



6 February 2007

Dear MEP,

You are one of 51 MEPs who signed a declaration critical of the referendum on abortion in Portugal.

I challenge you to justify some of the highly questionable assertions made in the declaration.

The declaration refers to the “devastating individual, social and demographic effects the liberalization of abortion in some of our countries has had.”

But what are the “devastating” social effects of abortion and in which countries? I do not believe you can point to any devastating social effects in any country in Europe. I am sure, however, that you do not need me to point out the devastating individual effects of badly performed illegal abortions.

The declaration also claims that “the limitation of abortion is currently on the agenda of most European countries”. Please tell me in which countries the limitation of abortion is currently being proposed? Are you proposing the limitation of the right of women in your own country to choose whether to have an abortion? Is your party proposing any such limitation?

Finally, why is it that you wish to refuse to Portuguese women a choice which is available to the vast majority of women in the European Union? Only in Ireland, Malta and Poland is the right to choose restricted as heavily as it is in Portugal. Like millions of other women across Europe I believe Portugal has taken the correct decision to offer its citizens the chance to have the same freedom of choice on abortion as other EU member states.

It is your individual right to oppose abortion. But I do not believe you have a right to impose that view on others through restrictive legislation – especially when women in your own country benefit from greater freedom of choice.

Kind regards,

Zita Gurmai
President
PES Women

