

Brussels, 25 September 2023
Press release

Mobilisation for the right to abortion, a universal struggle that concerns us all

To mark International Safe Abortion Day on 28th September, the Centre d'Action Laïque, together with organisations member of the Abortion Right platform and many Belgian and International associations, are mobilising to reiterate the urgent need to guarantee effective and safe access to abortion for all women throughout the world.

In 2023, access to abortion is **under threat throughout the world**, and Europe is no exception. Total bans and restrictions are on the increase. This significant decline in the right to abortion can be seen in Hungary, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria... Conservative movements and the far right are actively attacking this fundamental right, seeking to restrict access to essential medical care and to dictate to women what they should do with their own bodies. The Centre d'Action Laïque has produced a brochure on the state of abortion in Europe¹. This regression is unacceptable, and we cannot remain silent in the face of this threat.

The criminalisation of abortion has **serious and devastating consequences**. It drives some women to resort to unsafe and unsupported abortions, putting their health and lives at risk. According to the WHO, 47,000 women die every year as a result of illegal abortions.

This fundamental right **concerns not only women** seeking abortions, but **society as a whole**. In many countries - and Europe is not spared - women die as a result of severe medical complications linked to their pregnancy, necessitating an abortion that was refused by the medical profession. This unacceptable situation must stop.

This is why, on this important day, the Centre d'Action Laïque, in collaboration with numerous Belgian and international organisations active in the field of sexual and reproductive rights, has decided **to mobilise in Brussels**.

¹ Abortion in Europe. Status report, September 2023 : https://www.laicite.be/app/uploads/2023/09/etat-des-lieux-IVG-europe-2023-WEB_EN.pdf

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We must unite our voices to defend the right to abortion, to protect women's health and dignity, and to guarantee their autonomy of decision.

The fight for abortion rights is a fight for **equality, freedom and justice**. It concerns each and every one of us, whatever our gender, age, origin or beliefs. Together, we can make our voices heard, influence change and put an end to the stigmatisation and criminalisation of abortion.

Join us in Brussels on Thursday 28 September for a conference at the European Parliament from 12 noon to 2 pm, followed by a rally from 3.30 pm to 7 pm on the Place du Luxembourg with European representatives who will talk about the difficulties of access to abortion in their countries, a brass band, the soloist Soumaya Hallak, association stands and a reading of Gisèle Halimi's plea by the actress Priscilla Adade!

The full programme is available here : 28sept.abortionright.eu



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