

Towards a European abolitionist movement: The EWL campaign 'Together for a Europe free from prostitution'

Warsaw, 25 June 2013



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
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EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

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The EWL: the democratic voice of women at European level

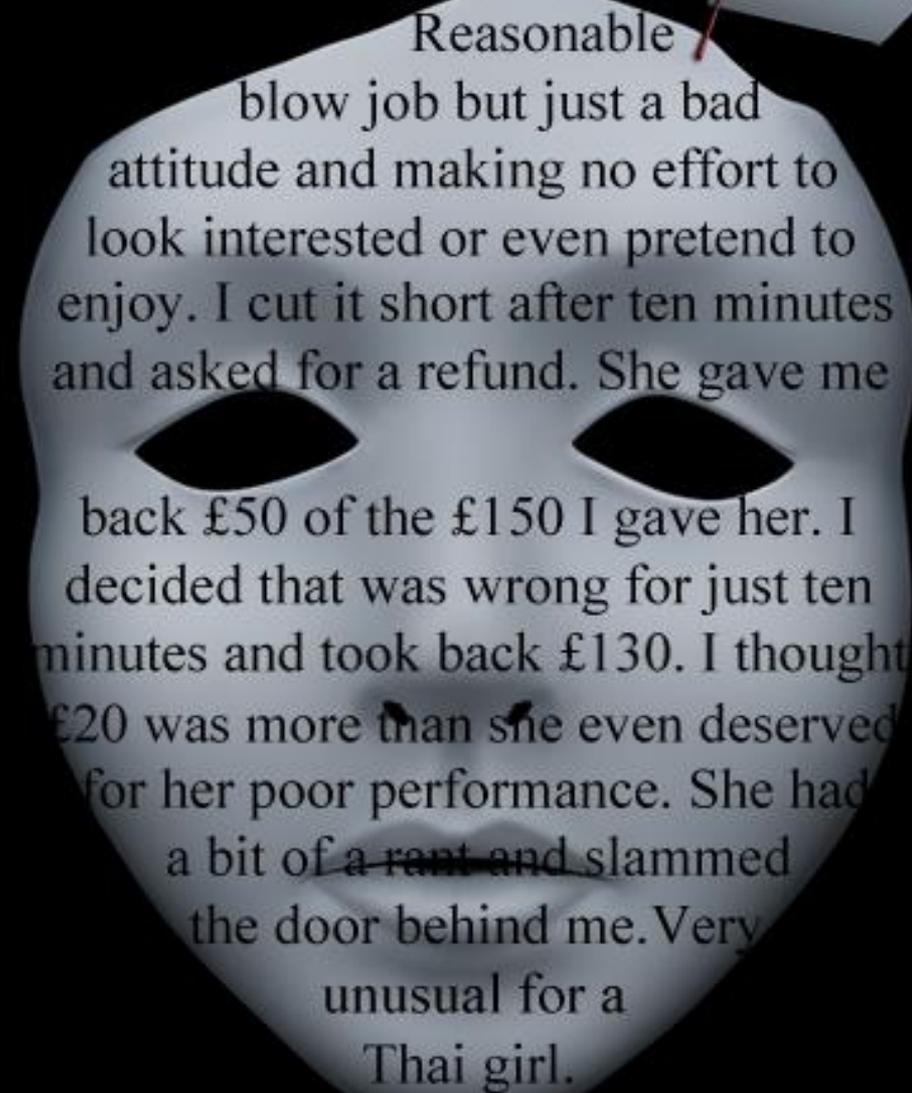
- ✓ The largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the EU
- ✓ Promoting women's rights and equality between women and men in Europe
- ✓ Members in all 27 EU member states and 4 candidate countries, as well as 20 European-wide associations → representing over 2000 women's organisations



The European Women's Lobby and prostitution: an abolitionist and women's rights perspective



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Reasonable
blow job but just a bad
attitude and making no effort to
look interested or even pretend to
enjoy. I cut it short after ten minutes
and asked for a refund. She gave me
back £50 of the £150 I gave her. I
decided that was wrong for just ten
minutes and took back £130. I thought
£20 was more than she even deserved
for her poor performance. She had
a bit of a rant and slammed
the door behind me. Very
unusual for a
Thai girl.

The demand side...

- ✓ Women's body for sale
- ✓ Male domination
- ✓ Racist stereotypes
- ✓ Fuels trafficking

Prostitution is a gendered phenomenon

Persons in prostitution = **women** / Sex buyers = **men**

10% are men and transsexuals. But ALL are male to female. And the sex buyers of men and transsexuals are men.

→ **Prostitution is not 'accidental', it is structural**

→ **It has to do with inequality between women and men**

'Whore' is an insult that can be addressed to any woman...



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Prostitution has to do with gender inequality and patriarchy

We still face gender inequality in Europe.

Women face more poverty and precarious conditions, and suffer from many forms of male violence against them.

WHEREAS men still own economic, political and social powers.

Violence against women is about men's control over women's body and sexuality: it is **a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men.**



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Prostitution is a form of violence against women

In an equal society, we want women to live free from violence, to make their own choices about their body and sexuality.

→ Sexual harassment at work, incest, rape, marital rape, sexual abuse... have been progressively outlawed.

HOWEVER, the system of prostitution allows men to get access to women's body and sexuality through the power of money.



In a global context...

- ✓ **Systems of prostitution:** several actors involved: prostitute-users, procurers and networks, the State and society (legal and cultural frameworks)
- ✓ **Using globalisation:** international migration, inequalities between countries, persistent inequalities between women and men, discrimination against minorities...
- ✓ **A real business:** a pimp in Europe earns 100 000 euros per year per prostitute (Interpol)



Impact on society: the commodification of women's body

Sex buyers have a more degrading representation of women and of the relationships between women and men

'She gave up her rights when she accepted my money'

For 27% of men, the concept of 'rape' is ridiculous for women in prostitution

Half of sex buyers continue the transaction even after clear signals that the woman is under 18



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Impact on society: young people's representations of equality and sexuality

11 years old: average age of first contact with pornography + Video games fostering rape and violence against women in prostitution

→ **Sexuality as a place for violence and domination**

Study on youth in France, at the border with the Spanish brothels → negative impact on girls' self esteem

French survey: **63% think prostitution is an obstacle to gender equality**



Impact on women: prostitution is violence against women

- ✓ Between 80 and 95% of persons in prostitution have suffered some forms of violence before entering the system of prostitution (rape, incest, pedophilia)
- ✓ 62% of women in prostitution report having been raped
- ✓ 68% of women in prostitution meet the criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder like victims of torture
- ✓ **The repetition of a sexual act without any desire is a form of violence**



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The abolitionist perspective

- ✓ We need to **set standards to protect human dignity.**
- ✓ Prohibiting sex purchase is about **setting ground for a progressive and equal society.**
- ✓ It is about **stopping a system that exploits all forms of inequalities and domination:** men over women, rich over poor, North over South, majority over minorities...
- ✓ It is about **building a society where all women and girls are not considered as objects,** where they can find help to exit prostitution and flee violence against women.



**Recent developments in
Europe:
Prostitution is high on the
political agenda!**



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Ten years of abolition in Sweden

Impact on persons affected by prostitution

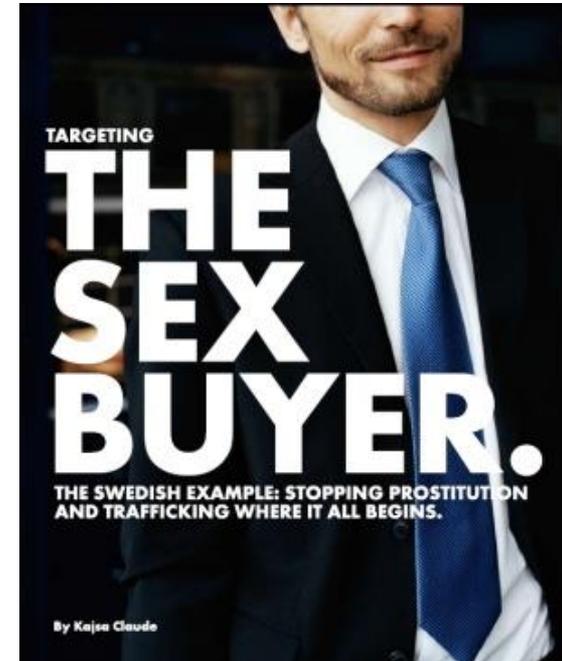
- ✓ Reduction of street prostitution (halved)
- ✓ No evidence of more 'hidden' prostitution
- ✓ No evidence of Swedish sex tourism abroad
- ✓ Police support + less violence

Impact on trafficking

- ✓ Decrease of trafficking and organised crime

Impact on society

- ✓ Increased support to the law: from 30% to 70% in 10 years!
- ✓ Great support of youth
- ✓ Decrease of the number of prostitute-users (less than 8%)



Moving towards abolition...?

- ✓ **Iceland:** closing down of strip clubs
- ✓ **Norway:** criminalising sex purchase abroad
- ✓ **France:** parliamentary resolution (Dec 2011), governmental programme, Minister's commitment
- ✓ **Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Cyprus:** consultations on a new legislation
- ✓ **Active coalitions of NGOs** (Abolition 2012 in France, Turn Off the Red Light in Ireland) + men against prostitution
- ✓ Positioning of NGOs in **Belgium**, despite proposals of eros-centers



Moves in the regulationist approach

Changes in the Dutch model

- ✓ Police and governmental reports portraying a bad situation for women: decrease of their well being, 50 to 90% of women in 'legal industry' being forced
- ✓ Increase of trafficking and organised crime: half of the owners of legal brothels have a criminal record
- ✓ Increase of hidden prostitution: 83% of ads for prostitution relate to illegal brothels
- ✓ **New law proposal:** 21 as minimum age, criminalise non-registered women and buyers of non-registered women



The logics of regulation in Europe

- ✓ **Spain:** Prostitution schools; 40% of men are buyers; negative impact on young people (self-esteem and sexuality); the sex industry makes 18 billion euros of benefit each year
- ✓ **Germany:** 'Pavement fees' for prostituted persons + threats on social benefits if refusing a job as prostitute in Germany + police inaction as law requests victim's complaint
- ✓ **Hungary:** rewarding employees through prostitution
- ✓ **Austria:** sex supermarkets (no condom, gangbang sessions...)
- ✓ **Romania:** tattooed bar codes...
- ✓ **Impact of the crisis**



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Si quieres trabajar YA
y ganar dinero al instante

Te ofrecemos Incorporación inmediata, formación profesional con clases teóricas y prácticas

Qué necesitas:
Ser atrevido, mayor de edad y tener buena presencia

Reinvéntate, no esperes más
Primera Academia de Prostitución y Artes Sexuales de España

Info. [Redacted]

Foto para respuesta de edad (18 años)

EWL campaign 'Together for a Europe free from prostitution'



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| TOGETHER FOR A EUROPE
FREE FROM PROSTITUTION |



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Campaign's main actions/goals

- ✓ **Raise awareness**, start the debate → at national and European level
- ✓ **Support national activities** → support our members + create links between countries and policies
- ✓ **Create a European abolitionist network**, with NGOs and MEPs → towards a European abolitionist voice



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Advocacy actions at national level

- ✓ **EWL support to 14 events** organised by EWL members since Sept. 2011, with ministers, MEPs, EU representatives...
- ✓ **EWL campaign presented** at more than 21 events (EU and national level)
- ✓ **EWL contribution** to national consultations (IE, NI, CY, UK)



Advocacy actions at EU level

EWL visual action

**‘Be a sport. Keep it fair...
Say NO to prostitution’**

30 May 2012

- Support of MEPs
- Clip ‘Sport, Sex & Fun’
- Media attention

EWL European conference

4 December 2012

- Comparison NL/SE
- High-level decision-makers (ministers, MEPs...)



10 years of policies on prostitution: Outcomes of the Swedish and Dutch options, and ways forward

European conference organised by the European Women's Lobby and co-hosted by MEPs Mariya Gabriel (EPP) & Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)

Tuesday 4 December 2012, 14h30-18h
European Parliament, P4B001

Followed by a reception

Please register by 19 November: bjorklund@womenlobby.org



Network building

Launch of the Brussels' Call on 4 December 2012

= political manifesto

→ 200 signatories NGOs

→ Media attention

→ Growing number of supporting
MEPs

→ New signatories in 2013

→ Meeting foreseen on 1st
October in Brussels

BRUSSELS' CALL

Victor Hugo

HE WOULD HAVE SIGNED...

WHAT ABOUT YOU ?

"THEY SAY THAT SLAVERY HAS DISAPPEARED FROM EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION. THAT IS INCORRECT. IT STILL EXISTS, BUT NOW IT WEIGHS ONLY ON WOMEN, AND IT IS CALLED **PROSTITUTION.**"

Victor Hugo, 1862.



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Raising awareness

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



Clip **'For a change of perspective'**
(EWL, 2011)

Clip **'Sport, Sex & Fun'**
(EWL, 2012)

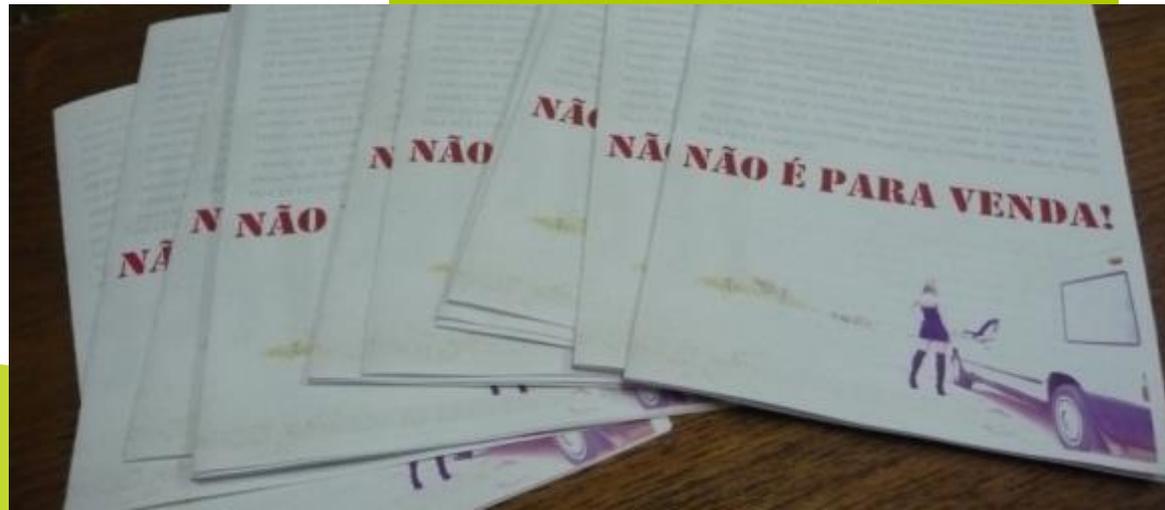


Involving

EWL Internet 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!

EWL red card on sport and 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



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Thank you!

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