



# Parliamentary action for the universalization of the right to health

Spanish parliamentary intergroup on population,  
development and reproductive health

The Spanish Parliamentary Intergroup on Population, Development and Reproductive Health is a network of parliamentarians with different political affiliation who are sharing the same interest and commitment regarding the situation of sexual and reproductive health and rights in developing countries.

Together they participate in activities that establish the dialogue with diverse social actors and the knowledge exchange, and promote parliamentary actions to improve and increase the steps of the Spanish Government in international cooperation in health and sexual and reproductive health. These efforts focus on the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Cairo Programme of Action on Population and Development.

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## SPANISH PARLIAMENTARY INTERGROUP ON POPULATION, DEVELOPMENT AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

### Our history

In 1994, an international agreement was adopted in Cairo by which the international community committed to make all necessary efforts in order to universalize the access to sexual and reproductive health as well as the free and full exercise of sexual rights. The Cairo Action Plan recognises the importance of counting with appropriate legal frames to promote, ensure and protect sexual and reproductive health and rights. Therefore, involving parliamentarians in this effort was an essential issue.

Four years later, the Spanish Parliamentary Intergroup on Population, Development and Health

was born in the Spanish State in the same way that similar associations had done in other countries. During two decades, dozens of parliamentarians have worked in this body, thus enriching its work and acting as agents of change and improvement of Spanish policies concerning reproductive health and health aid. During this time, scores of parliamentary questions have been registered to monitor the Government's work, resolutions have been promoted, and laws or budgets amended.

Furthermore, the Spanish Intergroup is part of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF), a meeting space for similar groups from 27 European countries to share and coordinate activities and initiatives.

The goals that governments from all over the world defined in Cairo and other important international meetings and agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) have not been achieved yet. The 17 goals, 169 targets and 230 indicators of the 2030 Agenda, which address



the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental), constitute the new global frame for development policies over the next fifteen years. International cooperation for development has played an essential role in great part of the progress made until today. However, there is still a long way to go, and the parliamentary action will continue to be crucial and active in the future years.



## Our work

Some of the activities organized by Intergroup are:

- **Regular meetings:** Parliamentarians and members of the technical secretariat of the Intergroup meet on a regular basis to organise their work, exchange information and plan future actions.
- **Meetings with experts:** National and international experts on relevant areas regularly meet members of the Intergroup to offer information and training on key issues regarding health and cooperation or sexual and reproductive health.
- **Training sessions and international conferences:** Whether in the Spanish State or abroad, parliamentarians working in the Intergroup attend trainings and conferences aimed both to improve their knowledge and experience and to influence decision making processes.



- **Study visits:** The Intergroup members travel to developing countries to see first-hand the state of the issue, to observe and understand the situation of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the communities as well as the access to services and the exercise of rights and, finally, to exchange information and proposals with parliamentarians of other countries, government representatives and ministers, and members of the local civil society.
- **Publications:** apart from “Parliamentary Brief”, our regular printed publication, the Intergroup counts with the website [www.intergruposalud.org](http://www.intergruposalud.org) and publishes and distributes material on relevant issues for the parliamentary work on health and cooperation.

## Regional Intergroups

The decentralized cooperation in the Spanish State means that a great variety of activities and programmes aimed to promote the development of the most vulnerable communities of the world are decided, budgeted and developed at a regional or municipal level. **Regional Parliaments** are responsible for approving budgets and monitoring governmental action in their regions. For this reason, the FPFE and its member associations have promoted the creation of the **regional Intergroups of the Catalan and Basque parliaments**, which have become a benchmark in their territories and whose members also take part in activities organised at a national level.

## SPANISH FEDERATION OF FAMILY PLANNING

**The Spanish Federation of Family Planning (FPFE)** is a non-governmental, non-religious and independent organization made up by persons and family planning associations of several regions. It is a member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), a large network of similar associations from over 180 countries around the world, and it works in collaboration with a many other national and international organisations.

### Our goals

Since 1987, the FPFE works for the promotion, defence and free exercise of sexual and reproductive health and rights for everybody, particularly for women and young people.

In FPFE we believe that every single person in the world must have the same right to decide upon the time, the way and whether to have children, and must be able to access quality health services that guarantee a safe delivery and childbirth. We understand that it is essential that all young people in the world have access

to the necessary safe and quality contraceptive methods to develop a full and healthy sexuality free from any risks or unplanned pregnancies.

These have been the maxims that have guided our labour with education and personal care programmes in the Spanish State, pledging for a long-term global change and promoting official commitments and policies with developing countries that bring us a little bit closer to the world we want.

### FPFE and Intergroup

Since its creation, the FPFE has served as the technical secretariat of the Intergroup, carrying out this role from the international department. It organises activities such as seminars, study visits or meetings with experts, develops and distributes publications, and offers technical advice on reproductive health and rights.



*Imagine a world where all women can refuse to have unprotected sexual intercourse; where all of them have access to family planning and none of them dies at childbirth. Imagine a world where all girls complete their schooling and none of them marries while still being a child. The day we do not need to imagine this anymore because such a world has become true, we would have done a great step towards development.*

If you wish to receive more information and subscribe the newsletter of the Intergroup, please send a message to [info@intergruposalud.org](mailto:info@intergruposalud.org)

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"The Parliamentary Intergroup's work is critical to promote the Sustainable Development Goals, since millions of women have difficulties to access safe delivery services, do not benefit yet of emergency obstetric care and cannot access planned parenthood nor essential medicines."

**Ángeles Álvarez**, Member of the Spanish Congress of Deputies



"Sexual and reproductive rights concern both men and women alike, and the challenge of defending these can be better addressed from the dialogue and a network-based work. After living with women and girls with HIV in the slum of Kibera or with massively sterilized indigene women in Peru, it is impossible not to think that a better world is possible. Intergroups must become an efficient tool to tackle this transformation."

**Iñigo Iturrate**, Member of the Basque Parliament



"The Intergroup on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, together with the specialised civil society, helps to raise awareness among parliamentarians about issues regarding population and sexual and reproductive health and rights, i.e. to give voice, a face, light and a future to a part of the world population lacking these. Thank you for bringing light in a place with so many shadows!"

**Anna Figueras**, Member of the Catalan Parliament



"A dynamic and free community is that which has a strong and independent civil society. Our work at the Parliament has increased and improved thanks to the task done by the Parliamentary Intergroup on Population, Development and Reproductive Health. It has stimulated new ideas and encouraged proposals for discussion and political planning."

**Jordi Xuclá i Costa**, Member of the Spanish Congress of Deputies



"Our work is to be the voice of the population and the civil society in the Parliament. This Intergroup is exactly this: a great way to place women in the spotlight of politics, assuring their rights and defending their sexual and reproductive health."

**Ángela Ballester**, Member of the Spanish Congress of Deputies



"The work we develop at the Parliamentary Intergroup reveals the shortages that exist for millions of women to fulfil their right to proper sexual and reproductive health. We work to overcome these shortages."

**José Antonio Rubio**, Member of the Spanish Senate

The Spanish Parliamentary Intergroup on Population, Development and Reproductive Health is able to conduct its work thanks to the support and commitment of a large pool of institutions and persons. To all of them, thank you.

## WHAT IS SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH?

The sexual and reproductive health of a person is a general state of physical, mental and social well-being. It entails the capacity of enjoying a satisfactory and safe sexual life and of having children, as well as the freedom to decide whereas to do it or not, when, and how often.

Sexual and reproductive health and the rights related to it include, among others, the access to information, advice, education and communication services regarding contraception and reproductive health; prenatal education and care services; a safe childbirth and postnatal period; health care for new-borns; access to safe and modern contraception methods and information; treatment of sexually transmitted infections and comprehensive sexual education. In order to promote and ensure sexual and reproductive health of the communities, it is essential to have accessible and solid health systems, to ensure the participation of women in the decision-making processes regarding sexual and reproductive health services, and to provide preventive and care services in matters of gender-based violence, among other issues.

## Sexual and reproductive health in the world

- Almost 400 million persons in the world do not have access to essential health services.
- Almost one fourth of the women in the world living with their partner have no access to modern contraception.
- Over 200 million women and girls have undergone genital mutilation in 30 countries of Africa, the Middle East and Asia.
- The universalization of family planning would reduce unplanned childbirths from 74 to 22 million per year; maternal mortality would be reduced on a 67%.
- A 99% of maternal mortality occurs in developing countries.
- One third of women in Latin American are already mothers before the age of 20.
- 70% of all people living with HIV are in sub-Saharan Africa.



Data sources: WHO, Guttmacher Institute, UNICEF.



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The FPFE is the technical secretariat of the Parliamentary Intergroup on Population, Development and Reproductive Health. [www.fpfe.org](http://www.fpfe.org)