



European Parliament



Mr Andrej Danko

Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic

Mr Robert Fico

Chair of SMER - sociálna democracia

Mr Milan Laurenčík

Chair of Sloboda a solidarita

Mr Eduard Heger

Chair of OBYČAJNÍ ĽUDIA a nezávislé osobnosti

Mr Tibor Bernaták

Chair of Slovenská národná strana

Mr Tibor Bastrnák

Chair of MOST – HÍD

Mr Boris Kollár

Chair of SME RODINA - Boris Kollár

Members of Parliament which are not members of any caucus

Brussels, 19 November 2019

Dear Members of the Slovak Parliament,
Dear Colleagues,

As Members of the European Parliament we are writing to express our deep concern regarding the *Draft Law which Amends and Supplements Act No. 576/2004 Coll. of Laws on Healthcare, Healthcare-related Services, and Amending and Supplementing Certain Acts as Amended, and which Amends and Supplements Some Acts* (Print no. 1729, 27.09.2019) that is currently pending in the Slovak Parliament. If adopted, we believe this legislation will severely jeopardise women's access to safe and legal abortion care, evidence-based information on abortion as well as undermine women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We are deeply concerned that the draft bill requires women seeking abortion care to undergo a mandatory ultrasound, obtain and view the ultrasound image of the embryo or the foetus and listen to the heartbeat of the embryo or the foetus. Such requirements are not imposed on women seeking abortion care in any other EU country. Forcing women to undergo a mandatory ultrasound undermines their autonomy in reproductive decision-making and can be a humiliating and degrading experience. Furthermore, it violates the requirement that consent to medical procedures be given freely and voluntarily.

The draft law's proposed prohibition of "advertising" is moreover of serious concern as it could lead to restrictions on access to evidence-based information on abortion care and create chilling effects on medical providers.

The regressive measures contained in the draft law have recently been heavily criticised by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which expressed deep concerns about the impacts of the pending legislative proposals and urged Slovakia to avoid any retrogression in relation to women's sexual and reproductive health rights.

We are convinced that measures that roll back protections for women's human rights and self-determination are of grave concern as they undermine a core European Union value, that of advancing gender equality. Unhindered and timely access to reproductive health services and respect for women's reproductive autonomy and decision-making is critical to protecting women's human rights and gender equality.

Let us reiterate that we are deeply concerned that this draft bill is the sixth legislative proposal seeking to restrict reproductive freedom that has come before the Slovak Parliament this year alone. To date, these regressive proposals have been rejected.

We respectfully urge Members of the Slovak Parliament to reject this current draft bill and to refrain from any further attempts to restrict women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in Slovakia.

Yours sincerely,

Ernest Urtasun, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Irène Tolleret, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Malin Bjork, GUE/NGL Member of the European Parliament

María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, GUE/NGL Member of the European Parliament

Maria Noichl, S&D Member of the European Parliament

Terry Reintke, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

On behalf of the coordinators of the All of Us Network in the European Parliament

Abir Al Sahlani, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Alessandra Moretti, S&D Member of the European Parliament

Alex Phillipps, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Alice Bah Kuhnke, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Diana Riba, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Evelyn Regner, S&D Member of the European Parliament

Fred Matić, S&D Member of the European Parliament

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Heléne Fritzon, S&D Member of the European Parliament

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Karen Melchior, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Lucy Nethsingha, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Martin HOJSÍK, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Michal ŠIMEČKA, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Monika Beňová, S&D Member of the European Parliament

Monika Vana, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Naomi Long, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Petra De Sutter, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Pina Picierno, S&D Member of the European Parliament

Robert Biedroń, S&D Member of the European Parliament

Samira Rafaela, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Saskia Bricmont, Greens/EFA Member of the European Parliament

Sophie in 't Veld, RENEW Member of the European Parliament

Susana Solís Pérez , RENEW Member of the European Parliament

On behalf of the All of Us Network in the European Parliament