Published on *Irish Family Planning Association* (http://www.ifpa.ie)

Abortion: Public Opinion

The dysfunctional way Irish policy makers have dealt with women's need for abortion in Ireland can give the impression that the abortion issue is somehow different in Ireland and perpetuates the myth that it is too sensitive, too controversial a topic for debate.

This is not the case. Women and girls need access to safe abortion services in every country around the world and Ireland is no different. And agreeing on legislation and regulations on abortion is always politically sensitive, controversial and difficult regardless of whether you live in Canada, Sweden or Zambia.

In the last decade there has been a significant shift in public attitudes towards abortion. Opinion polls and research consistently show increased support for access to abortion within Ireland.

- In **April 2015**, a Sunday Independent/ Millward Brown poll found that 70% of people surveyed supported abortion where there is a medical risk to a woman's life other than suicide. 63% of people supported abortion in cases of fatal foetal anomaly, while 60% were in favour of abortion in cases where a woman is suicidal.
- In **October 2014**, an Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI poll found that 68% of people surveyed were in favour of a referendum to be held on whether or not to allow for abortion in cases of rape and fatal foetal anomaly.
- In **September 2014**, a Sunday Independent/ Millward Brown poll found that of those who expressed an opinion, over 75% of people surveyed were in favour of holding a referendum to repeal the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution. 69% of respondents believed abortion should be allowed in cases of rape, while 68% were in favour of abortion where there is a threat to the long-term health of a woman.
- In **June 2013**, an Irish Times/ Ipsos MRBI poll fiound that 75% of people surveyed were in favour of the Government decision to introduce legislation to give effect to the X case judgment, which provides for abortion in circumstances where a woman's life is at risk, including the threat of suicide.
- Also in **June 2013**, a Sunday Independent/ Millward Brown opinion poll found that 58% of people surveyed said they would support legislation for the X case, which provides for abortion where there is a risk to the life of the woman, including the risk of suicide.
- In **May 2013**, a Sunday Indpendent/ Millward Brown opinion poll found that 53% of people surveyed supported legislation that would allow for abortion in cases where a risk to life occurs becuase of a threat of suicide. 78% of people surveyed said they would support legislation that would permit abortion in cases where the mother's life is at risk.
- In **February 2013**, an Irish Times/ Ipsos MRBI poll found that 71% of people surveyed supported legislation for the X case. 85% of people surveyed said abortion should be allowed in certain circumstances where a woman's life is at risk.
- In **January 2013**, a Sunday Times Behaviour & Attitude Poll found that 60% of people surveyed supported legislation for the X case, which provides for abortion in circumstances where there is a risk to the life of the woman, including the risk of suicide.
- Also in **January 2013**, a Paddy Power/Red C Poll found that 64% of people surveyed were in favour of more liberal abortion laws.
- In **December 2012**, a Sunday Business Post/Red C Poll found that 85% of people surveyed supported legislation for the X case, allowing abortion where a woman's life is theatened, including by suicide.
- In **September 2012**, a Sunday Times Behaviour & Attitude Poll found that 80% of people said they would support a change in the law to permit abortion in cases where the mother's life is at risk.
- In **2011,** a study of 500 established GPs and almost 250 GPs in training revealed that 75% of Irish GPs feel that there are situations in which abortion should be available in Ireland with 52% believing that abortion should be available to any woman who chooses it.
- In **2010**, an Irish Examiner/Red C Poll found that 60% of people supported legal abortion and three in five people aged 18-35 believed abortion should be legalised.
- Also in **2010**, a Marie Stopes/YouGov opinion poll indicated that 79% of those questioned were in favour of liberalisation of Irish abortion laws in certain circumstances.
- In **2007**, an Irish Times Behaviour and Attitudes Poll found that 54% of women believe the Government should act to permit abortion.
- A **2004** Crisis Pregnancy Agency study found that 90% of 18-45 year olds support abortion in certain circumstances, with 51% stating that women should always have to right to choose an abortion.

Referenda in **1992** and in **2002** rejected proposals to further restrict access to abortion. No referendum has ever been held to offer Irish people the opportunity to make access to abortion less restrictive; opinion polls, however, consistently indicate public support for less restrictive abortion regulation.

Despite much media and political attention on the abortion issue during the Lisbon Treaty debate in Ireland, independent research from the EU [1] indicated that only 2% of responsents cited that Lisbon would allow the introduction of European legislation in Ireland such as gay marriage, abortion and euthanasia as a reason for voting no.

Contact:

IFPA Dublin City Centre Clinic
5/7 Cathal Brugha Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 872 7088 / 874 2110

IFPA Head Office
Solomons House
42a Pearse Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 607 4456 / Fax: 01 607 4486
E-mail: post@ifpa.ie

IFPA Tallaght Clinic
Level 3, The Square
Tallaght
Dublin 24
Tel: 01 459 7685 / 459 7686

Find Us:

News:

Sign up to receive our **e-newsletter**

Source URL: http://www.ifpa.ie/Hot-Topics/Abortion/Public-Opinion

Links:
[1] http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_284_en.pdf