



Letter to Party Leaders of SLD and Unia Pracy

31 October 2006

Dear Wojciech Olejniczak, dear Waldemar Witkowski,

We, as the President and Vice Presidents of PES Women, would like to express to you – the leaders of our Polish sister parties – our deep concern about proposed restrictions on the right of abortion in Poland, and to offer you our full support in your efforts to oppose attempts to amend the Constitution to make the abortion law even stricter.

The amendment to the law would result in a total ban on all forms of abortion in Poland. Even therapeutic abortion, performed when a woman's health or life is at risk as a result of the pregnancy, would be forbidden.

While we understand that abortion law in Poland is a matter for the Polish people, we believe that a ban on abortion would be contrary to the fundamental rights of women, contrary to human rights, contrary to the basic right to health and to life. We believe that a woman has the right to choose, with her own conscience, whether or not to undergo an abortion – and that a ban on abortion is contrary to the values of choice promoted by our European Union.

In its 2004 report on Poland the EU Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights criticised the strict legislation and the consequences of it. Yet the Polish Government is proposing to further restrict an already very limited right of abortion.

A ban on abortions will result in a higher number of illegal and unsafe abortions, putting more women in life-threatening situations. It will create access to abortion according to wealth: with richer women being able to afford private abortions in other EU states while poorer women will have less choice. It is our belief that everyone should have the same access to health services.

We send support and encouragement to you - SLD and Unia Pracy - and responsible Family Planning and Pro-Choice' NGOs for the demonstration on 4 November 2006 in Warsaw against the proposed amendment to the Constitution.





We see the developments in Poland as part of a broader conservative backlash against sexual and reproductive health rights in Europe, and we pledge ourselves to continue to fight for a woman's right to choose.

Best wishes,

Zita Gurmai
President
PES Women

Inger Segelström
Vice-President
PES Women

Anna Karamonou
Vice-President
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Olga Zrihen
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