

Abortion Without Borders

The Reality of Abortion

Report

Poland 2024

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Introduction

Abortion in Poland is a daily reality, despite one of the most restrictive legal frameworks in Europe.

An estimated 120,000 to 150,000 abortions occur in Poland each year. This report outlines the 2024 activities of Abortion Without Borders (AWB) – a coalition of nine organizations that have worked together since December 2019 to provide essential support for people seeking abortions.

We present key data on abortions supported by AWB, alongside an analysis of the broader social and medical landscape in which people navigate their reproductive choices in Poland.



This report is available online: adt.pl

1. Statistics for 2024

Abortion Without Borders: 2024 Impact Overview

In 2024, Abortion Without Borders (AWB) supported 47,000 people in accessing abortion care. The breakdown is as follows:

Self-managed abortion

- **44 500** people had a self-managed abortion with pills in the first trimester
- **1,350** people had a self-managed abortion with pills in the second trimester

45.850 total self-managed abortion with pills

Travel for Abortion and Birth Support:

- **1,130** people traveled abroad for a second-trimester abortion
- **17** people traveled abroad for a third-trimester abortion
- **10** anonymous births were supported

1,147 total trips abroad for abortion care

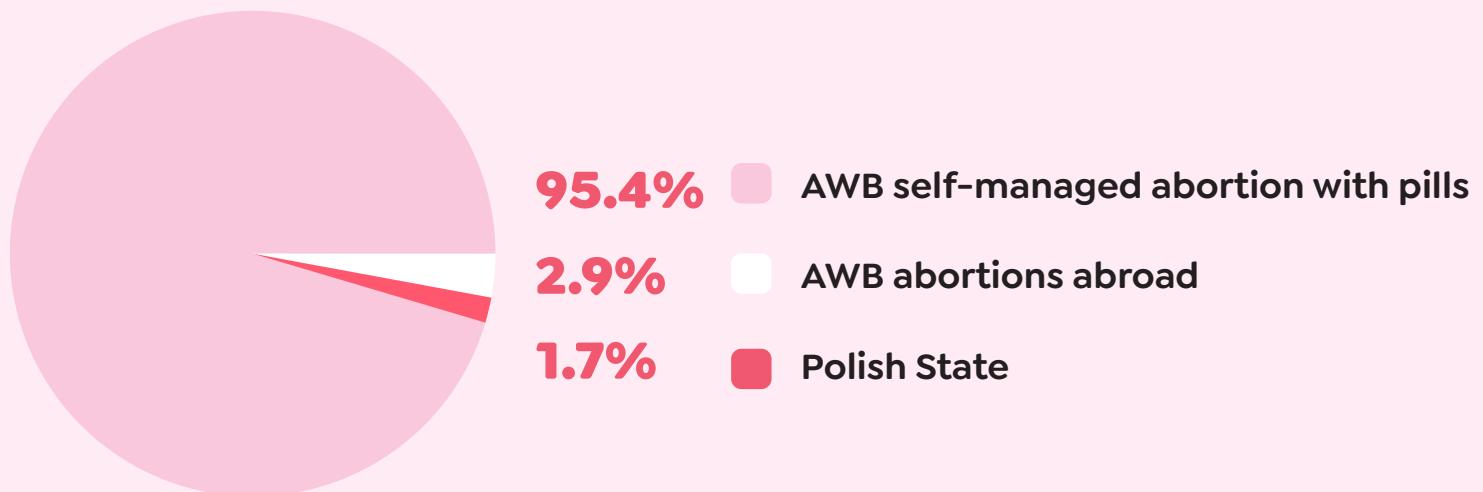
This data underscores the essential role of AWB in providing access to abortion—whether through self-managed options or cross-border travel—amid Poland's restrictive legal framework.

Where did people travelled for abortion?

- **Second trimester:** Netherlands, Belgium, France, Austria, Czech Republic, England
- **Third trimester:** Belgium, France, Mexico, England

Who Provides Abortions in Poland?

Below is a comparison between abortions supported by Abortion Without Borders (AWB) and those performed in Polish hospitals:



AWB Expenditure on Abortion Support (2024)

- Total amount spent on abortion procedures and travel:
2,069,995.10 PLN (~492,445.45 EUR)
- Cost of a self-managed abortion with pills:
Sliding scale donation from 0 to 75 EUR, depending on the person's financial situation.

Contacts & Support Requests

In 2024, Abortion Without Borders (AWB) and its partner organizations responded to an overwhelming number of inquiries from people seeking abortion support in Poland.



Did you know that you can call the AWB Hotline **every day** from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm?

Emails Received

- Women Help Women (WHW): Over 100,000 inquiries
- Ciocia Wienia: Over 1,300 emails
- Abortion Network Amsterdam (ANA): Over 6,800 emails
- Ciocia Basia: Over 3,600 emails
- Abortion Support Network (ASN): Over 7,900 emails

Phone Support

- AWB Hotline: More than 6,000 calls
- Abortion Support Network (ASN): More than 2,000 calls

Youngest person supported: 12 years old

Longest pregnancy gestation supported: 36 weeks

2. Abortion in Poland with Abortion Without Borders

The most popular method: abortion pills. The most common method of abortion in Poland is self-managed abortion with pills, accounting for 99% of all abortions in the country.

Key Facts:

Abortion Without Borders (AWB) supports 125 people per day in accessing abortion pills.

AWB follows protocols for self-managed abortion with pills recommended by the World Health Organization in their latest Guidelines.

Access through Women Help Women: Safe abortion pills can be ordered from Women Help Women (womenhelp.org) and you can support their work with a sliding-scale donation (0–€75, suggested €75).

Discreet process: Packages arrive within 10 days, ensuring privacy and accessibility.

Help with self managed abortion

Every day, Abortion Without Borders (AWB) provides essential support to people self-managing their abortions in Poland. This includes:

- Clear, detailed instructions on dosage and protocol for using abortion pills safely.
- Responsive support via phone, email, and social media, answering questions and providing information and reassurance.

By offering trusted, evidence-based guidance, AWB ensures that people can safely navigate their abortion process, even in a hostile legal environment.



The official WHW website is: womenhelp.org

The Danger of Unreliable Sources

Not all abortion pills advertised online are safe. Poland's restrictive abortion laws have created a market where scammers and unscrupulous people exploit those in need of care.

Risks of Unreliable Sources:

- Exorbitant prices for abortion pills
- Fake or ineffective medications, including placebos
- Fraudulent groups posing as feminist aid organizations

Choosing a trusted provider like Women Help Women (WHD) ensures access to safe, high-quality medication and reliable medical guidance.

Legal Considerations:

Self-managing an abortion is not a crime in Poland.

Selling abortion pills without a license or helping someone obtain one can lead to legal consequences.

IS ABORTION SAFE IN POLAND?

3. Abortion in Polish hospitals

Data from the health care system

As of October 2024, only 787 abortions were performed in Polish hospitals – **accounting for less than 0.5% of all abortions occurring in Poland.**

Outdated and Harmful Medical Practices

Polish hospitals continue to use obsolete and traumatizing methods that fail to meet international medical standards:

Harmful Procedures Still in Use:

- Curettage – An outdated and invasive method not recommended by the WHO or any other global health organization.
- Induction of miscarriage lasting 24+ hours – Causing prolonged pain and distress.
- Cesarean section in extreme cases – A highly invasive approach, rarely necessary for abortion care.

Lack of Patient-Centered Care

People seeking abortion care in Polish hospitals often report shock and distress due to:

- Poor bedside manner and lack of emotional support.
- Inadequate pain management and minimal patient communication.
- Unnecessary medical interventions, prolonging suffering and causing harm.



„there is no safe abortion in Polish hospitals”

photo: plakaciary.pl

The severe limitations and outdated practices within Poland's healthcare system force thousands to seek alternative, safer options, reinforcing the critical role of Abortion Without Borders and its partners in ensuring access to dignified and evidence-based abortion care.

Even in cases where abortion is legally permitted, many Polish doctors refuse to provide care due to:

- Lack of Experience – Years of restrictive laws mean that many doctors have never been trained in modern abortion care.
- Ignorance of the Law – Some healthcare providers misinterpret regulations or falsely claim abortion is illegal in all cases.
- Fear of Legal Consequences – Criminalization and harassment of doctors discourage even those who might be willing to help.

Experiences expressed by those seeking abortions in Polish hospitals

Quotes from patients:

„After the ultrasound, the doctor said: ‘The heart is beating, there is nothing we can do.’”

„I was sure it would be a medical procedure. I was not prepared for the fact that I would have to give birth to a stillborn.”

4. Abortion abroad

Every day, 7 people receive direct support from Abortion Without Borders (AWB) to travel abroad for abortion care, with over 3 of them funded for travel and the procedure. These abortions take place in clinics and hospitals that follow best medical practices, ensuring safe, evidence-based care, dignified treatment, and minimal trauma with emotional support. The increasing need for full financial assistance underscores the urgent demand for sustained funding to guarantee that no one is denied access to abortion due to cost.

People who need to travel for abortion care have very limited options due to legal and logistical barriers. For first-trimester abortions we have Germany, Czech Republic and Austria. For second-trimester abortions, the available destinations included the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, England, Germany, Austria and Czech Republic.

For third-trimester abortions, options with Belgium, or Mexico are even more restricted, France, and in some cases, the United States being the only accessible places.

Initiatives to support abortion seekers

In the Netherlands, a symbolic cemetery has been created near one of the clinics, offering a dedicated space for those who grieve after an abortion, providing a place of remembrance.

Femke van Straaten, director of two clinics in the Netherlands, emphasizes:

„Polish patients often feel both grief and relief after the procedure.”

5. Funding for abortions

Costs paid by AWB

For the first time in 2024, the Abortion Without Borders (AWB) network exceeded 2 million PLN (~475,000 EUR) in spending to cover the costs of abortion pills, procedures, travel, accommodation for abortions abroad, and other essential expenses.

As the cost of living rises, more people are unable to afford any part of their abortion costs, including even the suggested donation for abortion pills. An increasing number of people are requesting full financial support for the procedure, travel, and accommodation when seeking abortion care abroad.

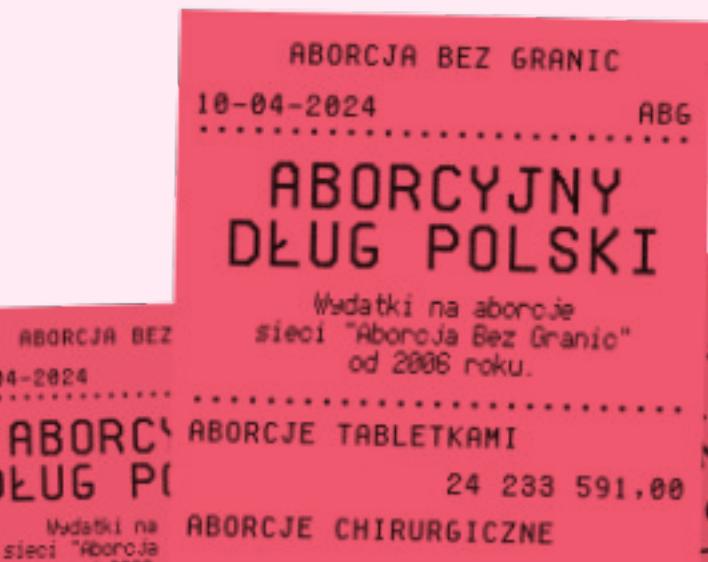
This growing demand underscores the urgent need for sustained funding to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent anyone from accessing safe abortion care.



You can support us at: abortion.eu

Poland's abortion debt

In 2024, AWB published the full amount of money they have spent helping Polish people have abortions for 18 years. Over that time, these activist groups have spent more than 50 million PLN (~12 000 000 Euro) supporting people in Poland to have abortions.



6. Abortion Center

For too long, we have been promised legal abortion, but those promises remain unfulfilled. We are no longer waiting. In 2024, we are opening **Poland's first abortion center – AboTak**.

AboTak is more than a center; it is a bold step toward the legalization of abortion and a direct challenge to the current system. We refuse to accept the chaos, fear, and inaction that continue to deny people their reproductive rights. By providing safe, legal, and compassionate abortion care, AboTak is sending a clear message to politicians and healthcare providers: Change is overdue, and we are making it happen.

At AboTak, abortion is healthcare, not shame. Every person who walks through our doors will be met with empathy, understanding, and professional medical care. This is our commitment—to ensure safe abortion access becomes a reality in Poland.

Abotak! Read more about AboTak at: abotak.org/en

7. About the Abortion Without Borders initiative

Abortion Without Borders is a network of 9 organizations that work together to ensure access to abortion, regardless of the legal situation.

In 2024, Abortion Without Borders trained 4 new groups in Poland that have also started helping people access abortion with pills in Poland.

AWB believes in:

- **Help:** We provide information and support to those in need of abortions.
- **Destigmatization:** We fight the stigmatization of abortion, both abortion with pills and abortions performed in a clinic or hospital abroad.
- **Unconditional support:** We offer empathy and understanding, without asking questions or making judgments.
- **Autonomy:** We recognize each person's right to make decisions about their own lives.
- **Solidarity:** We want abortion to be available to everyone, regardless of financial situation.

The AWB network includes:

Kobity w Sieci, Women Help Women, Ciocia Basia, Ciocia Czesia, Ciocia Wienia, Abortion Network Amsterdam, Abortion Support Network, Supporting Abortions for Everyone - SAFE and Abortion Dream Team.

8. Summary

Abortion in Poland is happening every day, made possible by the invisible work of women activists, aid organizations, and international solidarity. While the Polish state systematically avoids responsibility for the health and lives of women, it is private donors and grassroots organizations – like those within Abortion Without Borders (AWB) – who carry the burden of ensuring access to care.

This report demonstrates that, despite harsh legal restrictions, people in Poland can access safe abortion—at home or abroad—solely due to the support of feminist networks and cross-border cooperation.

In the face of growing financial and social challenges, AWB continues to be a lifeline for thousands, proving that where governments fail, solidarity prevails.



ABORTION:

The Government promises. We do.

