

Prostitution is violence against women: the EWL campaign 'Together for a Europe free from prostitution'

MONA Conference on prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation
Budapest, 23 September 2011



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Pierrette Pape
EWL Policy Officer and
Project Coordinator

**Let's start with some
facts...**



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- ✓ In 2004 in France, a man was arrested for having raped and kept a prostituted woman locked up.
- ✓ He was condemned to... pay back the price of the 'service'! (100 euros)

La Dépêche du Midi, 7 October 2004



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✓ April 2009, in a French regional daily newspaper:
'A 20-year old man has been arrested after having
robbed a prostituted woman but also gained a free
sexual service under the threat of a knife'

→ **A free sexual service under the threat of a knife,
it is a RAPE!**

La Dépêche du Midi, 13 April 2009



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- ✓ For 25% of men, the concept of ‘rape’ for women in prostitution is ‘ridiculous’...

Melissa Farley, Julie Bindel and Jacqueline M. Golding, “Men who buy sex. Who they buy and what they know. A research study of 103 men who describe their use of trafficked and non-trafficked women in prostitution, and their awareness of coercion and violence”, *Prostitution Research and Education* and *Eaves*, 2009



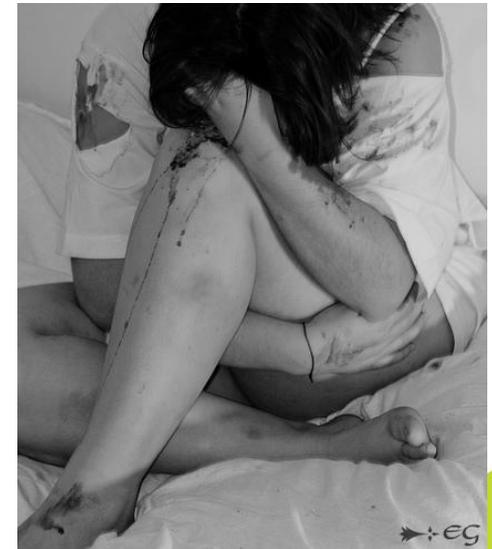
Extract from an ad for a strip club in Spain:

“If you sleep with a friend of hers, she won’t say anything. She can wait for you twelve hours a day and be available. She won’t ask you where you come from, nor with whom. You can ask her anything, she won’t be upset. If you don’t understand what she’s saying, no importance.”



- ✓ 73% of women in prostitution report having been subjected to physical aggressions while in prostitution
- ✓ 62% of women in prostitution report having been raped

Melissa Farley et al., “Prostitution in five countries: violence and post traumatic stress disorder”, *Feminism and Psychology*, 8, 1998



- ✓ 68% of women in prostitution meet the criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the same range as victims of torture

Melissa Farley et al., “Prostitution in five countries: violence and post traumatic stress disorder”, *Feminism and Psychology*, 8, 1998



A series of myths conveyed by the media:

- ✓ Women choose prostitution
- ✓ Prostitution is about sex, it is glamorous and sexy
- ✓ Prostitution is the oldest profession in the world
- ✓ Prostitution will never disappear
- ✓ Prostitution is a job like any other, and it brings freedom to women
- ✓ The sex industry is a business like any other
- ✓ Without prostitution, there would be more rapes



'Their choice'?

- ✓ Up to 95% of women in street prostitution are problematic drug users
- ✓ 9 out of 10 women in prostitution would like to exit the system of prostitution but feel unable to do so

Home Office, *Paying the price*, 2004



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A way to reduce rapes and violence against women?

- ✓ Nevada, where procuring is decriminalized, sees the highest rates of rape compared to all US states
- ✓ The states with higher circulation rates of pornographic magazines have higher rape rates

<http://www.prostitutionetsociete.fr/politiques-publiques/legislations-nationales/nevada-les-bordels-exemplaires-d>

Baron & Straus (1984), in Mary Anne Layden, 'Pornography and Violence: a new look at research', 2009



Our approach to the system of prostitution has an impact on society as a whole, and on the relationships between women and men



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Prostitution is a form of male violence against women

- ✓ Prostitution is not a question of 'choice' – What is 'free choice'?
- ✓ Prostitution is not a question of sexuality – There is nothing sexually new in prostitution!
- ✓ **Prostitution is about patriarchy:** it is the ultimate way in which men control women's bodies and sexuality, through an exchange of money or an abuse of unequal economic relations



Prostitution is violence against women

- ✓ Incest, rape, marital rape are outlawed thanks to women's NGOs; the system of prostitution remains as the ultimate place for male domination, legitimised by a **distorted representation of equality in commercial exchange** – money exchange is all but an expression of equality!
 - ✓ Refusing prostitution is about setting a standard of human dignity **for all women and girls around the world**
- **There won't be real equality as long as there is prostitution of some women by some men**



Prostitution in Europe...

18 out of 27 EU member States
have ratified the **UN
Convention of 1949 for the
Suppression of the Traffic in
Persons and of the
Exploitation of the
Prostitution of Others.**



**What about your
country?**



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Prostitution in Europe...

There are nowadays three main approaches to the system of prostitution :

- ✓ **Regulationism:** prostitution is a job, procuring is decriminalised (Germany, the Netherlands)
- ✓ **Abolitionism:** prostitution is considered as violence against women, procuring and prostitute-users are criminalised (Sweden, Norway, Iceland)
- ✓ **Prohibition:** 'Just hide it!' Persons in prostitution and procuring are criminalised, sometimes also prostitute-users (Croatia)



**Legislation on prostitution
has an impact on trafficking
&
Legislation on trafficking has
an impact on prostitution**



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The regulationist approach

Impact on prostituted persons

- ✓ Still poor conditions
- ✓ Decrease of well-being (emotional, social, legal...)
- ✓ No alternatives provided

Impact on trafficking

- ✓ Increase of trafficking and organised crime
- ✓ 50 to 90% of women in prostitution being trafficked
- ✓ Increase of child trafficking and prostitution



The abolitionist approach

Impact on prostituted persons

- ✓ Reduction of street prostitution (halved)
- ✓ No evidence of Swedish sex tourism abroad

Impact on trafficking

- ✓ Decrease of trafficking and organised crime

Impact on society

- ✓ Increased support to the law
- ✓ Decrease of the number of prostitute-users



To end trafficking in women, we need to end prostitution

By tolerating the systems of prostitution, we support traffickers and organized crime.

All forms of prostitution are a violation of human rights.



The work of the European Women's Lobby on prostitution



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The EWL: the democratic voice of women at European level

- ✓ The largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the EU
- ✓ Promoting women's rights and gender equality in Europe
- ✓ Members in all 27 EU member states and 3 candidate countries, as well as 21 European-wide associations → representing over 2500 women's organisations



The EWL: the democratic voice of women at European level

- ✓ **Monitoring** of European, national and international policies and legislation
- ✓ **Advocacy** on women's rights
- ✓ **Projects** on specific areas
- ✓ **Awareness raising** / mobilization campaigns, communication, media, at international and European levels
- ✓ **Building effective partnerships**



EWL work on prostitution and trafficking

*Three-year project 'Nordic-Baltic Network', with NGOs and government agencies → concrete activities to **support and assist women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation** (2005-2008)*

The links between prostitution and sex trafficking: a briefing handbook (2006, EWL-CATW)

*Not for sale (2006, EWL-CATW) → **awareness film on women survivors of prostitution***



EWL deliverables on trafficking and prostitution



EWL deliverables on trafficking and prostitution

The links between prostitution and sex trafficking: a briefing handbook
(2006, EWL-CATW)



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EWL deliverables on trafficking and prostitution

Film 'Not for sale' (2006, EWL-CATW)



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EWL abolitionist principles

The prostitution of women and girls constitutes a **fundamental violation of women's human rights** and a serious form of **male violence against women**. The tolerance of the EU and its member states for the system of prostitution allow for **men's use of and control over women's body and sexuality**, and fuels trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. The persistence of systems of prostitution in EU member states demonstrates the **failure at European level to reach gender equality and promote women's rights**.



EWL campaign
**‘Together for a Europe free
from prostitution’**



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To get a world free from prostitution, we need...

- ✓ To raise awareness, open spaces for debates and questions, allow people to discuss, exchange, learn more about what prostitution really is
- ✓ To support women survivors of prostitution and make their voices heard
- ✓ To involve men who are not prostitute-users and change peer pressure into positive attitude towards equality and respect for women's rights

→ We need social and political change!



EWL Campaign goals

- ✓ **Raise awareness** on prostitution as a form of male violence against women
- ✓ Give **visibility** to NGOs working on prostitution and/or with prostituted persons
- ✓ Provide for **European-wide campaign material** and **support** national actions and strategies
- ✓ **Advocate at EU level** for the abolition of the system of prostitution
- ✓ Engage **allies and supporters**, from the political world and civil society networks, but also individuals



Raising awareness

Film and clip

'Not for sale'

(EWL-CATW, 2006)

Ensure that the
voices of the
survivors are heard



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Launching the debate

Campaign clip

‘For a change of perspective’

(EWL, 2011)



Call on men to not be a
party to the system of
prostitution



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Involving

EWL pledge

I pledge not to engage in the system of prostitution and I call on local, national and European decision-makers to take action towards a Europe free from prostitution!

Take the pledge for a Europe free from prostitution!

Posted on 16 June 2011

I pledge not to engage in the system of prostitution and I call on local, national and European decision-makers to take action towards a Europe free from prostitution!

I pledge...

First name *[Required]* :

Surname *[Required]* :

Gender :

Country *[Required]* :

E-mail *[Required]* :

Please enter a valid email address (e.g. you@provider.com).

Submit



More

Donate Now ! 

Follow Us :



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Giving visibility to NGOs

Internet webpages dedicated to the campaign

The screenshot shows the website for the European Women's Lobby (EWL). At the top left is the logo, a stylized 'ewl' in a circle, with the text 'EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY' and 'EUROPEEN DES FEMMES' below it. To the right is a line drawing of five diverse women. A speech bubble from the drawing says 'Working together for WOMEN'S rights and gender equality in Europe!'. Below the drawing are language options 'EN | FR' and a search bar.

The main navigation bar includes: Home, About us, Our work, Publications, News, Press room, Get involved. A search bar is on the right.

The main content area features a large heading: **EWL CAMPAIGNS** and a sub-heading: **> TOGETHER FOR A EUROPE FREE FROM PROSTITUTION**. Below this is a small image of a man with the text 'PROSTITUTION IT'S NOT' and a paragraph: 'The system of prostitution is a form of violence against women. The EWL has launched a campaign calling for abolition.'

On the left side, there is a sidebar with the heading 'Together for a Europe Free From Prostitution'. It contains three sections:

- Campaign news**
 - At the EU level
 - At the national level
 - Media coverage
- About the campaign**
 - EWL material
 - EWL abolitionist principles
 - EWL members involved
 - They support us!
 - Partners
 - EWL political demands
- About prostitution**
 - EU context
 - National contexts
 - Survivors' testimonies
 - Resources
 - Frequently asked questions
 - Working with men
 - Supporting persons in prostitution
 - Prevention and education

At the bottom of the sidebar is a section titled 'Take action!' with two bullet points:

- Join a member's or a partner's campaign!
- Take the pledge!

At the bottom of the main content area, it says: 'Welcome to the webpages of the EWL campaign 'Together for a Europe free from prostitution''.



European campaign material

Campaign postcard



TOGETHER FOR A EUROPE
FREE FROM PROSTITUTION



WATCH THE VIDEO CLIP BY FRÉDÉRIQUE POLLET ROUYER AND
PATRIC JEAN AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN AT:
www.womenlobby.org

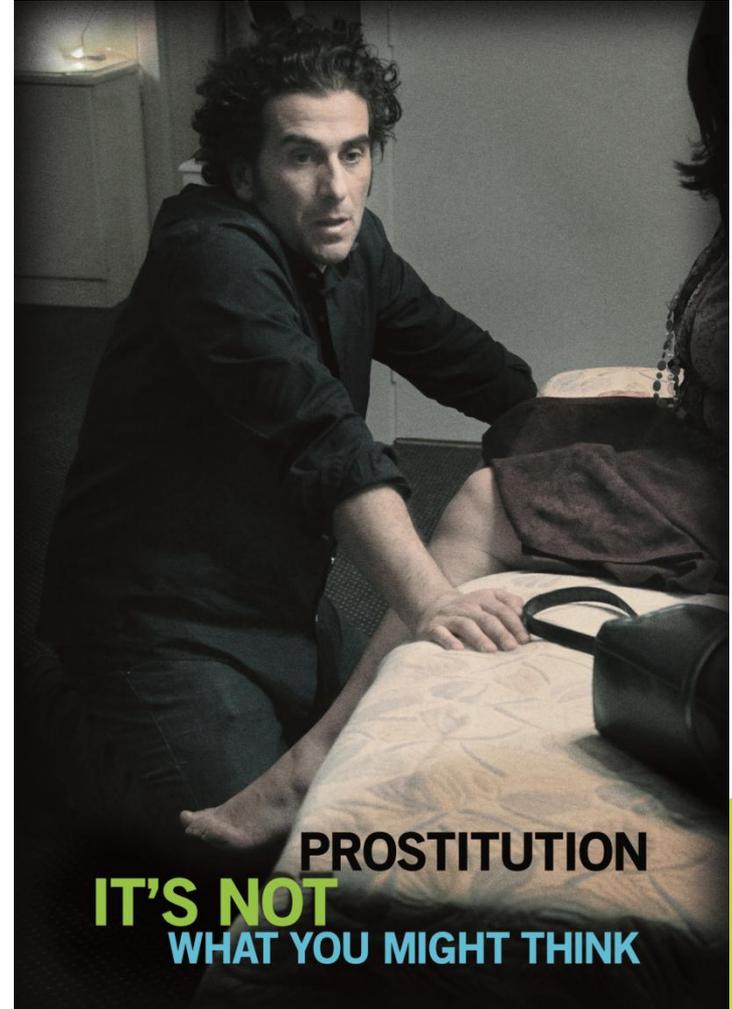
Designed by Rosam O'Leary / www.rosamjane.com



This postcard has been produced with the financial support of the European Union
Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS (2007-2013)



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PROSTITUTION
IT'S NOT
WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK

European campaign material

Campaign PPT presentation

- ✓ Facts and figures
- ✓ Comparison of legislations
- ✓ Presentation of EWL position and campaign
- ✓ Examples of national campaigns
- ✓ Resources and links



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European campaign material

Campaign logo



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TOGETHER FOR A EUROPE
FREE FROM PROSTITUTION



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ENSEMBLE POUR UNE EUROPE
LIBEREE DE LA PROSTITUTION



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Launch of the European campaign 17 June 2011, Brussels



PRESS CONFERENCE TO LAUNCH EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY CAMPAIGN

'TOGETHER FOR A EUROPE FREE FROM
PROSTITUTION'

PRESS PACK

17 June 2011
Social Platform, Square de Meûs 18
1050 Brussels

18 RUE HYPERHAUSQUE - 1210 BRUSSELS / BRUXELLES - BELGIUM / BELGIË - T +32 (0)217 91 20 F +32 (0)217 91 91 @ EWLEUROPEANWOMENSLobby WWW.EWLEUROPEANWOMENSLobby.ORG



Date: 17 June 2011 (**Embargo 17 June 12:00**)
Issuing organisation: The European Women's Lobby (EWL)

European Women's Lobby launches campaign to put an end to prostitution with video clip calling for a change of perspective

'If I had to have sex ten times a day with strangers for a living, at what point would I start to feel sick? From the beginning surely.' So concludes the voice-over of a thought-provoking video clip launched today by the European Women's Lobby (EWL) as part of its campaign to put an end to prostitution in Europe, which it considers a form of violence against women.

The one-minute clip is the work of French film director Frédérique Pollet Rouyer and Belgian film director, Patric Jean, whose 2007 documentary 'La domination masculine' won critical acclaim. In the clip, a steady stream of women visit a young male prostitute, leaving money on a table in payment for his submission to their desires. 'What we are appealing for is a moment of reflection and empathy,' says Patric Jean. 'We are asking viewers to imagine themselves in the place of a prostituted person and how it feels to rent out one's sexuality and body for money. If this basic reality of prostitution makes them feel uncomfortable or worse, they should take a stand against it.'

The EWL campaign, entitled 'Together for a Europe free from Prostitution', calls on individuals, national governments and the European Union to take concrete actions to bring about an end to societal tolerance for widespread sexual and economic exploitation of persons in prostitution, the vast majority of whom are women. 'As far as the members of the European Women's Lobby are concerned, the system of prostitution represents a backwater of inequality, a place where violence and oppression are thinly veiled by a distorted image of equality through commercial exchange,' says Rada Boric, Executive member of the EWL, representing more than 2500 women's associations throughout 30 countries.

Associations working with women in prostitution and survivors of the system agree and point to pervasive inequality between women and men as the key root cause for prostitution. 'Society has a duty to find alternatives for women so that they can live in dignity and not fall into prostitution,' insists Pascale Rouges, a survivor from Belgium.

A range of official reports and academic studies back up this harsh assessment. According to the UK Home Office, up to 95% of women in street prostitution are problematic drug users. Nine out of ten women in prostitution would like to exit the system of prostitution but feel unable to do so.¹ In the Netherlands, where procuring was decriminalised in 2000, up to 90% of women working in brothels in 2008 were victims of trafficking.² An

¹ UK Home Office 2004, *Playing the price*

² Korps landelijke politiediensten, *Schone Schijn: De zignering van mensenhandel in de vergunde prostitutievector, Orliebergen, 2008*

18 RUE HYPERHAUSQUE - 1210 BRUSSELS / BRUXELLES - BELGIUM / BELGIË - T +32 (0)217 91 20 F +32 (0)217 91 91 @ EWLEUROPEANWOMENSLobby WWW.EWLEUROPEANWOMENSLobby.ORG

A press conference in Budapest on the same day!



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Towards a European abolitionist movement



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Abolitionist mobilisation in Europe

Building alliances with NGOs

- ✓ **31 EWL member organisations** involved in the campaign, in 17 countries
- ✓ **6 partners** in Europe and USA



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ENSEMBLE POUR UNE EUROPE
LIBEREE DE LA PROSTITUTION



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Hungary

MONA Foundation Awareness raising at the Sziget Festival



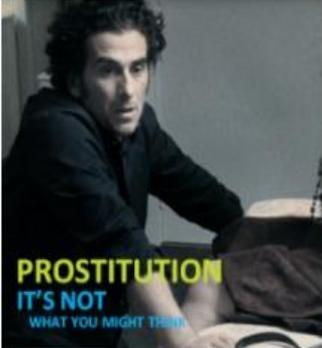
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Hungary

EWL support to Hungarian petition against child prostitution, March 2011

Campaign

Together for a Europe Free from Prostitution!



PROSTITUTION
IT'S NOT
WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK

Take Action!

Join the call for a European Year to end violence against women!



YOU ARE HERE [Home page](#) » [Get involved](#) » [Take action today!](#) » Sign the petition against [child prostitution](#) in Hungary!

TAKE ACTION TODAY!

Sign the petition against [child prostitution](#) in Hungary!

Posted on 16 March 2011



The Hungarian Women's Lobby (member of the European Women's Lobby), in cooperation with the Dignity for All Movement and with the support of over 30 Hungarian NGOs working with gender equality, youth, social, health, education and other related issues, is collecting signatures for a petition against [child prostitution](#): <http://www.gopetition.com>. The petition calls on the Hungarian government to recognize the problem of [child prostitution](#) and to do more to combat the phenomenon and to protect



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End Prostitution Now

Scotland



**STOP
DEMAND**
END PROSTITUTION

**“I felt guilty. I had used her.
You shouldn’t pay a woman,
I classed it as just as bad as rape”**

A Scottish male, 2008. (Challenging Men’s Demand research)



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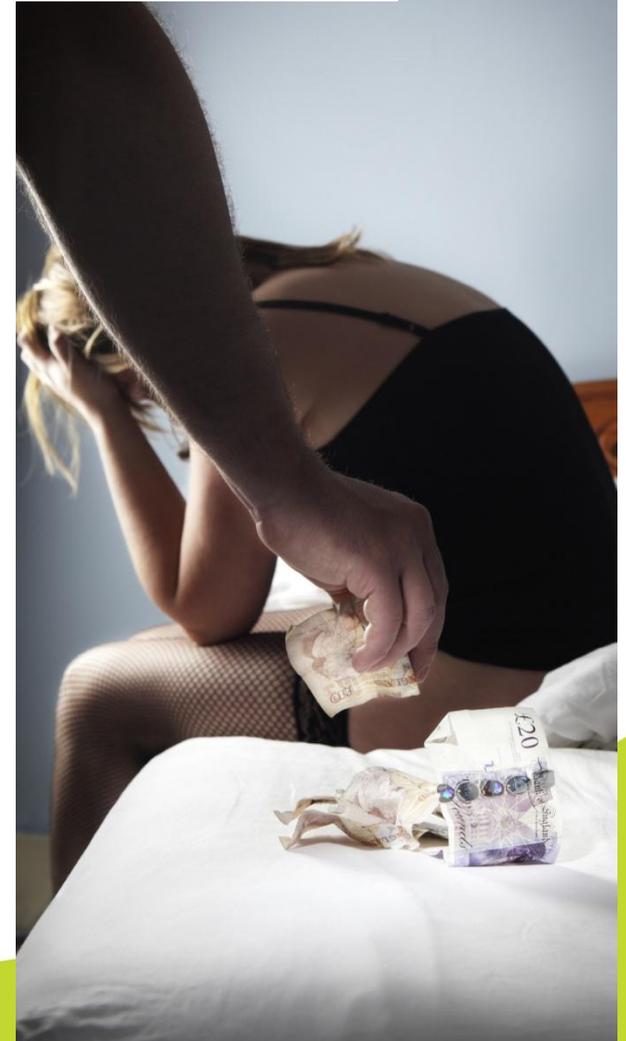
Turn Off the Red Light

End Prostitution and Sex Trafficking in Ireland

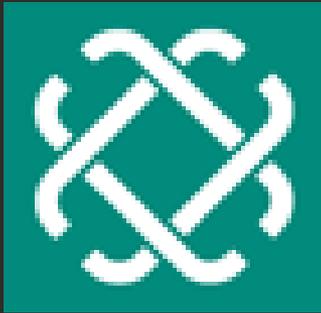


Turn Off the Red Light *Ireland*

Watch the videos of engaged
men!



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FONDATION SCELLES

Connaître, comprendre, combattre
L'exploitation sexuelle

Fondation Scelles

France

Watch the video
'Prostitution is violence'

Fondation Scelles - La prostitution est une violence



La prostitution est une violence (Fondation... par fondationscelles



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Collectif Alouette

France



Collectif Alouette - Rosen pour la pénalisation des clients



Sign the petition and watch the video of Rosen, a survivor of prostitution calling for criminalisation of prostitute-users



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Mouvement du Nid *France*



Abolir le système prostitueur

Participate to the
actions and/or
become a
volunteer

Discover the resource website
www.prostitutionetsociete.fr



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Standing Against Global Exploitation (SAGE)

United States



Discover SAGE programmes
for persons in prostitution and
for prostitute-users



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Abolitionist mobilisation in Europe

Building a network of supporters

- ✓ MEPs
- ✓ Supporters from the cultural world



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Supportive MEPs



Participate in the campaign!

If you are an NGO:

- ✓ Join the network of abolitionist NGOs
- ✓ Get visibility through EWL website
- ✓ Share information with other NGOs all over Europe
- ✓ Inform us of your actions
- ✓ Find new partners for the campaign
- ✓ Liaise between national and European levels by meeting MEPs or giving us names of good MEPs
- ✓ Organise a national event to foster your national advocacy



Participate in the campaign!

If you are an individual:

- ✓ Sign our petition!
- ✓ Join an NGO active in the campaign!
- ✓ Spread information and campaign tools
- ✓ Raise awareness around you
- ✓ Write to your Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament to call for the abolition of prostitution
- ✓ Write to your government to ask for the ratification / implementation of the UN 1949 Convention



Thank you!



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