

Portuguese president vetoes surrogacy law

June 8 2016

Portugal's centre-right President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa on Tuesday vetoed a law authorising surrogacy in some cases where a couple cannot conceive, quashing legislation adopted by parliament in May.

In a statement, the president's office said the [law](#) did "not conform to the conditions set out by the National Council for Ethics for the Life Sciences" which had demanded tighter rules on [surrogacy](#).

Parliament had adopted the bill allowing a woman to carry a child for another person or couple in some cases where women cannot conceive, provided the [surrogate mother](#) is not paid.

The legislation, which had supporters from across the left-right divide, was adopted by a slim majority, despite opposition from Portugal's powerful Catholic Church.

The veto does not necessarily spell the end of the road for the campaign to legalise surrogacy.

Under the constitution, parliament can still override a presidential veto to promulgate a law if an absolute majority of all MPs back it.

While quashing the surrogacy law de Sousa gave his seal of approval to legislation giving [lesbian couples](#) and single women to have in-vitro fertilisation (IVF).

Portugal is not the only European country where surrogacy is prohibited.

France, Germany and Italy prohibit surrogacy, which critics have dubbed "wombs for rent".

Britain, Ireland, Denmark and Belgium allow "altruistic surrogacy", where the woman carrying the baby does it as a favour and is not paid, or only for her expenses.

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