

## **Press Statement**

### **The NCPE supports the legal amendment that will improve women's access to basic healthcare**

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) strongly supports the tabled criminal code amendment that will allow the termination of a pregnancy when the woman's life is in danger.

As the national equality body responsible for discrimination in the sphere of the provision of services on the basis of gender, the NCPE notes that the current legislative imposition of a blanket ban on the termination of pregnancies hinders women's access to a basic, lifesaving, health service. In practice, this means that women can never be sure that the best medical decisions concerning their health and lives will be taken since doctors are bound by an archaic law that does not adequately protect the wellbeing of pregnant women and leads to unnecessary suffering. This serious deficiency was brought to the fore during the recent case of Andrea Prudente who had to be airlifted to Spain in order to receive a basic healthcare service.

Moreover, the NCPE underlines that, in line with established international definitions, norms and practices, there shouldn't be any exception for "mental health" when legally establishing what constitutes a danger to the woman's health and life. Women's mental health is equally important to and inextricably linked to their physical health. Forcing such an exception will not only endanger the health and lives of women with mental health problems, but it will also send the very wrong message that women's mental health is of less significance.

The NCPE also calls for more sensitivity from all social and political actors when discussing the proposed criminal code amendment. Regardless of one's position in the current debate, the experiences of women who went through very challenging and painful times should never be ridiculed or dismissed but rather listened to, respected, valued and given due consideration.

**1<sup>st</sup> December 2022**