

[Minister welcomes rise in early abortions](#)

Posted: 23 Jun 2007 12:27 PM CDT

Briefing. This has long been the object of Government policy, as Caroline Flint explains. It raises the serious question of whether attempts by pro-lifers to lower the abortion age-limit are misconceived. Yes, they might get some support in Parliament, but in the context of a drive to make abortions available as quickly as possible, this is not going to save any unborn children. More to the point might be an attempt to give women seeking abortion counselling and simply accurate information, and allow them time to think about their options: as the [Winterton Bill](#) sought to do.

From SPUC: A British health minister, Caroline Flint, has welcomed the increase in early abortions and the use of the morning-after pill. She said "We welcome the fact that a higher percentage of abortions are taking place at an early stage ... we have invested £8 million to improve early access [to abortion]..." She admitted the government needed to do more to reduce the number of so-called unwanted pregnancies and called for an improvement in access to contraception. [Times 19 June] Yesterday we reported on how recorded abortions in England and Wales last year exceeded 200,000 for the first time.

[On-line consultation on Hyrids etc.](#)

Action, please!

**Please register your views on
the website.**

From SPUC: The UK parliamentary Joint Committee on the Draft Human Tissue and Embryos Bill is running an online consultation on four questions relating to the bill, [_here](#).

If this does not work on your computer, please try

[here](#).

SPUC's submission to the committee is on the web as a PDF,

[here](#).

[British Medical Journal rejects infanticide](#)

Posted: 23 Jun 2007 12:01 PM CDT

Briefing.

From Care Not Killing (Newsletter): In a recent British Medical Journal commissioned editorial, professor of paediatrics Kate Costeloe reviewed the situation in the Netherlands, where neonatal euthanasia is occurring, before going on to consider the situation in the UK. She referred to the Nuffield Council of Bioethics' November 2006 paper, Critical care decisions in fetal and neonatal medicine, and stated that its position – rejecting neonatal euthanasia even when life is intolerable - was received with relief by most UK paediatricians.

Professor Costeloe considered the reasons why UK doctors are resistant to accepting active killing as a therapeutic option: the slippery slope argument; the negative impact of the psychology of professional staff; and the pressure parents may feel to accept euthanasia 'so that they do not become a burden on medical and social services'. She went on to discuss how difficult it is to judge another human being's quality of life, and described how indicators of severe disability in very preterm babies are not foolproof. She then emphasised the experience many neonatal nurses have in assessing babies' palliative care needs.

Her conclusion: 'the availability of active euthanasia as a therapeutic option would undermine this progress [of transparency of clinical decision making, with parents increasingly involved] and would be a step backwards'.

Professor Costeloe's recommendations give further support to the Nuffield Council's clear rejection of neonatal euthanasia.

[Tony Blair to become a Catholic?](#)

Posted: 23 Jun 2007 12:06 PM CDT

Briefing. This bizarre story refuses to die. Apart from strangely vacuous news reports (such as the one below), Blair has been visiting the [English College in Rome](#), from where so many English and Welsh priests returned to their native land to be martyred for the faith in the great persecution - a persecution Blair has devoted so much time and energy to reviving. Is it possible that, having voted for every [anti-life](#) and [anti-family](#) measure put before Parliament, closed down the [Catholic adoption agencies](#), [criminalised the teaching of the Catholic faith in schools](#), and removed [charitable status from large numbers of Catholic charities](#), he's going to enter the Church? We'd love to see him change his ways, but that doesn't seem to be part of the idea.

From SPUC: It is reported that Mr Tony Blair, the British prime minister who is about to step down from the premiership, is to convert to Catholicism. Paul Tully, SPUC general secretary, commented: "I'm sure that many Catholics, including SPUC members, keenly hope and pray for Mr Blair's repentance and conversion to the Catholic Church's view that human life is to be protected by law from the time of conception. Mr Blair voted three times to permit abortion up to birth before he became prime minister. As PM he has promoted the practice of secret abortions for schoolgirls without their parents being informed; he has encouraged use of the morning-after pill, which the manufacturers say may cause early abortions. He has championed destructive research on human embryos in the laboratory. Last year his government launched an appeal for a global fund to promote abortion for the poorest people around the world. SPUC as an organisation has no religious or political affiliation. For many years we have called on the prime minister to repudiate his anti-life position, and we continue to do so. We would be very concerned at the impact on Muslims and their commitment to the pro-life cause if Mr Blair became a

Muslim. We have similar concern for the impact on Christians if Mr Blair joins the Catholic church without publicly repudiating his publicly professed pro-abortion and pro-IVF positions."

[UK MEP exposes EU abortion agenda](#)

Posted: 23 Jun 2007 11:52 AM CDT

Briefing.

From CFam: British (South East, Conservative) Member of the European Parliament (MEP) [Nirj Deva](#) has slammed a new EU report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Speaking in the European Parliament this week, Deva acknowledged the need for a progress report for achieving the largely non-controversial MDGs of reducing poverty and disease, and increasing access to education. Where Deva diverged from the report, which was later passed by the European Parliament, was the attempt by the authors to "insert a covert agenda of abortion promotion" within the text.

The introduction to the "MDGs at the Midway Point" report states that "saving women's lives means ensuring that they have universal access to sexual reproductive health care and family planning" and that the EU "should continue to lead the way on sexual and reproductive health rights by maintaining levels of funding for the full range of (sexual and reproductive health and rights) services."

Deva took issue with two paragraphs of the report and urged his fellow parliamentarians to vote against them. Paragraph 41 of the report urges the EU "to continue to be the vanguard of efforts to support sexual and reproductive health rights" and links maternal mortality, low contraceptive prevalence and high rates of unsafe abortion in sub-Saharan Africa. Paragraph 42 of the report states the UN intends to adopt a new global target on "universal access to sexual and reproductive health."

UN experts point out several problems with the two controversial paragraphs. First, the term "sexual and reproductive health rights" has never been included in any negotiated UN document. Even so, they point out that such "rights" language related to "reproductive health" has been misinterpreted by UN committees to include abortion. Second, according to a 2004 report issued by the pro-abortion UN Population Fund (UNFPA) the most important means of reducing maternal mortality is not access to contraceptives and legal abortion but the presence of skilled birth attendants and access to emergency obstetric care.

Paragraph 41, which says the UN is about to adopt a new global goal on reproductive health, contradicts the repeated assertions of UN radicals like UNFPA chief Thoraya Obaid that such a goal already exists. Contrary to Obaid's statements, no such target currently exists and delegations such as the United States have spoken out in the General Assembly against any new targets, particularly in regards to reproductive health. Moreover, against the content of the new EU resolution, the UN General Assembly has no plans to initiate a new global goal in this area.

Speaking to the Friday Fax, Mr. Deva said, "This report in the European Parliament has very little to do with 'a woman's right to choose', and a lot to do with controlling population figures in the third world within what the 'West' feels is a manageable amount. It is clear that certain UN-backed and EU-backed non-governmental organizations which are heavily promoting abortion in the third world are more interested in culling people than in reducing the relatively far smaller figure of deaths through unsafe and illegal abortions."