

The Hague Declaration on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Europe

May 2010

At its meeting on Friday 21 May 2010 the General Assembly of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health (ESC) identifies that there are still large and sometimes unacceptable discrepancies in the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) status of the population in western, central, and eastern Europe partly due to a lack in availability and accessibility of contraceptive methods and sexual and reproductive health services.

Europeans with the most vulnerable SRH status and with the most unmet SRH needs are the young, particularly teenagers, immigrants and the poor. This calls for more tailor made preventative strategies and services across Europe with respect for its diversity.

Moreover, the General Assembly of ESC is worried by a lack of proactive prevention of violence against individuals because of their sexual lifestyle; sexual preferences; gender; gender identity; sexual orientation and marital status.

The ESC would want to ensure that contraception is not only seen as a means to prevent unwanted pregnancy but as a prerequisite for sexual pleasure and sexual satisfaction without fear for unwanted pregnancy,

The General Assembly of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health declares to adopt:

The Sexual Rights Declaration as issued by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in May 2008. <http://www.ippfwhr.org/en/node/658>

In this declaration seven guiding principles providing a framework for sexual rights as an integrated part of the canon of human rights are formulated:

1. Sexuality is an integral part of the personhood of every human being; for this reason a favourable environment in which everyone may enjoy all sexual rights as part of the process of development must be created.
2. The rights and protections guaranteed to people under age eighteen differ from those of adults, and must take into account the evolving capacities of the individual child to exercise rights on his or her own behalf.
3. Non-discrimination underlines all human rights' protection and promotion.
4. Sexuality, and pleasure deriving from it, is a central aspect of being human, whether or not a person chooses to reproduce.
5. Ensuring sexual rights for all includes a commitment to freedom and protection from harm.
6. Sexual rights may be subject only to those limitations determined by law for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and the general welfare in a democratic society.
7. The obligations to respect, protect and fulfil apply to all sexual rights and freedoms.

Adopting these IPPF principles the ESC affirms that sexual rights are human rights. Sexual rights are constituted by a set of entitlements related to sexuality that emanate from the rights to freedom, equality, privacy, autonomy, integrity and dignity of all people.

With acknowledgement to the Local Organising Committee of 11th Congress of ESC in The Hague, The Netherlands, who conceived the concept and wrote the initial draft.