

Improving access to emergency contraception

Cristina Puig Borràs

European Consortium for Emergency Contraception (ECEC)

14th FIAPAC Conference

Riga, 9th of September 2022



Declaration of competing interests

To date, ECEC has received support from:

- Gedeon Richter
- HRA Pharma
- MagnaPharm
- European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health (ESC)
- International Consortium for Emergency Contraception (ICEC)
- World Health Organization / UN Commission on Life Saving Commodities for Women and Children

Outline

1. About ECEC
2. Overview of access to emergency contraception in Europe
3. Strategies and initiatives that overcome barriers
 - Regulatory
 - Cost
 - Objection to dispense EC
 - Point of access

1. About ECEC

Founded in 2012, ECEC's mission is:

- To expand **knowledge** about and **access** to emergency contraception (EC) in European countries
- To promote the standardization of EC service delivery in the European context

ECEC is a partner of ICEC: www.cecinfo.org



Some of our activities:

- Community of Practice (listserv)
- Database of EC access
- Guidelines, educational materials and counselling tools
- Advocacy

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Expanding knowledge and access to
Emergency Contraception in Europe

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About ECEC

Emergency Contraception in Europe

- What is Emergency Contraception?
- Emergency Contraception
- Availability in Europe
- Country-by-Country Information
- Albania
- Andorra
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- Republic of North Macedonia
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary

Latvia

Emergency contraception (EC) is available in Latvia: local pharmacies distribute LMU EC and since June 2015 UPA EC. LMU EC is not subsidised or covered by social security and is not included in national policies for family planning.

- Sexual & reproductive health background information
- Accessibility & prescription status
- Cost
- Guidelines & common practices
- EC use

Sexual & reproductive health background information

	MEAN AGE	% USE OF COITAL
PERALS	20.7	100%
MEAN AGE AT SEX	17.2	17.2%
POPULATION	2,372,127	1.64%
PERCENT FERTILITY CONTRACEPTIVE USE	55.5%	

Estimated: 44,246¹

Year: 2015 2011 2004 2014 1995

Accessibility & prescription status

In Latvia, LMU and UPA EC are available behind the counter from pharmacies, which means that EC is available without a prescription but it is not on the shelves and needs to be requested in order to purchase. According to national authorities, since 2015, UPA EC has been approved to be sold without a prescription from pharmacies, but the product was not available in the country until June 2017.

Featured

also in Ukraine, European Parliament will be moving across to emergency contraception for women pharmacists in May 2016

May 2016: On May 19th, the European Parliament adopted a resolution that strongly condemns the use of sexual and gender-based violence.

Read More

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Emergency contraception
A guideline for service provision in Europe
SECOND EDITION
May 2016

Emergency contraception methods

Method may be used.

Method can generally be used but more effective method is recommended if available and/or additional remarks should be considered.

Method not recommended and/or further assessment by a clinician required.

About ECEC

ACCESS TO EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (EC) METHODS AND INFORMATION IS A HUMAN RIGHT

EC information and services based in human rights values:

- ✓ do not discriminate against anyone
- ✓ are available
- ✓ are accessible and affordable
- ✓ are person-centred and acceptable to all
- ✓ are of the highest quality
- ✓ facilitate informed decision-making
- ✓ guarantee privacy and confidentiality.

**Is this how access to EC looks
in your community?**



american society for
emergency contraception



<http://americansocietyforec.org/>



European Society for
Emergency Contraception

<http://ecae-la.org>



ECEC

European Consortium for
Emergency Contraception

www.ec-ed.org



International Consortium for
Emergency Contraception

www.cecinfo.org/

Based on:

World Health Organization, Framework for ensuring human rights in the provision of contraceptive information and services (Geneva, 2014)



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2. Access to EC in Europe

Contraception Atlas - March 2020

Availability of emergency contraception without prescription



■ Yes (legal) ■ Yes (illegal) ■ No

EC pills are directly available from pharmacies in all EU countries, except Hungary and Poland (still Rx).

Malta approved EC registration in 2016 (OTC).



Source: European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights; <https://www.epfweb.org/european-contraception-atlas>



If you want to know more:



This publication summarizes EC availability up to December 2021 and covers all European countries except Iceland, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Republic of Kosovo, San Marino, Turkmenistan and the Vatican City State. Data includes:

- Registration status of LNG, UPA and mifepriston ECPs (OTC/BTC /Rx)
- Average sale price / gratuity
- Availability of updated EC guidelines
- Data on EC use and knowledge
- Recent changes in accessibility policies

ECEC, 2022. <https://www.ec-ec.org/resources/publications/>



Most prevalent access modality: Pharmacy access (or *Behind-The-Counter*)

United Kingdom



Picture by C.Puig (2022)

Over-The-Counter access only in Netherlands, Norway and Sweden

Sweden



Picture by N. Envall (2018)

Norway



Picture by M. Johansen (2019)

3. Strategies and initiatives to improve access

Barriers:

- Regulatory
- Cost
- Objection to dispense EC
- Point of access

Regulatory 1: EU

- In Nov 2014, EMA approves availability of UPA ECPs without prescription.
- The centralized process makes UPA ECPs available in most EU countries overnight, including Germany, Croatia, Italy, (and Poland, temporarily).



Regulatory 2: Malta

Sunday, June 19, 2016, 19:21

Promoters of morning-after pill legalisation ready to take battle to European Court



Lara Dimitrijevic and Andreana Dibben. Photo: Chris Sant Fournier

Following a judicial protest by the Women's Rights Foundation against the State demanding the licensing, importation and distribution of emergency contraception, members **Lara Dimitrijevic** and **Andreana Dibben** tell Claire Caruana why legalising the 'morning-after' pill is crucial to protecting women's fundamental rights and how far they are willing to go to make this happen.

Regulatory 3: Andorra

Escaldes-Engordany

El Govern rectifica i la píndola de l'endemà ja no requereix recepta

Els col·lectius de dones celebren el canvi i reclamen que es revisi la llei de medicaments de l'any 1977

Per **Lídia Raventós, Lara Ribas**

Publicat el Dijous, 7 de juny de 2018 | 02:30 h

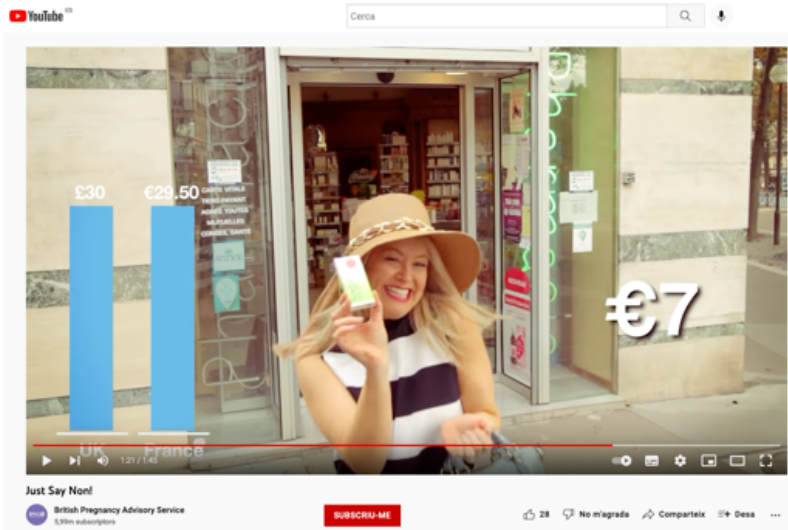


Més populars

1. **Un camioner mort a la C-1**
2. **El Grup Pyrénées impulsar major al Punt de Trobada**
3. **40 pacients es beneficien i intervenció**
4. **«Treballar en un lloc petit r**



Cost 1: UK



BPAS
@BPAS1968

🎉 Today's news that @BootsUK have lowered the cost of emergency contraception is very welcome, however it's long overdue...

Here's how we got to today's win @DianaJohnsonMP @RoseStokes

I Went to Paris and Back to Buy the Morning After Pill Because It Was Cheaper Than Buying It in the UK

The "sexist surcharge" on the morning after pill means it can cost about £35 in the UK – but it's only €5 in France.

NOV 2016

BPAS launches campaign for accessible, affordable emergency contraception - highlighting that the same medication being sold in the UK for £30 is less than €5

1:39 | 279 views



Cost 2: Belgium



Belgium introduces free morning after pills to all women

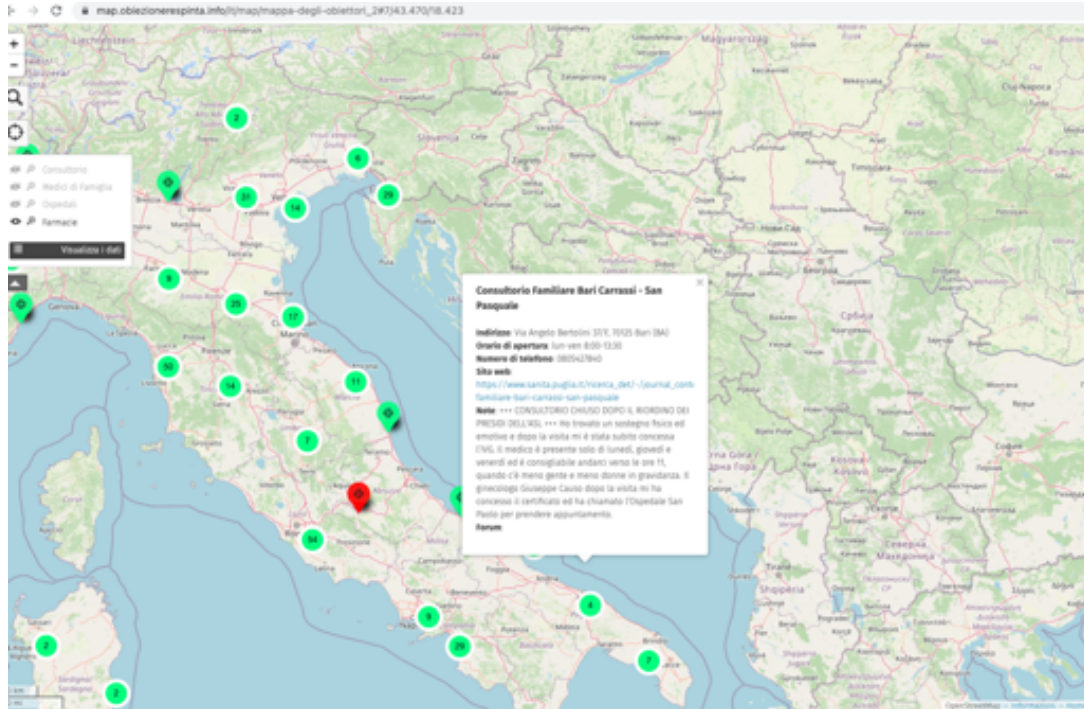
Saturday, 22 February 2020



© belga

The Belgian Federal government approved a royal decree that expanded the reimbursement of contraceptives and the morning after pill, Health minister Maggie De Block announced on Friday.

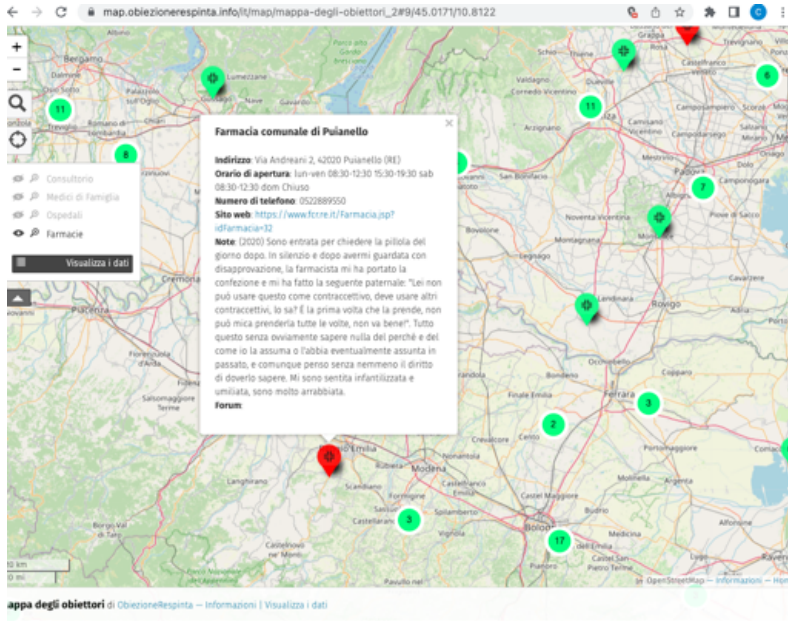
Objection 1: Italy



<https://map.obiezionerospinta.info/>



“I requested the morning after pill and they were very kind and professional. I bought it without any problem! When asked for the morning-after pill, the pharmacist didn't flinch and I didn't feel any kind of embarrassment. He just asked for an identification document and without a prescription he immediately provided the pill.”

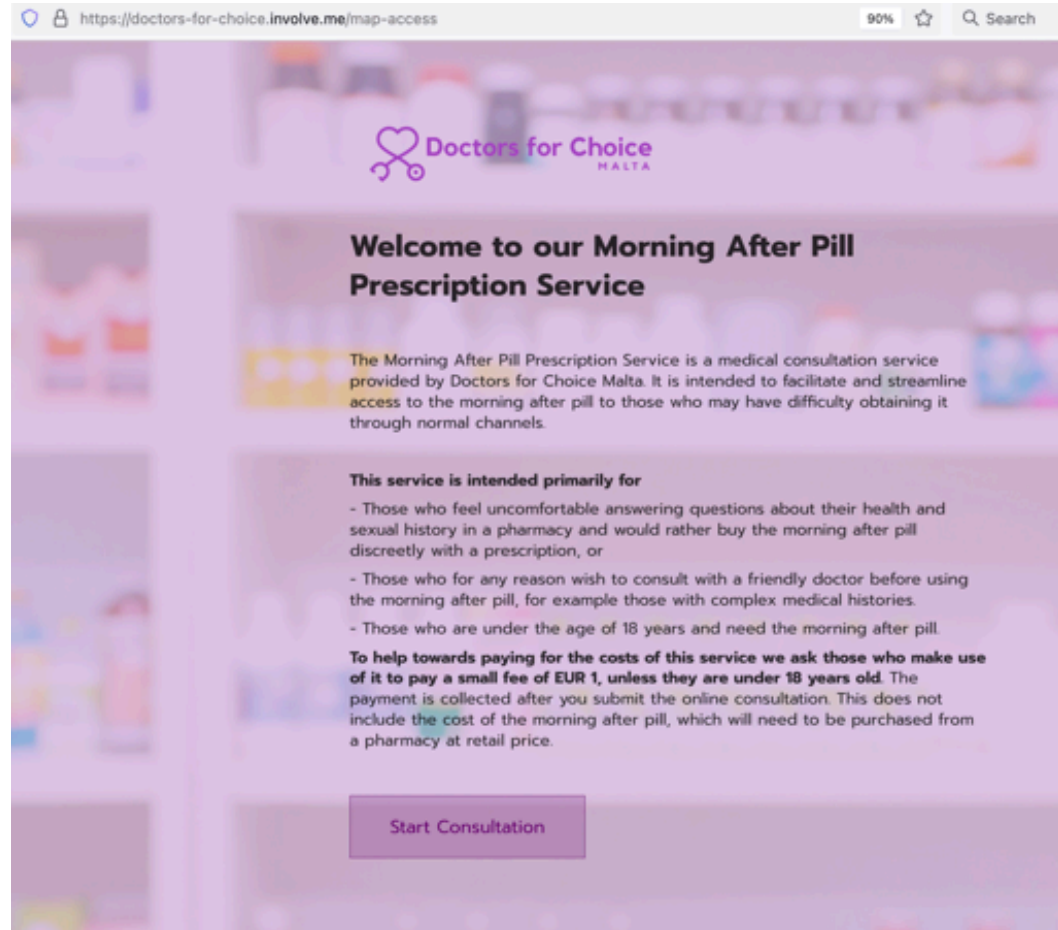


"I went in to ask for the morning after pill. Silently and after looking at me with disapproval, the pharmacist brought me the package and gave me the following lecture: "You can't use this as a contraceptive, you have to use other contraceptives, do you know? You can't take it all the time, it's not good! ". All this obviously without knowing anything about why and how I take it or have possibly taken it in the past, and in any case I think without even having the right to know. I felt childish and humiliated, I am very angry."

<https://map.obiezionerespinta.info/>



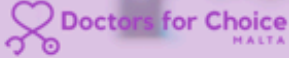
Objection 2: Malta



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://doctors-for-choice.involve.me/map-access>. The page features the logo for Doctors for Choice MALTA, which consists of a purple heart with a stethoscope around it. Below the logo, the heading reads "Welcome to our Morning After Pill Prescription Service". The main text explains that the service is a medical consultation provided by Doctors for Choice Malta to facilitate access to the morning after pill. It lists three primary groups: those uncomfortable with pharmacy questions, those with complex medical histories, and those under 18. A note states that users must pay a small fee of EUR 1 (except for those under 18) after an online consultation. A purple button labeled "Start Consultation" is visible at the bottom.

<https://doctors-for-choice.involve.me/map-access>

90% ☆ 🔍 Search

 **Doctors for Choice**
MALTA

Welcome to our Morning After Pill Prescription Service

The Morning After Pill Prescription Service is a medical consultation service provided by Doctors for Choice Malta. It is intended to facilitate and streamline access to the morning after pill to those who may have difficulty obtaining it through normal channels.

This service is intended primarily for

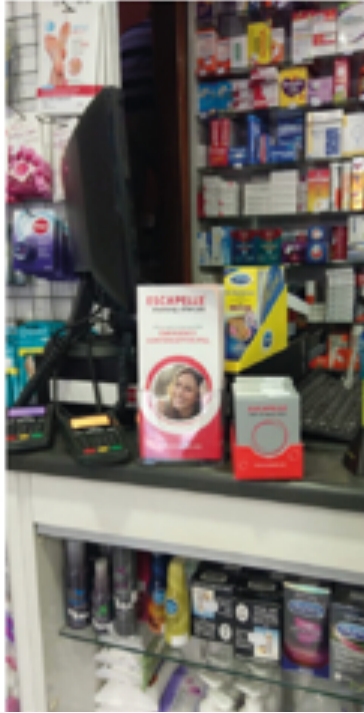
- Those who feel uncomfortable answering questions about their health and sexual history in a pharmacy and would rather buy the morning after pill discreetly with a prescription, or
- Those who for any reason wish to consult with a friendly doctor before using the morning after pill, for example those with complex medical histories.
- Those who are under the age of 18 years and need the morning after pill.

To help towards paying for the costs of this service we ask those who make use of it to pay a small fee of EUR 1, unless they are under 18 years old. The payment is collected after you submit the online consultation. This does not include the cost of the morning after pill, which will need to be purchased from a pharmacy at retail price.

[Start Consultation](#)

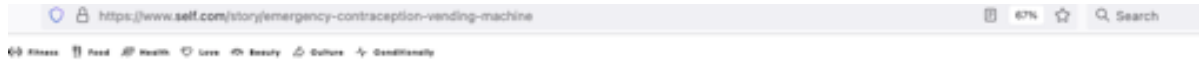
<https://doctors-for-choice.involve.me/map-access>

Point of access 1: Malta



One distributor displays LNG ECPs on the counter, in those pharmacies that “are comfortable” with this practice.

Point of access 2: USA



How to Get an Emergency Contraception Vending Machine on Your College Campus

From students who made it happen on theirs.

By Rebecca Lohr
August 11, 2020



Copyright: Photo: via Getty Images

Emergency Contraception for Every Campus (EC4EC) works with student activists on campuses across the United States to expand access to EC on campus. Two primary ways that student activists promote EC access on campus are:

- Advocating for an EC Vending Machine
- Peer-to-peer distribution of EC

<https://www.ec4ec.org/>



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Conclusions:

- Different contexts and situations require different strategies; however, some strategies may be replicable in our countries.
- Different players can have a key role in advancing access: pharma companies and distributors; women's rights organizations, scientific societies, and grassroot groups; members of parliament, governments and NGOs.
- Yes, we can!

Ending remarks

- Join us tomorrow at the Senates Hall during lunch for a casual conversation on EC (Sep 10th, from 12h45 to 13h45).
- To join the ECEC community of practice, contact cpuig@eeirh.org
- Visit our website www.ec-ec.org
- Please share your campaigns and strategies to improve access to EC with our community. We have a lot to learn from each other.

Thank you!