



## IPPF EUROPEAN NETWORK POLICY STATEMENT MEDICALLY ASSISTED CONCEPTION (MAC)

The IPPF European Network believes that medically assisted conception should be available and affordable to all individuals living in Europe for reasons of:

- **HEALTH:** everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health<sup>1</sup>
- **CHOICE:** everyone has the right to decide whether or when to have children<sup>2</sup>
- **RIGHTS:** everyone has the right to the benefits of scientific progress<sup>3</sup>

The IPPF European Network further believes that:

- All people, irrespective of marital status or sexual orientation, have the right to be parents
- All people have the right to correct information, counselling and services which will enable them to protect their sexual and reproductive health and reduce the risk of infertility
- All people, irrespective of marital status or sexual orientation, should have access to medically assisted conception
- All people must be free from any medical intervention related to their sexual and reproductive health, save with their full, free and informed consent
- All people seeking medically assisted conception must be informed of the risks and the success rates before embarking on complex and costly procedures
- All people considering MAC have the right to be informed of alternative options, such as adoption or surrogacy
- All people should have an access to MAC provided by the public health system
- All people should have access to confidential, non-judgmental infertility counselling, information and referral

### FPAs should

- Include Sexual and Reproductive Health protection and Sexually Transmitted Infections and Pelvic Inflammatory Disease prevention initiatives as a priority in their programmes
- Raise awareness of infertility and its causes, its prevention and means of reduction among the general public
- Emphasise the role of psychosocial counselling for infertile individuals and couples
- FPAs should be fully aware of the legal and ethical issues surrounding MAC and ensure that individuals are informed
- Ensure that any MAC programmes involve: respect for the dignity and integrity of the human being; and protection of human genetic material so that it is not misused, or used inappropriately without the donors' consent
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the state of MAC in the society (incl. legislation, scientific research, etc)

### IPPF EN Mission statement

To advance and defend the basic human right of all people to make free and informed choices in their emotional, sexual and reproductive lives; to strive for the development and provision within Europe of high quality and accessible information, education and health services regarding sexuality and sexual identities, conception, contraception and safe abortion.

<sup>1</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Art.12.1

<sup>2</sup> Declaration of Human Rights, Tehran 1968 Para 16;

<sup>3</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 Article 15.1

According to the IPPF Medical Advisory Panel Statement on Infertility (1995)

"The reproductive rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health." (**International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Cairo 1994 Programme of Action, para 7.3**) These concepts include concern for individuals and couples who are unable to have children when they desire them. Impaired fertility, variously described as infertility or sub-fertility, may be due to a relative or absolute inability to conceive, or to repeated pregnancy wastage. It affects both men and women in approximately equal proportions causing considerable personal suffering and disruption to family life.

### Statistics in Europe:

- The World Health Organisation estimates that one in every six couples in Europe suffer from infertility or sub fertility.
- According to UNFPA up to 55% of infertility cases globally are as a result of preventable infections, resulting from Sexually Transmitted Infections, Pelvic Inflammatory Diseases or unsafe abortion. Some cases are also due to external environmental factors, such as exposure to hazardous chemicals and some are of psychological origin.
- Success rates for the various methods of medically assisted conception vary between 7 – 45%, depending on method used and the age of the woman.

### Notes:

Medical Assisted Conception/Procreation : use of medical technology to assist women to become pregnant, methods include:

IVF:	In Vitro Fertilisation
ET:	Embryo Transfer
FREDI	Fallopian Replacement of Eggs with Delayed Intrauterine Insemination
POST	Peritoneal Oocyte and Sperm Transfer
ITI	Intra Tubal Insemination
IUI	Intrauterine Insemination
GIFT	Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer
TESE	Testicular Sperm Extraction
ICSI	Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection

Infertility*	absolute inability to conceive
Primary Infertility	means that the couple has never conceived, despite cohabitation and exposure to pregnancy for a period of 2 years
Secondary Infertility	means that the couples has previously conceived but is subsequently unable to conceive despite cohabitation and exposure to pregnancy for a period of 2 years.

\*(as defined by WHO Europe 1999)