



Open letter to the European Commission and Council of the EU Presidency Trio

Re: Urgent call for equal access to fertility treatments across Europe

Ms Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission
Mr Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the European Commission for Promoting or European Way of Life
Ms Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety
Mr Jens Spahn, German Minister of Health
Ms Marta Temido, Portuguese Minister of Health
Mr Tomaž Gantar, Slovenian Minister of Health

Brussels, 4 November 2020

Dear Ms von der Leyen, Mr Schinas, Ms Kyriakides, Mr Spahn, Ms Temido and Mr Gantar,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairperson of [Fertility Europe](#), a pan-European organisation representing [25 patients' associations](#), from 23 countries, dedicated to infertility.

In Europe today, over 25 million citizens are faced with infertility, meaning that nearly 1 in every 6 couples in reproductive age have difficulties conceiving a child. The consequences these numbers could have for Europe are alarming. A falling birth rate combined with an aging population underscores the need for supporting policies that address growth and support families.

We are writing to you in the middle of this year's [European Fertility Week \(EFW\)](#), taking place until Sunday, 8th of November, to ask for your support in addressing the difficulties faced by millions of Europeans whose situation is often misunderstood, underestimated, and surrounded by stigma.

This year's week focuses on a specific and quite topical challenge: the unequal access to appropriate fertility information, diagnosis and treatments. As a matter of fact, the picture we see in Europe is one of stark inequality between and within countries.

This regrettable situation is mainly due to constraints at national level that fall outside the medical scope of protecting the safety of patients, children, or donors, but that are rather cultural or ideological. On this very special week, we thus call on European public authorities to face the issue of infertility as one of equality, as much as one of public health.

Reliable information on the factors influencing one's fertility, as well as fertility screening, treatment, and accompanying psychological support, are fundamental sexual and reproductive health rights. These should be secured and state-funded irrespective of one's nationality, marital status, or sexual orientation.

The upcoming Pharmaceutical Strategy recognises access to therapies as a priority for Europe. For fertility treatments, putting in place science-based, non-discriminatory frameworks is a good place to start.

We thus call on the European Commission and Member States to foster dialogue and the exchange of best practices between national health authorities with a view towards ensuring equitable access to fertility treatments across Europe, therefore avoiding situations where patients are forced to travel abroad in search of medical support, incurring risks to themselves and their offspring, which are made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the middle of the greatest pandemic that Europe has known in centuries, and which has itself hampered patients' access to infertility screening and treatment, we count on you to take steps towards granting all EU citizens equal opportunities of building a family.

We very much look forward to working together on this important journey.

Yours sincerely,



Satu Rautakallio-Hokkanen
Chairperson of Fertility Europe