



Federation for Women and Family Planning  
13 Nowolipie St. apt.15, 00-150 Warsaw  
tel./fax: 022 635 93 95; 022 887 81 40  
biuro@federa.org.pl; www.federa.org.pl

---

**STATEMENT BY THE FEDERATION FOR WOMEN AND FAMILY PLANNING IN CONNECTION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CITIZENS' BILL BANNING ABORTION.**

The Federation for Women and Family Planning, a charity that defends women's rights to informed choice in pregnancy and motherhood, including access to legal and safe abortion, is seriously concerned about threats posed by a new bill on abortion that has been submitted to Parliament and is likely to pass in the coming months. **The Bill introduced as a citizens' bill by Fundacja "Pro– prawo do życia" (Pro-Life Foundation) bans abortion completely.**

The proponents of the legislation want each and every case of pregnancy termination to be illegal and a criminal offence. Fundacja "Pro - prawo do życia" proposes a criminal sanction of imprisonment for 3 months to 5 years. The sanction would apply both to individuals who perform or mediate abortion and to women who undergo such abortion. This is particularly outrageous. Should the law be passed, Poland would be one of a few countries with the most restrictive abortion legislation in the world. It must also be emphasized that the bill cancels free access to information and antenatal care and reduces access to reliable sex education.

The authors of the draft legislation claim the goal is to protect life by limiting abortion. The belief that women will not have abortions because abortion is banned is hypocritical and does not stand the reality test. Pregnancy terminations are commonplace in Poland. This is confirmed by research and estimates by experienced non-governmental organisations. With years of experience in the field, the Federation feels the outcome of the legislation will be exactly opposite. The number of illegal, thus unsafe, abortions will increase. Women will risk their health and life getting abortions in 'underground' facilities. The Pro-Life Foundation's bill will be especially hard for women with low incomes. Safe procedures will be accessible to those women who have the money and can travel out of the country or can afford a costly procedure in a domestic clinic. The price of illegal abortions will be very high because of the risk of high criminal charges under the new law.

The short-term approach demonstrated by the proponents of the legislation is even more dangerous as illegal abortions will include those performed in the second trimester of pregnancy because birth defects will not be discovered earlier. Physical and mental health impacts will be extremely serious for women.

Meanwhile, the current Polish anti-abortion legislation<sup>1</sup> is indeed one of the most restrictive in Europe. In addition, it is even more restrictive in practice than in the statutory provisions. Access

---

<sup>1</sup> The current Law on Family Planning, Human Fetus Protection and Conditions to Acceptable Abortion of 7 January, 1993 accepts abortions in three cases:

1. "pregnancy poses a threat to the life or health of the pregnant woman";
2. "antenatal examinations or other medical considerations suggest a high likelihood of major irreversible defect of the fetus or an incurable disease that poses a life threat to the fetus";
3. "there is a reasonable suspicion that the pregnancy is a result of a criminal offence"\* (e.g. incest, rape).



Federation for Women and Family Planning  
13 Nowolipie St. apt.15, 00-150 Warsaw  
tel./fax: 022 635 93 95; 022 887 81 40  
biuro@federa.org.pl; www.federa.org.pl

---

**STATEMENT BY THE FEDERATION FOR WOMEN AND FAMILY PLANNING IN CONNECTION  
WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CITIZENS' BILL BANNING  
ABORTION.**

to legal abortion for reasons listed by the applicable legislation is extremely limited and often impossible. Oftentimes, women who have the right to legal abortion are forced to use private sector clinics, either in the underground or abroad.

The proposed legislation contradicts the above facts that the Pro-Life Foundation has consistently ignored. It also violates the Polish Constitution and international agreements.

Research suggests two things: abortions are widespread among Polish women (as many as 5.9 million have experienced an abortion) and only 12 per cent of the Polish population is in favour of tightening up the legislation. References to the number of collected signatures under the citizen's bill as an alleged level of public support is abusive.

We do not want to live in a country where the election debt for political support is repaid with the freedom of women. The proposed legislation instrumentalises women, ignores and disregards women's health and deprives women of freedom and choice.