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COVID-19 / World Health Day: 'Access to family planning is essential, even in a time of crisis'

[07/04/2020 -Equality and Non-Discrimination]



"It is essential that access to family planning is guaranteed even during the COVID-19 crisis, which is putting sexual and reproductive health and rights at risk," said Petra Bayr (Austria, SOC), Chairperson of PACE's Committee on Equality and Non-discrimination, in a statement to mark World Health Day (7 April).

"Restrictions on movement in most European countries are making it hard for women and couples to access safe contraceptives. Many are forced to use unsafe methods that may cause severe health problems," she said.

"In addition, in some contexts the pandemic has been used as an excuse to restrict or deny access to contraception. We must not allow this to happen. As we join forces to counter the spread of the virus and treat the infected, we need to promote, not hinder, women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights," she added.

"I call on public authorities, at all levels, to ensure that protecting women's sexual and reproductive health and rights remain priorities. The Assembly's Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination is clear on the importance of access to contraceptives. In its adopted draft resolution on 'Empowering women: promoting access to contraception in Europe', the committee stresses that access to contraception is a crucial factor for empowering women and promoting health and well-being. This is particularly so in times of crisis when public health is seriously at stake. Together, we can avoid a crisis within the crisis!" she concluded.

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