Call to uphold the health rights of girls and women, and citizens to access accurate information and comprehensive sexual education in Poland

Dear Ms. Stella Kyriakides,

As Members of Parliaments from across political parties, we wish to express our deep concern about the two draft bills which are going to be voted in the Polish Sejm on 15 and 16 April 2020 and concern both sexuality education and access to abortion.¹ We call on the Polish parliament to reject these draft bills.

We are appalled that Polish authorities are using the COVID-19 pandemic and general lockdown to achieve its objective to limit women’s reproductive health and therefore their human dignity. Thousands of Polish women already clearly expressed their strong opposition to previous proposals to further restrict the country’s abortion law during the so-called Black Protests of 2016. Therefore, the current actions of the Polish government can only be considered as a cowardly move designed to evade democratic scrutiny as currently there are very limited options for Polish society to voice their opposition to such harsh initiatives.

The draft bill on abortion risks causing serious damage to women’s health and lives and violating Poland’s international human rights obligations. It would ban abortion in situations where there is a severe foetal anomaly, one of only three legal grounds for termination of pregnancy available in a country that already has one of Europe’s most restrictive abortion laws. The health and human rights implications for women living in countries with such restrictive laws are severe.

Many women who decide to end a pregnancy either travel to another country to obtain safe and legal abortion services or undergo illegal clandestine abortion at home and often risk their lives during these unsafe procedures. Some women may be left with no choice but to carry a pregnancy to term against their will. Even in those limited circumstances where abortion is legal in Poland, women still face barriers. In particular, in several regions in Poland women are often unable to obtain an abortion due to refusals of care by doctors. This law would damage women’s equality, dignity, autonomy, and bodily integrity, restricting their access to information and their rights to a private life and to health, and exposing them to forms of cruel and inhuman treatment.

¹ Parliamentary Document no 39 on amending the act of June 6, 1997 - the Penal Code, and Parliamentary Document No 36 on the amendment to the Act of 7 January 1993 on family planning, protection of the human foetus and conditions for the termination of pregnancy.
We urge the Polish Parliament 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. We also condemn the shift in Poland towards misinforming young people, and stigmatising and banning sexuality education. We call on the Polish Authorities to refrain from adopting the bill, which follows recent attempts to limit sexual and reproductive rights in Poland, including the right to abortion.

Yours sincerely,

SIGNATORIES

Members of Parliaments:

1. Hon. Klotilda Bushka, MP, Albania
2. Hon. Petra Bayr, Austria, MP
3. Hon. Meri Disoski, MP, Austria
4. Hon. Ewa Ernst-Dziedzic, MP, Austria
5. Hon. Eva-Maria Holzleitner, MP, Austria
6. Hon. Katharina Kucharowits, MP, Austria
7. Hon. Stefan Schennach, MP, Austria
8. Hon. Monika Vana, MEP, Austria
9. Hon. Senator Fourat Ben Chikha, Belgium
10. Hon. Saskia Bricmont, MEP, Belgium
11. Hon. Barbara Creemers, MP, Belgium
12. Hon. Petra De Sutter, MEP, Belgium
13. Hon. Valérie Delporte, MP, Belgium
14. Hon. Melissa Depraetere, MP, Belgium
15. Hon. Mélissa Hanus, MP, Belgium
16. Hon. Kattrin Jadin, MP, Belgium
17. Hon. Karin Jiroflée, MP, Belgium
18. Hon. Christophe Lacroix, MP, Belgium
19. Hon. Séverine de Laveleye, MP, Belgium
20. Hon. Marie Lecocq, MP, Belgium
21. Hon. Goedele Liekens, MP, Belgium
22. Hon. Nadia Moscufo, MP, Belgium
23. Hon. Simon Moutquin, MP, Belgium
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25. Hon. Isabelle Pauthier, MP, Belgium
26. Hon. Barbara de Radiguès, MP, Belgium
27. Hon. Sarah Schlitz, MP, Belgium
28. Hon. Cécile Thibaut, MP, Belgium
29. Hon. Els Van Hoof, MP, Belgium
30. Hon. Anja Vanrobaeys, MP, Belgium
31. Hon. Albert Vicaire, MP, Belgium
32. Hon. Maria Vindevoghel, MP, Belgium
33. Hon. Bojan Glavasevic, MP, Croatia
34. Hon. Predrag Fred Matić, MEP, Croatia
35. Hon. Radka Maxová, MEP, Czech Republic
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38. Hon. Satu Hassi, MP, Finland
39. Hon. Heidi Hautala, MEP, Finland
40. Hon. Merja Kylönen, MP, Finland
41. Hon. Hanna Sarkkinen, MP, Finland
42. Hon. Sofia Virta, Finland, MP
43. Hon. Senator Maryvonne Blondin, France
44. Hon. Leïla Chaibi, MP, France
45. Hon. Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, MEP, France
46. Hon. Sylvie Guillaume, MEP, France
47. Hon. Irène Tolleret, MEP, France
48. Hon. Chrysovala Zacharopoulou, MEP, France
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50. Hon. Maria Noichl, MEP, Germany
51. Hon. Terry Reintke, MEP, Germany
52. Hon. Frank Schwabe, MP, Germany
53. Hon. George Papandreou, MP, Greece
54. Hon. Clare Daly, MEP, Ireland
55. Hon. Senator Alice Mary Higgins, Ireland
56. Hon. Sarah Dunne, MP, Ireland
57. Hon. Brid Smith, MP, Ireland
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59. Hon. Valentina Barzotti, MP, Italy
60. Hon. Silvia Benedetti, MP, Italy
61. Hon. Laura Boldrini, MP, Italy
62. Hon. Francesca Bonomo, MP, Italy
63. Hon. Vincenza Bruno Bossio, MP, Italy
64. Hon. Elena Carnevali, MP, Italy
65. Hon. Vittoria Casa, MP, Italy
66. Hon. Lucia Ciampi, MP, Italy
67. Hon. Rina De Lorenzo, MP, Italy
68. Hon. Paola Deiana, MP, Italy
69. Hon. Yana Ehms, MP, Italy
70. Hon. Senator Valeria Fedeli, Italy
71. Hon. Flora Frate, MP, Italy
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75. Hon. Rossella Muroni, MP, Italy
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77. Hon. Fassino Piero, MP, Italy
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79. Hon. Doriana Sarli, MP, Italy
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81. Hon. Debora Serracchiani, MP, Italy
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83. Hon. Elisa Tripodi, MP, Italy
84. Hon. Maria Edera Spadoni, MP, Italy
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86. Hon. Virginia Villani, MP, Italy
87. Hon. Boriss Čilevičs, MP, Latvia
88. Hon. Dovile Sakaliene, MP, Lithuania
89. Hon. Betian Kitev, MP, North Macedonia
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91. Hon. Monika Falej, MP, Poland
92. Hon. Hanna Gill-Piątek, MP, Poland
93. Hon. Katarzyna Kretkowska, MP, Poland
94. Hon. Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus, MP, Poland
95. Hon. Joanna Senyszyn, MP, Poland
96. Hon. Krzysztof Smiszek, MP, Poland
97. Hon. Sylwia Spurek, MEP, Poland
98. Hon. Andrzej Szejna, MP, Poland
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103. Hon. Isabel Rodrigues, MP, Portugal
104. Hon. Isabel Santos, MEP, Portugal
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108. Hon. Lucía Muñoz, MP, Spain
109. Hon. Bárbara Pernando, MEP, Spain (Basque Country)
110. Hon. Isabel Pozueta Fernández, MP, Spain (Basque Country)
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112. Hon. Idoia Villanueva Ruiz, MEP, Spain
113. Hon. Abir Al-Sahlani, MEP, Sweden
114. Hon. Sara Heikkiläinen Breitholtz, MP, Sweden
115. Hon. Eva Espling, MP, Sweden
116. Hon. Thomas Hammarberg, MP, Sweden
117. Hon. Björk Malin, MEP, Sweden
118. Hon. Ola Möller, MP, Sweden
119. Hon. Carina Ohlsson, MP, Sweden
120. Hon. Azadeh Rojhan, MP, Sweden
121. Hon. Emma Wennerholm, MP, Sweden
122. Hon. Damien Cottier, MP, Switzerland
123. Hon. Fabian Molina, MP Switzerland
124. Hon. Liliane Maury Pasquier, MP, Switzerland
125. Hon. Valentine Python, MP, Switzerland
126. Hon. Franziska Ryser, MP, Switzerland
127. Hon. Maria Bijl, MP, The Netherlands
128. Hon. Kathalijn Buitenweg, MP, The Netherlands
129. Hon. Senator Margreet De Boer, The Netherlands
130. Hon. Senator Ruard Ganzevoort, The Netherlands
131. Hon. Senator Van Gurp Roel, The Netherlands
132. Hon. Sophie In’t Veld, MEP, The Netherlands
133. Hon. Lies Roest, MP, The Netherlands
134. Hon. Senator Koole Ruud, Netherlands
135. Hon. Sophie In’t Veld, MEP, The Netherlands
136. Hon. Lilianne Ploumen, MP, The Netherlands
137. Hon. Vera Tax, MEP, The Netherlands
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156. Hon. Kate Green, MP, United Kingdom
157. Hon. Rachel Hopkins, MP, United Kingdom
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159. Hon. Pauline Latham, United Kingdom
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161. Hon. Baroness Doreen E Massey, United Kingdom
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163. Hon. Lindsay Northover, United Kingdom
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165. Hon. Baroness Shas Sheehan, United Kingdom
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167. Hon. Baroness Glenys Thornton, United Kingdom
168. Hon. Baroness Jenny Tonge, United Kingdom
169. Hon. Baroness Pola Uddin, United Kingdom
170. Hon. Nadia Whittome, MP, United Kingdom