



European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights
Forum parlementaire européen pour les droits sexuels et reproductifs
Европейский парламентский форум по сексуальным и репродуктивным правам

H.E. Gitanas Nausėda
President of Lithuania

H.E. Viktoras Pranckietis
Speaker of Seimas

H.E. Saulius Skvernelis
Prime Minister

H.E. Aurelijus Veryga
Minister of Health

Hon. Gabrielius Landsbergis, MP
Leader of the Opposition

European Parliamentary Forum for
Sexual & Reproductive Rights (EPF)
Executive Committee

22 April 2020

Recent statement of H.E. Aurelijus VERYGA about women who wish to terminate their pregnancy during the Covid 19 lockdown

Dear Sirs,

As Members of Parliaments from across political parties and Members of the EPF Executive Committee, we are greatly alarmed by your recent statement about women who wish to terminate their pregnancy during the Covid 19 lockdown whereby media have reported that you stated: " Maybe this would be a good time to reconsider such a decision." A lockdown is not a reason to restrict women's and girl's reproductive rights, including the possibility of terminating a pregnancy.

Abortion is an individual decision for each woman which does not require the approval of politicians and, furthermore guaranteed by Lithuanian law. In these difficult times it is improper to impose unnecessary restrictions on women's access to legal health care services particularly when these are time sensitive.

These are challenging and uncertain times for all of us in Europe where we as elected politicians must ask our electorate to make difficult and unprecedented sacrifices for the common good. In return, our electorate expect us as politicians to live up to our responsibilities to safeguard their rights and well-being. This would include recognising that sexual and reproductive health and rights, including

access to abortion, constitute essential health services and that public authorities, such as your Ministry, have a responsibility to ensure women's access to this essential health intervention.

We therefore urge the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania to respect the right of women to make autonomous decisions about their own bodies and reproductive functions, which are at the very core of their fundamental right to equality and privacy concerning intimate matters of physical and psychological integrity.

Signatories:

Hon. Petra de Sutter, MEP, (Belgium) *EPF President*

Hon. Petra Bayr, MP, EPF (Austria) *EPF Vice President*

Hon. Malahat Ibrahimqizi, MP (Azerbaijan)

Hon. Bojan Glavašević, MP (Croatia)

Senator Alice Mary Higgins (Ireland)

Hon. Dovile Šakalienė, MP (Lithuania)

Senator Florian Bodog, (Romania)

Hon. Sara Heikkinen Breitholtz, MP (Sweden)

Lord John Mann of Holbeck Moor (United Kingdom)