

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

How to prevent and combat sex trade in Finland,  
in light of practical experiences from other European countries

*Helsinki, 15 March 2012*



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**LOBBY**  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

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# Building an EWL's approach to prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation



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# The EWL: the democratic voice of women at European level

- ✓ The largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the EU
- ✓ Promoting women's rights and gender equality in Europe
- ✓ Members in all 27 EU member states and 3 candidate countries, as well as 20 European-wide associations → representing over 2000 women's organisations



# The EWL position on prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation

## **EWL 1998 motion 'Prostitution and trafficking'**

- ✓ 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"
  - ✓ The definition of male violence includes all forms of sexual exploitation
- calling for protection of and access to services for women, and for education to equality



# The EWL position on prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation

**EWL 2001 motion 'Make it a crime to buy women in prostitution and develop strong policies against pimping'**

- ✓ Women are victims of a crime and of a system
- ✓ They should not in any way be criminalised
- ✓ Buying sex should be a crime
- ✓ Policies should help women to get out of prostitution (financial assistance, education, job training, housing and health care)

**Pimping should be tackled**



# The EWL position on prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation

## Other EWL motions

- ✓ Pornography is a form of male violence against women
- ✓ Zero tolerance towards all forms of prostitution, including 'services' for persons with disabilities
- ✓ Give women victims of trafficking a residence and/or work permit, psychological and psychiatric help, the opportunity to work and study, and compensation
- ✓ Advertising of sex services should be prohibited
- ✓ Need for prevention to women: education and vocational training and information



# EWL's approach to prostitution

✓ The act of engaging in sexual relations for money →

**Traditional image of the person in prostitution**

✓ But it also implies prostitute-users, procurers and networks, the State and society → Several actors involved → **System of prostitution**



# EWL's approach to trafficking

## Trafficking in human beings

**... exists because prostitution exists :**

✓ 79% of reported trafficking in human beings is for sexual exploitation.

**... exists because prostitution :**

✓ The profits generated during the exploitation of victims of sexual exploitation reach US\$ 27.8 billion.

UNODC 2009 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, UNODC Preliminary findings of the human trafficking database (2003), Europol Mai 2007



# To end trafficking in women, we need to end prostitution

By tolerating the systems of prostitution, we support traffickers and organized crime.

All forms of prostitution are a violation of human rights.



# The EWL position on prostitution and sex trafficking

*Three-year project 'Nordic-Baltic Network' (2005-08), with NGOs and government agencies*

→ Concrete activities to **support and assist women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation**

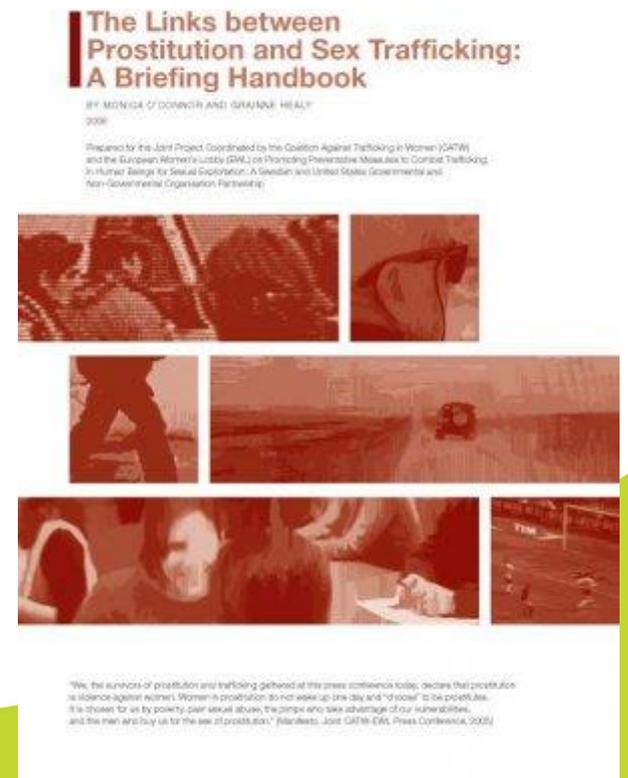


# The EWL position on prostitution and sex trafficking

*The links between prostitution and sex trafficking: a briefing handbook (2006, EWL-CATW)*

Tools for a gendered approach to trafficking for sexual exploitation

Looking at the impact of prostitution legislation on the scale of THB



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# Prostitution in Europe...

17 out of 27 EU member States  
have ratified the **UN  
Convention of 1949 for the  
Suppression of the Traffic in  
Persons and of the  
Exploitation of the  
Prostitution of Others.**



**What about your  
country?**



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## EWL abolitionist principles

The prostitution of women and girls constitutes a **fundamental violation of women's human rights** and a serious form of **male violence against women**. The tolerance of the EU and its member states for the system of prostitution allow for **men's use of and control over women's body and sexuality**, and fuels trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. The persistence of systems of prostitution in EU member states demonstrates the **failure at European level to reach gender equality and promote women's rights**.



# **EWL's abolitionist principles:**

- Prostitution is violence against women**
- Prostitution is an obstacle to equality between women and men**
- Abolition is a progressive and realistic policy project**



**Prostitution is always  
violence against women**



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# Violence against women BEFORE prostitution

- ✓ Between 80 and 95% of persons in prostitution have suffered some forms of violence before entering the system of prostitution (rape, incest, pedophilia)



Judith Trinquart, 'Health and prostitution', at EWL reflection day 'Violence against women and prostitution: which public policies?', 1 December 2011

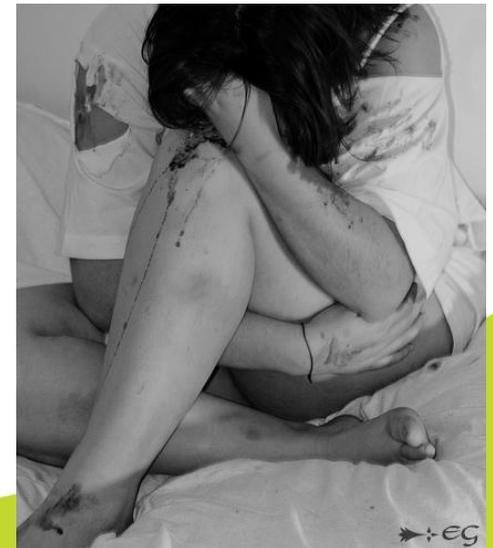


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# Violence against women DURING prostitution

- ✓ 73% of women in prostitution report having been subjected to physical aggressions while in prostitution
- ✓ 62% of women in prostitution report having been raped

Melissa Farley et al., “Prostitution in five countries: violence and post traumatic stress disorder”, *Feminism and Psychology*, 8, 1998



# Violence against women DURING prostitution

- ✓ Women in prostitution in London suffer from a mortality rate that is 12 times the national average

Home Office (2004a). *Paying the Price: A Consultation Paper on Prostitution*. London: UK Government.



# Violence against women DURING prostitution

## Prostitution by essence is a form of violence:

- ✓ Prostitution is about having sex against money without any desire. In prostitution, someone imposes his desire on someone else through money.
- ✓ The repetition of a sexual act without any desire is a form of violence.



# Violence against women AFTER prostitution

- ✓ 68% of women in prostitution meet the criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the same range as victims of torture

Melissa Farley et al., “Prostitution in five countries: violence and post traumatic stress disorder”, *Feminism and Psychology*, 8, 1998



# Prostitution is an obstacle to equality between women and men



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# The image of women and men in prostitution has an impact on all society

Extract from an ad for a strip club in Spain:

*“If you sleep with a friend of hers, she won’t say anything. She can wait for you twelve hours a day and be available. She won’t ask you where you come from, nor with whom. You can ask her anything, she won’t be upset. If you don’t understand what she’s saying, no importance.”*



# Prostitution perpetrates male domination and legitimises it

- ✓ “She gave up her rights when she accepted my money”
  - Prostitution is not about sexuality, it is about **power and domination**

Durschlag, R., & Goswami, S. (2008), *Deconstructing the demand for prostitution: Preliminary insights from interviews with Chicago men who purchase sex*. Chicago: Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation.



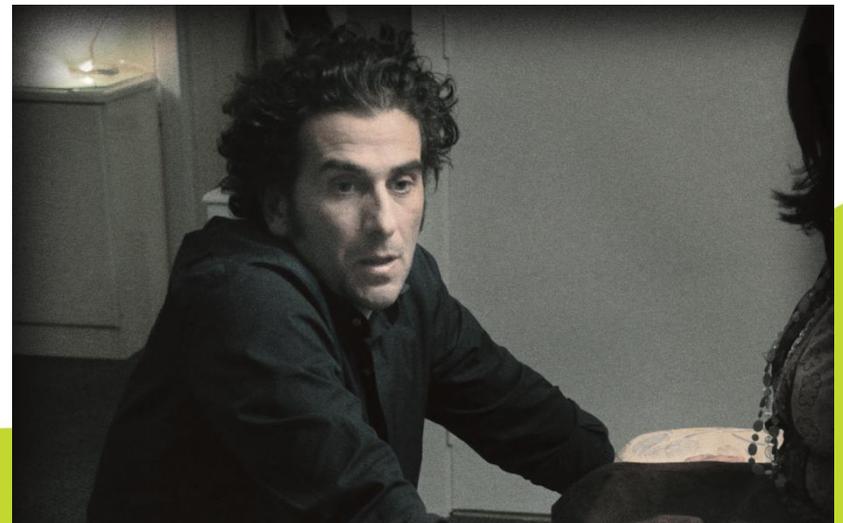
# The tolerance for prostitution trivialises the commodification of sex amongst the new generations

- ✓ For 10% of girls and 37% of boys who were interviewed, it is normal to receive money or gifts in exchange of a blow job
  - **Prostitution becomes a model for relations between girls and boys**

Danish social services, 2008



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# The globalisation of prostitution legitimises the demand

- ✓ Around 50% of buyers have paid for sex in other countries. They cite a variety of reasons for traveling to other countries for prostitution, including price, variety and exoticism.
  - **The system of prostitution uses sexist and racist stereotypes and reinforces them**

Farley et al., 2009  
Macleod et al., 2008



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# The systems of prostitution and pornography are intimately linked

- ✓ “Watching pornography has shaped my sexual desires”
- ✓ In the USA, the states with higher circulation rates of pornographic magazines have higher rape rates

Baron & Straus (1984), in Mary Anne Layden, ‘Pornography and Violence: a new look at research’, 2009

Farley et al., *Men who buy sex*, 2009, p.7



# The persistence of prostitution seriously hinders campaigns against violence against women

- ✓ For 25% of men, the concept of ‘rape’ for women in prostitution is ‘ridiculous’...

Melissa Farley, Julie Bindel and Jacqueline M. Golding, “Men who buy sex. Who they buy and what they know. A research study of 103 men who describe their use of trafficked and non-trafficked women in prostitution, and their awareness of coercion and violence”,

*Prostitution Research and Education and Eaves, 2009*



# Abolition of prostitution is a progressive and realistic policy project



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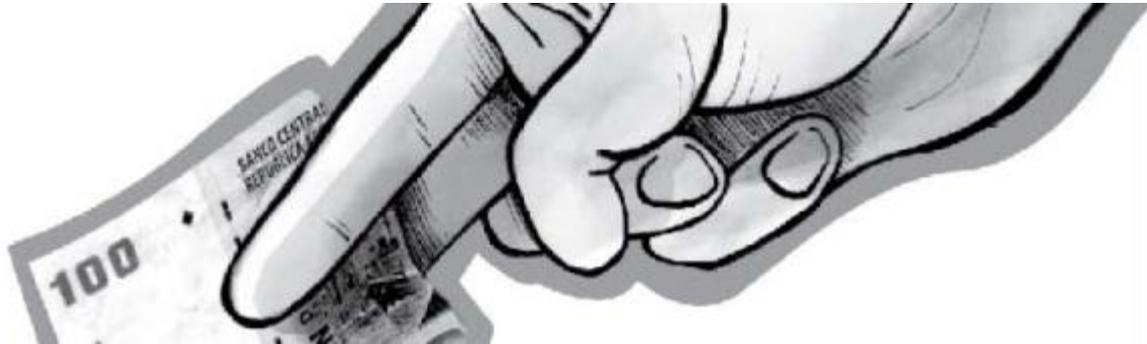
# The abolition of prostitution...

- ✓ ... is about **pursuing the struggle against all forms of violence against women**: prostitution is part of the historical continuum of male violence against women; incest, rape, marital rape are outlawed thanks to women's NGOs.
  - the system of prostitution must be the next step to **stop men's control and use of women's and girls' bodies and sexuality**



# The abolition of prostitution...

- ✓ ... is about **extracting sexuality and bodies from the market**: there is no equality in an sexual relation based on money, the system of prostitution perpetuates patriarchal views on women's sexuality  
→ **It is about real sexual freedom!**



# The abolition of prostitution...

- ✓ ... is about **deconstructing the liberal discourse about choice**: 9 out of 10 women in prostitution would like to exit the system of prostitution but feel unable to do so
  - We cannot build a project for society by adding individuals consents, we can build a strong policy project by **setting a standard of human dignity for all women and girls around the world**



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# The abolition of prostitution...

- ✓ ... is about **changing mentalities** and setting clear norms: it's not possible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to buy access to a woman's or a girl's body and sexuality
  - ... is about **making equality between women and men a serious issue and reality!**



# EWL political demands

No repression towards **persons in prostitution** / No taxation of their incomes / Concrete alternatives / Unconditionality in the deliverance of residence permits to foreign persons in prostitution / Equal treatment when victims of male violence

Make it a crime to buy sexual 'services' / Campaigns on accountability and deterrence towards **prostitute-users**

Prevention of prostitution / Education to a respectful sexuality / **Awareness raising** on the reality of prostitution and break stereotypes

Condemn all forms of **procuring and pimping** and refuse its decriminalisation / Restitution of all procuring benefits and funds



# Let's put an end to the myths about prostitution!

- ✓ Nevada, where procuring is decriminalized, sees the highest rates of rape compared to all US states  
→ **Prostitution is not a solution to rape!**

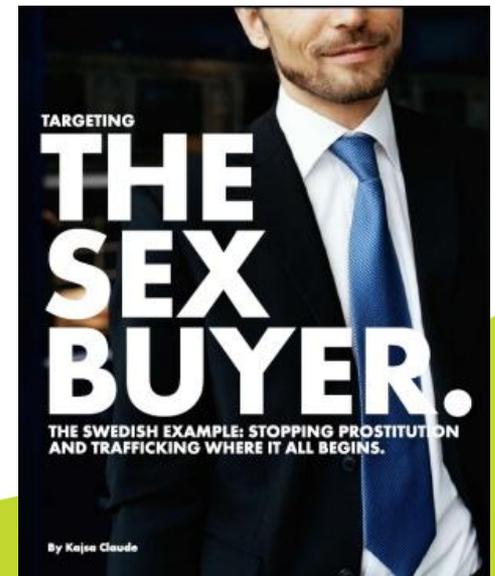
<http://www.prostitutionetsociete.fr/politiques-publiques/legislations-nationales/nevada-les-bordels-exemplaires-d>



# Let's put an end to the myths about prostitution!

- ✓ 43% of men were with friends when they engaged with prostitution, 65% had their first experience arranged by friends or colleagues
- **Prostitution cannot be justified as the only solution for desperate men**

Anderson & O'Connell Davidson,  
2002. Farley et al., 2009



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# Let's put an end to the myths about prostitution!

- ✓ The average age of entry into prostitution is 13-14 years
  - How can prostitution be about sexual freedom?



Benson, C. and Matthews, R. (1995), Street prostitution: Ten facts in search of a policy in *International Journal of Sociology of the Law*, Vol. 23, p395-415



# Let's put an end to the myths about prostitution!

- ✓ Up to 95% of women in street prostitution are problematic drug users
  - **Prostitution has nothing to do with economic independence for women**

Home Office (2004a).  
*Paying the Price: A Consultation Paper on Prostitution*. London: UK Government.



# The work of the EWL and its members and partners to abolish prostitution in Europe



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# EWL campaign

## ‘Together for a Europe free from prostitution’

- ✓ **Film and clip** ‘Not for sale’ (2006)
- ✓ **Clip** ‘For a change of perspective’ (EWL, 2011)
- ✓ **Pledge** → sign it!
- ✓ **Campaign webpages** with information and resources
- ✓ **Postcard**
- ✓ **Common logo**



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TOGETHER FOR A EUROPE  
**FREE FROM PROSTITUTION**



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# Abolitionist mobilisation in Europe

- ✓ **32 EWL member organisations** involved in the campaign, in 18 countries
- ✓ **9 partners** in Europe and the USA
- ✓ **16 MEPs** stating their support to the campaign
- ✓ **3 personalities from the cultural world**

- Join us! Sign the pledge!
- Become a partner!
- Mobilise your MEPs!



TOGETHER FOR A EUROPE  
FREE FROM PROSTITUTION



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# Campaign of MONA Foundation: 'I am responsible' (2010-11)

## Awareness raising in Hungary



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# Abolitionist mobilisation in Portugal

## Petition of the Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights (2011-12)



**Plataforma Portuguesa para os Direitos das Mulheres**

Respeitar a diversidade | Unir forças | Realizar a Igualdade de Género

[ÍNICIO](#) [SOBRE NÓS](#) [ORGANIZAÇÕES MEMBRO](#) [AÇÕES DE LOBBYING E PARTICIPAÇÕES](#) [FILIAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS](#) [COMO ADERIR](#) [PONTO DE CONTACTO: GÉNERO !](#) [PARTICIPE!](#) [CO](#)

Janeiro 2012

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«Dez» Fev»

### Publicações

**CEDAW: O Estado da Arte em Portugal** | A CEDAW fez 30 anos no final de 2009 mas continua absolutamente actual, fornecendo um conjunto de directrizes que permitem orientar o trabalho de todas as pessoas e organizações que intervêm em defesa dos Direitos Humanos das Mulheres. Esta publicação contém as recomendações feitas pelo Comité CEDAW ao nosso país em 2007 e o Relatório Alternativo EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

« Seminário "Prostituição e Tráfico de Seres Humanos para Fim de Exploração Sexual em Portugal e na Europa"

18 de Outubro: Dia Europeu contra o Tráfico de Seres Humanos »

### Petição - Junt@s por uma Europa livre de prostituição

A prostituição, enquanto sistema de exploração sexual de pessoas, incluindo crianças e jovens, é uma realidade de violência extrema e de violações graves de direitos humanos.

Não é uma questão moral, é uma questão de Direitos Humanos!

Pagar por sexo é inaceitável! Pagar por sexo é impor sexo!

O Ser Humano não é para venda!

Eu declaro que não apoio o sistema de prostituição e exijo aos decisores políticos, a nível local, nacional e europeu, que tomem medidas para erradicar os factores que a influenciam de forma a se alcançar uma Europa livre de prostituição!

Junte-se à Campanha! Assine a petição [aqui](#).

Outubro 20th, 2011 | Category: Junt@s por uma Europa livre de Prostituição | Leave a comment

### Responder

Nome (obrigatório)



# Alerting on the links between sport and prostitution in France

CLEF video clip:  
'Foot, sex and sun'  
(2010)

Foot sex and sun - CLEF



# Addressing men in Spain

How much is  
your ass?  
Your mouth?  
Your genitals?

APRAMP (2008)

¿CUÁNTO  
VALE TU  
CULO?  
¿Y TU BOCA? ¿Y TU SEXO?

Más de 600.000 personas al año son vendidas,  
compradas y forzadas a comerciar con su cuerpo.  
Si el cuerpo de una persona puede ser comprado,  
todos estamos vendidos.

www.23septiembre.blogspot.com

23 de septiembre  
Día Internacional contra la explotación sexual  
y la trata de mujeres y niñas.

GRUPO 23 sept

APRAMP

Asociación de Mujeres



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# Building partnership in France

Awareness raising  
campaign co-organised  
by the City of  
Strasbourg and EWL  
partner Mouvement du  
Nid (2011)



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Strasbourg.eu  
& COMMUNAUTÉ URBAINE

# UNE FEMMIE

n'est pas un  
**OBJET**

**La prostitution est rarement un choix,  
toujours une violence.**

Plus d'infos sur : [www.strasbourg.eu/prostitution](http://www.strasbourg.eu/prostitution)

EN PARTENARIAT AVEC:  
MOUVEMENT  
DU NID

www.strasbourg.eu

To find out more:

[www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org)

Thank you!



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