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EU leaders call for RH law implementation

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BAGUIO. European Parliamentarian Cristovao Norte from Portugal plays the gong with the Hapiyo Mi Cultural Group during their study tour and call for the implementation of responsible parenthood and reproductive health (RPRH) law in the summer capital. (Milo Brioso)

MEMBERS of the European Parliamentarians have joined the call for the Philippines to fully implement the reproductive Health Act.

Delegates from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Romania and Spain were in the region for a study tour on the situation of reproductive health here with the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation, Inc. (PLCPD).

Johan Verstreken from Belgium representing the Christian Democratic and Flemish Party said RH concerns in their country were also not warmly received 20 years ago but with education and testimonies, a welcoming attitude was formed.

The Belgian representative added reproductive health topics started to be discussed in school with the education sector helping in the information dissemination.

Verstreken said the Ministry of Education in Belgium has taken a pro active stand in the discussion of sexuality, reproductive health, women's rights as well as LGBT concerns in the school platform.

The group hopes for the full and meaningful implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) with the present administration backing the advocacy.

The delegation included Jordi Xucla from Catalonia and Spain representing the Democratic Convergence and a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Florian Dorel Bodog from Romania representing the Social Democratic Party and a member of the Public Health Committee; Cristovao Norte from Portugal representing the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administrative Modernization and the Commission on Economy, Innovation and Public Works; Sari Tanus from Finland representing the Christian Democratic Parliamentary Group; Ulla Sanbaek from Denmark representing the Alternative Party; and Petra Bayr from Austria representing the Social Democratic Party.

The delegate arrived August 21 and met with legislators Edcel Lagman and Pia Cayetano, authors of the Reproductive Health Act, visited the Population Commission, Department of Health and the National Economic and Development Authority.

The group also met with Benguet Governor Cresencio Pacalso and La Trinidad Mayor Romeo Salda to talk about reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health in the province.

The delegation immersed themselves in the Benguet communities where reproductive health is implemented and had a meeting with local officials.

The country's failure to fully implement RH Law has failed to meet Millenium Development Goals targeting to reduce maternal mortality ratio to 52 deaths per 100,000 live births. At present, the country still experiences 221 maternal deaths out of 100,000 translating to 15 mothers dying daily out of child birth.

Contraceptive prevalence also remains low at 55% making 7 million Filipino women with unmet needs for family planning.