

Sexuality education : the way forward for equality and empowerment, to build up a progressive and equal Europe with young people

Such is the outcome of the European conference held on May, 16th 2014, by Le Planning Familial with its European partners, one week before the European elections.

The stakes are high. Sexual rights are fundamental rights and a major issue in terms of equality between women and men, and more generally between all citizens in Europe.

Men and women still do not have the same status and opportunities. Yet there is no justification for the current inequalities and discriminations related to sexuality. Too many obstacles impede progress towards equality in Europe : we have to do everything in our power to overcome these fears fuelled by traditional conservative groups !

In order to build up a democratic, egalitarian and progressive Europe, respectful of the needs of women and men, where each and everyone can live his/her sexuality free from discrimination, we have to put this equality into practice, by encouraging new attitudes and mindsets, starting at a very young age.

Ensuring access to comprehensive sexuality education, within and out of the school framework, is the only way to empower individuals and to enable them to make their own choices. By refusing to address the impact of heteronormativity and gender roles, States contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities and the stigmatization of homosexuality.

These rights must be enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. We ask the French government to support this demand because :

- It is a matter of democracy : ensuring universal rights and equality between citizens, women and men, regardless of sex or gender identity, is the cornerstone of democracy
- It is a matter of equality : living one's sexuality freely, respectfully of others, choosing whether to have children or not, having access to information and education along with sexual health services, are all fundamental rights
- It is a matter of public health : international standards (WHO, UN...) recommend that States ensure access to information, education and family planning services as well as access to safe and legal abortion : when these rights are violated, women die in Europe and throughout the world.

The Parliament must ensure and strengthen these rights on the basis that they are firmly rooted in EU fundamental rights : the right to gender equality, the right to health, the right to non-discrimination. These rights must be clearly enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. We will make sure that they are.

Today, we call for equal rights between women and men in Europe, free from any discrimination and coercion from States and religion.

In order to achieve this, we need to build up a strong European movement, uniting all the progressive forces in Europe, in which the demands of young people should be upheld. NGOs, associations and organisations in France and in Europe present at the conference will join forces to support this cause.

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