

The Council of Europe Should Work for Women's Rights

For the Universal Abolition of Surrogacy
Rally Tuesday 15th March 2016 from 10:30 am to 12 noon
In front of the Office of the Council of Europe
55 avenue Kléber, Paris 16ème (metro Boissière)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which adopts resolutions and formulates recommendations that the 47 members of the organization must take into account, requested a report on 'Human rights and ethical issues related to surrogacy'. On March 15th, the Committee of Social Affairs of the PACE meets in Paris, in camera, to adopt the report, which will be possibly complemented by a draft resolution and recommendations.

However, the rapporteur, Belgian senator Petra de Sutter has, in our opinion, a conflict of interest with regard to the subject matter.

In fact, this Belgian senator heads the Department of Reproductive Medicine at Ghent University Hospital, which accompanies surrogate mothers in Belgium.

In addition, her department collaborates with the Indian clinic 'Seeds of Innocence', where surrogacy is practiced and which promotes its collaboration with Ms. Sutter as a selling point to its international clients.

We suspect that the report only condemns surrogacy practiced commercially to encourage what is discreetly described as ethical surrogacy. However, the acknowledgement by the instances of the Council of Europe of an 'ethical' or 'regulated' form of surrogacy falsely opposed to 'commercial' surrogacy would be an immense hypocrisy and would only support what is currently happening internationally: the exploitation of human beings for reproductive ends.

Beyond the issue of a conflict of interest, we demand the universal abolition of surrogacy. Democratic societies should as a principle refuse the commodification and the instrumentalization of the human body.

We expect the Council of Europe to defend human rights, in this case the dignity of women and of children.

Surrogacy is contrary to the respect of the rights of the human person

Surrogacy instrumentalizes women's bodies for the individual interests of other people and the commercial interests of medical, legal and business sectors.

What is this 'right to have a child' which is too often put forward to justify the recourse to surrogacy? The current technical possibilities of assisted reproduction can never justify preying on others and exploiting women.

Compassion for those, sterile or not, who yearn for a child, the argument of the 'generosity' and 'altruism' of women, the concept of 'new parental forms' only serve as a fig leaf to a much less glamorous reality: the use for many months of a woman's body, of a human being, for private interests, while that woman is endangered, as pregnancy, birth and all the chemical preparations which are used involve risks.

The question of the contract and the payment of a 'compensation' show clearly that we are dealing with a commercial exchange. In this respect, surrogacy is a 'modern' form of prostitution.

As for the request for regulation, for a so-called 'ethical' form of surrogacy, whereby the conditions of access are fixed no longer by contract but by law, it will in no way eliminate the exploitation of women's bodies.

Rally called by :



coordination des associations
pour le droit à l'avortement
et à la contraception



Signatories of this appeal :

Amicale du nid ; AnA Society for Feminist Analyses, Bucarest ; Bagdam Espace Lesbien - Toulouse ; Cibel ; CNDF - Collectif national pour les droits des femmes ; Collectif et Réseau féministe "Ruptures" ; Collectif Midi-Prénées pour les droits des femmes ; Coordinamento Italiano della Lobby Europea delle Donne ; CQFD / Fierté Lesbienne ; ECICW - CECIF European Centre of the International Council of Women ; ECVF - Elu/es Contre les Violences faites aux Femmes ; ELCEM - Elus Locaux Contre l'Enfance Maltraitée ; Encore féministes ; Femmes migrantes debout ; Femmes solidaires ; FIT - Une Femme un Toit ; FNSF - Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes ; GCdV - Groupe Cadre de Vie ; Images et paroles (association d'artistes féministes) ; L'Assemblée des femmes ; L'Escalier - Solidarité Femmes ; La CLEF - Coordination française pour le lobby européen des femmes ; La LUNE - Strasbourg ; La Marche Mondiale des femmes ; Le CEL - Marseille ; Le Mouvement du Nid ; LEF - Lobby Européen des femmes ; Les chiennes de garde ; Les effronté-e-s ; Libres MarianneS ; LIFPL - Ligue Internationale des Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté ; Maison des femmes de Paris ; No somos vasijas - Espagne ; Pour les droits des femmes du Québec ; Se Non Ora Quando ? Libere - Rome ; SOS sexisme ; Union des Femmes Monégasques ; Zéromacho.