

Obstetric Violence - Time for change

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Demands from the ENCA Conference, Berlin, April 9th 2016, convened as a response to the publications of the WHO for "The prevention and elimination of disrespect and abuse during childbirth - Greater support from governments and development partners for research and action"¹ and the call from the UNO to combat violence against women.² ENCA, the European Network of Childbirth Associations, organized a European symposium on the topic of "Obstetric Violence", an issue which is currently relevant and controversial.

Women from 20 European countries met in Berlin on April 9th 2016 to discuss the current situation and the causes and consequences of acts of violence against women during birth. Beverley Beech (AIMS UK) and Dr. Katharina Hartmann (Roses Revolution Germany) – speakers at the ENCA Conference – have spoken previously at the International Conference of Jurists, Midwives and Obstetricians on the topic of "Human Rights in Childbirth" in The Hague (2012) and in Zagreb (2014).

Activists from Great Britain, Spain, Germany, and Bosnia-Herzegovina spoke about the obstetric situation in each of their countries, followed by questions and discussion from the conference delegates and participants in various workshops. The main concerns of the conference were to bring the issue of obstetric violence out of the 'taboo zone', to highlight and create public awareness of the issues, and to promote the networking of European associations.

¹http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/maternal_perinatal/statement-childbirth-govnts-support/en/

²<http://www.unwomen.org/en/trust-funds/un-trust-fund-to-end-violence-against-women>



Experiences of violence during childbirth range from forced medical interventions, procedures carried out without consent, to unnecessary tests and investigations, humiliation and abuse. To

identify these situations as violence and to bring about changes throughout Germany and Europe as more and more women affected become active across Europe.

Together with the other participating organisations, ENCA and the GfG call for:

- Respect for the natural reproductive and childbearing cycle of women and the human rights of mother and child
- One-to-one care during birth (One midwife for each birthing woman)
- Implementation of the right to free choice of place of birth
- Reimbursement through health insurance of the costs of psychosocial and therapeutic care for victims of obstetric violence
- Services tailored to the needs of migrant women

The 23rd ENCA annual symposium was organised by the GfG – Gesellschaft für Geburtsvorbereitung – Familienbildung und Frauengesundheit – Bundesverband e.V. (Childbirth and Family Education and Women's Health) under the direction of their Honorary Chairman Elisabeth Geisel. Miss Geisel is the founder and co-ordinator of ENCA, under whose umbrella organisations from 20 European countries have come together. The Mary Ann Kübel Foundation financially supported the conference. The conference report will be published in early July 2016 and can be requested from the GfG.

ENCA Spain es representado por El Parto es Nuestro, una asociación sin ánimo de lucro, formada por usuarios, usuarias y profesionales que pretende mejorar las condiciones de atención a madres, hijos e hijas durante el embarazo, parto y posparto en España.

Más información:

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