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Press release | 11.11.2021

Government’s attacks on women’s rights has deadly consequences

Polish abortion ban

Today, the European Parliament has voted in favour of standing in solidarity with the thousands and thousands of Polish citizens who, last week, took to the streets in protest against draconian Polish abortion laws. The restrictive law is just one year old but it has already cost at least two women's lives.

Terry Reintke MEP, Greens/EFA Vice President and shadow rapporteur on Poland in the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs committee, comments;

“The Polish ban on abortion is a symbol of a political and judicial system that has bent to the will of the government with deadly consequences. The government is systematically using the illegitimate ‘Constitutional Tribunal’ to undermine the rule of law and human rights, especially women’s rights and the rights of LGBTIQ+ people. The government used the so-called Constitutional Tribunal to bypass proper parliamentary procedures to ban abortion. The tragic recent deaths following the unlawful ruling on abortion are more examples of the political takeover of the judiciary and the systemic collapse of the rule of law in Poland. The EU institutions cannot stand by as people’s lives and liberties are under threat.”

Dr. Sylwia Spurek MEP, Greens/EFA Vice Chair of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee, comments;

“We know that restrictive abortion laws tend to make doctors fearful of terminating pregnancies, even in theoretically legal cases. This has been tragically demonstrated again in Poland where at least two women have lost their lives because they were denied abortions. Forcing a woman to go through with a pregnancy she does not want or that may threaten her life is a form of gender-based violence. We also have to keep in mind that the situation of access to legal abortion has been very difficult since 1993. A lack of actions of previous Polish governments to improve access to legal abortion and effective actions by the European Commission in enforcing the rule of law by Poland have contributed to today's alarming situation. The Council and Commission need to take decisive action and counter any legislative proposals or restrictions on accessing healthcare services in Poland, including abortion care.”

More:

The resolution calls on the Council to expand the scope of its Article 7 hearings on the situation in Poland to include the violations of SRHR rights and other allegations of violations of fundamental rights in Poland. The resolution also condemns the Polish government's abuse of the judicial system and of its legislative powers in order to instrumentalise and politicise the lives and health of women and LGBTIQ+ people, leading both to their oppression and to discrimination against them. Denying access to safe and free abortion is not only a violation of human rights, it is form of gender-based violance and a violation against EU law and the European treaties.

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