

France OKs bill legalizing IVF for lesbians, single women (Update)

October 15 2019, by Sylvie Corbet and Catherine Gaschka



Sandrine Rudnicki, a 38 years old single woman smiles to her 10-month old daughter Emilia who was conceived through in-vitro fertilization, Monday Oct.14, 2019 in Saint-Pryve-Saint-Mesmin, near Orleans, France. France's lower house of parliament is set to adopt a bill that would give single women and lesbian couples access to in-vitro fertilization and related procedures. (AP Photo/Catherine Gaschka)

France's lower house of parliament on Tuesday overwhelmingly passed a bill that aims to give single women and lesbian couples legal access to in vitro fertilization, egg freezing and fertility medication.

The assisted reproduction measures are part of a broader bioethics bill voted by the National Assembly, the lower house, where French President Emmanuel Macron's government has a majority. The bill passed 359-114. It must still go to the Senate for debate.

France's health care system would cover the cost of the assisted reproduction procedures for all women under 43.

French law currently allows in vitro fertilization and related procedures only for infertile heterosexual couples. Many ineligible French women travel abroad to undergo IVF treatment.

Sandrine Rudnicki, 38, a single woman who lives near Orleans in central France, went to Denmark for IVF treatment and now is the mother of a 10-month-old daughter, Emilia.

She said she's "delighted" in-vitro fertilization is set to become legal for women like her because she feels like her family of two is "not accepted" under the current situation.

Rudnicki estimated it cost about 10,000 euros (\$10,997), travel included, for her to get IVF in another country.

"This erases all sorts of inequalities," she said added.



10-month old daughter Emilia, who was conceived through in-vitro fertilization, smiles to her mother Sandrine Rudnicki, a 38 years old single woman, Monday Oct.14, 2019 in Saint-Pryve-Saint-Mesmin, near Orleans, France. France's lower house of parliament is set to adopt a bill that would give single women and lesbian couples access to in-vitro fertilization and related procedures. (AP Photo/Nicolas Garriga)

Lesbian couples, single women or both already have legal access to medically assisted reproduction in 18 of the European Union's 28 countries.

France's pending legislation also would allow children conceived with donated sperm to find out the donor's identity upon demand when they reach age 18, a change from France's current strict donor anonymity protections.

"For me it's something which is indispensable. It will enable these children to have a foundation, a reference" Rudnicki said.

The legislation does not address surrogate motherhood arrangements, which are banned in France.

Earlier this month, tens of thousands of conservative activists of all ages marched through Paris to oppose the bill. The Oct. 6 protest was organized by the same groups behind 2013 demonstrations against France legalizing same-sex marriages.

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