



Motion adopted at the 1998 General Assembly of the European Women's Lobby

(June 1998)

TITLE OF THE MOTION: Prostitution and Trafficking

We state that:

1. Prostitution and trafficking in women constitute a fundamental violation of women's human rights.
2. Prostitution and Trafficking in women should not be associated with the terms "forced" or "free".
3. It should be recognised that "free choice" is a relative factor, situated at the intersection of economic, social, cultural and political options of women in a given society. Inequality severely restricts freedom of choice.

We affirm that:

4. Prostitution and trafficking in women are violations of women's human rights. Effective protection of these rights will depend on raising the status of women in all areas of life and that this can be brought about through mindful strategies which enable women and men to negotiate in the form of a gender contract;
5. Strategies to confront prostitution and trafficking in women must be multi-faceted addressing on the one hand the needs of women whose human rights are violated while at the same time targeting at the client, the procurer and other people benefiting from the sex industry...
6. Studies on prostitution and in particular studies about traffickers and customers must be undertaken.
7. The definition of male violence includes all forms of sexual exploitation.
8. Until these issues are rightfully recognised and adequately addressed in consultation with a broad-based coalition of women's groups, prostitutes and women, victims of trafficking must have access to all protective services.
9. These rights should include: access to health care; police protection; opportunities for training and education; legal services and representation including legal residence permits in the cases of women from non EU countries; support and counselling and all other services offered to all women regardless of their activity.
10. There must be education reflecting the view that buying and selling of bodies represents a violation of human rights and as such must be considered illegal.

We call on:

11. Governments and policy-makers at all levels to engage in a broad consultation with all groups concerned with the protection of women's human rights, in particular women's organisations, prior to considering any policy or legislation relative to prostitution. The EWL believes that the issues are global and therefore, require multi-dimensional solutions which address a number of universal issues, notably: inequality of women, globalisation of the world economy; countries in transition; poverty; immigration policies and above all the issue of incessant violation of women's human rights.
12. Governments and policy-makers to pass legislative measures against trafficking in women, and to ensure full application of these measures