

Towards a European Strategy for Gender Equality: Protecting the Health and Well-being of Vulnerable Women



Tuesday 13th May 2014
NH Hotel du Grand Sablon
Brussels



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Overview

According to the World Health Organisation, health represents 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.' Both biological differences and gender-related socioeconomic determinants are important in health and have a different impact on women and men and on their access to health care. In Europe, discriminatory gender roles still compromise the health of women and girls and, in turn, affect families and communities. Furthermore, healthcare providers and advocates are increasingly recognising devastating physical and mental health effects of domestic violence globally. Despite the progress that the EU has made in terms of raising public awareness, there is still a need to ensure the rights and trust of victims in institutions protecting their rights.

The Council of Europe has endorsed universality, access to quality care, equity, and solidarity as common values and principles underpinning the health systems of the EU Member States. However, certain marginalised groups, such as people living with HIV, the LGBT community or sex workers are still 'hard to reach' for health services. Reducing health inequalities, among which gender and inclusion of vulnerable groups are recognised as determinants should, therefore, be one of the priorities of health systems in Europe.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Right (SRHR) is one of the most controversial topics in our society. In 2013, the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM) of the European Parliament presented the Estrela Report, totalling nearly 90 recommendations and opinions on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The report, which was later rejected by the Parliament, called for access to safe and legal abortion, non-discrimination, and the right to access health care and sexual education. There is a need to address the range of barriers women can face in accessing health services, which consequently prevents them from fully utilising their fundamental right to health.

This timely International Symposium continues the debate on how to work towards an EU-wide policy framework on gender equality and non-discriminatory access to health care. It provides a key platform for the discussion of a better European regulatory framework aimed at strengthening prevention, protection and inclusion. The Symposium will support the exchange of ideas and best practices and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate whilst sharing best practices and lessons learned.

“We know that differences in social and economic conditions are major drivers of inequalities in health. This is why achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy – smart, sustainable and – very importantly – inclusive growth, are essential to reduce health inequalities. We continue our efforts to push forward the health angle within the European Semester, and redouble our efforts to ensure that health is for everybody, everywhere in the EU.”

- Tonio Borg, EU Commissioner for Health, January 2014

“Is it only policy rhetoric or are we witnessing the progress of real organisation-wide systems and resources in place, to ensure that gender is everyone's business?”

- Virginija Lagbakk, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality, April 2013

Venue and Accommodation

NH Hotel Grand Sablon,
Rue Bodenbroek 2/4. B-1000 Brussels
Belgium



Why Attend?

- ✓ Share comparative knowledge on gender-based discrimination and barriers to women's health
- ✓ Exchange best practices on gender-specific health policies and campaigns across Europe
- ✓ Explore innovative solutions for effective prevention and treatment of women's health
- ✓ Assess the health needs of vulnerable groups, such as people living with HIV, sex workers and the LGBT community
- ✓ Gain insights into existing risk factors for victims of domestic violence
- ✓ Delineate a comprehensive strategy for Europe and provide recommendations for future initiatives

Who Should Attend?

- Local Authorities
- Gender Equality Councils
- Social Funds
- Organisational Development Professionals
- Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Practitioners
- Women's Associations
- Women's Enterprise Agencies
- Child Care Service Agencies
- Associations for Education and Development of Women
- Institutes for Social Inclusion of Women
- Women's Centres
- Anti-Discrimination Agencies
- Research Centres for Gender Equalities
- Academics and Universities
- National Agencies on Gender Equality
- Women's Networks
- Trade Unions
- Employers' Associations
- Equal Opportunity Agencies
- Women's Councils
- NGO Networks
- International and Regional Organisations
- National Ministries and Institutes
- Confederations of Women's Organisations
- Joint Committees on Women
- National Coordinators on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities
- Social Exclusion Officers
- Judges and Lawyers
- Human Rights Groups
- Social Care Professionals

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Programme

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| 09:15 | Registration and Morning Refreshments |
| 10:00 | Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks |
| 10:10 | Strategic Action Planning for Women's Health - A General Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defining and Understanding Women's Health - Cultural and Socioeconomic Determinants• Addressing Gender Disparities in Health Policy - Progress and Failures• Examining Innovations in Prevention and Treatment of Women's Health• Recommendations on Gender-Specific Health Policies and Practices Across Europe |
| 10:40 | First Round of Discussions |
| 11:10 | Morning Coffee Break |
| 11:30 | Promoting and Securing Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for Women in Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussing the ESTRELA Report• Providing Women with Neutral Information and Support Services• Moving Towards Comprehensive Sexual Education and Youth-Friendly Services• Recommendations for Future Action |
| 12:00 | Second Round of Discussions |
| 12:30 | Networking Lunch |
| 13:30 | Supporting "Hard to Reach" Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessing the Health Needs of Vulnerable Groups (Sex Workers, Drug Users) – Providing Tailored Support and Education• Addressing the Role of the Healthcare System in Combating Violence Against Women• Preventing Violence and Abuse Against Women - Identifying Risk Factors in Victims• Exploring Innovative Projects and Community-Based Initiatives |
| 14:00 | Third Round of Discussions |
| 14:30 | Afternoon Coffee Break |
| 14:50 | Sharing Best Practices in Tackling Women's Health Issues at the EU Level <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examining the Initiatives to Tackle Stigma and Discrimination Related to HIV/AIDS• Examples of Successful Campaigns and Projects Combating Risky Sexual Behaviours• Considering Online Strategies for Fighting Gender Stereotypes and Discrimination• Sharing Best Practices and Innovative Projects Across Europe• Recommendations for the Future |
| 15:20 | Fourth Round of Discussions |
| 15:50 | Chair's Summary and Closing Comments |
| 16:00 | Networking Reception |
| 16:30 | Symposium Close |

Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice

Event Details

Date: Tuesday 13th May 2014
Time: 10:00am – 4:30pm
Venue: NH Hotel du Grand Sablon, Brussels



Speakers Include

- ✓ **Dr Gunta Lazdane**, Programme Manager Sexual and Reproductive Health, Division of Noncommunicable Diseases and Life-Course, WHO Regional Office for Europe (confirmed)
- ✓ **Christina Zampas**, Senior Legal Adviser - Law and Policy Programme, Amnesty International (confirmed)
- ✓ **Marijke Weewauters**, Advisor, Belgian Institute for Equality between Women and Men (confirmed)
- ✓ **Thierry Martin**, Directeur, Plate-Forme Prévention Sida (confirmed)
- ✓ **Julia Laot**, Project Manager, Federation for Planned Parenthood (confirmed)
- ✓ **Katleen Peleman**, Health Care Assistant, Ghapro (confirmed)
- ✓ **Hildrun Sundseth**, President, European Institute of Women's Health (confirmed)
- ✓ **Evert Ketting**, Senior Researcher, Radboud University Nijmegen (confirmed)

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