

SheDecides – 1 year down the line

SPOTLIGHT ON COUNTDOWN 2030 EUROPE COUNTRIES

One year on from the international SheDecides conference, Countdown 2030 Europe takes a look at what European donor governments have pledged to support the new movement, how they have kept the momentum, and what still needs to be done to ensure that the world's most vulnerable women and girls are not left behind.

IN BRIEF

→ In 2017, over **€ 223 MILLION EURO** was committed by 6 Countdown 2030 European governments as part of the SheDecides initiative: **BELGIUM, DENMARK, FINLAND, THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY AND SWEDEN**. Other European countries have expressed their commitment to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), including Family Planning (FP) and publicly supported the initiative, but have so far not made a pledge (e.g. France, Switzerland).

→ Some of these pledges were additional funds to SRHR (Sweden, The Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium), other countries reallocated funding from other ODA budget lines (Norway, part of the funding by the Netherlands). For other donors this is no new ODA but mainly part of planned SRHR measures (Finland).

→ Following the SheDecides conference, the initiative has grown to a political movement. Ministers have continued to advocate for the initiative, leading to **BROADER POLITICAL SUPPORT** and reinforcing SRHR as a priority issue for ODA. Many of them are planning events around SheDecides Day to bring SRHR issues to the fore.

→ Countdown 2030 Europe applauds governments for their commitments and involvement so far, but **MORE WILL NEED TO BE DONE IN 2018 AND BEYOND** to reverse the trend and address the funding crisis facing global SRHR and family planning programmes.



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European governments make first pledges at SheDecides Conference

BACKGROUND

Countdown 2030 Europe is a consortium of leading European non-governmental organisations working in 12 European countries* to ensure that Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and family planning (FP) are a funding priority for European donors and a policy priority globally. Countdown 2030 Europe holds donors to account for their commitments to SRH and FP and amongst other activities, the consortium partners track policy and financial trends in their respective countries¹. In the context of the **1st anniversary of the SheDecides initiative**, the purpose of this fact sheet is to provide an overview of the commitments and involvement to date by Countdown 2030 Europe' country governments.

SheDecides was launched in early 2017 as a global movement to support the fundamental rights of girls and women to decide freely and for themselves about their sexual lives, including whether, when, with whom and how many children

they have. It was initially launched in response to the reinstatement of the Global Gag Rule (GGR) by the US President Donald Trump's administration, which could potentially affect approximately \$2.2 billion in global health funding². Four European countries (The Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden) co-organised the first SheDecides conference on the 2nd March 2017, making it a wider movement to mobilise political and financial support for SRHR. The conference was attended by more than 50 governments and 450 participants from across the world, sharing the concern of the global attack on SRHR. Pledges have since been made by multiple country governments and foundations, including at the Family Planning Summit in London in July 2017.

* Countdown 2030 Europe countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom

OVERVIEW OF PLEDGES BY COUNTDOWN 2030 EUROPE COUNTRIES

Six Countdown 2030 European countries have pledged over **€ 223 million³** as part of the She Decides initiative:




BELGIUM hosted the SheDecides Conference, and made an initial pledge there of **€ 10 million**. At the FP Summit and the Global Citizen Pop Festival the government promised additional funding, adding up to a total sum of **€ 16,5 million** of new funds to invest in SRHR.



THE NETHERLANDS have pledged **€10 million** at the SheDecides conference, and at the Global Citizen Pop Festival added another **€ 15 million**. **€ 4 million** was pledged at the UNGA in September 2017.




FRANCE has made a political commitment to SheDecides but has not financially pledged to date.



DENMARK made a pledge of **€ 10 million** at the SheDecides conference. Later in 2017, Denmark allocated about another **€ 44,5 million** to SRHR on top of already planned grants.



SWEDEN first committed about **€ 20 million**, and through reallocations later added another **€ 1.3 million**.



SWITZERLAND took part in the SheDecides conference, expressed commitment to the issue and to maintaining their financial contributions, but will not make additional pledges.



FINLAND made one of the largest pledges at the SheDecides conference promising **€ 20 million**. Another **€ 21.3 million** was added to this at the FP Summit, but this funding had already been budgeted to be directed to SRHR measures in Finland's development cooperation budget.



NORWAY pledged over **€13 million** in March 2017. At the FP Summit in July the country then promised **€ 60.4 million**, which included the initial pledge, for SRHR programmes between 2017 until 2020.

ALLOCATION OF FUNDING PLEDGES

SheDecides funding is going through existing funding streams of their respective donors, so is not a new funding mechanism. Some of the pledged funds have already been allocated and disbursed to specific funding streams by the respective country donors. A large portion has been committed to **UNFPA**, through a variety of funding mechanisms including UNFPA country offices, Core funding, and UNFPA reproductive health supplies. UNFPA has been drastically affected by recent cuts in funding; in early 2017, the Trump Administration announced it will discontinue all funding to UNFPA.

Furthermore, a significant section of the SheDecides pledges was promised to **international NGOs**. Based on evidence of the detrimental effects of the GGR, a number of international NGOs, including IPPF, announced they will not sign the policy. This means that, without alternative funding, there will be serious cuts to sexual health services around the globe. Other funding was promised to **multilaterals** such as UN Women, UNAIDS, WHO and UNESCO, or allocated through **bilateral programmes** of the donor country.



POLITICAL SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

Apart from the financial pledges, several countries have been **actively promoting** the initiative **at national and international level**. At global level, European donors have been especially active in taking the SheDecides initiative forward by speaking out around SRHR in intergovernmental processes and by organising side events, at World Bank meetings, the High-level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals and at the UN General Assembly. Ministers from six EU member states (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Sweden, and Luxembourg) sent a letter to European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, in which they called upon the European Commission to allocate funding to SRHR in order to act upon EU's commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development and to address the gap left by GGR. The initiative was also presented at the African Union - European Union summit in November 2017, at a high-level event organised by the Dutch and French government.

Further, Ministers have included these discussions in stakeholder and parliamentary meetings and with the media, to further advance SRHR and gender equality at a political level. The pledges have triggered broader political support in many of the countries, with increased interest from members of parliament and reinforcing SRHR as a key priority as part of ODA. Norway, as promised at the FP Summit as part of their pledge, hosted a technical conference on Comprehensive sexuality education at the end of 2017.

European countries continue to champion the movement, affirming sustained commitment to SRHR. As part of the **1-year anniversary** of the initiative, on **SheDecides Day, 2nd of March 2018**, several Countdown 2030 Europe countries are involved in organizing events to further spread the word. A snapshot of a few important activities:

→ The **Danish** government, together with South-Africa, are hosting the SheDecides champions flagship event, for youth leaders, parliamentarians and ministers from countries in East and Southern Africa. The main aim is to encourage more leaders from governments, parliaments, youth-led organisations and other supporters to stand up and speak out for SheDecides and identify concrete steps forward to change laws and policies in their countries.

→ The Minister of Development Cooperation from **Belgium**, one of the SheDecides champions, will hold a roundtable in Dakar, together with the government of Senegal, a partner country of the Belgian development cooperation.

→ Media and press releases, such as the **Swedish** Deputy Prime Minister (also Minister for Development Cooperation) publishing an opinion piece in Sweden's largest morning newspaper.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The SheDecides initiative has galvanised Countdown 2030 Europe countries to increase their funding for SRHR to support life-saving work implemented by international NGOs who have been adversely affected by the GGR or through different UNFPA funding mechanisms. We applaud governments for their commitments and pledges so far. However, **1 year after the launch of the initiative, it is clear that more needs to be done.** The current commitments will not be able to reverse the trend or address the funding crisis facing global family planning programmes.

COUNTDOWN 2030 EUROPE THEREFORE RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING:

1

All governments, including European governments, have a crucial role to play and need to step in too.

The Global Gag Rule has not ended, and even before its reinstatement, there were large gaps for SRHR and family planning services and supplies. Countries that have already pledged cannot take their foot off the pedal and should consider multi-year pledges and ensure their investments are sustained in 2018 and beyond.

2

In the face of a changing political, economic and financial environment, ensuring a continued progressive voice for Europe on SRHR has never been more critical.

Governments should not only pledge funding, but continue speaking out on these issues in political processes and increase pressure in European and global spaces.

3

Where governments have not already done so, they should provide more information and transparency on where their funding is going, so we can celebrate the successes, look at the impact these funds have and address the remaining gaps.

Countdown 2030 Europe will continue to carefully track these pledged funds to identify when and how they are disbursed as well as continue advocacy for increased funding for subsequent years. It is hoped that the momentum gained thus far will garner additional European, and wider, support for 2018 and beyond.

1. The latest Countdown 2030 Europe resources and donor tracking reports can be found on the website: www.countdown2030europe.org

2. Figures obtained from the latest report from the Kaiser Family Foundation

3. Pledged amounts from Denmark, Norway and Sweden were converted to Euro using exchange rates from 2nd March /11th July 2017


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