

Religious and conservative MEPs block vote on reproductive health and rights

Posted: Thu, 24th Oct 2013

Members of the European Parliament have blocked a vote on a progressive report that sought to promote the [Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#) (SRHR) of EU citizens and beyond.

As previously reported, MEPs were due to vote this week on the report, authored by [Edite Estrela MEP](#), a Portuguese MEP from the Socialist and Democrat Group, which called for universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights throughout Europe. However, due to the intense lobbying of right-wing religious and political conservatives, the report was instead returned to the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, which had, in September, voted by a clear majority in favour of it.

The non-binding report called for, amongst other things, comprehensive sexuality education, safe and legal abortion services, teaching about negative LGBTI stereotypes, and the prevention and treatment of sexually-transmitted diseases.

It also contained a number of recommendations in favour of LGBTI people, such as against the mandatory sterilisation of transgender persons and the right to access non-discriminatory information about sexual orientation and gender identity.

Religious and political conservatives had lobbied intensely against the report, repeatedly misrepresenting its contents. For example, they wrongly claimed that the report would force EU Member States to change abortion rules, or include mandatory teaching about masturbation to 0-4 year-olds.

During a tense debate, which saw the author of the report heckled, MEPs voted in favour of a motion to send the report back to the Committee by 351 (with 319 voting against).

There were also reports of right-wing MEPs walking out and boycotting the debate altogether. Several Members described the boycott as another clear attempt by conservatives to impede any progressive move related to women's SRHR.

An [alternative resolution](#) authored by conservative MEPs, which sought to defend a dignified vision of maternal health, to extend conscientious objection and to promote "healthy" sexual education for children, was rejected.

NSS Honorary Associate [Michael Cashman MEP](#) commented that the Parliament's actions have "achieved nothing but send an excellent text back to the Committee on Women's Rights. The majorities will be the same, our support even stronger, and we will see this report adopted before the end of our mandate. Shame to those who voted against women' and LGBTI rights."

[Ulrike Lunacek MEP](#), Co-President of the LGBT Intergroup and spokesperson for the Green group, said that: "It was shameful. Right-wing bigots from the [EFD](#), [ECR](#) and [EPP](#) groups argued against this report, and women's right to a safe and healthy reproductive and sexual life."

She added that: "They bullied the chamber into taking a vote which shouldn't have taken place, and then booed the Rapporteur when she took the floor."

- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Women](#)

Related Campaigns

-

[Women's rights](#)

End religious subordination of women and girls.

[Read More](#)

Related Articles

[NI assembly votes in favour of inclusive, evidence-based RSE](#)

MLAs speak of "twisted" RSE teaching that thoughts of sex are "sinful" and same-sex relationships "laughed at". [Read More »](#)

[NSS hosts talk with author of Annie Besant book](#)

Renowned author Michael Meyer discusses 'A Dirty, Filthy Book' in online event. [Read More »](#)

[Experts speak out against religious abuse](#)

Public authorities failing to tackle abuse in religious settings, panellists say at NSS event. [Read More »](#)

Iranian support for secularism has more than doubled since 2015

Iranian support for secularism has more than doubled since 2015 [Read More »](#)

NSS urges First Minister to review misogyny enabling charity law

NSS says the charitable purpose 'the advancement of religion' is "significantly impeding" efforts to combat misogyny [Read More »](#)