

Question for written answer E-001198/2023/rev.1
to the Commission
Rule 138
Robert Biedroń (S&D)

Subject: Addressing misuse of the conscience clause leading to denial of the right to abortion

The media recently reported on a pregnant woman raped by her uncle. The woman was refused an abortion, even though abortion procedures on these grounds remain legal in Poland. To justify this decision the doctor cited the conscience clause¹.

Parliament has urged the Member States to implement effective regulatory and enforcement measures to address misuse of the conscience clause², given that all patients have the right to appropriate medical care without personal beliefs interfering with access.

Failing to provide essential health services, including abortion, based on personal beliefs may amount to discriminatory practice that endangers women's lives and rights. In Poland this is particularly important, since the de facto abortion ban imposed in 2020 severely limits access to abortion.

Considering this:

1. What is the Commission's position on misuse of the conscience clause, which can result in the breach of the patient's right to healthcare?
2. Since sexual and reproductive health and rights are part of the EU's health strategy, what initiatives has the Commission planned to address misuse of the conscience clause, which can lead to complete denial of abortion services?

Submitted: 13.4.2023

¹ <https://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/7,35241,29451365,tylko-w-wyborczej-ciotka-zgwalconej-24-latki-niedzielski.html>.

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0314_EN.html.