
Malta: abortion, Church expresses concern over extensive changes to abortion law

“The Church has expressed extreme concern over any legislative change that would permit the termination of a pregnancy to take place in circumstances where a woman’s life is not at risk”. Thus ends a press release published on the website of the Church in Malta about the ongoing debate in the Maltese Parliament on an amendment to the abortion legislation that would make abortion legal not only when a woman’s life is at risk, but also when her health is in danger. On Monday, 19 December, the amendment was approved in its second reading in Parliament with 42 votes in favour and 34 against. The text will now be subject to further changes at the committee level, before returning to Parliament for a final vote in January. According to a study commissioned by the Archdiocese of Malta and carried out by MISCO, 77% of the Maltese are in favour of ending a pregnancy if the mother’s life is at risk, but 68% are against abortion if the mother’s life is not at risk. Almost 78% do not want abortion to be allowed if “the mother does not wish to have more children”. 58% of women and 78% of men said they are against abortion when a woman’s life is not at risk. As age increases, opposition to abortion also increases. Indeed, the percentage of those in favour of abortion when a woman’s life is not at risk is 25.7% among young women aged 16 to 24 and 36.4% among males the same age, as opposed to 92.7% among men over 65 and 87,5% among women the same age. Almost 13% of respondents said they are against abortion even when the mother’s life is at risk. The survey was conducted towards the end of November and involved 800 people.

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