

# 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.



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPÉEN DES FEMMES



FONDATION  
SCELLES



Abolir le système prostitution

# BRUSSELS' CALL

## 'TOGETHER FOR A EUROPE FREE FROM PROSTITUTION'

JOIN THE BRUSSELS' CALL! Contact : [pape@womenlobby.org](mailto:pape@womenlobby.org)

### Whereas:

#### PROSTITUTION IS A FORM OF VIOLENCE

- The vast majority of prostituted persons have suffered from violence, often sexual, before entering prostitution.
- The vast majority of prostituted persons are victims of many forms of violence while in prostitution (physical, verbal, sexual, psychological violence).
- The repetition of sexual acts without physical desire, but instead experienced as a result of financial need, inequality and/or as exploitation of vulnerability, constitutes in itself a form of sexual violence.

#### PROSTITUTION IS A FORM OF EXPLOITATION OF INEQUALITIES

- Prostitution is a part of a long patriarchal tradition of making women's bodies available for men's benefit (droit du seigneur, rape, "conjugal duties"...).
- Prostitution exploits multiple forms of inequality: men's domination over women, rich over poor, North over South, majority groups over minorities.
- The majority of prostituted persons within the EU come from poorer third-countries. When they come from EU Member States, there is an overrepresentation of ethnic minorities.

#### PROSTITUTION IS A VIOLATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

- By placing the human body and sex into the realm of the marketplace, the system of prostitution reinforces the objectification of all women and their bodies. It is a direct violation of the physical and moral integrity of prostituted persons.
- Prostitution reinforces the domination of men over women, in particular the attitude that women's bodies are available and accessible, which is present in other forms of violence against women such as rape, sexual harassment and intimate-partner violence.
- Prostitution is an obstacle to establishing truly free, respectful and egalitarian sexuality in society.
- The system of prostitution fuels and perpetuates trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation.

### We call

#### ON THE EU MEMBER STATES TO ADOPT POLICIES WHICH WOULD GUARANTEE:

- The suppression of repressive measures against prostituted persons ;
- The criminalisation of all forms of procuring;
- The development of real alternatives and exit programmes for those in prostitution;
- The prohibition of the purchase of a sexual act;
- The implementation of policies of prevention and education, to promote equality and positive sexuality;
- The development of prevention policies in the countries of origin of prostituted persons.

#### PROSTITUTION IS VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- The UN Convention of 2 December 1949 adopted by its General Assembly and ratified by 17 Member States of the EU, states in its preamble that "Prostitution and the accompanying evil of the traffic in persons for the purpose of prostitution are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person".
- The UN 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) ask states parties to "take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women".
- Prostitution is indeed incompatible with articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which state that "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person" and "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

**The European Union and its Member States should entirely review their policies against trafficking in human beings, as they are unlikely to achieve meaningful results as long as the impunity of procurers and sex-buyers is not addressed.**