

# Be a champion for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights globally!

## Strong provisions on SRHR in EU policies

The European Union (EU) has been championing the promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), which are recognised as a **key priority in the EU's international development policies and instruments**, including amongst others in the European Consensus on Development, the regulation for the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III), the Youth Action Plan, and the Global Health Strategy. The EU is also **one of the main international donors for SRHR in terms of Official Development Assistance (ODA)** – despite currently only dedicating a fraction of its ODA budget (less than 2%) to SRHR.

## The role of the European Parliament

The **Parliament's work has been pivotal** in ensuring that SRHR are embedded in ambitious EU policy frameworks to promote human development, gender equality, human rights. The Parliament has also continuously defended the Union's ODA budget from proposed cuts and called for budget to be allocated according to sustainable development priorities, rather than short-term political interests.



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# We count on you to continue championing SRHR in the new parliamentary term!

## What are SRHR?

According to the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission, “Sexual and reproductive health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. All individuals have a right to make decisions governing their bodies and to access services that support that right”,<sup>1</sup> including:

- have their bodily integrity, privacy and personal autonomy respected
- freely define their own sexuality, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
- decide whether and when to be sexually active
- choose their sexual partners
- have safe and pleasurable sexual experiences
- decide whether, when and whom to marry
- decide whether, when and by what means to have a child or children, and how many children to have
- be free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation and violence
- have access over their lifetimes to the information, resources, services and support necessary to achieve all the above

## Why is it important to support SRHR?

**SRHR are human rights** and are essential for people’s ability to lead healthy lives, to address violence and power relations, to be empowered to participate in social, economic and political life, and to freely make decisions governing their bodies. SRHR are also a **fundamental component of Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and a prerequisite to achieving **gender equality**. SRHR are also crucial to achieve **the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030**. But supporting SRHR is also a **smart investment!** SRHR are a powerful development enabler with positive ripple effects on many other areas of sustainable development, favouring improved educational outcomes, labour market participation and building resilient populations faced with the impacts of the climate crisis and other crises.

## Unequal progress and remaining challenges

While the world achieved great progress in the past decades, many challenges remain, and progress is stalling. **SRHR are far from being universally accessible**. Throughout the world, and even within Europe, access to SRHR varies greatly, and can be restricted by legislation, policy and administrative barriers, insufficient public spending, a lack of political will, stigma, and discrimination, in particular for people experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.<sup>2</sup> **Additional investments are needed** especially in low- and middle-income countries to address lack of access to modern contraception, persisting high rates of unintended pregnancies, maternal and newborn deaths.<sup>3</sup>

## Growing opposition to human rights

In Europe as well as globally, **SRHR have been under attack in the recent years**, with multiple attempts to restrict SRHR and women’s rights. The opposition to SRHR is supported by growing anti-rights movements which are **globally connected, well-funded, and making concerted efforts** to undermine achievements made in the past decades for **gender equality and human rights**, but are also threatening fundamental rights, freedoms and democracy in general.

## FREE AND SAFE REPRODUCTIVE LIVES



# What can you do to champion reproductive freedom, safety and dignity in EU external policies?

## Your 5 superpowers as an MEP:

### 1. Ensure future policies include ambitious provisions on SRHR, gender equality and human rights

As co-legislators MEPs can shape the EU's future instruments and policies for international cooperation.

### 2. Ensure adequate budget for SRHR

MEPs can ensure that current and future EU spending **allocates adequate funding** for SRHR and gender equality (**gender budgeting**).

### 3. Hold power to account

MEPs can hold the European Commission accountable, ensuring that the EU is standing by its **commitments**, e.g. through tools such as **parliamentary questions**.

### 4. Speak out

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

### 5. Listen to those most affected

MEPs can consult **individuals and civil society** organisations, representing people most affected by SRHR challenges, bringing their voices to the EU decision-making spaces.

## With these superpowers, you can:

### Ensure ambitious policy frameworks to advance SRHR by:

- **Supporting the adoption of a fully-fledged EU intersectional Feminist Foreign Policy**, applying a gender-transformative, intersectional and decolonial approach to all areas of EU external action: human rights, international cooperation, humanitarian aid, but also enlargement, migration, security, climate, trade, economic policies, etc.<sup>4</sup>
- **Ensuring a renewed and strengthened Gender Action Plan (GAP IV) after 2027**, building on the successes and lessons learnt of GAP III, with strong support to SRHR, a robust intersectionality and gender-transformative approach, ensuring its implementation through earmarked funding and monitoring tools.
- **Supporting the implementation and renewal of the Youth Action Plan and the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan**, with, for the latter, a stronger inclusion of SRHR, women's rights, LGBTIQ+ rights, and gender equality, stressing the importance to provide protection and support to women human rights defenders in partner countries.
- **Monitoring the implementation of the EU Global Health Strategy**, ensuring SRHR are fully recognised as an essential component of UHC, including by drafting an own initiative report providing recommendations and views to feed into the European Commission's mid-term review of the Strategy.
- **Monitoring the implementation of EU regional partnerships**, and in particular the Samoa Agreement between the EU and Africa, Caribbean and Pacific states (ACP), and the EU-Africa partnership, to ensure the full implementation of gender equality, women's rights and SRHR commitments, and make sure these issues are at the core of any new (or renewed) bi-regional agreements.
- **Calling on the Commission and Member States to reinforce a gender equality perspective in the EU's humanitarian aid response**, including through training of humanitarian actors to include SRHR as part of the Minimum Initial Service Package.

# Ensure ambitious funding to advance SRHR by:

- **Encouraging and monitoring Member States' progress on meeting the commitment to achieve 0.7% of ODA** as a share of their Gross National Income (GNI) by 2030.
- **Monitoring the implementation of the NDICI** and call on the European Commission to **increase funding for human development, health and gender equality, specifically scaling up support to SRHR**, women's rights and youth-led organisations, including by continued and strengthened contribution to UNFPA Supplies Partnership and the Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on SRHR in sub-Saharan Africa.



- **Monitoring and encouraging progress in the achievement of specific funding targets**, that are contributing to advance SRHR globally:
  - **Human development:** ensure that at least 20% of the EU ODA is allocated to human development and social inclusion
  - **Gender equality:** ensure that at least 85% of new EU funded programmes have gender equality as a significant objective and 5% of new programmes have gender equality as the principal objective.
- **Calling on the European Commission to ensure sufficient funding** for people living in areas requiring **humanitarian assistance** to have access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- **Working towards the adoption of a new ambitious EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) and successor programme to the NDICI after 2027**, in particular by:
  - Calling on Member States and the European Commission to **increase the budget of the NDICI successor** to make sure that it can respond to the magnitude of the global needs.
  - Pushing for the **continued inclusion of gender mainstreaming** as a horizontal priority in the MFF, and calling on the European Commission to **adopt gender budgeting as a key approach** in its proposal for a new MFF, making sure that gender equality is included as a priority and funded throughout the MFF.
  - Including in the renewed NDICI regulation commitments to achieve ambitious **funding targets for human development and gender equality**: 85% of ODA should go to programmes where gender equality is a significant component and 20% of ODA should go to programmes where gender equality is the principal component.
  - **Establishing specific funding mechanism for local women's rights and SRHR organisations**, through core, sustainable and flexible funding.

1. <https://www.gutmacher.org/gutmacher-lancet-commission/accelerate-progress-executive-summary>
2. UNFPA, *State of the World Population* 2024.
3. Stover, John, and al. "Investing in Three Transformative Results: Realizing Power-ful Returns." UNFPA, November 8, 2022.
4. CONCORD, *Intersectional Feminist Policy-Making for EU External Action: 10 principles*, June 2024.



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About IPPF EN: The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is a global healthcare provider and a leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for all. IPPF European Network is one of IPPF's six regional networks. IPPF EN works with its members and partners in over 40 countries across Europe and Central Asia. IPPF EN cares for all people across Europe, especially the most socially excluded, and recognises their right to lead free and safe sexual and reproductive lives, free from harm and discrimination.