



Brussels, 28 September 2020

### **All of Us Statement: International Safe Abortion Day**

**On the occasion of International Safe Abortion Day 2020, the All of Us network of Members of the European Parliament expresses its concern that across Europe, and the world, the right of and access to safe and legal abortion is still widely denied. On this day, we stand in solidarity with women across Europe and the world whose human rights and equality continue to be denied. We also stand with human rights defenders and civil society organisations that continue to lead the struggle for sexual and reproductive rights and specifically the right to safe and legal abortion.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the harms and inequalities that women suffer as a result of intensified restrictions. The current situation has further exacerbated medically unnecessary barriers such as mandatory waiting periods and counselling requirements, the need to obtain authorisation from third parties or multiple medical professionals and failures to ensure an adequate number of medical professionals committed to providing abortion care.

These restrictions and barriers must be urgently removed and bans on abortion must be immediately lifted. Criminal sanctions for women and health care professionals and those assisting women in accessing abortion care must be removed. Burdensome requirements should be eliminated and antiquated medical regulations updated to reflect current best practice.

The All of Us network affirms that each and every individual has a right to decide over one's own body and should enjoy protection from any form of coercion, discrimination or violence in making informed decisions about sexual and reproductive health.

When women are denied this fundamental right their autonomy, dignity, equality, and wellbeing are jeopardised and undermined. Legal restrictions that still criminalise and restrict abortion care in Europe, and across the world, harm and stigmatise women and expose their health and lives to risks.

Across Europe we have seen some progress in moving closer to guaranteeing safe abortion and some Member States have been reforming their related laws and policies. However, much still needs to be done and the threat of rolling back established rights is ever present.

Over the past year alone, we have seen several attempts to further restrict access to abortion in several European countries. We urge decision makers to reject any further attempts at rolling back hard fought gains for women's human rights, equality, right to self-determination and full control over their own bodies. We call on the EU to redouble its support for sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to safe and legal abortion, both within and beyond the European Union.

**All of Us Coordinators:**

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