

# **ALIANȚA FAMILIILOR DIN ROMÂNIA**

## **ALLIANCE OF ROMANIA'S FAMILIES**

Str. Zmeica nr. 12, sector 4, Bucuresti

Tel. 0745.783.125 Fax 0318.153.082

[www.protejarea-familiei.com](http://www.protejarea-familiei.com)

[office@protejarea-familiei.com](mailto:office@protejarea-familiei.com)

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May 25, 2015

The European Parliament  
The Registrar/Secretariat  
Rue Wiertz 60  
B-1047 Brussels  
Via facsimile transmission  
32 228 49 395  
Via regular international mail  
Via electronic delivery

Re.: The Noichl Report  
Draft Report on the EU Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men Post-2015 (2014/2152(INI))

Dear Members of the European Parliament:

Greetings! I am writing on behalf of the Alliance of Romania's Families, a grassroots movement espousing pro-family and pro-life policies and views with a constituency of hundreds of thousands of Romania's families. We take this opportunity to provide input on the Draft Report on the EU Strategy for Equality Between Women and Men Post-2015, commonly known as the Noichl Report. We **oppose** the Report as well as the Motion for a European Parliament Resolution requesting the adoption of the Report. We have carefully reviewed the Report and find it woefully lacking in persuasiveness and objectionable in several respects. We justify our position as follows.

I.

### **BREAKDOWN OF THE EUROPEAN FAMILY**

We express full support for the notion and necessity of improving the lives and influence of women in society and the world generally. We also support the notion that women and men, though biologically different, are entitled to equal dignity from society and should be treated equally in all relevant aspects. Nevertheless, we disagree with some of the methods the Report proposes to attain these objectives. We also object to them because they are upended by an ideology which is inimical to women and girls. This will be explained below. We emphasize from the start, however, that the constituency we represent has a different perspective and would propose that the root cause of the social and demographic problems which confront Europe, and

therefore undermine women's influence in society, is **the breakdown of the family**. We note with disappointment that along the years the European Parliament has been a main promoter of ideologies and structures which undermine the family, cause its breakdown and, indirectly, condemn women into a life of poverty.

To strengthen the role of women and girls in society we believe **it is imperative to strengthen the family and marriage as institutions**. We are mindful of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** which states, in Article 16, among others, that "Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State." The Noichl Report nowhere addresses this point. It does not even mention the fundamental institution of "marriage," except to condemn "forced marriages." Europe cannot survive the challenges it currently faces, which are numerous and aggravating, without a strong pro-family and pro-marriage culture. Social collapse, poverty and demographic decay are the immediate results of the decline of family and marriage as institutions. Whether it be poverty, demography, equality, human rights, crime, addictions of all kinds -- sociologists and policy makers are in agreement that strong families and marriages are strong deterrents and guarantors against these social challenges.

### American Studies

Studies confirming this proposition are legion and are published frequently on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as Australia. Just last fall the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for Family Studies jointly published a major Report on the impact of marriage decline on poverty. The Report was authored by W. Bradford Wilcox and Robert I. Lerman, prominent American sociologists and scholars, and was published on October 28, 2014. Its title is **For richer, for poorer: How family structures economic success in America**.

[<http://www.aei.org/publication/for-richer-for-poorer-how-family-structures-economic-success-in-america/>]

The two main findings of this study are that the decline in marriage is fueling inequality, and that traditional family structures are guarantors of economic success in the United States. Additional relevant findings are: (1) Thirty-two percent of the growth in family income inequality since 1979 can be linked to the decline in the marriage rate. (2) Marriage's economic benefits are numerous. (3) Being raised by married parents is connected to better economic wellbeing for young adults. (4) Being married as an adult generates more wealth than being single. (5) Growing up with both parents increases one's odds of becoming highly educated, which in turn leads to higher odds of being married as an adult. (6) The combination of education and marriage results in higher income levels. For instance, middle-aged married men earn about \$19,000.00/year more on average compared to their single peers. (7) Married women likewise earn more in comparison with non-married women. According to the study, young men and women raised by married parents earn an average of \$6,500.00 more annually, for men, and \$4,700.00 more annually, for women, compared to their peers from single-parent families. (8) The reason married men have higher average incomes is also attributable to the fact that they are more responsible than unmarried men, and their responsibility translates in being more

productive at work. They are responsible toward their wives and children. (9) The benefits of marriage extend across education levels and racial backgrounds. (10) Decline in marriage, or, conversely, higher rates of divorce for men, translate in higher unemployment rates among males. They simply stop working because they no longer feel responsible for the welfare of their families.

A 2010 study is also relevant here. An article in **Time Magazine** from December 7, 2010 titled "*Why Married Men Are Less Antisocial*" commented on the study and concluded: "A good marriage civilizes men. At least, that's what it looks like, since fewer married men are antisocial. Married men are more responsible, less aggressive, less likely to do something illegal and more mentally healthy than single ones. This has been documented in a bunch of studies and chronicled in such great works of art as *Jane Eyre* and **Failure To Launch**." [The **Time Magazine** article can be accessed here: <http://healthland.time.com/2010/12/07/why-married-men-are-less-anti-social/>] The study itself, published in 2010 in the **Archives of General Psychiatry**, can be viewed here: <http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=210932>

### **Japan Studies**

Japan is another classic example where the decline in the family and marriage has drawn the country into perpetual economic morass and decline since the 1990s. Studies which link Japan's economic woes to the decline of its family structures and marriage are likewise many and frequent. We recommend Nicholas Eberstadt, **Japan Shrinks**, published in the Spring 2012 edition of **The Wilson Quarterly**. [Link: <http://wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/spring-2012-the-age-of-connection/japan-shrinks-2/>]

The decline of marriage and family experienced by Japan is radical and probably more advanced than in Europe. Sociologists talk about a "flight from marriage" in Japan. Between 1970 and 2009 the number of new marriages in Japan plummeted by nearly a third, while the divorce rate skyrocketed and nearly tripled. By 2005, 30% of all Japanese men who had reached their 30s had not married, as did not 18% of women in the same age bracket. Eberstadt remarks that "traditional Asian values - the ideals of universal marriage and parenthood - are already largely a curiosity of the past in Japan. Their decay has set in motion a variety of powerful trends which virtually ensure that the Japan of 2040 will be a country with far greater numbers of aged isolates, divorced individuals, and adults whose family lines come to an end with them." A major consequence of the family decline is what Eberstadt calls "a struggle to maintain economic growth." He adds: "the Japanese economy faces a future in which simply sustaining growth will be an increasing challenge."

### **European Union Statistics**

Closer to home, **the European Union** is not faring any better. Recent data put out by Eurostat shows that Europe is collapsing demographically, a collapse that occurred in tandem with the decline of family and marriage. There are an estimated 28 Europeans aged 65 or older for every 100 residents ages 20 to 64, almost twice the world average. By the end of this century it is

expected that for every 100 Europeans between the ages of 24 and 64 there will be 56 Europeans over the age of 65. The Eurostat Report released earlier this year is also extremely grim for the demographic future of the continent. Between 1994 and 2013 the number of European children under 15 decreased from 18.5% of the total to just 15.6%. This translates into a total loss of 10 million children. This means that today there are 10 million fewer children in Europe than in 1994. The same Eurostat Report also reflects that the will of Europeans to procreate is nearly extinguished. According to the Report less than one third (30.7%) of all households in the European Union had children in 2013. Couples with children represented one in five (20.5%) EU households.

### **Consequences and a Time for Renewal**

Needless to say, this will impact everyone, not only women and girls. It will strain public spending and will spell the end of the much prized European welfare state. This bleak summation, however, is the direct consequence of *the many years of anti-family and anti-marriage ideology the European Union and the European Parliament has promoted*. For generations, Europe's youth have been taught how to engage in "safe" sex but not how to procreate. How to employ their intimate lives for pleasure and sexual gratification, not for the common good. The European Union has devised a sexual ideology and education which decoupled sexuality from procreation. The EU's slogan has been, for way too long, "sex and abortion are good. Abstinence and procreation are wrong." The "greening" of Europe is likewise being promoted at the expense of human beings. The EU has chosen a side which is against nature and has dire consequences. Every European knows by now that things have become so alarming in Denmark, for instance, that the state is begging Danish youth to have children. [See, Danny Hakim, *Sex Education in Europe Turns to Urging More Births*, **New York Times**, April 8, 2015: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/09/business/international/sex-education-in-europe-turns-to-urging-more-births.html? r=0>]

Thus, the EU needs a revival, not rejection, of fundamental and traditional family values and structures. The **Noichl Report** states, rather irresponsibly, that "gender stereotypes and traditional structures have a negative effect on health." We wring our hands in disbelief at the irresponsibility of this statement. To the contrary, millions of EU citizens believe that the EU needs a new paradigm where each human being is desired and welcomed into the world as a promoter of development and common welfare. Where human beings are viewed as agents of progress not decline. Where human beings are honored qua human beings and are not viewed as a burden or potential burden or destroyers of the planet and its resources. Development is impossible without human beings. Human beings need not be portrayed in EU or UN documents, as they often and unfortunately are, as rapacious, senseless, uneducatable beings which destroy the environment and the planet. Furthermore, decline of marriage and family correlates with economic decline. At the opposite end, marriage and family correlate with economic prosperity and development. Demographic decline correlates with economic stagnation and decline, whereas demographic progress correlates with economic development. The European Union is encouraged to adopt pro-family and pro-marriage policies. Europe needs a pro-family and pro-life culture. It needs to work with nature not against it. Please also note that, from our perspective as taxpayers, the European Parliament insults millions of traditional Europeans by promoting the

notion that marriage and family as oppressive institutions.

## II.

### **THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES**

The Noichl Report stresses, boldly, that "traditional structures have a negative impact on health." [Comment J] The Report has it backwards. This averment is worrisome for our constituency for several reasons. First, the statement is ambiguous and it conceivably could mean any "structure" or institution" human society has ever had. If the Report includes in this commentary, as we suspect it does, family and marriage as "traditional structures" which have a negative impact on health, then the Report simply is irresponsible. It is utterly conclusory and ignores the experience of humankind in the matter. For millennia, family, marriage, and the extended family were, for the individual, the equivalent of the modern day doctor and provider of support in times of illness. The role of the mother, sister, daughter, or grandmother in a family faced with illness was always positive and irreplaceable. The Report's comment also fosters hatred and intolerance toward the institution of family and marriage and toward individuals who strongly believe in the sanctity of natural marriage and the natural family. Marriage and family are social goods. Yet, the Report seems to scorn and relegate them to the status of undesirable "traditional structures" with negative impact on "health."

Furthermore, in complaining about "traditional structures," the Report does not recognize or honor the role of women as mothers and grandmothers and the extremely important role they have played and continue to play in the progress of humanity. The Report seems to equate domestic work and the immense contributions women make to progress and civilization through their domestic work with something that is undesirable, or less worthy of women than office work or holding top positions of leadership in top corporations. In this respect, the message the Report transmits to younger women is equally irresponsible. It fails to recognize that women derive fulfillment, happiness, and meaning from birthing children into the world, bringing them up, being married, having husbands or a fulfilling domestic life. It also fails to recognize that many women who have placed careers over family life and their natural instincts are unhappy. In other words, while happiness for women does not necessarily correlate positively with professional fulfillment, family life in accord with their natural instincts does. The world on a larger scale is not the equivalent of the fantasies of the unmarried young professional women portrayed in "Sex in the City."

It is to also be noted that the recent and short experiment of humanity with "non-traditional structures" has had adverse consequences for society. The adverse consequences have manifested themselves in rapid succession and in an equally short period of time. The legalizing of civil unions and civil partnerships in Western Europe has resulted in the gradual but massive migration of the young from the framework of natural and traditional marriage into legalized cohabitation. The consequences have been manifested in the children produced by these "modern", yet unnatural, structures . According to a report published in the United Kingdom earlier in May, for instance, in the last 20 years, 1.8 million children were born in the UK not in

marriages but in legalized cohabitation structures. By the time these children reached age 15 their cohabiting biological parents had already separated. Additionally, over the same period the proportion of children born to married couples has fallen from 88 per cent to 53 per cent. Notably, the British study also reports that three quarters of couples who marry before having their first child stay together, compared with 31 per cent of cohabiting couples. [See, Harry Benson, *Family breakdowns are blamed on the decline of marriage*, **The Times**, April 27, 2015: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/relationships/article4423214.ece>] Why then denigrate "traditional structure" which work?

Similarly, the legalizing of same-sex marriage has resulted in a drastic reduction in the rates of traditional marriages. Across the Atlantic, statistics show a disheartening picture. Massachusetts, for instance, adopted same-sex marriage in 2003. Since that time the rate of traditional marriage in that state declined by 8.9%. In Vermont it declined by 5.1%, in Connecticut by 7.2%, and in Iowa by 9.2%. [James Phillips, *Correcting Six Mistakes from the Same-Sex Marriage Oral Arguments Last Week*, published on May 7, 2015 in **Public Discourse**:

<http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/05/14968/>] The trend now is to provide a legalized framework for polyamory. This not only is not a traditional structure but an anti-family and anti-marriage structure. It is an artificial modern construct, the epitome of the ultimate social structure that is most harmful to children. We recommend, here, James Lopez, *Polyamory Isn't Good for Children: My Story*, published in **Public Discourse** on May 14, 2015: <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/05/14780/>.

### III.

#### **ABORTION AND "SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS"**

The Noichl Report further elevates abortion to the rank of a "fundamental human right." Nothing can be further from the truth. It speaks of "universal access to sexual and reproductive health and the associated rights [as] a fundamental right." The European Parliament needs to hear our voice, forcefully and without ambiguity: **abortion is not a fundamental right**. There also are no "sexual and reproductive rights." Consequently, we oppose the Report's call for the proliferation of abortion services and for Member States to facilitate access to abortion clinics. [Paragraph 26 of the Noichl Report] We further deplore the insertion in the Noichl Report of the notion of "sexual and reproductive rights" because it consists of code words for promoting not only abortion but also immoral sexual practices, risky lifestyles, and promiscuity.

That there is no "right to abortion" under international law is a given. On the contrary, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies a "right to life" which we believe applies to both the born and the unborn. Abortion and abortion services are matters of domestic competence, not EU competence. Consequently, Member States are free to enact laws on abortion as they see fit. The European Court of Human Rights has likewise decreed, in **Vo v. France**, Application No. 53924/00, Judgment of 08/07/2004, that the unborn "belongs to the human race." This correlates, in our view, with the right to life of the unborn. The "greening" of Europe, which the policies of the EU have promoted, has made the human race, fertility, and the reproductive capacity of women anathema, the very enemy of humankind and a danger to the

very survival of the planet. Such an anti-human thinking and ideology have no place in the European Parliament's Resolutions and constitute hate speech. Finally, we also cite to **A. B. and C. v. Ireland**, Application No. 25579/05, Judgment of 16 December 2010, in which the ECHR ruled that the European Convention of Human Rights "cannot ... be interpreted as conferring a right to abortion."

With respect to abortion, the Noichl Report further is in need of intellectual honesty. Concerns for women's health need to point out the link between abortion and breast cancer. We recall no reports or resolutions ever authored by the European Parliament where women have ever been cautioned that abortion is linked to breast or ovarian cancer. Concern for their health mandates an honest discussion of this subject. Young women especially should be alerted to the significant likelihood of developing breast or ovarian cancer as a result of multiple abortions. Studies issued by the medical community on the link between abortion and cancer are numerous and are being published all over the globe. In December 2013 the American College of Pediatricians published an important paper: **Abortion and the Risk of Breast Cancer: Information for the Adolescent Woman and Her Parents**. [The link to the study is here: <http://www.acpedcs.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/health-issues/abortion-and-the-risk-of-breast-cancer-information-for-the-adolescent-woman-and-her-parents>] Its main conclusion is succinctly summarized as follows: "Studies from many nations suggest that induced abortion (IA) may be a causal risk factor for the development of breast cancer. Researchers agree that IA contributes to the increased risk of breast cancer by delaying the timing of a full-term pregnancy which is a protective factor. Increasing numbers of studies now show that IA prior to 32 weeks in and of itself is a risk factor for breast cancer due to the physiology of breast development and the manner in which abortion interferes with the maturation of the breast cells. *Although largely ignored by the mainstream medical community, this risk information deserves a prominent place in the education of all adolescent women who may, in the future, consider an IA.*"

This study is particularly relevant to Romania, which prior to 1990 banned abortion. Prior to 1990 Romania had one of Europe's lowest rates of breast cancer. Since 1990 the number of legal abortions in Romania increased over 400 percent and the breast cancer incidence doubled in 18 years from 25 cases per 100.000 women to 51 in 2006. Studies on China's forced abortion policies have revealed a similar rise in the incidence of breast cancer. Since 1983 the rate of breast cancer there increased by 31%.

In our view, then, the European Union should emphasize abortion less, and life and responsible procreation more. We do not detract from the reality that pregnancy is a challenging time for women. But we do not believe that abortion is an answer or the right answer. Instead of stressing abortion clinics, the policy of Member States should focus on facilitating crisis pregnancy centers where young, pregnant women can have their questions answered. This would be a much wiser and more beneficial investment in the future of Europe than preventing future generations from being born.

## PARENTAL RIGHTS

Noticeably absent from the Noichl Report is any reference to **parental rights**. We think we understand why, considering the aversion the Report displays toward "traditional structures." **Parental rights are fundamental human rights**. The future belongs to both children and parents, as does the present. Development and equality can only be achieved where the state and, in this case, the European Union recognize, protect, and promote parental rights. We are concerned that in recent decades the European Parliament and the European Union have become opponents, and even enemies, of parental rights. The welfare state, which seems to be the dominant ideology of the EU and of the European Parliament, cannot replace parents or assume the role of parents for our children. We note with grave concern that the EU and the European Parliament are earnestly erecting a wall of separation between our children and us, their parents, where parents are relegated to mere breeders and the welfare state assumes the role for the upbringing and education of our children. We reject this trend and the anti-parental ideology which upends it, and believe that, if it continues, it will prove detrimental to the future of our continent and its survival. For millennia, generations have jointly contributed to development. Parents taught their children the necessary skills, both moral and technical, to survive and contribute to the general welfare.

The Noichl Report emphasizes individual rights at the expense of common welfare. The seemingly endless emphasis on individual rights has usurped parental rights and the common welfare. For millennia parents have exercised, and, in fact, society has expected them to exercise, parental obligations. The modern European welfare state has confiscated parental obligations and has substituted its own vision for the upbringing and education of children. Totalitarian regimes of the Twentieth Century have done that as well, causing the world's most tragic human cataclysms. Their experience should be a useful guide that the state, and especially the modern welfare state, is not helping society in displacing parental obligations. For this reason parents, in Romania and around the world, demand that the prerogatives they have traditionally exercised with respect to their children -- such as education, morals, values -- be recognized in the European Union and internationally as fundamental rights and parental rights.

V.

## THE FUTURE, EQUALITY, AND TECHNOLOGY

The Noichl Report indirectly touches on the intersection of technology, development, and the lot of women. We welcome this discussion and we hope it will continue. The rapid development of technology is generally regarded as a major obstacle to attaining equality between men and women, especially in the work place. The technology world, past or present, has typically been uninterested in equality or human rights. The European Parliament should, therefore, focus attention on this matter, in conjunction with the technological future, direction, and development of society. Technology has typically been used to lure various social groups to employ it to promote particular agendas, but the technological world itself is not committed to equality and nondiscrimination. Democracy and the rule of law are of no interest to the world of technological



development. On the contrary, democratic values are despised by those who seek to change the world and its future through technology. In particular, discrimination against women in the world of technology is well known and rampant. The lot of women and older workers in Silicon Valley's technological firms, for instance, is well known and compromised. Therefore, we encourage the European Parliament to address the apparently inherent inequality among men and women which pervades the technological world. If equality is to be a cornerstone for the future and for future development, the negative impact of technology on equality and values needs to be addressed as well. Technology creates employment or displaces jobs. Technology empowers and technology dis-empowers. The distribution of power through technology remains unequal and impacts most adversely those whom technology leaves behind. [A commentary on the subject which we recommend is Yuval Noah Harari, "Death Is Optional," published in March 2015. It can be accessed here: [https://edge.org/conversation/yuval\\_noah\\_harari-daniel\\_kahneman-death-is-optional](https://edge.org/conversation/yuval_noah_harari-daniel_kahneman-death-is-optional)]

## VI.

### **BIOLOGY MATTERS**

We feel a tinge of gender ideology in the Noichl Report. [Comment M; General Recommendations 1 and 3] To force equality between men and women in areas where they are distinctly different and their talents disparate is not a productive policy. To likewise say that there are no differences between men and women is scandalous. And a policy to extinguish differences between men and women where biology has the last word is inappropriate. Men and women are different, yet they harmoniously complement one another. They are biologically different as their Creator endowed them with different peculiarities. This, however, does not detract from the lofty objective that women be treated equally. That is why equality of opportunity should be the goal, rather than equality of condition.

The Report should also take into account that discrepancies between the wages of women and men are caused by factors other than deliberate indifference to their wellbeing or outright discrimination. The Report states that the wage gap between women and men in the European Union is 16.5%. But the Report ignores the most common factors attributable to this discrepancy. If women feel more fulfilled and happy pursuing professions which pay less than those which men pursue, they are within their right to do so and the European Parliament should not demean them for doing so. If women prefer to be teachers instead of working in the mines hundreds of meters below the ground, the European parliament should stop objecting.

There are education and occupational choices which women make which account for much of the wage discrepancy. According to a study recently done in the United States, only 13% of petroleum engineers are women. In contrast, only 12% of social workers in the United States are men. A petroleum engineer earns between \$80,000.00 and \$120,000.00 annually, and a social worker between \$36,000.00 and \$39,000.00. According to the study, the gap in wages between women and men is mostly due to choices. Only 5% of the wage discrepancy is caused by factors other than personal choice. This 5% could be due to intentional discrimination and, to

the extent that this is so, we are in agreement that such invidious discrimination needs to be eliminated. Women, should be respected for the professional and career interests they possess and articulate. Otherwise, the debate degenerates into the pursuit of equal pay for unequal work. [We recommend, Christina Hoff Sommers, *No, Women Don't Make Less Money Than Man*, **Daily Beast**, February 1, 2015: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/02/01/no-women-don-t-make-less-money-than-men.html>]

VII

CONCLUSION

In summary, we trust you have found our comments helpful and compelling. We must oppose the Noichl Report. We are grateful for the opportunity to submit our comments. We trust they will be found persuasive and will be taken into account when the final vote is taken. Please file our plea among the official papers of the European Parliament and disseminate a copy to all members well in advance of the plenary vote.

Very truly yours,

BY: 

Peter Costea, PhD, President  
Alliance of Romania's Families