has formally opposed. There is also a Russian affiliate, called the **Slavic Centre for Law and Justice (SCLJ)**, based in Moscow.

The General Director of the ECLJ is **Grégor Puppink**, who was also the president of the **One of Us** European citizens' initiative. According to Buzzfeed, the ECLJ's budget for 2012 was nearly €1 million.³⁸

L'Institut Européen de Bioéthique (European Institute of Bioethics, IEB)



Founded in 2001 in Brussels, the IEB claims to be a 'a private initiative of a group of citizens (physicians, jurists, and scientists) who are closely interested in significant advances in medicine and biology, which confer on humankind unprecedented control over the course of human life'.³⁹ Its goals are to inform the general public and influence policy makers on bioethical issues, which is done from an anti-choice perspective. Its Honour Committee includes MEPs **Miroslav Mikolasik** (EPP, SL) and **Anna Zaborska** (EPP, SL).

38 The Rise of Europe's Religious Right, https://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/the-rise-of-europes-religious-right?utm_term=.tv4bqje52#.jxwnEvBPp

39 IEB, Qui sommes nous? <http://www.ieb-eib.org/en/qui-sommes-nous/charte-2.php>, accessed 29/06/2016

[International Centre for Law, Family and Life \(ICOLF\)](#)



This newly emerged initiative brings together well-known anti-choice actors active on the EU scene to promote the Vatican's 1983 Charter of the Rights of the Family within various international and regional human rights systems. Contributors include **Maria Hildingsson** of FAFCE and **Marguerite Peters** of **Dialogue Dynamics**.

Roger Kiska of the Vienna office of **ADF International** and the anti-LGBT Mum, Dad and Kids European citizens' initiative⁴⁰ is listed as co-director in charge of the European system alongside ECLJ's **Grégor Puppink**. **Luca Volonte**, former Italian parliamentarian and EPP President at the Council of Europe, CEO of the **Novae Terrae Foundation**, chair of **Dignitatis Humanae Institute** and board member of **CitizenGo**, is listed as an advisor.

[Novae Terrae Foundation](#)



The Novae Terrae Foundation is an Italian NGO researching and formulating policy briefings on issues relating to affirming the right to life from conception until natural death. Ahead of the 2014 European elections it issued a pledge calling on MEPs to demand the adoption and implementation of an EU Roadmap on the Rights of the Family. **Luca Volonte**, former Italian parliamentarian and EPP President at the Council of Europe, CEO of the **Novae Terrae Foundation**, chair of **Dignitatis Humanae Institute** and board member of **CitizenGo**, is the organisation's founder.

40 See footnote 10.



EU Elections 2014: RESET EUROPE!

I PLEDGE to stand up for and actively promote HUMAN RIGHTS in Europe as a member of the European Parliament, including Human Dignity, Human Right to Life, the promotion of Family, freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion, Social Justice as well as the Right of Parents to educate their children.

I make this PLEDGE by supporting the following actions:

1. Promote Right to Life

To adopt an EU Road Map for the 'One of Us' initiative, to protect Human Dignity with a comprehensive action plan and the Right to Life from conception to natural death..

2. Improve Right of Family

To adopt and enforce an EU Road Map founded on Rights of Family, as the legal union between a man and a woman, with an inherent openness to life; to equip the EU with a comprehensive action plan and 'family friendly' policies, which particularly support young couples and large families.

3. Esteem Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion

To respect and promote freedom of acting according to individual conscience.

4. Respect Personal Freedom

To respect and recognize the Principle of Subsidiarity as a fundamental principle in the Anti-discrimination standards; to actively work respecting the autonomy and historical and religious roots of member states.

5. Protect Parents' Rights

To protect the Rights of Parents on every educational issue. To ensure the role of the European Union to respect and promote the right of parents to educate their children according to their moral and religious values in all youth and education programs.

6. Provide Healthcare for Everyone

To tackle discrimination and inequality in healthcare. To develop palliative care and to respect the right to conscientious objection among doctors and healthcare providers.

Figure 10: fragment of the Novae Terrae Foundation 2014 European elections pledge⁴¹

⁴¹ Novae Terrae Foundation, [A pledge for Europe](#), accessed 26/09/2016

Ordo Iuris Institute for Legal Culture



Ordo Iuris is a legal institute based in Warsaw and the initiator of the 2016 legislative proposal for a complete ban on abortion in Poland. It aims to promote traditional values and the 'natural order' by providing legal advice and counselling, legislative drafting, holding seminars and hearings and training young lawyers. Ordo Iuris further monitors developments on the EU policy arena and has organised at least one EP event on fundamental rights⁴² hosted by anti-choice MEP **Marek Jurek** (ECR) in June 2016.

Aleksander Stępkowski, its founder and director, sits on the citizens' committee of anti-LGBT Mum, Dad and Kids European citizens' initiative.⁴³ Ordo Iuris's expert list includes **Jakob Cornides**, employee of the European Commission's DG TRADE, as well as **European Dignity Watch**, **ADF International**, **ECLJ** and **ICOLF**.

⁴² Ordo Iuris, [Czy Europa potrzebuje nowego paktu na rzecz demokracji, praworządności i praw podstawowych? – konferencja EKR i Ordo Iuris w Brukseli](#), accessed 26/09/2016

⁴³ See footnote 10.

Political Network for Values



The Political Network for Values is a global network of politicians who commit to ‘promoting the values of life, marriage, family and fundamental freedoms’⁴⁴, which aims to collect and share best practices and promote the protection of life from its moment of conception. Headquartered in the United States, this initiative was created by the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute (C-FAM), an anti-choice organisation actively lobbying the UN.

The PNfV advisory board includes a number of European politicians, including the Hungarian Minister for Family and Youth Affairs, **Katalin Novak**, former Spanish Minister of the Interior and MEP **Jaime Mayor Oreja** (EPP) and former Slovak European Commissioner and current special envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU, **Jan Figel** (of the EPP-affiliated KDH). Its board of directors includes **Benjamin Bull**, Executive Director of **ADF International** and **Ignacio Arsuaga**, president of **CitizenGO**.

PNfV’s members are asked to sign a ‘Decalogue of Commitments for Human Dignity and the Common Good’.⁴⁵ Members of the network include Croatian MEP **Marjana Petir** (EPP), former Lithuanian MEP **Laima Andrikiene** (EPP), Hungarian MEP **György Holvenyi** (EPP), Spanish MP **Luis Peral** and the leader of the Spanish Vox party, **Santiago Abascal**.

44 Political Network for Values, www.politicalnetworkforvalues.org, accessed 29/08/2106

45 PNfV, Decalogue of Commitments for Human Dignity and the Common Good, www.politicalnetworkforvalues.org/aims, accessed 26/09/2016

Members of the European Parliament, EP and other EU staff

An analysis of pre-election pledges and endorsements by anti-choice organisations,⁴⁶ membership lists of anti-choice intergroups and working groups,⁴⁷ parliamentary questions targeting SRHR organisations,⁴⁸ proposals for anti-SRHR amendments to reports,⁴⁹ and signatures on letters initiated by anti-choice organisations⁵⁰ reveals that within the 8th term of the European Parliament (2014-2019) **111 MEPs are, at the very least, favourable to the anti-choice cause**. While only a small core group of those are active champions in the fight against SRHR, they remain very determined in the pursuit of their goal.

While anti-choice MEPs tend to come from the far right or the populist right wing, one fifth of the mainstream centre-right party MEPs in the EPP group support the agenda. In addition, at least two high-ranking EPP politicians have signed anti-choice pledges or have been endorsed by anti-choice organisations – **Antonio Tajani**, who signed the **Novae Terrae pledge**, and **Manfred Weber**, who has been endorsed by **European Dignity Watch**.

Nearly half of the MEPs in the ECR and ENF groups support the anti-choice agenda. Moreover, approximately one sixth of EFDD members can be considered anti-choice. Other groups also contain individuals who oppose SRHR, but their numbers are significantly lower.

Some of the most active anti-choice champions in the EP include Slovak EPP members **Miroslav Mikolasik** and **Anna Zaborska** who are at the forefront of anti-choice activities such as hosting events organised by **ADF International**, **ECLJ** and the **One of Us Federation**, chairing the **EPP Working Group on Bioethics and Human Dignity**, and sitting on the board of known anti-choice organisations, such as the **European Institute of Bioethics**. Other EPP members, such as **Tunne Kelam** (ET), **Peter Liese** (DE), **Alojz Peterle** (SI), **Marijana Petir** (HR), **Paul Rubig** (AT), **Michaela Sojdrova** (CZ) and **Pavel Svoboda** (CZ) are also active through asking parliamentary questions targeting SRHR organisations or attempting to remove SRHR language from EP reports.

46 FAFCE '[Vote for Family' Manifesto](#), Novae Terrae '[Reset Europe' pledge](#), La Manif Pour Tous 'Europe for Family' pledge, Grundsätze für Familie und Kinder pledge, Life Institute [Pro Life pledge](#), ECPM [Pledge for Europe](#)

47 Intergroup on Family and the Rights of the Child & Bioethics, 2009-2014, EP Working Group on Human Dignity, 2014-2019

48 For example: Miroslav Mikolášik (EPP) '[Illegal trafficking of human body parts](#)', Marijana Petir (EPP) '[Unlawful activities of the Planned Parenthood organisation](#)', Lorenzo Fontana (ENF) '[Planned Parenthood scandal](#)'

49 For example: EP own initiative report on [promoting gender equality in mental health and clinical research](#), and EP own initiative [annual report on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter 2015](#), accessed 10/11/2016

50 Letter to EP President Martin Schulz 'Request to remove International Planned Parenthood Federation from the Transparency Register' signed by 63 MEPs, dated 13 October 2015



Medical, Legal & Ethical Aspects of neonatal infanticide

Guest speakers:

Dr. Grégor Puppink
Dr. Claire de La Hougue

European Centre for Law & Justice, Strasbourg

Wednesday 13 April 2016 from 15.30-17.00 hrs

Room SDM-S3, European Parliament, Strasbourg

Registration at EPP-Bioethics@europarl.europa.eu until 8 April 2016

Interpretation:
FR DE EN ES





Figure 11: Poster advertising the ECLJ event co-hosted by EPP MEP Miroslav Mikolášik as part of the EPP Working Group on Bioethics and Human Dignity, April 2016

ECR members **Bas Belder** (NL), **Peter van Dalen** (NL), **Branislav Skripek** (SL), **Arne Gericke** (DE) and **Marek Jurek** (PL) are all members of the European Christian Political Movement, and thus committed to promoting traditionalist Christian values in their work within the European Parliament.

Nirj Deva (ECR, UK) was one of the original founders of the extremely conservative Christian **Dignitatis Humanae Institute (DHI)** and is the president of its **International Committee on Human Dignity**. He had originally established the DHI-supported European Parliament Working Group on Human Dignity, currently chaired by **Bas Belder** (ECR, NL) and co-chaired by **Alojz Peterle** (EPP, SI), **Luigi Morgano** (S&D, IT), **Marian Harkin** (ALDE, IE), **Daniela Aiuto** (EFDD, IT) and **Diane Dodds** (NI, UK).

MEPS: “WE NEED TO PUT HUMAN DIGNITY AT THE FOREFRONT OF EU POLICY MAKING”

2 November 2015



In times when human dignity is under threat on many different legislative fronts, not only in the EU but also worldwide, Members of the European Parliament, from different political groups and affiliations, have acted this week to relaunch the cross-party Working Group on Human Dignity.

Figure 12: Screenshot from the press release announcing the launch of the EPWG on Human Dignity, standing: Benjamin Harnwell, Diane Dodds, Arne Gericke, unknown, Luigi Morgano, Leo van Doesburg; sitting: Marian Harkin, Nirj Deva, Bronislav Skripek, Bas Belder, Alojz Peterle, Luigi Morgano. November 2015⁵¹

51 DHI, [MEPs: We need to put human dignity at the forefront of policy making](#), accessed 26/09/2016

EFDD member **Beatrix von Storch** (DE), of the newly elected **Alternative für Deutschland**, an openly racist and anti-gender party, is a founder of the German far-right populist movement **Zivile Koalition e.V.**, which is connected to the organisers of the **One of Us** European citizens' initiative. She is related to **Paul Herzog von Oldenburg**, the Brussels representative of the **Federation Pro-Europa Christiana**. MEP von Storch and her husband are currently under investigation by the Berlin Commissioner for Data Protection due to their suspected illegal gathering of internet users' private data, used to raise funding and generate support for petitions on the many interconnecting websites run by them. The petitions and signatures were to be used to put pressure on German and European parliamentarians.⁵²

Prominent anti-choice activists are also employed within the European institutions as staff members or representatives. **Paul Moynan**, previously the EU representative of the **Christian Action Research & Education (CARE)**, one of the lead opponents of the Noichl report,⁵³ is currently employed as a staff member for the ECR group in charge of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE). **Tobias Teuscher**, former parliamentary assistant to anti-choice champion MEPs **Dana Scallion** (IE) and **Anna Zaborska** (SL) and former EU representative of the **One of Us** European citizens' initiative is currently employed as EFDD staff in charge of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON).

The openly anti-choice former Slovakian European Commissioner **Jan Figel** has recently been appointed as the Development Commissioner's 'first ever special envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union.'⁵⁴ **Figel** comes from the same party as **Anna Zaborska** and **Miroslav Mikolasik** – the Slovak Christian Democrats (KDH), is a member of the **Political Network for Values**, has delivered a keynote address at the One of Us Policy Forum and has close links to **ADF International** and the **World Youth Alliance**.

What is evident from the overview of the anti-choice organisations and the individuals supporting their cause are the interconnections which exist between many of them and their ability to come together to support specific goals. While a few of the organisations described are more extreme or traditionalist in their views than others and remain on the side lines of the main Brussels-based anti-choice activities, the majority

52 TAZ, '[Von Storchs Datenimperium](#)', accessed 28/09/2016

53 See Annex 2: [EP resolution on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015](#), 9 June 2015, rapporteur Maria Noichl

54 '[Figel becomes EU's special envoy for freedom of religion](#)', The Slovak Spectator, 9 May 2016

cooperate among each other, exchange information and pursue common objectives. These factors have contributed to their ability to reach out to and secure the support of politicians and policy makers belonging to moderate or centrist political circles, thus enabling them to raise the profile of their cause and achieve a degree of influence on the political agenda.

4. What are the methods used by the anti-choice movement?

The methods used by anti-choice organisations to influence policy at EU level include standard lobbying and advocacy approaches, such as meeting policy makers, holding public events, providing briefings and policy papers, submitting voting amendments and parliamentary questions. These organisations are also proficient in the use of online campaigning tools and citizen mobilisation.

However, it is the more disingenuous methods used at times by some organisations, such as spreading slanderous messages and misinformation, which are a cause for concern.

Increasingly, international or US-level anti-choice campaigns are used to exert influence on the EU policy process, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the anti-choice organisations.

Increasingly, international or US-level anti-choice campaigns are used to exert influence on the EU policy process, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the anti-choice organisations.

The list below serves to structure and categorise the tactics and approaches used by anti-choice organisations and gather examples of how they have been used in the recent years.

Misinformation

False accusations and slander: Accusations of SRHR organisations' involvement in illegal activities is a strategy frequently used by the anti-choice movements – the European Dignity Watch 2012 report⁵⁵ accusing Marie Stopes International and IPPF of misappropriation of EU funds is a case in point, as is the #DefundIPPF campaign (see box 4) based on the false allegations⁵⁶ about the organisation's US affiliate engaging in an 'illegal trade in body parts.'

55 European Dignity Watch, [Funding of Abortion through EU Development Aid](#), 2012, accessed 26/09/2016

56 ADF International, [IPPF Fact Sheet](#), accessed 26/09/2016

Slander and the use of fear-rousing language is another tactic, which often involves equating SRHR, gender equality and LGBT rights with sexual deviations and social pathologies. An example of this are the emails to MEPs sent ahead of the vote on the Estrela report, accusing it of promoting masturbation in toddlers and paedophilia (see box 3).

Anti-choice activists also do not abstain from personal attacks and smear campaigns against individuals, with pro-choice MEPs regularly being described as ‘anti-humanist’⁵⁷, compared to Nazis⁵⁸ or being the target of homophobic attacks.⁵⁹

Misrepresentation of legal and scientific facts: Anti-choice publications often present falsified, misinterpreted or selectively chosen facts – the argumentation and studies they quote are not widely accepted by the academic community as they are ideologically motivated and based on poor methodology.

While presented as well-researched reports, citing academic journals and providing opinions from experts, anti-choice publications are primarily designed to mislead policy makers and the general opinion to win them over to their cause. This was the case with an academic study referenced in European Dignity Watch’s 2012 report claiming that ‘almost 10% of all mental health problems are directly linked to abortion’,⁶⁰ a finding decisively debunked by the scientific community.⁶¹

In another example, the initiators of the One of Us European citizens’ initiative, which included several qualified lawyers, have misled their supporters by citing the 2011 European Court of Justice case of ‘Brüstle v Greenpeace’⁶² as the legal basis for the initiative. In this ruling, the Court declared that scientific findings emanating from procedures, which involved the destruction of the human embryo, could not be patented.

However, the judgment explicitly excluded the issue of pregnancy termination from its remit, and therefore had no impact on the subject of funding abortion through EU development aid.

57 Agenda Europe, [A list of shame: 9 MEPs publicly support Planned Parenthood’s trade with baby organs](#), accessed 26/09/2016

58 C-FAM, [EU: while 1.3 million sign the pro-life petition, radical pro-abortion-politicians don’t want to learn the lesson](#), accessed 26/09/2016

59 C-FAM, [European Parliament: the Lunacek-Report, and why it should be rejected](#), accessed 26/09/2016

60 European Dignity Watch, [Funding of Abortion through EU Development Aid](#), 2012, p.6, accessed 26/09/2016

61 Guttmacher Institute, [Study Purporting to Show Link Between Abortion and Mental Health Outcomes Decisively Debunked](#), accessed 26/09/2016

62 One of Us, [Synthetic analysis of the ECJ Case C-34/10 Oliver Brüstle v Greenpeace e.V. and its ethical consequences](#), accessed 26/09/2016

BOX 2: Opposition to the Estrela report

In 2012, the Anne van Lanker report on SRHR from 2002 was due for an update, especially in light of the EU's enlargement by 12 member states and the vast discrepancies in access to sexual and reproductive health and rights between the Western, and the Central and Eastern European member states. Portuguese MEP Edite Estrela of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) was appointed as rapporteur.

Estrela's draft report⁶³ was strongly endorsed by the FEMM committee despite MEP Anna Zaborska's opposition to it, in which she cited the demands of the then-ongoing One of Us European citizens' initiative as being at odds with the recommendations of the report regarding abortion. However, once the report was due for a vote in the plenary, it attracted powerful opposition from organisations such as European Dignity Watch⁶⁴ and FAFCE.⁶⁵ These organisations mobilised support for their cause through platforms such as HazteOir and CitizenGO, which collected nearly 50,000 signatures on a petition calling for the rejection of the report.⁶⁶ They further called out for individuals to email MEPs demanding they reject the report. A template message accused the report of enforcing 'mandatory masturbation in children at age 0-4' and 'a form of paedophilia that could lead to child abuse'. Overall, an estimated 80,000–100,000 emails were received by Edite Estrela and several other pro-SRHR MEPs, some of them containing violent language or direct threats. At the same time, anti-choice organisations employed offline tactics such as the placement of plastic dolls representing a human foetus in MEPs' post boxes (see figure 13), along with a letter calling on them to reject the Estrela report.

As a result, the report was sent back to committee for re-drafting in October 2013, and some of its passages were watered down to make it more palatable to the conservative side of the EP. Nonetheless, the report was finally rejected when an alternative (and completely devoid of content) EPP/ECR resolution⁶⁷ was adopted by a narrow majority of seven votes in favour. The debate ahead of the vote, as well as the vote's outcome was accompanied by heckles and jeering from the report's opponents. The Estrela report was lost mainly on abstentions – i.e. centrist MEPs who chose not to take a side, which in turn allowed the opposition to overtake the report's active supporters by a small majority.

63 [European Parliament draft report on SRHR](#), 3 December 2013

64 MercatorNet, [Defending human dignity and democracy in Europe](#), accessed 26/09/2016

65 FAFCE, [12 reasons to vote against the Estrela Resolution on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#), 26/09/2016

66 CitizenGO, [Reject the Estrela Report! Petition](#), accessed 26/09/2016

67 [European Parliament resolution of 10 December 2013 on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#)



Figure 13: A plastic doll claiming to represent a 10-week old foetus, similar to the ones placed in MEPs post boxes ahead of the vote on the Estrela report.

From: European Dignity Watch

Sent: Monday, November 25, 2013 9:23 AM

Subject: Action Alert: Estrela report back on the agenda for tomorrow!



The Estrela Report: promoting compulsory sex education for toddlers and a right to abortion, and calling for restrictions on conscientious objection

The scandalous [Estrela Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#) is back on the agenda! (...) The proponents of this radical anti-freedom and anti-life report are very nervous: No debate will be allowed, no new amendments will be allowed to be tabled and the existing tabled alternative resolution, which was a good, non-ideological text, is completely banned from the agenda. This means that the content of the report will be changed in cosmetic details at best, which means that MEPs will be asked to vote on the same toxic report which they referred back to the committee, because it was not acceptable to the majority of the house.

(...) The number of amendments and “split votes” tabled for this report prior to the last plenary session was unusually high – an indicator that European Parliament is deeply divided over this controversial proposal. Nevertheless, the MEPs who proposed it still hope to find a way to **advance their ultra feminist agenda** of compulsory sex and gender education starting with toddlers onwards, **free abortion on demand**, and serious restrictions on doctor’s right to conscientious objection.

On the other hand, thanks to a massive reaction by citizens across Europe, more and more MEPs are aware that they need to demand that the boundaries of EU competence be respected—which does not allow for the promotion of abortion and stands for the dignity of women, the right to life and for the protection of fundamental freedoms for all. As a result of the efforts of human rights organizations to raise public awareness in Europe of the many problems contained in the Estrela Report, **MEPs received thousands of emails before the last plenary session**. But there are still reasons to be concerned and the battle is not yet over. (...)

What can you do to help?

- Contact the MEPs of your country who are members of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (see the attached list). Ask them to vote against the report in the final Committee vote, no matter what changes are made to the report. The radical Estrela Report is simply unacceptable.
- You may use arguments from the analysis below when contacting your MEPs.

What's problematic in the Estrela Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights?

- The Estrela Report calls for a so-called "right to abortion". But the EU has no competence to promote abortion. Hence, such a call is against EU law. Furthermore, it is incompatible with the fundamental right to life of every human being.
- The Report calls for restrictions on the right to conscientious objection, which it considers an obstacle to establish a so-called "right to abortion" (Paragraph 35 of the Report). But conscientious objection is an internationally recognized right. Everyone has the fundamental freedom to not participate in a practice that is contrary to one's conscience, within the boundaries prescribed by law.
- The Report calls for compulsory sexual education according to the Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe published by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the German BzgA. (...). Although these standards differentiate between "minimum" and "optimal achievements, **masturbation at age 0–4 is mandatory**. In short, this is a programme for sexual initiation beginning at the toddler age. And one seriously has to ask oneself whether this kind of sexual education is not in fact **a form of paedophilia that could lead to child abuse**, albeit under a pretext of "education" or "skill development".

BOX 3: Fragments of an email from European Dignity Watch calling on citizens to email MEPs about the Estrela report, November 2013 (highlights by the author)

Redefining commonly agreed concepts and their misuse: Anti-choice organisations frequently present themselves as defenders and promoters of human rights. European Dignity Watch for example claims to defend ‘fundamental freedoms’, ADF International aims to ‘promote religious freedom’ and the World Youth Alliance ‘defends the dignity of the person’ – all positive notions rooted in international legal treaties. It is however not specified that the interpretation of these notions by these organisations is different from international jurisprudence.

In particular, the anti-choice movement is increasingly using the concept of conscientious objection, usually understood to refer to individuals opting out from performing acts they morally condemn and applied in the context of objection to military service. In the anti-choice interpretation, the term ‘conscientious objection’ is used to justify doctors’ or pharmacists’ refusal to perform lawful abortions or provide contraceptives.

However, these contentions have no basis in international law – in fact, under human rights law, the right to conscientious objection is subject to limitations to protect the rights of others. With regards to healthcare specifically, conscientious objection is constricted by legal standards protecting the right to life, health and privacy.⁶⁸

The use of positively associated human rights notions by the anti-choice movement serves a double purpose: firstly, by positioning themselves as human rights NGOs, these organisations earn policy makers’ trust and open pathways to establishing a relationship with them. ADF International regularly organises events on religious freedom and freedom of conscience which build its legitimacy within the European Parliament.

Secondly, by positioning themselves as the ‘true’ representatives of human rights, anti-choice activists can accuse pro-SRHR organisations of being anti-human rights (e.g. against the ‘right to life of an unborn child’⁶⁹), anti-faith and anti-human dignity. They can thus re-define positive notions, such as feminism and gender equality in accordance with their interests.

By claiming ownership of these concepts, these organisations are able to manipulate the public discourse much more effectively. As a result, the political consensus on SRHR is becoming undermined and pro-SRHR organisations must constantly defend themselves and their work against baseless accusations.

68 For more see the High Ground Alliance [Briefing on conscientious objection](#), accessed 28/09/2016

69 ADF International, [ADF Intl Defends Right to Life of Unborn Before European Court](#), accessed 26/09/2016

BOX 4: #DefundIPPF campaign

In September 2015, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), its work and Brussels-based staff became targets of a particularly vicious campaign spearheaded by ADF International, the One of Us Federation and European Dignity Watch. The anti-choice organisations exploited the US-based media storm around the release of deceptively edited videos which claimed that IPPF's US affiliate, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), illegally harvested organs from aborted foetuses. Dubbed #DefundIPPF (adapting the #DefundPP slogan from the US), the campaign combined both online and offline elements to mobilise several MEPs for the anti-choice cause.

Online, the hashtags #DefundIPPF and #TruthAboutIPPF were promoted on social media such as Facebook⁷⁰ and Twitter,⁷¹ with the involvement of the existing network of supporters and blogs, like Agenda Europe. In parallel, CitizenGo launched a petition⁷² calling to end EU funding to IPPF.

These activities created a buzz providing a backdrop to the offline offensive. This began with a few MEPs (including EPP's Anna Zaborska and ECR's Bronislav Skripek) and anti-choice activists disrupting an IPPF event organised at the European Parliament by handing out fliers with false accusations against the organisation, placing posters with the #DefundIPPF hashtag throughout the room and heckling speakers. In the weeks preceding and following these events, a series of virtually identical parliamentary questions were posed by anti-choice MEPs (ex. EPP's Miroslav Mikolášik⁷³ and Marijana Petir,⁷⁴ ENF's Lorenzo Fontana,⁷⁵ S&D's Luigi Morgano⁷⁶) to Development Commissioner Neven Mimica, repeating the false allegations against PPFA and asking if EU funding provided to IPPF would be revoked. Mr Mimica's answer clarified that while the EC was aware of the allegations against the PPFA, the organisation was not a recipient of EU funding.⁷⁷

70 Facebook page of the #DefundIPPF campaign, www.facebook.com/DefundIPPF

71 Twitter stream of the #DefundIPPF hashtag, <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23defundippf&src=typd>

72 CitizenGO, [EU Commission: stop funding IPPF petition](#), accessed 26/09/2016

73 Question for written answer to the Commission, Miroslav Mikolášik, 20 July 2015, [Illegal trafficking of human body parts](#)

74 Question for written answer to the Commission, Marijana Petir, 28 October 2015, [Unlawful activities of the Planned Parenthood organisation](#)

75 Question for written answer to the Commission, Lorenzo Fontana, 26 August 2015, [Planned Parenthood scandal](#)

76 Question for written answer to the Commission, Luigi Morgano, 7 October 2015, [Potential action against the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network \(IPPF-EN\)](#)

77 See for example joint [answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission](#), 11 January 2016

Anti-choice campaigners followed up by sending a letter signed by 19 MEPs to the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Xavier Bettel, requesting the withdrawal of the patronage for the European Week of Action for Girls 2015 if IPPF remained one of the co-organisers. They also sent a letter signed by 63 MEPs to the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz. This letter called for IPPF to be banned from organising events at the European Parliament and for its staff to be stricken from the Transparency Register. Both requests were disregarded, nonetheless causing IPPF staff to use a significant amount of time to rebuff the groundless allegations.

ADF International and the One of Us Federation then proceeded to organise an event hosted by the EPP⁷⁸ whose sole purpose was to slander IPPF and its associates. Among the panellists was Lila Rose, a hard-line US anti-choice activist, who has repeatedly been involved in the creation of misleading video footage against PPFA.⁷⁹ Her organisation, Live Action, has close links to anti-choice groups who have in the past engaged in violent criminal activity in the US.⁸⁰ Ahead of the event, 'fact sheets'⁸¹ were sent to MEPs with misleading and factually inaccurate information on IPPF services. To counter these activities, IPPF produced its own fact sheets correcting the information spread by the anti-choice advocates.

78 ADF International, [ADF Intl to co-host event at European Parliament on current Planned Parenthood video scandal](#), accessed 26/09/2016

79 Media Matters, [Who is Lila Rose?](#), accessed 28/09/2016

80 Right Wing Watch, [Live Action Praises Church-bombing Cult Leader](#), accessed 28/09/2016

81 ADF International, [IPPF Fact Sheet](#), accessed 26/09/2016

New Social Media Campaign: Defund Planned Parenthood

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 ~ ADMIN



Planned Parenthood is playing every possible trick to hide the truth about their abortion business and selling baby parts. Unsurprisingly, a lot of its big-buck budget is going to social media.

So, what do you do?

Jump onto your Facebook account and change your profile to include this

“twibbon” overlay.

By overlaying the transparent twibbon (illustrated below) on your profile photo, you will communicate a pro-life message throughout cyberspace....

The twibbon says “DefundPP” and not “DefundIPPF”, but while the European debate will continue to happen on the [FB page DefundIPPF](#) (it has reached almost 24.000 people with the page in just 48 hrs!), we can all join a global virtual movement by using this twibbon.

Figure 14: Facebook page of the #DefundIPPF campaign, June 2016

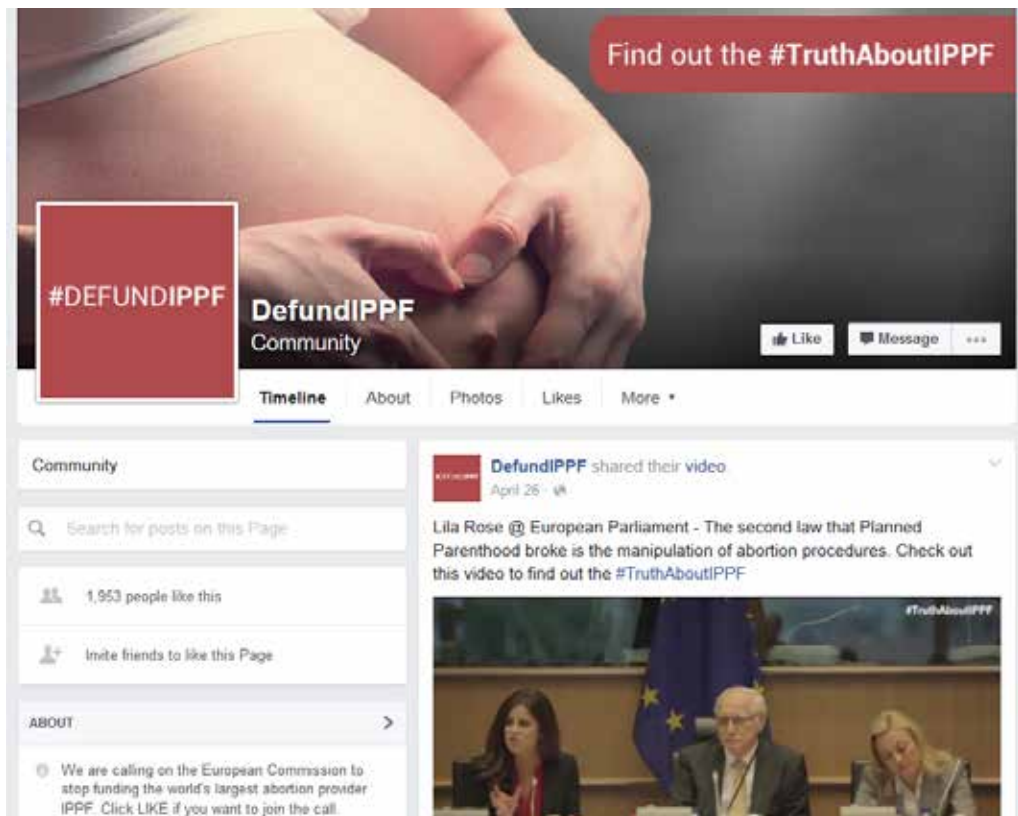


Figure 15: Agenda Europe post⁸² promoting the #DefundIPPF social media campaign

82 Agenda Europe, [New Social Media Campaign: Defund Planned Parenthood](#), accessed 26/09/2016



Planned Parenthood: Selling Baby Parts for Profit

For years, Planned Parenthood has worked to convince the public that they are more concerned with "women's health" than profit, and that "terminating a pregnancy" is simply "reproductive healthcare."

New undercover videos depicting senior Planned Parenthood officials show that the organization is involved in criminal activity, including:

- harvesting and selling the parts of aborted babies for profit and without consent of the mothers
- selling intact fetal cadavers
- alternating abortion procedures (using "less crunchy methods") in order to harvest better the pre-ordered organs
- harvesting organs from babies who's heart was still beating after late-term abortion

To this day, ten videos have been released. Here is what we learn from these videos:

Figure 16: Flyers handed out at the IPPF event in the European Parliament on 22 September 2015

Citizen mobilisation

Social media campaigns: While anti-choice policies may not have widespread support in society,⁸³ anti-choice organisations have demonstrated their ability to create social media campaigns, which mobilise tens of thousands of supporters around their goals. While these campaigns are presented as instigated by individual concerned citizens, they are often organised at the initiative of anti-choice lobby groups. This serves to create pressure on policy-makers to incline them to support policies which, while supported by a vocal minority, are not representative of the views of the majority of society.

Aside from #DefundIPPF, the anti-choice lobby has targeted the Noichl report on an EU strategy for equality between women and men post-2015⁸⁴ with the #StopNoichl hashtag. The online petition site promoting conservative Christian values, CitizenGo, regularly hosts calls for the rejection of pro-SRHR and pro-gender equality reports in the EP. Its petition to reject the Estrela report⁸⁵ collected nearly 50,000 signatures, while the petition⁸⁶ against the Tarabella report⁸⁷ (launched by FAFCE) was signed by over 60,000 people.

Spam and mass emailing: Ahead of the plenary vote on the Estrela report on SRHR, MEPs received an estimated 80,000-100,000 emails from citizens designed to flood their inboxes and demonstrate a large-scale opposition to the report. This was a result of a campaign instigated by the **European Dignity Watch**, which sent out a highly emotive and misleading call to action to its supporters (see box 3).

Despite the falseness of the allegations made against the Estrela report, the mobilisation campaign resulted in a relatively high attention and the subsequent rejection of the report. While this is the most prominent example of the use of mass emailing in recent years, it is by far not isolated, as similar tactics were deployed (without success) ahead of votes on the Lunacek,⁸⁸ Tarabella and Noichl reports.

83 See for example the [Buzzfeed News/ Ipsos poll of attitudes towards abortion in 23 countries](#) from May 2015, accessed 26/09/2015

84 [Report on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015](#), May 2015

85 CitizenGO, [Reject the Estrela Report! Petition](#), accessed 26/09/2016

86 CitizenGO, [Stop Tarabella relaunching Estrela! No EU support to abortion](#), accessed 26/09/2016

87 [Report on progress on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2013](#), January 2015

88 [Report on the on the EU Roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity](#), January 2014

In fact, as early as in 2002, the Van Lanker report on SRHR was targeted using the same tactics. The constituencies of anti-choice organisations in several countries, including France, Germany, Poland, Canada and the United States, organised an email and fax smear campaign asking MEPs to vote against the report and branding it as an effort to ‘impose abortion’ on EU candidate countries.⁸⁹

Using parliamentary means

Invoking the principle of subsidiarity: Anti-choice organisations frequently exploit the political position embraced by a number of political groups in the European Parliament with regards to the principle of subsidiarity. The principle, enshrined in the EU treaties, limits the areas in which the EU does have a legislative competence, excluding for example the area of healthcare.

Anti-choice organisations argue that consequently the European Parliament should altogether refrain from debating or adopting positions on issues pertaining to this area, such as reproductive health. This argument was quoted as the basis for oppo-

sition to the Tarabella and Noichl reports by the ECPM⁹⁰ and **European Dignity Watch**.⁹¹ FAFCE organised an event on the importance of subsidiarity⁹² in this context in January 2014.

The implication that politicians who wish to discuss or establish a policy position on SRHR are against the principle of subsidiarity is unfounded and serves the sole purpose of shutting down the debate on the topic.

However, it is clear that anti-choice activists invoke this principle not out of genuine concern for upholding subsidiarity in EU legislation, but opportunistically and as a convenient argument, to exploit a pre-existing position of the political groups in the one specific case of European Parliament debates and positions on SRHR.

89 Catholics for a Free Choice, 2003, ‘[Preserving power and privilege. The Vatican’s agenda in the European Union](#)’, p.21

90 ECPM, [Tarabella report breaches the subsidiarity principle. Abortion and SRHR are NOT EU competences](#), accessed 26/09/2016

91 European Dignity Watch, [Estrela revisited: Noichl report calls for aggressive sex ed programmes, abortion, and medically-assisted reproduction](#), accessed 26/09/2016

92 FAFCE, [The EU and Abortion: a twofold need for subsidiarity](#), accessed 26/09/2016

While legal provisions relating to abortion and reproductive health are indeed the sole competence of the EU member states, it does not mean that the European Parliament is not allowed to express its opinion on these matters, as it does in other areas, which do not fall under EU competence. The implication that politicians who wish to discuss or establish a policy position on SRHR are against the principle of subsidiarity is unfounded and serves the sole purpose of shutting down the debate on the topic.

Use of European Citizens' Initiatives: The European citizens' Initiative (ECI) One of Us was one of the most successful citizens' initiatives to date, with 1.7 million signatures collected across the EU. It was also the first time that the anti-choice movement engaged with citizens on such a mass scale to further its goals.

Most organisations involved in the initiative have religious backgrounds, but religious belief was never mentioned as a motivation for the initiative, with the focus much more on legal arguments, such as the incorrectly interpreted *Brüstle v. Greenpeace* case. This tactic was designed to create a misleading impression of the European citizens' initiative having a sound legal – rather than ideological – basis.

Widespread support for the initiative would in turn allow its organisers to present the European citizens' initiative as a true grassroots movement initiated by concerned citizens rather than special interest lobbies. The newly registered anti-LGBT European citizens' initiative Mum, Dad and Kids⁹³ is attempting to recreate the popular success of One of Us.

Alternative resolutions: Proposing alternative resolutions to those reports which contain a reference to SRHR has now become standard practice by the EPP group. In the case of the Estrela report, the original text was not directly rejected but rather replaced by a joint EPP/ ECR resolution referring to the subsidiarity principle. The EPP also presented alternative resolutions to the Noichl⁹⁴ and Honeyball⁹⁵ reports⁹⁶ which it was opposed to based on references to SRHR.

93 See footnote 10

94 [Motion for a resolution replacing non-legislative motion for a resolution A8-0163/2015 on behalf of the EPP group](#)

95 [Report on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU](#), February 2016

96 [Motion for a resolution replacing non-legislative motion for a resolution A8-0024/2015 on behalf of the EPP group](#), accessed 26/09/2016

Coordinated parliamentary questions: Anti-choice MEPs have made use of parliamentary questions to the European Commission in order to attempt to create pressure for it to further their cause. This was the case when the false allegation campaign against IPPF started in 2015: seven separate, but extremely similar parliamentary questions were asked by 13 MEPs⁹⁷ in the space of three months about the EU's development funding provided to the organisation.

Attempts to remove SRHR organisations from the Transparency Register: In October 2015, 63 MEPs issued a letter to the EP President Schulz calling for the removal of IPPF and its staff from the Transparency Register in connection to the slanderous campaign led by ADF International and European Dignity Watch. While this request was rejected, IPPF staff was forced to spend considerable time combatting the attempts to delegitimise their work and countering the slanderous allegations outlined in the letter.

Election pledges: Ahead of the European elections in 2014, several anti-choice organisations proposed pledges for candidates to sign. These included the French anti-LGBT movement **La Manif pour Tous**, the **Irish Life Institute**, the **German Association for Family and Children** at national level and **European Dignity Watch**, **ECPM**, **FAFCE** and the **Novae Terrae Foundation** at EU level. Many of the pledges contained various more general and nuanced promises, such as focus on health care and protection of patients' rights, designed to attract signatures from politicians who might not be persuaded by an openly anti-choice declaration.

Introduction of anti-choice language into reports or resolutions not primarily concerned with SRHR: Anti-choice MEPs regularly introduce amendments to resolutions with a view to removing or watering down SRHR or gender equality language, which can easily be missed by staff who have not received training on gender sensitive and pro-SRHR formulations. What is more, anti-choice language is sometimes being inserted into reports which seemingly do not touch on the subjects of healthcare or SRHR.

This was the case in April 2016, when **MEP Miroslav Mikolasik** (EPP, SK), introduced wording condemning 'trafficking in human organs, tissue and cells, including unlawful trade in reproductive cells (ova, sperm), foetal tissue and cells, and adult and embryonic stem cells' into the Opinion of the Committee on Environment, Public

97 Miroslav Mikolášik (EPP) '[Illegal trafficking of human body parts](#)', Lorenzo Fontana (ENF) '[Planned Parenthood scandal](#)', Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR), Janusz Wojciechowski (ECR), Stanisław Ożóg (ECR), Zbigniew Kuźmiuk (ECR), [Commission funding for the International Planned Parenthood Federation](#), Daniela Aiuto (EFDD), [IPPF scandal](#), Luigi Morgano (S&D), [Potential action against the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network \(IPPF-EN\)](#), Marie-Christine Arnautu (ENF), Sylvie Goddyn (ENF), Bruno Gollnisch (NI), Jean-Marie Le Pen (NI), Mylène Troszczynski (ENF), [EU funding for the International Planned Parenthood Federation](#), Marijana Petir (EPP) '[Unlawful activities of the Planned Parenthood organisation](#)',

Health and Food Safety (ENVI) on the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) on the fight against trafficking in human beings in EU external relations.⁹⁸ The reference to the ‘illegal trading in foetal tissue and cells’ was the exact language used by the anti-choice opposition to demand that IPPF be defunded and stricken from the Transparency Register in 2015 (see box 4).

Strategic litigation at national and regional level: ADF International, the ECLJ and Ordo Iuris are all specialised in strategic litigation and legal advocacy, which they engage in primarily within their countries or in the European Court of Human Rights. They focus and engage on key cases relevant to abortion⁹⁹ or the ‘rights of the unborn child’¹⁰⁰ in the hope that amending laws or legal practice at national level or in the Council of Europe will eventually influence EU policies and agenda.

Training future anti-choice lobbyists

Virtually all major anti-choice organisations offer internship programmes, mainly aimed at young law graduates, offering to train them on litigation, legal advocacy, lobbying, campaigning or communications with a view of promoting an anti-choice message.

The US-based Phoenix Institute, which specialises in educating and training youth interested in becoming political actors specifically to further the ultra-conservative Christian ideology and anti-choice values, offers summer seminars in Vienna.¹⁰¹ The lecturers include Rocco Buttiglione, who in 2004 was rejected by the European Parliament from his proposed post as European Commissioner for Justice due to his regressive views on homosexuality and women’s rights.

The World Youth Alliance offers specific advocacy training programmes, partly funded by the Erasmus+ programme;¹⁰² ADF International offers scholarships,¹⁰³ academies for legal graduates¹⁰⁴ and leadership courses.¹⁰⁵ Several anti-choice initiatives were started by ex-interns or staff members of anti-choice MEPs.

98 [EP resolution on the fight against trafficking in human beings in the EU’s external relations](#), 5 July 2016,

99 ECLJ, [Written Observations submitted to the ECHR in the case of Anita KRŪZMANE against Latvia](#), accessed 26/09/2016

100 ECLJ, [Communication to the Committee of Ministers on the execution of the judgment A. B. and C. v Ireland](#), accessed 26/09/2016

101 The Phoenix Institute, <http://www.thephoenixinstitute.org/summerseminarsvienna.html>, accessed 05/11/2016

102 WYA [Europe Emerging Leaders Conference 2015](#), co-funded through Erasmus+, accessed 26/09/2016

103 ADF International, [Veritas Scholarship](#), accessed 26/09/2016

104 ADF International, [ADF Academy](#), accessed 26/09/2016

105 ADF International, [Areté Academy](#), accessed 26/09/2016

5. Recommendations

As stated in section two, anti-choice movements at the national, European and international levels present not only a policy, but also a political challenge. Their proliferation and rising influence are a result of a broader sense of social dissatisfaction originating in the political and socio-economic crises facing liberal democracies in Europe.

Progressive politicians must put forward their own positive political agenda to proactively shift the debate and embed their values within it.

The economic insecurity and lack of democratic accountability perceived by citizens provides fertile soil for the proliferation of movements proposing undemocratic or retrogressive politics and policies as a solution. To counter the emergence of these movements, it is not enough to react whenever they appear. Progressive politicians must put forward their own positive political agenda to proactively shift the debate and embed their values within it.

The following recommendations are intended to lay out the path for enacting this approach. They are meant for MEPs, members of national parliaments, political group leaders, political activists and political group staff. The recommendations are accompanied by best practice examples, which illustrate ways in which they are already being put into practice.

✓ Be vocal about your values

Progressive actors should actively promote their values and voice their strong commitment to human rights for all. It is crucial not to be complacent and believe that rights such as SRHR have been ‘won’ once and for all. As anti-choice actors (but also other undemocratic or anti-human rights movements) are actively attempting to reverse this trend, progressives must vigorously promote their values and remain vigilant for attempts to undermine them.

Progressives should challenge anti-choice actors about the contents of their discourse to reveal their anti-gender agenda. Explaining the context in which certain policy demands are made or demanding clarifications on the motivations behind them will allow to expose hidden agendas to citizens.

Best practice example

In July 2016, the European Parliament was set to debate the state of fundamental rights in Poland, in particular with regards to women’s rights and reproductive rights in view of a proposed law further restricting the country’s law on abortion. However, as a result of the opposition of the EPP and the ECR groups, the debate was removed from the agenda. In response, MEP Terry Reintke (Greens/EFA, DE) published a video on her Facebook profile¹⁰⁶ in which she called out the conservative MEPs for cancelling the debate and stressed that it had taken away the opportunity for an inclusive and necessary discussion. She then presented the pro-SRHR statement she had planned to make in plenary to voice her strong commitment to women’s rights across the EU.

¹⁰⁶ Post from 6 July 2016, www.facebook.com/terry.reintke/?fref=nf, accessed 26/09/2016

✓ Work with the grassroots

Policies must be based on the best interests of the people they will affect. This requires the identification of the challenges faced by individuals within a society, articulating and addressing them in progressive terms. To achieve this, progressives must work closely with disenfranchised and marginalised groups who are disproportionately affected by both socio-economic instability and conservative policies.

Progressive actors should further convey the message that promoting the rights and values of the citizens is their explicit mandate as elected politicians. As they have been elected based on their progressive convictions, they have clear a mandate from their constituents to promote these values at national, EU or international levels.

Best practice example

The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) regularly organises field visits for MEPs and members of national parliaments to developing countries. These visits allow the parliamentarians to learn about the SRHR and population challenges faced by the people they meet and to subsequently ensure that the EU's foreign and development policy adequately addresses their needs.

In July 2016, four European national parliamentarians, as well as MEP Norbert Neuser (S&D, DE) attended a five-day study tour in Kyrgyzstan¹⁰⁷ to learn about reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) in the country. The parliamentarians met with local NGOs and youth representatives working on SRHR and visited maternity hospitals and rural family planning centres.

¹⁰⁷ EPF, Five Parliamentarians complete RMNCH Study Tour to Kyrgyzstan, www.epfweb.org/node/505, accessed 27/09/2016

✓ Communicate clearly

Progressives need to present the pro-choice message in a clear and relatable manner resonating with the lived experiences of citizens. To do this, politicians should adapt their language to one, which relates to the daily concerns and struggles of their constituents rather than using abstract policy or international systems notions, all while avoiding anti-choice language ('pro-life', 'unborn child', etc.).

It is crucial to communicate that the debate on SRHR is both symbolically significant, by contributing to public discourse and attitudes towards individual rights, and has practical implications on the funding provided by the EU and its member states towards promoting these rights in developing countries.

Progressive actors should make full use of social networks and online campaigning to spread the SRHR-positive message. It is crucial to make use of these spaces to counter balance the anti-choice movements' efforts.

Best practice examples

As a response to the attacks to which it was being subjected to as part of the #DefundIPPF campaign, IPPF designed and launched its own positive campaign under the hashtag #womencount. By focusing on the subjects of their work and their needs and rights, IPPF successfully communicated the true objective of its mission: to deliver healthcare to women worldwide. On the day of its launch, which coincided with a joint ADF and One of Us event aimed against IPPF in the European Parliament, the #womencount hashtag vastly overpassed #DefundIPPF mentions on social media.

✓ Build alliances

Progressive actors must take advantage of the fact that there are no clear divisions on SRHR between different political or religious groups to further the SRHR agenda, or key issues within it, by finding partners from all parts of the political scene. This should be done by opening an inclusive dialogue across political groups to try to find a common ground for a pro-SRHR agenda to take forward.

Progressives should nurture relationships with pro-choice civil society actors. Political actors should seek to join forces with civil society (such as liberal, feminist, secular and progressive faith-based organisations) to demonstrate unity above divisions and take a strong stand on issues of common interest. Support and cooperation should include making sure that such organisations can access long-term funding for their activities.

Best practice example

In response to the formation of the anti-choice One of Us Federation, a number of MEPs from across parliamentary groups launched a joint movement entitled All of Us.¹⁰⁸ The group aims to mobilise support for the right to access modern contraceptives and safe and legal abortion within the European Parliament, in cooperation across political families. Its founding members are Iratxe Garcia Perez (S&D, ES), Sophie in 't Veld (ALDE, NL), Malin Björk (GUE/NGL, SE), Marie Arena (S&D, BE) and Ernest Urtasun (Greens EFA, ES).

Civil society actors are also increasingly organising to jointly promote common goals and progressive messages, as exemplified by the launch of the High Ground Alliance,¹⁰⁹ which brings together six organisations: Catholics for Choice, the European Humanist Federation, the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF), the International LGBTI Association (ILGA), the European Women's Lobby and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). While each of these organisations works on different topics and their policy positions on individual issues may vary, they are united by their commitment to promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights for all in EU policy.

108 All of Us, www.facebook.com/JoinALLOfUs/photos/a.1656313937914278.1073741829.1651867918358880/1656313971247608/?type=3&theater, accessed 27/09/2016

109 High Ground Alliance, www.highgroundalliance.eu, accessed 27/09/2016

Annexes:

Annex 1: International legal basis for SRHR

The term sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) refers to a diversity of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights affecting the sexual and reproductive life of individuals and couples. While there is no individual international human rights instrument dedicated to SRHR, their protection is provided through the various elements of the main United Nations and regional human rights instruments, the most relevant of which are listed below.

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, 1994

- describes reproductive rights as based on the right of couples and individuals to decide free from discrimination, coercion and violence whether to have children, how often and when to do so, and having the necessary information and means to make such decisions;
- highlights the connection of SRHR to the right to the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health;
- stresses the relationship between women's health and their ability to access family planning and other reproductive health services;
- commits states to provide universal access to a full range of family planning methods and to recognize the specific needs of vulnerable groups;
- recognises unsafe abortion as a major public health concern, and commits states to reducing the need for abortion through expanded and improved family planning services, while at the same time stating that, in circumstances where not against the law, abortion should be safe.

The United Nations General Assembly review and appraisal of the implementation of ICPD in 1999 (ICPD+5) further agreed that, ‘in circumstances where abortion is not against the law, health systems should train and equip health-service providers and should take other measures to ensure that such abortion is safe and accessible.’¹¹⁰

Beijing Platform for Action, 1995

- affirms that the rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence;
- asserts the right of all women and men to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice;
- affirms the ICPD conclusions on abortion.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979

- obligates states parties to ensure access to health care services, including those related to family planning, and stresses the need for appropriate services in connection with pregnancy and the right to decide on the number and spacing of children;
- prohibits the discrimination against women, including in the provision of women-specific healthcare services.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966

- establishes the general right to the highest attainable standard of health, of which contraception and family planning are key dimensions;
- prohibits the discrimination against women, including in the provision of women-specific healthcare services.

¹¹⁰ General Assembly Resolution S-21/2, Key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, A/RES/S-21/2 (1999), para. 63(iii).

Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990

- protects children's right to the highest attainable standard of health.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008

- specifically mentions the right of persons with disabilities to sexual and reproductive health.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966

- protects the right to life, which is violated by the high level of preventable maternal mortality.

International human rights bodies

- characterise laws generally criminalizing abortion as discriminatory and a barrier to women's access to health care. They have recommended that states remove all punitive provisions for women who have undergone abortion. These bodies have also requested that states permit abortion in certain cases.¹¹¹

Treaty body jurisprudence

- indicates that denying women access to abortion where there is a threat to the woman's life or health, or where the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest violates the rights to health,¹¹² privacy¹¹³ and, in certain cases, to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.¹¹⁴

111 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Concluding Observations on Peru, CEDAW/C/PER/CO/7-8 (2014), para 36; Statement on sexual and reproductive health and rights: Beyond 2014 ICPD Review (2014).

112 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, L.C. v. Peru, CEDAW/C/50/D/22/2009, para. 8.15.

113 Human Rights Committee, K.L. v. Peru, CCPR/C/85/D/1153/2003, para. 6.4; V.D.A. v. Argentina, CCPR/C/101/D/1608/2007, para. 9.3.

114 K.L. v. Peru, para. 6.3; V.D.A. v. Argentina, para. 9.2. 7 International Conference on Population and Development, Programme of Action (1994), para. 8.25.

Annex 2: Key EU positions on SRHR

IN EXTERNAL POLICY

European Parliament

[EP Resolution on Progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: Mid-Term Review in preparation of the High Level Meeting in September 2010](#), 15 June 2010, rapporteur Michael Cashman

- calls on the EU member states and the European Commission to reverse the decline in funding for SRHR in developing countries and to support policies on family planning, abortion, treatment of sexual diseases and provision of condoms.

[EP resolution on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015](#), 9 June 2015, rapporteur Maria Noichl

- asks the European Commission to ensure that European development cooperation follows an approach that is based on human rights and underscores that universal access to health, in particular sexual and reproductive health and the associated rights, is a fundamental human right, and emphasises the right to voluntarily access family planning services, including safe and legal abortion-related care;
- urges that the provision of humanitarian aid by the EU and the Member States should not be subject to restrictions imposed by other partner donors regarding necessary medical treatment, including access to safe abortion for women and girls who are victims of rape in armed conflicts.

EP resolution on the EU and the global development framework after 2015, 17

November 2014, rapporteur Davor Ivo Stier

- stresses the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights of all people, without discrimination on any grounds, starting with the fundamental right to dignity of all human beings, with particular attention to the human rights of women and girls, including the promotion of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

EP resolution on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2014 and the European Union's policy on the matter, 17 December 2015,

rapporteur Cristian Dan Preda

- stresses the importance of upholding the Beijing Platform for Action conclusions on access to health as a basic human right, and the protection of sexual and reproductive rights; emphasises the fact that universal respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights and access to the relevant services contribute to reducing infant and maternal mortality; points out that family planning, maternal health, easy access to contraception and safe abortion are important elements in saving women's lives and helping them rebuild their lives if they have been victims of rape; highlights the need to place these policies at the core of development cooperation with third countries.

Council of the European Union

Council Conclusions on Gender in Development, 26 May 2015

“The Council 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 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 Council reaffirms the EU's 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 Council 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.”

European Commission/ High Representative of the Union on Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Joint Staff Working Document on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020

- commits to preventing, and responding to, all forms of violence against girls and women by ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights;
- sets the objective of promoting, protecting and fulfilling 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.

IN INTERNAL POLICY

European Parliament

EP Resolution on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 6 June 2002, rapporteur Anne Van Lancker

- recommends the governments of the member states and accession countries to develop a high quality national policy on sexual and reproductive health;
- recommends that, in order to safeguard women's reproductive health and rights, abortion should be made legal, safe and accessible to all and calls upon the governments of the member states and accession countries to refrain from prosecuting women who have undergone illegal abortions.

EP Resolution on equality between women and men in the European Union 2009, 10 February 2010, rapporteur Marc Tarabella

- emphasises that women must have control over their sexual and reproductive rights, notably through easy access to contraception and abortion; emphasises that women must have access free of charge to consultation on abortion;

- supports measures and actions to improve women's access to sexual and reproductive health services and to raise their awareness of their rights and of available services.

EP resolution on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015, 9 June 2015, rapporteur Maria Noichl

- calls on the European Commission to assist member states in ensuring high-quality, geographically appropriate and readily accessible services in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights and safe and legal abortion and contraception;
- urges the European Commission to include SRHR in its next EU Health Strategy, in order to ensure equality between women and men and complement national SRHR policies.

EP resolution on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU, 8 March 2016, rapporteur Mary Honeyball

- urges the European Commission and the member states to guarantee full access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to safe abortion;
- stresses that full access to the right to free healthcare services, especially sexual and reproductive health and rights should be guaranteed by the host countries.

Further reading

On anti-choice movements at the UN level

Pam Chamberlain, 2006, '[UNdoing Reproductive Freedom: Christian Right NGOs Target the United Nations](#)'

Norad, 2013, '[Lobbying for Faith and Family: A study of religious NGOs at the United Nations](#)'

On anti-choice movements at EU level

Catholics for a Free Choice, 2003, '[Preserving power and privilege. The Vatican's agenda in the European Union](#)'

Neil Datta, 2013, 'Keeping it all in the family. Europe's Anti-choice Movement', [Con-science](#), vol. XXXIV – no.2, pp 22-27.

J. Lester Feder, 2014, [The Rise of Europe's Religious Right](#), BuzzFeed

Amir Hodzic, Natasa Bijelic, 2014, '[Neoconservative threats to sexual and reproductive rights in the European Union](#)', CESI

On anti-gender movements at EU member state level

Weronika Grzebalska, '[Anti-genderism and the crisis of neoliberal democracy](#)', Visegrad Insight

Weronika Grzebalska, Eszter Soos, '[Conservatives vs. the “Culture of Death”. How progressives handled the war on “gender”](#)', FEPS

Andreas Kemper, 2016, '[Foundation of the nation: how political parties and movements are radicalising others in favour of conservative family values and against tolerance, diversity, and progressive gender politics in Europe](#)', Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Eszter Kovács, Maari Pöim, Judit Tanczos, 2015, '[Beyond gender? Anti-gender mobilisations and lessons for progressives](#)', FEPS-FES Policy Brief

On SRHR in international treaties and jurisprudence

UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights information series on sexual and reproductive health and rights:

- [Abortion](#)
- [Contraception and Family Planning](#)
- [Maternal mortality and morbidity](#)