



## New wave of abortion extremism is targeting Europe's last pro-life holdouts

### Description

**EU : The wave of abortion extremism sweeping Europe continued on April 11, when the European Parliament voted 336-163 in favor of including “access to abortion” in the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights.**

The vote itself was symbolic – the resolution is non-binding, as an enforceable “right to abortion” would have to receive the backing of all 27 member states.

But the symbol was a sign of things to come, and pro-life leaders in embattled EU member states told me that the vote was intended to place pressure on legislators in countries like Malta, where pre-born children are still protected in the womb.

In Poland, a raft of bills has been put forward by legislators seeking to fulfill Prime Minister Donald Tusk’s campaign promise to put an end to the country’s pro-life regime; abortion activists, sensing that they may be facing a unique opportunity with a splintered coalition government, are pushing fiercely for action.

Four bills have been put forward, two of which propose legalizing abortion on demand up to 12 weeks of pregnancy; a third proposing the decriminalization of assisting a woman in procuring an abortion; and the fourth proposing a reversion to the pre-2020 norm by legalizing abortion in the case of fetal abnormality.

Those proposals received wall-to-wall abortion coverage from the mainstream press; aside from pro-life publications like this one, however, the media largely ignored the massive pro-life backlash that saw over 50,000 Poles take to the streets of Warsaw on April 14 to decry these proposals:

This is in marked contrast to media coverage of the 2020 pro-abortion protests, which saw activists vandalize churches and threaten pro-life politicians.

Regardless of who is in power, pro-life protests are portrayed as a reactionary defense of the establishment, while abortion protesters are portrayed as genuine, grassroots revolutionaries on the side of progress.

Abortions in Germany should be legalized within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, a government-appointed commission has recommended.

While abortion is rarely punished, it remains illegal in Germany, except for specific circumstances including when a woman's life is in danger or she is a victim of rape, while the prerequisite for any termination is a consultation with a state-recognized body.

Advocates of a law change have welcomed the investigation into the country's legal framework, calling the law outdated and detrimental to women. Even in the cases not considered illegal, the procedure must take place within the first three months except when there is a compelling reason to carry it out later.

The all-female expert commission on reproductive self-determination and reproductive medicine was set up by Chancellor Olaf Scholz's three-party government after the desire to change the 153-year-old law was anchored in its coalition agreement.

However, opposition lawmakers – in particular from the conservative Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union alliance and the far-right Alternative für Deutschland – say the existing law enjoys broad acceptance as it stands and offers necessary protection to the unborn.

They argue that, despite being illegal, abortions are accessible, and it is extremely rare for them to lead to prosecutions. If the recommendations are acted upon, they have said they will turn to the constitutional court.

The AfD argues for a tightening of the existing law, saying too many abortions now take place. One of its arguments is that Germany would need fewer migrants if the birthrate was higher.

The report, which was published Monday, emphasized that Germany's existing law was not compatible with international standards and needed to be modernized.

Leaked to some German media last week, the report included the recommendation that by effectively criminalizing any woman who goes ahead with an abortion, the law is untenable.

"The fundamental illegality of abortion in the early stages of pregnancy is not sustainable," it read.

The experts said terminations beyond the stage at which a fetus is deemed able to survive outside the womb, which is generally considered to be about 22 weeks, should remain forbidden.

It said the onus should be on lawmakers to decide on the specific timeframes, recommending that they follow existing medical and ethical guidelines.

The government is under no obligation to accept the commission's advice.

Those pushing for a change in the law say the fact that abortion in the early stages of pregnancy is

included as paragraph 218 of the penal code means a future government could instigate punishments for terminations relatively easily.

With the AfD, which supports tightening the existing law, rising in the polls in recent months, this danger is more pressing, campaigners say.

They have pointed to developments in other countries, such as the United States and neighboring Poland in particular, where abortion rights have become a highly divisive topic, especially since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2022 to abolish the nationwide right to abortion.

On Friday, the Center for Reproductive Rights in Europe welcomed the news that lawmakers in Poland, under Tusk's new liberal government, had taken the first step in relaxing the country's strict abortion rules, including seeking to decriminalize the act.

Supporters of change in Germany have welcomed the initiative by French President Emmanuel Macron for the EU to guarantee a woman's right to abortion in its charter of fundamental rights, and for France to enshrine abortion as a constitutional right.

Lawmakers said the impetus for this initiative was the U.S. Supreme Court decision.

In 2022, a Nazi-era law in Germany that forbade doctors from advertising abortion services was abolished after attempts by anti-abortion activists to push for the prosecution of some gynecologists.

A bill is currently making its way through the Bundestag that, if passed, would outlaw the "intimidation" of people, whether staff or patients, in areas around clinics offering abortion.

**BY Jonathon Van Maren**

### **Category**

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### **Date Created**

04/22/2024