



Member of the European Parliament

John Dalli
Member of the European Commission
BERL 11/106

Concerns: Publication of biased research findings

Brussels, 21st June 2012

Dear Commissioner,

The Directorate-General for Health and Consumers has published an extensive study, *The state of men's health in Europe*. The study purports to comprehensively chart demographic, medical, and epidemiological knowledge about men's health in 34 European countries.

Unfortunately, the final report published by the Commission has omitted all mentions of specific terms present in the original research report (made available on the Directorate-General's website as the 'Extended report'). The terms that were eliminated from across the research findings include 'homosexuality', 'gay', 'bisexual', 'sexuality', 'condom', 'contraception', 'sexual health', 'reproductive health' and 'divorce', among others.

Furthermore, entire sections on prisoners' health, mental health, fatherhood, drug abuse, condom use, suicides and erectile dysfunction disorders have disappeared from the final report entirely.

The original ('extended') report also pointed to condom use as central to combating HIV/AIDS and other STIs. This has been deleted in the final report.

While the extended report was made available online, it is not officially endorsed by the European Commission: it includes the mention "This report represents the views of its authors", and it is not prefaced by the Director General.

The draft final report put forward by the researchers accurately reflected all sections of the extended report, and featured the same number of pages as the final report, which excludes these sections. Therefore, it becomes clear this was an editorial choice on the part of the Commission.

These highly selective deletions show undeniable political bias, and we are worried that the Commission only endorsed a version of the report which excludes crucial aspects of public health policy-making for men's health.

Therefore, we would like to know why and at whose request the European Commission selectively erased all references to sexuality, sexual orientation, and

sexual and reproductive health in the final report, and who is responsible for this decision. Like other themes present in the final report, these topics remain within the remit of the Union's competence as public health concerns (Articles 4 and 168 TFEU).

We are equally interested in the precise considerations that led to the deletion of these parts only. How do these deletions contribute to 'a better understanding of the health of men', and contribute to 'the fundamental values of equality and equity, as we are seeing many men whose lives are blighted through a collective lack of awareness and action on the problems they are facing'¹?

Finally, we would like to know how you expect the Commission's report to inform policy-making if it is politically biased. How will the Commission address this selective publication of research findings in the future?

Yours sincerely,

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¹ Final report, page 10.

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