

PROGRAM

Symposium

Safeguarding abortion rights

Dutch law in context

18 september 2025

registration required

10:00 - 16:00

De Kargadoor

Worldwide, abortion rights are under pressure. What is the situation in the Netherlands, what are the obligations under the UN Women's Convention, and how can we protect access to safe, legal abortion now and in the future?

Speakers:

- **Genoveva Tisheva** (*keynote speaker*), Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and rapporteur of CEDAW's investigation into abortion legislation in Poland. This groundbreaking report puts women's right to reproductive autonomy at the forefront and recognizes the enormous harm caused to women by Poland's strict legal restrictions on abortion.
- **Rebecca Gomperts**, founder of Women on Waves (WOW), internationally known for her pioneering activism for reproductive freedom, will talk about WOW's activism and their latest project: the Women & More study, which aims to demonstrate that mifepristone 50 is a safe non-hormonal contraceptive for women.
- **Karolina Kocemba**, Marie Curie Fellow at the Institute for Social Studies in The Hague (part of Erasmus University Rotterdam), will address the fight for abortion rights in Poland and resistance to right-wing legal mobilization. Kocemba leads the EU-funded research project Reproductive Rights and Transnational Dynamics of Legal Mobilizations.
- **Trudy Dehue**, professor emeritus of the philosophy of science at the University of Groningen, will show how concepts such as "fetus," "heartbeat," and "abortion" are not neutral, but shaped by language, technology, and social norms – and how these terms, in turn, influence abortion discourse and the rights of pregnant women.

Panel discussion:

- **Fleur van Leeuwen**, board member of VVR and affiliated with Utrecht University, will speak about the shortcomings of Dutch abortion law in light of international human rights law, including the UN Women's Convention.
- **Linde Bryk**, Bureau Clara Wichmann, will present new legal research on how the right to safe and legal abortion can be anchored in Dutch legislation.
- **AVA**, an independent Dutch advocacy organization dedicated to providing reliable, neutral information and decision-making support regarding contraception and abortion.

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- 10:00 - 10:30 **Registration/Coffee**
- 10:30 - 10:40 **Introduction**
- 10:40 - 11:40 **Keynote by Dr. Genoveva Tisheva - UN CEDAW**
- 11:40 - 11:50 **Coffee break**
- 11:50 - 13:00 **Abortion Activism & Advocacy**
 - Rebecca Gomperts - Women on Waves
 - Karolina Kocemba - Erasmus University
- 13:00 - 14:00 **Lunch**
- 14:00 - 14:30 **What counts as an ‘abortion’?**
Prof. Trudy Dehue - Groningen University
- 14:30 - 16:00 **Panel discussion: the future of abortion law**
Moderator: Marjan Wijers
 - Dr. Fleur van Leeuwen - Lecturer in law UU
 - Linde Bryk - Bureau Clara Wichmann
 - Laura van Stein - AVA
- 16:00 - end **Drinks & Networking**
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register via vn-vrouwenverdrag.nl/contact