



EUROPEAN COALITION ON SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS AND INCLUSION



We, the 15 organisations united under the [European Coalition on Sex Workers' Rights and Inclusion](#) [1] and the 170 organisations' signatories attached call on all Members of the European Parliament to support sex workers' rights and their inclusion and to *reject any attempts to criminalise sex work* as a part of the Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence Report 2022/0066(COD) that is currently being negotiated in the European Parliament.

Our organisations are leading civil society networks and human rights organisations. We have decades of experience and expertise in human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV, harm reduction, the rights of LGBTI people, digital rights, anti-trafficking, migration, racial justice and criminal justice. Within these numerous fields of expertise, all 15 organisations have come to the same conclusion: *criminalisation is not the solution*. It is only by adopting a human rights based approach, decriminalising sex work, and meaningfully including sex workers and sex worker rights defenders in decision-making that sex workers can be protected.

The criminalisation of adult consensual sex that is subject to remuneration - including of sex workers, clients and third parties - continues to negatively impact sex workers' lives and their access to health and justice in particular. Despite calls by some organisations to 'abolish prostitution' in order to protect and 'rescue' people who sell sex, there is no evidence that criminalising sex workers, their clients or third parties has any positive impact on the lives or human rights of sex workers. On the contrary,

decades of evidence from academic research, civil society organisations and sex workers themselves clearly indicates that repressive policing and criminalisation directly harm the health, well-being and social inclusion of people who sell sex. This is the case in particular for those sex workers who are subject to multiple layers of marginalisation, such as racialised, LGBTIQ, and undocumented migrant sex workers.

We, the members of the Coalition of Sex Workers' Rights and Inclusion, call on Members of the European Parliament to:

- **Reject any attempts to introduce yet another criminal provision that would conflate all sex work (prostitution) with violence against women.** Criminalising adult, voluntary, and consensual sex – including the commercial exchange of sexual services – is incompatible with the human rights to personal autonomy, dignity and privacy.[2] Denying a particular group of women agency is not only utterly patriarchal, but it is also in opposition to the goal of the Directive which aims to strengthen the right of women to give or withhold consent.
- **Reject any attempts to exempt sex workers from Article 35.** Art 35 recognise women sex workers as a group at 'an increased risk of violence against women or domestic violence' and, when victimised, in need of specific support services. Listing sex workers as such in the Directive will have a significant positive effect on sex workers access to justice and holding authorities accountable.
- **Avoid using the term 'women in prostitution', 'prostituted women' or 'prostitutes' in this important directive.** This term has strong connotations of criminality and immorality and it is perceived by the sex working community as a demeaning and stigmatising term, which contributes to further exclusion and marginalisation.
- **Strengthen, recognise and amplify the role of communities and community based organisations that can play a vital role in crime prevention if meaningfully included and consulted.** Meaningful inclusion and consultation with affected communities should be set as a minimum standard in achieving the Union of Equality.

References

[1] The organisations who make up the Coalition are: Aids Action Europe (AAE), Amnesty International, Correlation European Harm Reduction Network (Correlation EHRN), European Aids Treatment Group (EATG), European Digital Rights (EDRi), European Network Against Racism (ENAR), European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA), Equinox - Racial Justice Initiative, Fair Trials, Human Rights Watch, International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN), The European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe), La Strada International (LSI), Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), and Transgender Europe (TGEU).

[2] [Amnesty International policy on state obligations](#) to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of sex workers, 2016, Human Rights Watch: [Why Sex Work Should be Decriminalised?](#)

[3] The 170 organisations endorsing this Open Letter can be found in attachment

Organisations	Countries
Alliance against Discrimination of LGBT	Albania
Austrian Family Planning Association (OGF)	Austria
maiz - Autonomes Zentrum von und für Migrantinnen	Austria
IBUS	Austria
SXA-Info	Austria
LEFÖ - Beratung, Bildung und Begleitung für Migrantinnen	Austria
Red Edition	Austria
Espace P... ASBL	Belgium
UTSOPI	Belgium
Sensoa	Belgium
Equinox	Belgium
çavaria	Belgium
Let's Talk About Non-Binary	Belgium
IGLYO	Belgium
Modus Vivendi asbl	Belgium
World Health Organisation	Belgium
Life Quality Improvement Organisation FLIGHT	Croatia
KISA - Equality, Support, Antiracism	Cyprus
Czech AIDS Help	Czech Republic
Česká společnost AIDS pomoc, z.s.	Czech Republic
ROZKOŠ bez RIZIKA, z. s.	Czech Republic
SWIPE	Italy
TAMPEP European Network for the Promotion of Rights and Health among Migrant Sex Workers	European
Idazkaritza feminista - LAB SINDIKATUA	Euskal Herria
Lady Clitter	Finland
Pro-tukipiste ry	Finland
Partage Droits Autonomie	France
AUTRES REGARDS	France
Ezekiel	France
CABIRIA	France
Sensual arts school	France
Association Allié(e)s des TravailleurSEs du Sexe (AATDS)	France
Le Collectif des Femmes de Strasbourg-Saint-Denis	France
STRASS, Syndicat du Travail Sexuel	France
Care and Colors	France
Sauviac	France
Nouvelle Aube	France
Arcat	France
Checkpoint Paris	France
Altaïr	France
Médecins du Monde-France	France
Les Pétrolettes	France

Ban Ying e.V.	Germany
Berufsverband für erotische und sexuelle Dienstleistungen (BesD)	Germany
Hydra	Germany
TAMPEP, the European Network for the Promotion of Rights among Migrant Sex Workers	Germany
BesD e.V.	Germany
With Pleasure e.V.	Germany
Playbabe	Germany
Whoroscope.eu	Germany
The Black Sex Worker Collective	Germany
Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women	Global
Red Umbrella Fund	Global
CREA	Global
Freedom United	Global
Positive Voice - Greek Association of People Living with HIV in Greece & Red Umbrella Athens	Greece
Sex Workers' Empowerment Network (SWEN)	Greece
DES	Greece
Inter Alia (https://interaliaproject.com/)	Greece
Balkan Can Kino	Greece
HumanRights360	Greece
Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network in CEECA (SWAN)	Hungary
Rauða Regnhlíf, Red Umbrella Iceland	Iceland
Feminist Ire	Ireland
Transgender Equality Network Ireland	Ireland
Ombre Rosse	Italy
Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute ApS	Italy
Collettivo Padova Hardcore	Italy
GenderLens	Italy
Associazione Mimosa	Italy
LILA - Lega Italiana per la Lotta contro l'AIDS	Italy
GRIPS Gruppo Ricerca Italiano su Prostituzione e Sex work	Italy
LGBTI+ Gozo	Malta
Association Spectra	Montenegro
Rutgers	Netherlands
Klankbordgroep Seksworks	Netherlands
SHOP Den Haag	Netherlands
Trans United Europe	Netherlands
HIV Justice Network	Netherlands
Prostitution Information Centre	Netherlands
SekswerkExpertise, Dutch platform for the advancement of sex workers' rights	Netherlands
WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform	Netherlands
International Network of Liberal Women	Netherlands
SWDigitaal	Netherlands

SW Links	Netherlands
Proud Nederland	Netherlands
Trans and non Binary Migrants	Netherlands
CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality	Netherlands
Aidsfonds	Netherlands
Gender Concerns International	Netherlands
Global Action for Trans Equality	Netherlands
Amsterdam BIJ1	Netherlands
VIVI stone	Netherlands
Stichting EqualA Foundation (Equal Asia Foundation)	Netherlands
Hivos	Netherlands
SWARP (Sex Workers Action Research Project)	Netherlands
Reimagining Sex Work	Netherlands
SAVE (Safe Sex Workers Against Violence & Exploitation)	Netherlands
Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)	Netherlands and South Africa
TransFormA	North Macedonia
Coalition Margins	North Macedonia
Association EGAL Skopje	North Macedonia
STAR-STAR Skopje	North Macedonia
Safe house	North Macedonia
Tiiiiit! Inc.	North Macedonia
Coalition sexual and health rights of marginalized communities MARGINS Skopje	North Macedonia
HOPS - Healthy Options Project Skopje	North Macedonia
Meduza platform	North Macedonia
Equality for gay and lesbians EGAL-Skopje	North Macedonia
LezFem	North Macedonia
PION - Sex worker's interest organization in Norway	Norway
Sex Work Polska	Poland
Łódzkie Dziewuchy Dziewuchom	Poland
Psychoterapia i Psychoedukacja	Poland
GAT Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos	Portugal
Manas - Livraria das Insurgentes	Portugal
APDES - Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento	Portugal
Associação Existências	Portugal
Opus Diversidades	Portugal
Panteras Rosa - Frente de Combate à LesBiGayTransfobia	Portugal
SOS Racismo	Portugal
Por Todas Nós - Movimento Feminista	Portugal
União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta -UMAR	Portugal
A Coletiva	Portugal
GPV - Grupo Partilha de Vivências	Portugal
UMAR	Portugal
OVO PT - Observatório de Violência Obstétrica de Portugal	Portugal

Polyportugal	Portugal
Rede ex-aequo	Portugal
Clube Safo	Portugal
Movimento dxs Trabalhadorxs do Sexo	Portugal
Grupo Partilha de vivências (GPV)	Portugal
ECPI-Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives	Romania
MozaiQ LGBT	Romania
TransCore Romania	Romania
Informal group "[H] BRAȘOV" - soon to become an LGBT association	România
NGO Equal Rights	Serbia
Drug Policy Network South East Europe	Serbia
Legebitra	Slovenija
Coalition on sex workers rights and inclusion	Spain
Comisión 8M Cádiz	Spain
NuncaSinNosotras	Spain
Colectivo Micaela - Mujeres Trabajadoras de Hogar Migradas	Spain
Asociación Mujeres Progresistas por la Diversidad en Granada	Spain
OTRAS	Spain
APROSEX	Spain
CATS (Comité de apoyo a las trabajadoras del sexo)	Spain
EUFORIA. Familias Trans-Aliadas	Spain
Colectivo de Prostitutas de Sevilla	Spain
Colectiva feminista de Cadiz JARANA	Spain
Putxs en Lucha	Spain
Fundación de los Comunes	Spain
acciónenred Andalucía	Spain
PreveniÓsona	Spain
APDHA Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalucía	Spain
Comite de Apoyo a las Trabajadoras del Sexo (CATS)	Spain
Red Umbrella Sweden	Sweden
Jardin des Reves	Switzerland
Sex Worker Breakfasts	United Kingdom
The domino foundation C.I.C.	United Kingdom
National Ugly Mugs	United Kingdom
ReShape/International HIV Partnerships	United Kingdom
x:talk	United Kingdom
Cybertease	United Kingdom
Release	United Kingdom
English Collective of Prostitutes	United Kingdom
Women Against Rape	United Kingdom
UK Community Advisory Board (c/o HIV i-Base)	United Kingdom
United Sex Workers	United Kingdom
Gender Concerns International	United Kingdom / The Netherlands

