



European Parliament Targets US Helms Amendment

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NEW YORK, NY - In a [resolution](#) adopted this week, the European Parliament called for access to abortion for women and girls victims of war rape.

As pressure mounts on the White House to move on the Helms Amendment, the European Parliament joined voices targeting US abortion restrictions by adopting an equalities report titled “The EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men Post 2015”.

The report is the Parliament’s input for a gender equality strategy for 2016-2020. In Resolution 72, EU parliamentarians underlined that humanitarian aid from Europe “should not be subject to restrictions imposed by other partner donors regarding necessary medical treatment, including access to safe abortion”.

This language is in reference to the the Helms Amendment, a decades old US policy that restricts any US funds from being given to any organization that offers abortion services, that is still in place today.

“This just further demonstrates how out of touch the US is with our allies.” says Janet Benshoof, president of the Global Justice Center.

This is the fifth resolution the European Parliament adopted on the matter in three years and the second time in 2015 that European allies have called on the US to address Helms. During the review of the US’s [human rights record in May](#), five countries challenged the US to justify its continued implementation of the abortion restrictions.

The report also called on the international community to do more to prevent rape used as a weapon of war, increase protection of victims and ensure access to medical and psychological support for woman and girls abused in armed conflicts.

“As terrorists increasingly use sexual violence as a tactic of war and as pressure mounts at home and abroad, the Obama administration’s failure to act on these issues is becoming increasingly glaring,” says Benshoof. “Obama must choose now if his legacy will include turning a blind eye to the plight of women and girls raped in war.”

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