

Activists send 'feminist drone' delivering abortion pills to Poland to highlight country's restrictive laws

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Feminist activists have sent a drone carrying abortion pills from Germany to Poland to highlight the staunchly Catholic country's restrictive abortion laws.

The pills are not available in Poland and Julia Gaweda of the feminist organisation Feminoteka said two Polish women — who were not pregnant — swallowed them as part of the "symbolic" stunt organised by Dutch pro-choice campaign group Women on Waves.

Activists launched the drone in the German city of Frankfurt an der Oder, flying it over the river to the bordering Polish town of Slubice.

"It's a symbolic operation designed to show that just a few kilometres [between the take-off and the landing site] can be a gulf in terms of respect for women's rights, reproductive rights which are human rights," Ms Gaweda said.

She added that the pills were provided by a Dutch gynaecologist.

A dozen anti-abortion protesters gathered at the landing site and gave out plastic foetuses to the pro-choice activists, Ms Gaweda said.

She said that several plainclothes police officers attended the event without intervening.

Poland, whose population is 90 per cent Catholic, only allows abortion within 12 weeks of pregnancy in cases of rape or incest, or 24 weeks in cases of irreversible foetal malformation or a threat to the mother's life.

After 24 weeks of pregnancy, the procedure is allowed on a case-by-case basis if the mother's life is at risk.

The government did however recently authorise the morning-after pill.

Women on Waves has over the years sent "abortion boats" to countries including Ireland, Portugal and Spain to provide women with free treatment that circumvents strict abortion laws.

The arrival of one of these boats in Poland in 2003 prompted a wave of protests, while ultra-Catholic newspaper *Nasz Dziennik* branded the drone delivery a "drone of death" ahead of its landing.

AFP

Topics: feminism, community-and-society, abortion, reproduction-and-contraception, health, womens-health, government-and-politics, germany, poland, netherlands



PHOTO: An 'abortion drone' transporting packets of pills takes off from Frankfurt in Germany and lands in Slubice, Poland. (AFP: Poland Out/Lech Muszynski)

MAP: Germany