

SLIPPERY SLOPE

Replacement babies, rent a womb comes with "guarantees"

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Don't worry if your surrogate baby dies, bring it back to us and we'll change it for you. This chilling statement is not a hoax or fake news, nor fiction, but it is one of the **46 guarantees** that the Gestlife agency - a company of lawyers who work on surrogacy -

offers its clients. But before analysing this particular guarantee, which assures a "spare child", let's glean the list of guarantees being offered to those who want to rent a woman's uterus to have a baby.

"Most of our egg donation programs [...] are at a fixed price": but, if the eggs are donated, one wonders why do I have to pay for them? In any case, if you do undergo multiple IVF cycles the price is fixed just like the products in a supermarket, and if you join the STANDARD PLUS and PREMIUM programmes you are guaranteed no unpleasant surprises. It works in exactly the same way a mobile phone contract works.

Once signed up, Gestlife will advise you on which countries are best for you to go to; the opportunity to freeze your baby's umbilical cord; plan with you the path that will end with the "collection of the child" (sic): prior interviews, clinical tests, hotel or apartment booking, internet SIM card, the right to be present at the birth including cutting the umbilical cord, registration at the registry office, psychological support, postpartum pediatric assistance, babysitting service, wheelchair rental, complimentary layette, legal assistance for adoption procedures, a course for new parents.

The company which is based in Spain also covers all the following contingencies: "loss or deterioration of embryos during transport, change of donor at no additional cost in case of a white puncture (without eggs), compensation to the pregnant woman in the case of miscarriage, death of the pregnant woman or the donor". Moreover, Gestlife explains it is a prestigious company which has its own a code of ethics, (evil needs to be masked as being conducted in a clean and responsible way): "We practice responsible surrogacy, avoiding the exploitation of surrogate mothers, and our teams control in situ the conditions in which they live, the homes where they live, their diet and habits. [...] We analyse their state of health, but also their medical history, that of their relatives, their criminal and police records, and we undergo a series of interviews conducted by our psychologist who, by means of a battery of tests, decides whether or not the candidate is suitable". These notes are almost a photocopy of the health regulations found in animal husbandry according to which hens must have a square meter to move, their state of health and their diet must be strictly controlled and where any form of exploitation is avoided to guarantee the quality of the eggs isn't compromised.

Furthermore, Gestlife has received the blue sticker from the Padres per la gestaciòn association which "brings together more than 700 parents who have become parents through surrogacy and which monitors agencies to guarantee good practices, approving with its seal only those that meet the strict parameters required". The

Spanish company was considered deserving of the blue sticker also because it shines for its inclusiveness: "we have programs for all types of families: heterosexual couples, married or single, single men and women, homosexual couples (of both sexes), transgender people, people affected by HIV or hepatitis..."

But let's come to point number 24 of the list of guarantees offered which reads as follows: "Unfortunately, after the 7th month, all agencies consider that, if the child is born prematurely and dies, the program has been fulfilled and you are left without a child and without money. **GestLife is the only company in the WORLD** that covers you for this terrible contingency, guaranteeing you the restart of the same program you had contracted, up to two years after the birth, in the event of the death of the baby for any reason or cause (including domestic or traffic accidents). At no cost to you."

The message is loud and clear: if the child born through a surrogate mother dies within the first two years of birth, it will be replaced for free, as if it were the windshield of the car. So, in addition to the "satisfied or refunded" commercial formula, there is also a very specific form of compensation: if your child gets damaged, it's replaced. And instead of liquidating the damage, the surrogacy program is restarted so that injured parties obtain a substitute for the child fate took away.

Really, a baby is a product that can be replaced for another. An object, a thing. The replacement child, the "spare child" if the first one is "damaged", is the reserve child ready to enter the field if the first choice is injured, it's the replacement child of the child dealer. We are at the height of the shopping on line formula, obviously not applied to shoes, but to people. It is the Kasko flexible fertility insurance, of third party maternity.

In the short or even very short term, we are certain you will be able to return your child within a couple of years, without having to wait for it to die, if it is defective, i.e. it falls ill, or if, just like a pair of shoes that don't fit you, that is it doesn't match your expectations because it's not as blond or intelligent or nice or as good at football as you had expected. A deal that will certainly lead to a plethora of second-hand children: used children, definitely and certainly used, but above all abused.

On the other hand, if we have manufactured babies in test tubes and then put them on the assembly line for wombs, we expect them to be perfect. Just as perfect as the calculated and profitable madness that staged this horror.