



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES



COORDINADORA ESPAÑOLA
PARA EL **LOBBY**
EUROPEO DE MUJERES

Brussels, 20 June 2013

Women's organisations ask support of the European Parliament against the modification of the Spanish law on sexual and reproductive health and rights

The European Women's Lobby and CELEM met today with the Chair of the EP Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

President of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) Viviane Teitelbaum and President of the Spanish Coordination for the European Women's Lobby (CELEM) Rosa Escapa met this morning with Mikael Gustafsson, Chair of the EP Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, to convey their urgent appeal for solidarity and support to ensure that the Spanish legislation on abortion don't experience a clear setback. The Spanish Minister of Justice, Sr. Gallardón, announced that he plans to reform the current law on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary interruption of pregnancy. The meeting has been facilitated by Spanish Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Iratxe García Pérez.

According to the EWL and CELEM, the Spanish Government has proposed the revocation of the current abortion legislation based on time limits and the implementation of a new legislation which would be much more restricted than the 1985 law based on assumptions. Under the new legislation, women won't have the right to decide upon their maternity by themselves, and will rely on the decision made by health professionals amongst others. Moreover, the new legislation will eliminate the possibility of terminating pregnancy when there is fetal malformation and when there is "alleged risk" to the mother's health, making it more difficulty or even a crime for women to make decision on their own reproductive rights.

MEP Iratxe García Pérez said: "If the changes proposed by the Minister of Justice enter into force, it will represent a clear backlash on women's rights. It will also mean that in Spain, in a situation of abortion, we would have two groups of women: on the one hand, women who have the financial possibility to travel and get an abortion freely and legally, with all health guarantees, in any of the other European countries which have a similar law to the current Spanish one; and on the other hand, women without financial resources who will have to resort to clandestine abortions, as criminals and with a serious risk to their health."

On 2nd June 2013, the General Assembly of the European Women's Lobby adopted an emergency motion whereby the EWL and its members support the Spanish women's associations in their defense of the women's right to choose their motherhood. "Women's control over their bodies and their sexuality is a key human right. However, we witness a growing backlash to women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in Europe and new strategies to prevent women's access to reproductive health care", said Viviane Teitelbaum.

The EWL motion has been signed today by MEP Iratxe Garcia Perez and MEP Mikael Gustafsson. CELEM will continue to raise awareness at all levels to make sure that no backlash is taking place in Spain with regards to women's rights in general, and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights in particular.

Press Release

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Note to editors:

Both the EWL and CELEM are key actors in equality policies, working respectively at European and Spanish level.

Founded in 1990, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. The European Women's Lobby is made up of 31 National Coordinations in the 27 EU Member States and 4 of the 5 candidate countries as well as 20 large international or European networks, representing a total of 2000 organisations in Europe.

CELEM is the Spanish Coordination for the European Women's Lobby. CELEM is a network representing 25 Spanish organizations and three regional platforms and participates in several national advisory bodies.

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