

## HEALTH

## German 'abortion drone' to drop pills to Polish women

By **Eilish O'Gara** 6/23/15 at 3:29 PM

A women's rights group are planning to fly a drone carrying abortion medication across the border from Germany to Poland on Saturday morning to distribute the pills to Polish women who have severely restricted access to terminations.

The 'abortion drone' is being sent by not-for-profit organisation Women on Waves, which distributes medical abortion pills to women all over the world.

After taking off from Frankfurt in Germany at 11am, it will drop the pills in Słubice in Poland on the country's border with Germany, where women's groups will distribute them to women on the ground, according to the organisation's [website](#).

Abortion laws in Poland have been severely restricted since 1993. Women are allowed to have an abortion if they are a victim of rape, incest, if the fetus is severely damaged or poses a significant risk to the health of the mother. According to a recent UN report, there are over **50,000** dangerous, underground abortions being carried out in the country each year.

Dr Rebecca Gomperts, founder and director of Dutch-based organisation Women on Waves is keen to stress that the project will not be breaking the law because although those who perform abortions in Poland can be prosecuted, women are not criminalised for taking the abortion pill. The drone will not fly into any controlled airspace, meaning no authorization is required for the flight under Polish or German law.

Gomperts says this means "the drone can deliver the medication directly to women in Poland who need it, safely".

She adds that taking the abortion pill, which is free and available to women under nine weeks pregnant in Germany, "will not result in any criminalization of women, even if they have to seek medical help should complications during the termination".

But Gomperts admits that the main purpose of the drone is symbolic. "We are only looking at a few women at the moment, combining the delivery of legal services whilst also hoping to raise awareness of the social injustice experienced by women in countries where abortion is illegal."

A **poll** carried out by Poland's Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) in 2013 found that 75% of Poles believe that abortion is "not justifiable under any circumstances".

If Saturday's drone's mission is a success, Gompert's says the project could be expanded to regular drops, and says that the project may also be expanded to the Republic of Ireland, where women can only have abortions if their lives are known to be under serious risk from their unborn fetus. However, this could cause difficulties because women can be prosecuted in Ireland for having an abortion.

The abortion pills the drone is carrying, mifepristone and misoprostol, have been approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and can be taken by women in the first nine nine weeks of pregnancy, **causing** women to experience the same symptoms and results as a spontaneous miscarriage.

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