



Letter in support: Vote in favour of the resolution on the human rights of sex workers

We, the undersigned organisations, welcome the draft resolution entitled "Protecting the human rights and improving the lives of sex workers and victims of sexual exploitation" ([Doc. 16044](#)), adopted by the Equality and Non Discrimination Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 12 September 2024. On 3 October, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) will discuss and vote on the report and resolution. We encourage the members of PACE to vote in favour of this resolution, with no amendments to the text.

The undersigned organisations are leading civil society networks, health, human rights, feminist, antiracist, and community-led organisations with a range of expertise that enables us to address issues affecting the human rights of sex workers through an intersectional lens.

While recognising that the proposed resolution refers to the Council of Europe Member States' wide margin of appreciation in choosing their policies and legislation on sex work, the text also calls on States, irrespective of their policy model, to adopt a human rights-based approach, and address the stigma and marginalisation, violence and abuse, and high levels of discrimination that sex workers continue to face in Europe.

The proposed resolution particularly highlights States' responsibility to ensure that sex workers have their human rights respected, protected and upheld, including access to justice and protection from violence, to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services, to education, training, information and awareness raising, and protect the right of sex workers to just conditions of work. States must also combat discrimination in access to employment, and ensure that anyone can leave sex work if they so choose.

Recognising that preventing and combating trafficking in human beings is a top priority for Council of Europe Member States, the draft resolution also emphasises that sex work should not be conflated with human trafficking. Instead, the report makes a clear distinction between coercive and exploitative practices and sex work. Further, the resolution asserts that sex workers and relevant civil society organisations should be involved in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking policies, as they are not only best placed to identify victims of trafficking in the sector, but also to identify how such policies infringe sex workers' rights.

Finally, the draft resolution also recognises the agency, bodily autonomy and self-determination of sex workers, which is fundamental to their meaningful inclusion. The draft resolution uses non-stigmatising language by referring to 'sex work' in line with policy documents of other human rights bodies including the [guidance document](#) of the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls. This is consistent with a human rights approach, as it emphasises the agency and rights of individuals engaged in sex work, and is the term preferred by the majority of people selling sexual services, in its different modalities.

This terminology challenges stigma and promotes the dignity, autonomy and protection of the rights of sex workers.

We see the draft resolution as a very timely and important step forward in recognising the human rights of all sex workers in their diversity in Europe and call on the members of PACE to vote in favour of this Resolution.

September, 26, 2024

Amnesty International

Correlation-European Harm Reduction Network (C-EHRN)

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA)

ILGA-Europe

Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)

International Planned Parenthood Federation - European Network (IPPF EN)

PICUM

Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice

Doctors of the World/Médecins du Monde France

AIDS Action Europe

La Strada International

Human Rights Watch

Transgender Europe (TGEU)

Sexual Rights Initiative