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Abortion Drone to take cross-border flight in Ireland

by [Elaine Burke](#)

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The Abortion Drone awaiting its first flight from Germany to Poland in 2015. Photo via Women on Waves



Pro-choice groups will leverage drone and e-health legislation to stage an Abortion Drone demonstration across the border of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

At 10am tomorrow (21 June), a drone will travel from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland with supplies of abortion pills. Dubbed 'The Abortion Drone', the flight has been planned to demonstrate the flaws in abortion regulation in both countries.

The Abortion Drone comes from a collaboration between Alliance for Choice, Rosa, Labour Alternative and Women on Waves, which released a statement to say that this is "an all-island act of solidarity between women in the north and the south to highlight the violation of human rights caused by the existing laws that criminalise abortion... except in very limited circumstances".

Though this is true of abortion legislation across the island, the group has determined that a drone flight supplying abortion pills from the Republic to Northern Ireland is perfectly legal.

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How is the Abortion Drone legal?

A medical abortion (that is, one that does not require surgery) can be obtained by taking an oral preparation containing abortifacient pharmaceutical drugs, commonly known as abortion pills. The medicines used for a non-surgical abortion – mifepristone and misoprostol – have been on the list of essential medicines of the World Health Organisation (WHO) since 2005 and both are authorised medications in the UK.

In the Republic of Ireland, misoprostol is [authorised by the Health Products Regulatory Authority](#) (HPRA) and can be obtained through prescription at a chemist or pharmacy, while mifepristone has been granted market authorisation by the European Medical Agency (EMA) and can be imported into the country for personal use.

While the UK's Abortion Act 1967 does not extend to Northern Ireland, UK laws concerning e-health do apply and the drone will contain a legal electronic prescription from an EU-registered doctor along with the medicines. Additionally, the person receiving the drone is importing the medicines for personal use, which is also permitted under UK legislation.

Because the Abortion Drone is not being used for any commercial purposes, and will stay within sight of the person flying it and out of any controlled airspace, no authorisation is required from the Irish Aviation Authority or the UK's Civil Aviation Authority.

This is the second time Amsterdam-based organisation [Women on Waves](#) has been involved in such action, having flown an Abortion Drone from Germany to Poland last summer. The [original flight](#) took months of planning and, at the time, Women on Waves founder and director Rebecca Gomperts was considering bringing the project to Ireland.

Planned protest

The Abortion Drone will start its journey at 10am tomorrow (21 June) near Cornamucklagh House in the Republic of Ireland. Following the flight, a protest is planned in front of the Court of Appeal in Belfast at 2.30pm, at which time an appeal on the High Court's decision that Northern Ireland's abortion law breaches the

European Convention on Human Rights will be heard.

The Belfast High Court ruled that laws governing abortion in Northern Ireland are in breach of Article 8 of the Convention and, earlier this month, the UN Committee found the Republic of Ireland’s abortion laws in violation of human rights and called on the country to “amend its law on voluntary termination of pregnancy”.

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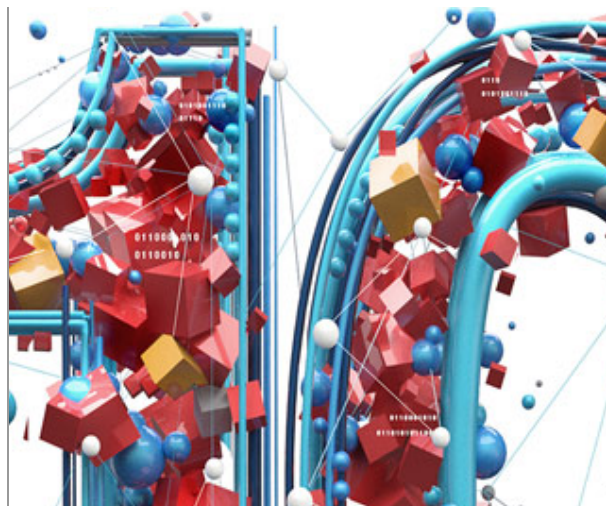
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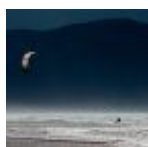
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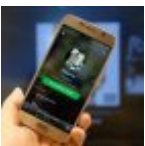


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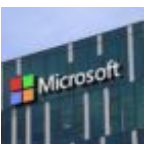
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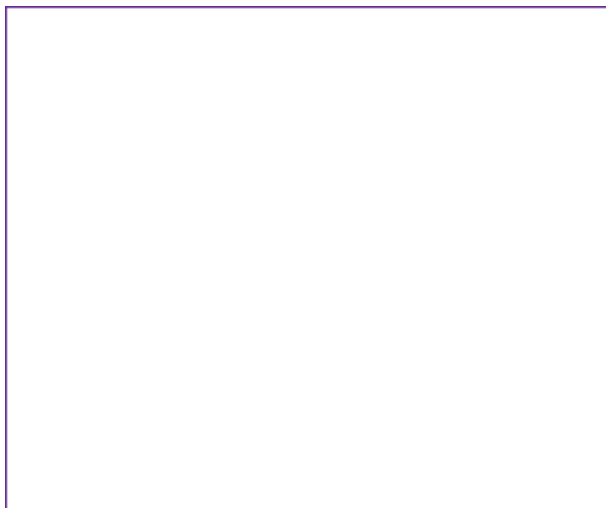
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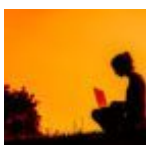


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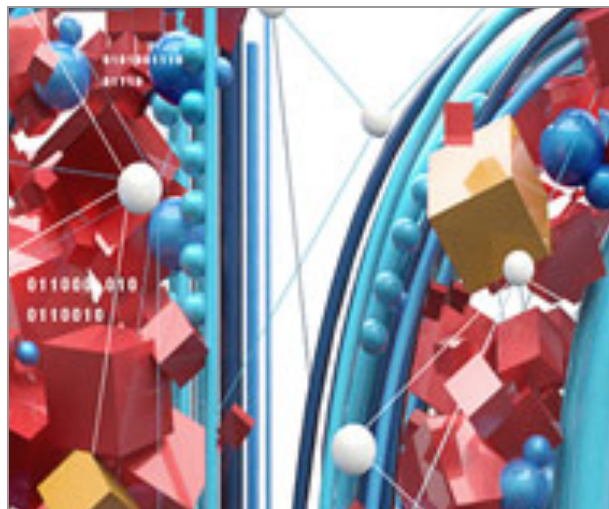
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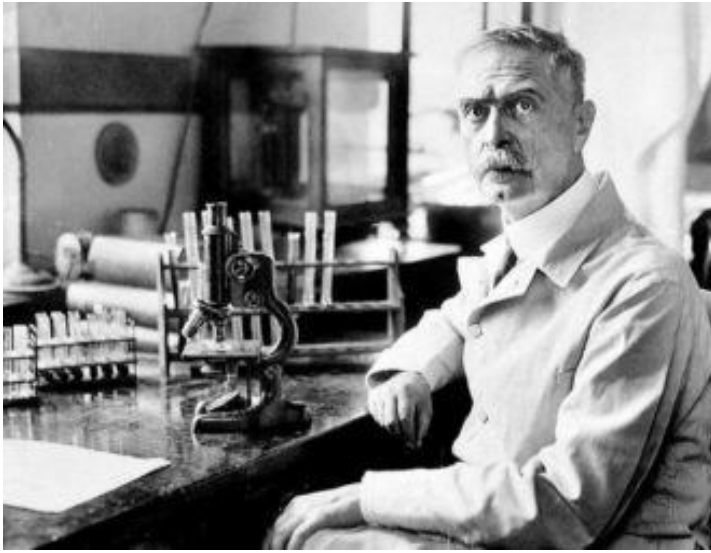
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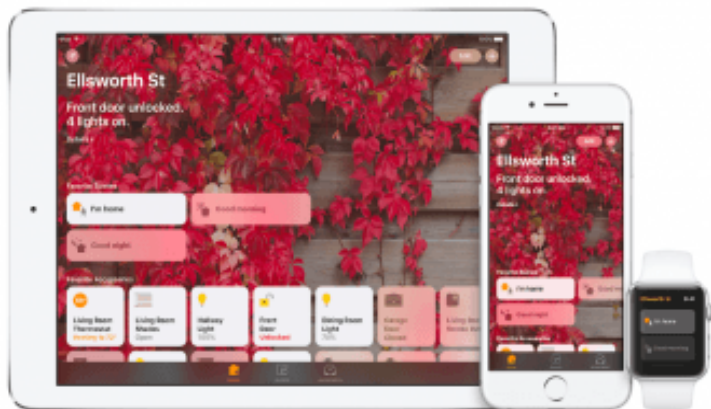
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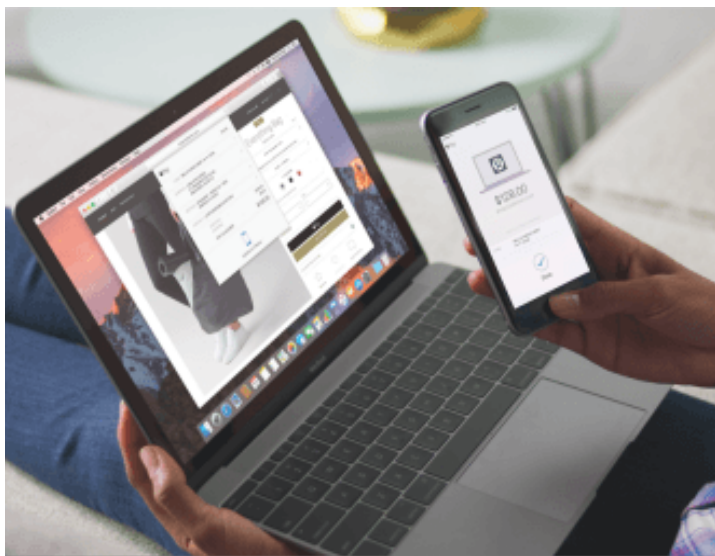
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