



PES STATEMENT ON THE REFERENDUM ON ABORTION IN PORTUGAL

A woman has the right to control her own sexual and reproductive health. Above all a woman has a right to choose – including, and if necessary, the right to choose a safe abortion.

We welcome the abortion referendum in Portugal and urge the Portuguese people to take the opportunity to vote.

We support those Portuguese women and men who have been campaigning in favour of choice and welcome the positive position of the Socialist Party.

It IS a question of choice – a woman's right to have a choice based on the right information, education and medical support. It is most certainly not a question of being in favour of abortion. The Portuguese people will vote on whether to give women a choice, or whether to continue to criminalise those who decide an abortion may be necessary.

Criminalising abortion does not prevent abortion – it merely drives it away: leading either to clandestine abortions or abortions abroad. Banning abortion merely leads to illegal and unsafe abortions. Banning abortions means that the rich can afford abortions abroad and the poor must take a risk with an illegal operation.

In supporting the campaign for choice in Portugal, we are expressing the views of the vast majority of Europeans who believe in a woman's right to choose. Like most Europeans we believe that sexual and reproductive rights are personal choices which cannot be dictated by imposed moral or religious rules.

Portugal has benefited from enormous social and economic progress since joining the European Union. We urge Portugal not to be isolated from Europe on the question of abortion but rather to join the rest of Europe in modernising its abortion law and give women free choice.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen
President
Party of European Socialists

Zita Gurmai
President
PES Women

