

First of all I would like to say that I was very pleased that this Congress was held in Amsterdam. A radio reported asked me what the need was for a congress on family. I had the opportunity to explain that family are under a lot of pressures today, financial pressure due to the economic crisis, pressures combining work and family life, pressure of educating our children, being part of the computer-generation; a high rate of divorce where in Holland 60.000 children are involved. Reasons enough to exchange idea's with civil society groups and other Members of Parliament.

In the session on best practices for Parliamentarians in the context of foster parents and youth care, participants stressed the importance of the strength of family as an instrument to be used by youth care. There were serious warnings against the too soon outplacement of children. Examples were de US and Sweden, where outplacement became a big business and the influence of the parents was reduced in favor of the state.

This was a warning I will take with me from here.

Concerning the final statement:

We agree with the organization that the natural family would be the most ideal form of family, but unfortunaly we have to acknowledge the reality of today and see that besides the natural family there are also other form of families like composed families out of previous marriages or single parent families. As far as my party the ChristenUnie is concerned, we feel the responsibility to support these families as well, especially the single parent families.

It would have been good if the congress also had paid attention and care to those situations in the program.

I support the statement where it promotes strengthening of families in development countries and the set of instruments that are proposed.

On the issue of Aids I read that the focus is on *abstinence, faithfulness and character building*. I agree with this but do want to stress that condoms can not be excluded especially in cases where the husband is inflected and the woman want to prevent herself of becoming inflected.

And I know that my Party colleague Esme Wiegman will be very glad to know that you promote breastfeeding. She is crazy about breastfeeding, and even visits breastfeeding café's.

In close

I do compliment the organization with the variety of subjects that was dealt with during this congress and with the distinguished and honorable speakers that participated. The issues vary from the day care till the struggle against human trafficking and the importance of family within development aid. I therefore want to thank the organizers and the organization The Howard Centre for Family for making this Congress possible and hope that this congress contributes to the strengthening and empowering of families worldwide.