



FPFE

Federación
de Planificación
Familiar Estatal

Public statement

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The Spanish Government's proposal to reform the law on sexual and reproductive health is a step backward of thirty years in the rights of women

The Spanish Federation of Family Planning (FPFE) rejects the content of the draft bill approved today by the Council of Ministers and requests for the project to be withdrawn and the 2010 Law on Sexual and Reproductive health to be fully implemented instead.

The draft bill approved by the Cabinet seeks to end the right to decide for women and the comprehensive concept of sexual and reproductive health that the current law contains.

With this proposal, the government wants to alienate our country from the prevailing legislative framework in Europe, to place Spain in line with Malta, Ireland, Andorra, San Marino, Monaco or Liechtenstein, countries with the most restrictive laws.

The Spanish Federation of Family Planning also denounces the secrecy with which the legislative reform is being carried out, without any involvement of civil society organizations specialized in reproductive health and without the proper public information procedure, a prerequisite for any democratic process.

The application of the current law that the government intends to repeal has not caused any health or legal problems, nor has increased abortion cases in our country. This reform is against the opinion of the majority of the population, as various surveys have shown¹.

Studies of the World Health Organization (WHO) show that the number of voluntary abortions in countries with restrictive laws does not vary from those with laws based on time limits, as shown by the example of the Netherlands, with one of the lowest abortion rates and a law based on time limits. Thus, in its 2012 report the WHO says: "Whether or not abortion is restricted by law, the likelihood of a woman to have an abortion for an unwanted pregnancy is practically the same."

Therefore, a restrictive law will not result in a reduction of the number of abortions, but will incite that they occur under a legal insecurity for women and for professionals, in a long and difficult process that will add suffering and risk to the health of women. The Government proposal responds to the requirements of the more conservative minority and has into account moral positions while ignoring human rights and both health and scientific evidence.

The FPFE regrets that this attempt to roll back decades of women's rights is accompanied by a stopping of the strategy on sexual and reproductive health, as seen in a recent European barometer. This has resulted in a decline in the access to safe and effective contraception, difficulties in the access to family planning services and lack of implementation of a coherent training to students and health professionals.

Therefore the Spanish Federation of Family Planning requests the draft bill introduced by the Minister of Justice to be removed and the 2010 Law on Sexual and Reproductive health to be fully implemented instead; especially the inclusion of sex education in primary and secondary education and ensuring universal access to contraception, including the morning-after pill. Two elements that, as demonstrated by scientific evidence and unlike the restrictive abortion laws, reduce the number of induced abortions.

¹ According to a survey by Metroscopia published in April 2013, 46% of the population supports the law based on time limits while 41% only accepts a law based on assumptions.