

'Lift Swedish ban on surrogate motherhood'

Published: 28 Feb 13 07:28 CET

A key ethics council for medical sciences in Sweden has said it sees no problem in allowing surrogate motherhood and embryo donation, but not when it is done for financial gain.



File photo: Hasse Holmberg/Scanpix

Surrogacy and embryo donation should be allowed in Sweden, wrote the Swedish National Council on Medical Ethics (Statens medicinsk-etiska råd, SMER), which advises parliament and the government, in its new report.

"In cases where money isn't the motive, where you want to help a fellow human being, and our recommendation is that it should be a close relative," chairman Kjell Asplund told Sveriges Radio (SR) on Thursday.

"It could be a sister, a sister-in-law, or a close relative who helps out."

The report underlined that any would-be surrogate mother should go through with a pregnancy voluntarily.

"Women who want to be a surrogate mother for relatives should be women who have the possibility to fully decide over their own bodies," Asplund, alongside his colleagues Göran Hermerén and Lotta Eriksson, wrote in the opinion pages of the Svenska Dagbladet (SvD) newspaper.

A minority of representatives on the ethics council wanted to keep Sweden's current ban on surrogacy.

There was unanimity in allowing the donation of fertilized eggs, which is forbidden in Sweden at present.

The ethics council also changed its official opinion on having age limits on certain fertility treatments, stating that "individuals age at different rates" and placing the focus on how suitable potential parenthood would be for the child.

The Swedish healthcare system has an age limit of 37 for women and 41 for men wanting help to conceive, reported the TT news agency.

The new report stated instead that one of the parents should be young enough to care for the child until he or she becomes an adult.

Last spring, Sweden took a step toward legalizing surrogate motherhood after the Riksdag's Committee on Social Affairs voted to authorize government inquiry into the issue.

TT/The Local/at