



Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations (MCWO)

c/o Keimar Bldg. Level 4, Giovanni Mamo Street, B'Kara BKR 2961

Tel:00356-79592626

e-mail: mail@mcwo.net; website: www.mcwo.net

The Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations (MCWO) strongly objects to the proposal made by the by the GU Clinic Consultant to legalise prostitution in order to make it 'safe'.

Whilst we can understand that the motive, as explained in the article published in the Sunday Times 15.12.2013, is to encourage women to come forward for treatment and monitoring of their health, prostitution can never be 'safe' since as is well known, involvement in the sex industry, often means experiencing threats, and physical and sexual violence.

Rather than legalising prostitution we should be following the French parliamentarians who have just voted in new legislation aimed at supporting prostituted persons and considering prostitution as an obstacle to gender equality and a violation of human rights and dignity. This new law will address all actors involved in the system of prostitution, in a comprehensive way. Persons in prostitution won't be criminalized anymore and on the contrary, will be offered alternatives to exit the system of prostitution. The demand for prostitution is recognized as the main driver of the exploitation, and the purchase of sex will therefore be criminalized. The fight against all forms of procuring and trafficking is strengthened, highlighting the links between prostitution and trafficking. Finally, prevention and education actions will be implemented to raise awareness to the reality of prostitution as a form of violence.

France has now joined Sweden, Norway and Iceland, whose successful and progressive policies on prostitution are based on the fundamental principles of equality between women and men, human dignity, solidarity and justice.

MCWO Chairperson Lorraine Spiteri said that women who are being prostituted should be helped to get out of the ring of violence, whilst society should send a strong message that it is the buyer who should be punished not the victims who often find themselves in this ring without much hope of getting out of it. Legalising prostitution is a sign that government and society are ready to commercialise violence at the expense of women. MCWO trusts that this will not be tolerated in Malta today.

Facts and figures on prostitution:

Prostitution is a form of violence against women:

- Between 80 and 95% of persons in prostitution have suffered some form of violence before entering the system of prostitution (rape, incest, pedophilia).
- 62% of women in prostitution report having been raped.
- 9 out of 10 women in prostitution would like to exit the system of prostitution but feel unable to do so.
- 68% of women in prostitution meet the criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the same range as victims of torture undergoing treatment.
- According to Interpol, a pimp earns 110 000 Euros per year per prostituted person.
- Nevada, where procuring is decriminalised, sees the highest rates of rape compared to all US states.
- For 10% of girls and 37% of boys interviewed in Denmark, it is normal to receive money or gifts in exchange of a blow job.

Prostitution and trafficking:

- Globally, women constitute 85% of the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (prostitution).
- Globally, 79% of reported trafficking in human beings is for sexual exploitation (prostitution).
- In Europe, 76% of trafficking in human being is for sexual exploitation (prostitution). Women constitute 70% of victims of trafficking.
- According to the UN, trafficking in human beings is the second biggest source of illicit profits for criminals after drugs trade.

Prostitution in Sweden and the Netherlands:

- According to the Dutch Ministry of Justice's study 'Daalder', there has been no significant improvement in the situation of persons in prostitution and the use of sedatives has increased.
- According to the same study, in the Netherlands, options for leaving the industry were in high demand, while only 6% of municipalities offer assistance.
- The Dutch National Police Force's study on the sector of legalised prostitution found that between 50-90% of the women in licensed prostitution "work involuntarily".
- In Sweden, the number of persons exploited in street prostitution has halved since 1999, while it tripled in Denmark and Norway for the same period.
- After ten years of implementation of the Swedish legislation, 70% of the population express full support for the law. •
- In 1996, 13.6% of Swedish men said they had bought someone for prostitution purposes. In 2008, the figure had dropped to 7.8%.

The MCWO is an umbrella organisation that represents 15 local member organisations which collectively has 24,000 female members. The MCWO is a full member of the Brussels based European Women's Lobby.

Lorraine Spiteri

Chairperson

Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations

Mob 00356 7959 2626