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European socialist women condemn conservative backlash

European socialists express disappointment at the US government's behaviour and hesitation in signing up to an internationally-backed declaration which asserts women's rights over their own bodies, in particular, their sexual and reproductive rights. Due to intense pressure by EU governments and civil society, the US reluctantly conceded to the declaration which was the result of an important international meeting organised by the UN in New York last week.

On the eve of international women's day, Zita Gurmai MEP (President of PES Women) stated: "The position of the US government is unacceptable. They continue to rely on an outdated approach – the so-called "ABC" approach – abstinence, be faithful, and correct and consistent condom use. European socialists support progressive policies which go beyond these old-fashioned mantras, we advocate women's reproductive health and rights for women as the only way to solve global problems."

"If we let the US administration lead on this issue, we are in grave danger of continuing to deny women fundamental human rights and of not tackling the series of global problems associated with these inequalities, such as the spread of HIV/AIDS and child poverty. We will fight with all of our energy to defeat this conservative backlash."

"European socialists are committed to women's rights and to creating better conditions for women across Europe and in the rest of the world. Poverty still has a female face and one in four women in the world is subject to violence, a significant number of these in their own homes." On international women's day (8 March), PES Women will launch its pledge card which sets out five priorities to improve women's lives in Europe.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, President of the Party of European Socialists, added: "This is about a political choice for ordinary people in Europe. European socialists are committed to creating more and better jobs for women and better conditions for working families. In contrast, the European right continues to block legislation which would enable working men and women to balance work and family commitments."

"The Party of European Socialists has a progressive vision for women in Europe, the right has a backward-looking agenda full of empty promises".





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Notes:

- PES Women brings together women politicians and activists from European socialist, social democratic and labour parties, within the Party of European Socialists.
- The PES Women pledge is available electronically and copies will be distributed in the Strasbourg pressroom.
- Last week, governments and civil society groups from around the world met at the 49th Session of the UN Commission for the Advancement of Women in New York, to assess the progress on gender equality commitments agreed in Beijing ten years ago.

