Dear Madame President Zuzana Čaputová,

Dear Speaker of the Slovak National Parliament Boris Kollár,

10 September 2020

As Members of Parliaments from across political parties, we wish to express our deep concern about recent attempts of the Slovakian Parliament to tighten the current abortion law.

Abortion is a time-sensitive matter, women, therefore, need timely and safe access to information and services. **The National Council document, number 154, by prolonging the waiting period, stands in the direct opposition with good medical practice, international human rights, and WHO recommendations.[[1]](#footnote-1)** Additionally, **it infringes upon the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner’s obligations for the Member States to ensure access to abortion care and specifies that any refusal of care on grounds of religion or belief by a medical professional may never be allowed to jeopardise women’s right to access sexual and reproductive health services[[2]](#footnote-2).** The lawwould harm women’s equality, dignity, autonomy, and bodily integrity, restricting their access to information and their rights to private life and health.

These are challenging and uncertain times for all of us in Europe where we as elected politicians must ask our electorate to make difficult and unprecedented sacrifices for the common good. In return, our electorate expects us as politicians to live up to our responsibilities to safeguard their rights and well-being. This includes recognising that sexual and reproductive health and rights, including access to abortion, constitute essential health services and that current governments have a responsibility to protect and thereby ensure women’s continued access to this essential health intervention.

We, therefore, **urge the National Council ruling coalition to respect the fundamental rights of all Slovakians to make autonomous decisions about their own bodies and reproductive abilities, which are at the very core of their fundamental right to equality and privacy concerning intimate matters of physical and psychological integrity, and to refrain from adopting the bill number 154.**

Kind regards, European Parliamentary Forum for

 Sexual & Reproductive Rights (EPF)

Members of Parliaments

**Signatories:**

**Monika** Beňová

1. WHO, *Safe abortion: technical and policy guidance for health systems,* <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/70914/;jsessionid=20462B98841638912FC1B01FBB3D5B4E?sequence=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Council of Europe, Women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights in Europe

<https://rm.coe.int/women-s-sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights-in-europe-issue-pape/168076dead> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)