



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

EWL Charter of Principles

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY CHARTER OF PRINCIPLES ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN¹

1. FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

In considering the issue of violence against women, the EWL firmly adopts a feminist perspective. Violence against women is seen as a structural phenomenon, the cause of which is a direct result of gender inequality. The EWL adopts the definition of violence against women as stipulated in the Beijing Platform for Action. Furthermore, it endorses the statement of the Beijing Platform for Action: "violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of women's full advancement." (*paragraph 118*). The persistence and tolerance of all forms of male violence against women is a fundamental obstacle to the achievement of full equality between women and men in all areas of life.

2. WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

The EWL believes in the fundamental principle of respect for Human rights. The EWL believes that all forms of violence against women and girls in the private and public sphere by state and non-state actors must be addressed and understood as basic violations of human rights principles.

3. THE AUTONOMY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The EWL believes that the intervention of NGOs in the area of violence against women should work to achieve the autonomy and the empowerment for all women. This goal underpins all actions undertaken by the EWL to combat violence against women.

4. PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

In relation to prostitution and trafficking in women, the EWL believes that:

- Prostitution and trafficking in women constitute a fundamental violation of women's human rights.
- Prostitution and trafficking in women should not be associated with the terms "forced" or "free".
- 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.

5. RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY

The EWL believes that differences among women must be taken into account when dealing with issues of violence against women. Women can be affected by violence in different ways in relation to their diversity. NGOs working in the field of violence against women should develop strategies to ensure the inclusion of women marginalised because of their race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age, belief or religion.

¹ Adopted by the EWL Board in 2007