

## The FIAPAC Newsletter, October 2016

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### **Editorial.**

Dear members,

It is now just a couple of days until we meet in Lisbon for the 12th international meeting of FIAPAC. The program looks exciting and promises stimulating sessions for all delegates.

We have had a total of 550 number of delegates registered so far. We are also delighted to have received over 150 abstracts, which have been of superb quality and 32 have been selected for oral presentations. There will be prizes for the best poster and oral presentation and we will also be announcing the winner of the FIAPAC/ Exelgyn research grant.

Looking forward to seeing you all in lovely Lisbon very soon!

Best wishes,

Sharon Cameron  
FIAPAC President



# Polish War on Women

**Warsaw, September 30**

In recent months, social protests have taken place in many parts of Poland, provoked by the draft legislation proposed by radical anti-choice groups Ordo Iuris (the drafter of the law) and Pro Foundation, strongly supported by the Roman Catholic Church and its structures, which collected almost 0.5 million signatures.

The law proposes a complete ban on abortion, even if a woman's life at risk, and criminalizes women who undergo abortions. In response, an alternative pro-choice law was drafted by the Save the Women Committee to liberalize already very restrictive Polish legislation to allow abortion on request to the 12 th week of pregnancy. This attracted about 250 000 signatures. The Parliament decided to proceed with the repressive draft, while simultaneously rejecting the liberal law. This outrageous decision strengthened the grass-roots street actions and protests. Women, together with male supporters, are mobilizing and expressing their anger at the repression of women's rights and autonomy.

*'The law proposes a complete ban on abortion, even if a woman's life at risk, and criminalizes women who undergo abortions.'*

The day after I wrote this article, another demonstration #BlackProtest was organized in Warsaw and other cities. On 3rd October the Women's Strike was announced similar to Icelandic Women Strike of the 70ties. The action, initiated in a short notice and proposed by famous Polish actress Krystyna Janda, does not allow for mass mobilization, but we expect that many people to take part in it.

Despite all these protests opposition to abortion does not stop. Anti-choice campaigners try to restrict in vitro fertilization and a recent draft of the Bill has been proposed to ban emergency contraception and the abortion pill. The war against women continues. Despite all the protests, the restrictions will become the binding law soon. We fear the anti-women forces are very resourceful and getting stronger.

*Wanda Nowicka, Poland*

## **FIAPAC Statement**

**- In solidarity with women in Poland the FIAPAC steering committee issued the following statement to coincide with the strike 3 October 2016 -**

As an international organisation that represents those working in contraception and abortion care in 31 countries around the world, FIAPAC is appalled by the decision taken by the Polish Government to further restrict abortion in Poland. The country already has one of the most restrictive laws in Europe, which causes women to travel abroad, buy medication from the internet and pay for clandestine procedures.

We stand with the women in Poland who are protesting against this laws and pledge to provide whatever help we can, in our own countries, to support Polish women's need for abortion and to urge the Government to step back from implementing a barbaric law. Women need safe and legal abortion as early as possible and as late as necessary.

# Lisbon Conference

## 13-15 October 2016

### Programme update:

[www.fiapac.org/media/uploads/fiapac-programme-website-v6.pdf](http://www.fiapac.org/media/uploads/fiapac-programme-website-v6.pdf)

### Conference venue:

Culturgest  
Edifício Sede da Caixa Geral de Depósitos  
Rua Arco do Cego 50, Piso 1  
1000-300 Lisboa  
<http://www.culturgest.pt/arquivo/2012/docs/culturgest.pdf>

### Registration desk:

Please ensure that you bring identification (credit card or passport or ID card etc) to obtain your registration pack.

- Thursday, 13 October, 12:00 - 17:00 (pre-congress session participants only)
- Friday, 14 October, 08:00 - 17:00
- Saturday, 15 October, 08:30 - 17:00

### Social programme:

#### *Networking corners*

Friday, 14 October (12:45 – 14:00) – Saturday, 15 October (12:30 – 14:00)

To enable attendees to meet each other and share thoughts, we have arranged two networking corners in the exhibit during lunch time. On a poster there will be some questions about issues covered in the plenary sessions. These questions may help trigger off dialogues with colleagues working in the same field of interest as you but in different settings. Or you may just want to start a conversation about your own professional interests.

#### *Conference dinner*

Friday, 14 October, 20:00

Address: Cultural Centre de Belém, Praça do Império, 1449-003 Lisboa, Portugal

Transport: The buses will leave from the entrance of Culturgest (conference venue) at 19:30 for the Cultural Centre de Belém. Return transfer will be foreseen.

#### *Farewell drink*

Saturday, 15 October, 17:45



"Improving women's  
journeys through  
abortion"

13.-15. October 2016,  
Lisbon, Portugal

## FIAPAC at ESC Congress in Basel



The European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health (ESC) invited FIAPAC to organise a session at their Congress in Basel. The session took place on 6 May 2016 and was very well attended.

The programme was as follows:

### *The good, the bad and the ugly*

*Chairs: S. Rowlands (UK) - T. Bombas (Portugal)*

*The good news: simplified abortion - K. Gemzell Danielsson (Sweden)*

*The bad news: still restricted access to abortion - C. Fiala (Austria)*

*The ugly news: delayed presentation - S. Cameron (UK)*

The logo for Exelgyn, featuring the word 'Exelgyn' in a green, sans-serif font. The 'E' is stylized with a diagonal slash through it.

## FIAPAC / Exelgyn grant

Exelgyn, in partnership with FIAPAC, provided funding to support an individual, group, institute or organisation with a project within Europe related to the aims and scope of the Exelgyn/FIAPAC project “Improving the quality of life for women having a medical abortion”. The Exelgyn/FIAPAC committee has approved the grant (10.000 euro) to the following project:

### **MedAbb**

**Short description:** Many women experience anxiety as a result from pain and bleeding when using home-use, despite having received guidance. We will create a smartphone app to support women during home-use, especially when MTOP is carried out by less specialized providers.

**Applicant:** Jana Maeffert (Germany)



## General Assembly 2016

Paid up FIAPAC members are cordially invited to attend the FIAPAC General Assembly (GA), which will take place on Friday 14 October 2016 from 17:45 - 19:15.

### Place of the meeting:

Culturgest (Main Auditorium), Rua Arco do Cego 50 Piso 1, 1000-300 Lisbon, Portugal.

### Agenda

#### Welcome address (S. Cameron)

#### Report by the Secretary (N. Martens)

- o Minutes of last GA meeting 2014
- o Membership report
- o Newsletter and website
- o FIAPAC grant
- o Statutes
- o Miscellaneous

#### Treasurer Report (C. Fiala)

- o Final report 2014 and 2015
- o Final report Ljubljana Congress 2015
- o Membership fee 2017

#### Board Elections and Mandates 2016 - 2020 (S. Cameron – N. Martens)

- o Presentation of the results of the voting

#### 2018 Congress bids

#### Agenda items requested by members

#### Any other Business

#### Date of next meeting

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## Board election 2016

For the first time, Board elections have been organised prior to the General Assembly (GA). In this way, all members were able to vote – present or not at the time of the GA.

- 15 August was the reference point at which the number of members per country was calculated to determine the number of board representatives for each country. Each country may have one representative in the Board if they have five paid-up members; two representatives if a country has twenty or more paid-up members.
- Members of the following countries needed to vote: Australia, Belgium, France, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and The Netherlands.
- 15 September was the closing date for applications.
- 16 September: countries were informed on the candidates, followed by e-voting.
- 14 October: the new Board will be announced formally at General Assembly in Lisbon

## Deborah Bateson, Australia

Australia is made up of 8 states and territories each with its own abortion legislation. While the patchwork of laws can make access to abortion challenging for all women, these challenges are magnified many times over for those living in the rural and remote areas of our large country. Access to abortion through public hospitals is extremely limited and it was hoped that the introduction of medical abortion in 2012, with the possibility of provision by credentialed General Practitioners, would improve options for women.

Unfortunately, this has not translated into reality with few GPs taking up training due to real or perceived barriers to becoming an abortion provider. However, Australians are nothing if not innovative and new models of home-based MTOP service delivery utilising telemedicine have been set up to potentially serve the needs of women across rural as well as urban areas where legally permitted.

In November of this year the multidisciplinary Australasian Sexual Health Alliance Conference in Adelaide will play host to several abortion-related sessions exploring these issues.

If you happen to be in Australia in November do join us!

*“Australians are nothing if not innovative and new models of home-based MTOP service delivery utilising telemedicine have been set up”*

## Nausikaa Martens, Belgium

In Belgium, several political parties from the opposition made proposals for a change in the abortion law. In short, four different parties put forward **proposals to decriminalize abortion, and to extend the limit of gestational age** in which an abortion can be performed.

These are of course only proposals, it's still a long road before something will really change. But of course it is positive some politicians in Belgium are ready to work on this.

## Helena Kopp Kallner, Sweden

The Swedish government has decided to withdraw the exemption of abortion related diagnosis from the national registry of diagnosis that includes all diagnoses made in Swedish Healthcare.

This will enable a **national follow up on abortion related complications and follow up on contraception after abortion**. It will also enable research on contraception before and after an abortion and short and long term follow up of women who have had an abortion.



## Bpas launches free telephone aftercare helpline

*Abigail Fitzgibbon, Head of Advocacy and Campaigns, British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas)*

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas) has launched a free telephone aftercare helpline for women in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the Isle of Man who have bought abortion medication online. Access to abortion services in these areas is currently highly restricted, meaning women who cannot travel for abortion treatment have no choice but to break the law and order pills over the internet.

The confidential nurse-led telephone service will offer advice to women who have obtained pills from the online not-for-profit clinics run by Women Help Women (WHW) and Women on Web (WOW) and who are concerned about any symptoms or simply want to speak to someone. bpas knows these organisations provide the same high quality, safe medications to women who are up to 10 weeks pregnant that are provided from bpas clinics. While adverse events are extremely unlikely, bpas is concerned that because they are committing an illegal act, women may not always seek help when they need it.

WHW and WOW already provide women with comprehensive information about what to expect, and when to seek help. The bpas aftercare telephone line provides another option for those women who wish to speak to someone, or who need immediate help. Women will be able to seek reassurance on the telephone about levels of bleeding, what to do if it appears nothing has happened, and when care should be accessed urgently. On the very rare occasion we believe emergency help is required, we will also call an ambulance. If you have any questions please get in touch: [policy@bpas.org](mailto:policy@bpas.org)

Aftercare helpline numbers

From Ireland: 1800 910 049

From Northern Ireland: 0800 077 6049

From the Isle of Man: 0800 077 6049



***Abortion rights advocates call on the United Nations to make International Safe Abortion Day, 28 September, an official UN day***

[Full text of open letter](#)

[Press release](#)

Marge Berer, International Coordinator,  
International Campaign for Women's Rights  
to Safe Abortion, London, UK

All materials to be included in the FIAPAC Newsletter should be submitted (electronically) to: [admin@fiapac.org](mailto:admin@fiapac.org)  
FIAPAC Central Office, p/a Orga-Med Congress Office, Opalfeneweg 3, 1740 Ternat, Belgium.

**Chief Editor:** Nausikaä Martens (Belgium)