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[IN THE COURTS](#) > [ABORTION](#) > [EUROPE](#) > [NEWS](#)

Croatian Court Reaffirms Constitutionality of Women's Access to Abortion

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(PRESS RELEASE) Today the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia reaffirmed the constitutionality of access to abortion.

The Constitutional Court decision rejected claims made by conservative groups and individuals that allowing women access to abortion on request was unconstitutional. In its decision, the court reaffirmed that women's access to abortion is protected within their constitutional rights to liberty, personality, and privacy.

The Center for Reproductive Rights and the Center for Education, Counselling and Research submitted [amicus briefs](#) to the Constitutional Court that explain how international human rights law, comparative European law and international public health and clinical standards support women's right to access safe and legal abortion.

“We welcome the Constitutional Court’s reaffirmation of Croatian women’s rights to access abortion services,” said Leah Hocht, regional director for Europe at the Center for Reproductive Rights. **“Today’s ruling thwarts an attempt to rollback constitutional recognition of these rights. It is now essential that Croatian authorities ensure that future legislation also guarantees and respects these rights.”**

“We are pleased that the Croatian Constitutional Court confirmed the constitutionality of women’s right to safe and legal abortion,” said Sanja Cesar, Program Manager at the Center for Education, Counselling and Research. **“It is expected that under this Government ultraconservative forces will attempt to severely limit, if not outright prohibit, access to safe abortion. The Croatian**

authorities must not deviate from universal and regional human rights principles and standards that protect the sexual and reproductive rights of women.”

Croatian legislation, adopted in 1978, allows abortion on request within the first 10 weeks of pregnancy and thereafter when a pregnancy is a result of a crime, if there is a risk to a woman's health or life, and in cases of severe fetal impairments. The Court ruled that by allowing women's access to abortion in these circumstances, the law gives effect to women's constitutional rights to privacy, liberty, and personality and complied with international human rights law and comparative European law. As the 1978 law predated the current Croatian Constitution, the Court requested that the Croatian Parliament adopt new legislation within two years.

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