



**DECLARATION
11 March 2015, New York**

POWER TO WOMEN; MY BODY, MY RIGHTS

**DECLARATION ON EQUAL SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS FOR
ALL WOMEN**

PES Women members **and its gender equality Ministers and State Secretaries** call for equal sexual and reproductive rights for all women in Europe **and across the world under the motto 'Power to women; My Body My Rights'**.

Therefore PES Women

- wants to see **priority given to women's lives and rights, freedom of choice including reproductive choice, liberty and dignity over any other religious or cultural considerations**. Promoting equal and affordable access to sexual rights including abortion rights does not equate to promoting abortion per se, but it safeguards women's fundamental rights to have a free choice to their own body and health.
- **recalls** the need for significant progress on **choice and equal affordable access to information**; comprehensive sexual **education** for girls and boys; medical **assistance**, including **abortion**; medical **infrastructure**; recruitment and training of medical personal; the promotion of prevention and contraception methods, such as female condoms and emergency contraception; and counseling tools in all EU Member States.
- demands **a commitment to combat the still existing taboos** around sexual and reproductive rights, as well as sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

Reproductive Health - as one of the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) that was to be reached by 2015 – as well as sexual rights go beyond the issue of health. Sexual and reproductive rights are related to multiple human rights, including the right to life, the right to be free from torture, the right to health, the right to privacy, the right to education, and the prohibition of discrimination. That contributes towards women's empowerment in the fields of social, economic and financial development; all the more so within the framework of the economic crisis. We will not allow fundamental values and rights to be put into question due to the consequences of the economic crisis and must encourage continuous scientific, secular founded policies

Both the adoption of the CEDAW (in 1979) the and the launch of the **Beijing Platform for Action** in 1995 were the result of social democratic and progressive movements advocating a global women's rights agenda. In evaluating the progress on gender equality after twenty years, we are falling behind the commitments and objectives made in the Beijing Platform¹ for Action and their review conferences in Europe and around the world. Similarly, several of the MDG targets which contribute directly to improving women's rights, enhancing gender equality, fighting global poverty

and injustice, including maternal and reproductive health, have not been met. Full sexual rights and self-determination are also far from being guaranteed to all girls and women.

Giving and securing women's rights leads to a progressive development of women's status in the society as a whole and ensures their personal and social well-being. Therefore all women should have access to safe, legal and affordable medical services and assistance of good quality to guarantee the principle of equal opportunity and social justice throughout the EU and other regions of the world for all women, regardless of their social status, ethnic background, religious belief, geographical origin and sexual orientation.

While witnessing a backlash and knowing that today still more than 5 women die per hour due to unsafe abortions, we need to unite the progressive forces in preparing the Beijing 20+ evaluation and future vision on women's rights, gender equality and development goals and ensure global governmental investment, including on **Sexual and Reproductive Rights**, as an agenda priority **at national, European level and Global level** in order to reach ambitious goals and commitments for the post-2015 period.

ⁱWe note the PES New York declaration on universal maternal health, the PES Madrid declaration on combating violence against women, the PES Warsaw declaration and Rome Resolution on equal sexual and reproductive rights for all women in Europe, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW), the Program of Action of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and subsequent follow-ups, the UN Millennium Development Goals, the Resolution 1607 of the Council of Europe, the WHO Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 21/6.

ⁱⁱNote that the Maltese Minister for social dialogue, consumer affairs and civil liberties Helena Dalli has opted out from signing this declaration