

Crises and their aftermath effects can have a detrimental impact on gender equality, specifically on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), which concerns well-being in all matters related to the reproductive system (United Nations Population Fund, 2022), among which abortion services. Crises can contribute to a change in political discourse by exposing faults in the system which may motivate political actors to advocate for policy changes. The effects of crises have often been studied in relation to public opinion or financial impact. However, little is known about the effects of crises on SRHR and the political discourse surrounding this topic. This is despite the fact that SRHR have been recognised as a crucial policy field by organisations such as the UN (United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2017). This thesis explores how crises can generate a paradigm shift in the political discourse on abortion by conducting a content analysis of the reports and debates on SRHR in the European Parliament during the post-crisis periods of the Eurocrisis and the COVID-19 crisis. The research finds an increased commitment of the European Parliament to abortion accessibility after the COVID-19 crisis. It also shows that this commitment was less present after the Eurocrisis. These findings indicate that crises can contribute to changes in political discourse on SRHR, yet also show that not all crises are equal: the perception of the severity and impact of the crisis are determining factors in this context and not all crises have the same effects on political discourse.