Seminar 'How to prevent and combat sex trade in Finland, in light of practical experiences from other European countries', Helsinki, 15 March 2012

European activism and sex trade: the EWL campaign 'Together for a Europe free from prostitution'

EWL Pierrette Pape's presentation aims at giving a clear picture of the position of the European Women's Lobby on the issue of prostitution. EWL's approach is based on the views and experience of its members, amongst which some work directly with women in prostitution or develop advocacy or awareness raising actions on the issue. Based on this expertise, the EWL has developed a strong position calling for the abolition of the system of prostitution, which is apprehended by the EWL and its members as a form of violence against women and an obstacle to equality between women and men. For the EWL, building a society free from prostitution is a progressive and realistic policy project. The EWL campaign 'Together for a Europe free from prostitution' has been designed to fulfill two goals. Firstly it aims at raising awareness on prostitution as a form of violence and breaking myths about prostitution, especially amongst young people and men. Secondly, the campaign wants to be the cornerstone for a European abolitionist mobilisation, gathering EWL members, partner NGOs and decision-makers, including MEPs. Finally, the presentation will give examples of the diversity of activities undertaken at national level by EWL members and partners, which support the advocacy for a Europe free from prostitution.

Pierrette Pape is Policy Officer and Project Coordinator at the European Women's Lobby, most specifically in charge of the issues of violence against women and sexual rights, and coordinates the EWL campaign 'Together for a Europe free from prostitution'. She is also an activist in various women's organisations in Belgium, and especially a volunteer for a grassroot NGO working to assist and support persons in prostitution.