

Below is a screen shot with excerpts from a speech given on the UN floor by WAGGGS United Nations delegate Nefeli Themeli, where among other things she promotes education on “*sexual orientation*” and controversial “*sexual and reproductive health and rights*.” The text has been highlighted in yellow to make it easier to see. The speech can be accessed online [here](#).

www.wagggsworld.org/en/grab/20239/1/WAGGGSWSW54Nefeli.pdf

extremely segregated and that existing policies are failing to revert this trend. This phenomenon is particularly worrying considering that segregation in the field of study is also reflected in the employment sector. Indeed, although young women are nowadays more educated than young men in the EU, both the gender employment gap and the pay gap are still hugely affecting women and young women in particular.

Combating gender stereotypes and achieving gender equality should therefore be a strong focus of the follow up strategy on the EU roadmap for achieving equality between women and men 2006-2010. Moreover, the effective implementation of the existing Council of Europe instruments in the field of gender equality would also foster the implementation of the Beijing PoA in the field of education and training.

In the area of **health**, the PoA recognises the importance of tackling traditional and cultural practices that hamper the right of young women and young men to attain the highest level of physical and mental health. Prejudices, gender-based stereotypes and lack of self-esteem have a particularly heavy impact on the sexual and reproductive health of young women and young men. In this respect, non-formal education and sex-education in formal education systems have been acknowledged as crucial by the PoA.

However, the implementation of these actions should be given further priority in Europe. Although **sex-education at school** appears to be quite widespread, it is sometimes inadequate in overcoming gender-based stereotypes on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and is often not comprehensive, failing to include **issues relating to gender equality, self-image and sexual orientation**.

A more integrated approach is needed among EU policies in the areas of education, youth, health and equality and a **specific priority focusing on promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights** should be included in the follow-up strategy of the Roadmap. Furthermore, the effective implementation of existing instruments at the Council of Europe level, such as the 2008 Recommendations from the Committee of Ministers on the inclusion of gender differences in health policies and article 11 and E of the Revised European Social Charter, are essential to achieve the health-focused objectives agreed upon in Beijing.

This approach is also crucial in addressing sexually transmitted diseases, which are one of the most serious public health issues for young people. Given the fact that the European and Central