

Prague, 8th April, 2016

Beata Szdylo

Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland

Your Excellency, Mrs Prime Minister,

we are deeply concerned about the proposal to adopt a complete ban on abortions in Poland. Adoption of such a law would mean that also women who were victims of rape, women for whom pregnancy means a serious threat to their life and health and young girls would have no access to a safe abortion. Adoption of such a law would mean a significant health threat for Polish women. In some cases even threat to their lives. Similarly strict law exists for example in El Salvador where it has already caused deaths of many women.

Protection of unborn children is important. But legal regulation of abortions cannot endanger lives of women and their personal integrity. An abortion should not be used as a tool for family planning – that is why it is important to inform people about family planning options and provide them with accessible and safe contraception. Experience from abroad proves that providing women and men with accessible contraception significantly decreases the number of abortions. We consider the right to safe and legal abortion as one of the basic human rights. Such attitude is common in almost all European countries. Protection of women's rights, including deciding about their bodies, is one of the pillars of European democracies, Poland being one of them.

On behalf of the Czech Women's Lobby, a network of twenty eight organisations enhancing women's rights in the Czech Republic, we urge you to refuse the law. We sincerely believe that you as a Prime Minister care about health and safety of Polish women and you will not allow them to be threatened.

Yours sincerely,

Jana Chržová

Chair of Czech Women's Lobby