



European Women Lawyers Association

The Voice of Women Lawyers Across Europe

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PRESS RELEASE

EWLA supports #BREAKTHESILENCE initiative (#PREKINIMOŠUTNJU) in Croatia

The speech by a female Member of the Croatian Parliament about an excruciating and traumatic experience of a surgical miscarriage procedure without anaesthesia has encouraged women in Croatia to publicly speak about the inhuman and inadequate treatment they have experienced in medical institutions during pregnancy and childbirth.

The initiative #BREAKTHESILENCE (#PREKINIMOŠUTNJU) has invited all women in Croatia to share their own stories about medical malpractices and mistreatments they have experienced during pregnancy and childbirth. The purpose of the initiative is to alert the community about the existing problems and to force the government authorities to make urgent changes with respect to women's reproductive health care in Croatia.

Within only a few days, hundreds of women sent letters describing the painful and degrading medical treatments they had experienced. The initiative has also been extended to Croatia's neighbouring countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia.

EWLA's standpoint is that women should have the right to a quality, equitable and dignified health care, particularly with respect to their reproductive health. Women have the right to be informed and the right to decide about their medical treatment, as well as the right to human and professional treatment by medical personnel. Government authorities do have the particular obligation to undertake measures to improve women health care services in order to protect women's health and to ensure their respect and dignity.

EWLA President, Katharina Miller states: "EWLA stands with those brave women in Croatia that decided to break the silence. #BREAKTHESILENCE (#PREKINIMOŠUTNJU) is a great example of how civil society and especially women have impact on democracy within European Union. 2019 is a very important year for European Union and we want to invite all women and men to make their voices heard at the elections in May."

The European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) is registered in Belgium as an international non-governmental, non-profit, association (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif). It is a federation of national women lawyers associations from amongst the European Union countries and those of EFTA countries. Members of EWLA are also individual women lawyers and academics from these countries. EWLA pursues the co-operation of European women lawyers, in order to combine their specific expertise in monitoring law and politics seen from the angle of fundamental rights, and in particular gender equality.

The European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) is registered in Belgium as an International Non-profit Association (AISBL)

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