

EPF strongly condemns the verdict in the case of Justyna Wydrzyńska

Brussels, 21 March 2023,
European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights
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The European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights (EPF) strongly condemns the verdict in the case of Justyna Wydrzyńska, a Polish activist who was convicted and sentenced to eight months of community service for supplying a pregnant woman with abortion pills in a landmark trial under the country's ultra-strict abortion laws. The case sets a precedent within the country that already has some of the most restrictive abortion legislation in Europe and will further repress women's reproductive rights.

EPF members stand in solidarity with Ms Wydrzyńska and all individuals who are working to protect reproductive rights and justice. Current Polish law and Polish government actions stand against basic WHO abortion care guidelines, damage women's equality, dignity, autonomy, as well as bodily integrity, and expose them to forms of cruel and inhuman treatment.¹

Access to safe and legal abortion is a fundamental human right and an essential component of reproductive healthcare. According to several publications by the EPF on essential SRHR policies, such as access to abortion or contraception, Poland remains the worst country in Europe.²

Moreover, banning abortion does not reduce the number of abortions; it only increases the likelihood of unsafe and unreliable procedures that can cause serious harm, or even death.³ Many women in Poland are forced to travel to other countries or undergo

¹ WHO Abortion care guideline, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240039483m>, accessed: 8 March 2023

² The European Abortion Policies Atlas, <https://www.epfweb.org/node/857>, European Contraception Policy Atlas, <https://www.epfweb.org/node/89>, accessed: 8 March 2023

³ Abortion worldwide 2017, Guttmacher institute, https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/abortion-worldwide-2017.pdf accessed: 8 March 2023.

unsafe procedures at home. In some regions of the country, women are also unable to obtain an abortion due to refusals of care by doctors. ⁴

We, therefore, call on the Polish government to repeal regressive laws on reproductive rights and take immediate steps to ensure that individuals like Ms Wydrzynska are not persecuted for providing essential healthcare services. The right to legal and safe abortion is at the very core of the fundamental right to equality and privacy concerning intimate matters of physical and psychological integrity.

Signatories:

- EPF Executive Committee
 - Hon. Petra Bayr, MP, EPF President
 - Hon. Bojan Glavašević, MP, EPF Vice President
 - Hon. Lina Lopes, MP, EPF Treasurer
 - Hon. Alice-Mary Higgins, Senator, EPF Executive Committee Member
 - Hon. Goedele Liekens, MP, EPF Executive Committee Member
 - Hon. Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus, MP, EPF Executive Committee Member
 - Hon. Predrag Fred Matić, MEP, EPF Executive Committee Member
 - Hon. Morgana Daniele, MP, EPF Executive Committee Member
 - Baroness Lindsay Northover, EPF Executive Committee Member
- MEPs for Sexual and Reproductive Rights co-chairs (MEPs for SRR)
 - Hon. Predrag Fred Matić, MEP
 - Hon. Sophie in 't Veld, MEP
- Polish APPG for Population, Health and Development co-chairs.
 - Hon. Scheuring-Wielgus Joanna, Chairwoman
 - Hon. Kotula Katarzyna, Vice President
 - Hon. Nowicka WandaNowicka Wanda, Vice President

⁴ *Notes from Poland*, <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/07/09/abortion-ban-forces-polish-women-to-seek-terminations-abroad-and-mental-health-support-at-home/>, accessed: 8 March 2023