



21.03.2018

Subject: Consideration of the Draft Bill "Stop Abortion"

Honourable Member of the Committee for Social and Family Policy,

As Members of the European Parliament, we are writing to you today to express our concern about the draft bill "Stop Abortion" which is currently under consideration in your corresponding committee.

We would like to outline our concerns in more detail, explaining why we believe that the draft bill "Stop Abortion" will have severe negative effects on the safety, health and wellbeing of women. Various human rights bodies have repeatedly affirmed that the access to safe and legal sexual and reproductive health measures is a fundamental right. In this context, it has been established that highly restrictive abortion laws contravene human rights standards. International human rights bodies have called upon states to reform restrictive abortion laws and remove barriers undermining access to quality care.

Poland's Act of 1993 on Family Planning, Protection of Human Fetus and the Conditions of Legal Pregnancy Termination is already one of the most restrictive laws on abortion in the European Union.

International public health evidence clearly shows that restrictive abortion laws force women to seek clandestine and often unsafe abortion or to travel to other countries to access safe and legal care. This can have severe impacts on their health and wellbeing. This is why many countries over the past years have opted for a more liberal approach on sexual health and reproductive rights in order to minimize the acute harms to women's health and lives.

We recall that recently the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights in a letter to the Prime Minister, Mr Mateusz Morawiecki, stressed that in order to

safeguard human rights for women and girls, Poland must guarantee access to safe and legal abortion care. Furthermore, the European Court of Human Rights has found that in three cases in which women were denied access to timely abortion as a result of myriad barriers, Poland has been in violation of its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution on 12 September 2017 that “strongly affirms that the denial of sexual and reproductive health and rights services, including safe and legal abortion, is a form of violence against women and girls; reiterates that women and girls must have control over their bodies and sexualities; calls on all the Member States to guarantee comprehensive sexuality education, ready access for women to family planning, and the full range of reproductive and sexual health services, including modern contraceptive methods and safe and legal abortion.”

As representatives of all European citizens we would like to stress that the European Union is built upon our common values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union as well as on the fundamental rights as laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

As fellow elected representatives we urge you to uphold Poland’s international human rights obligations to guarantee the rights of women in Poland and to reject the draft bill “Stop Abortion”.

Kind regards,

Maria ARENA, Member of the European Parliament

Malin BJÖRK, Member of the European Parliament

Michał BONI, Member of the European Parliament

Sophia in 't VELD, Member of the European Parliament

Agnieszka KOZŁOWSKA-RAJEWICZ, Member of the European Parliament

Angelika MLINAR, Member of the European Parliament

Terry REINTKE, Member of the European Parliament

Ernest URTASUN, Member of the European Parliament

Judith SARGENTINI, Member of the European Parliament

Barbara SPINELLI, Member of the European Parliament

Josef WEIDENHOLZER, Member of the European Parliament