



February 22nd, 2014

Amsterdam

To: Members of European Parliament

Regarding: the vote on 25th of February 2014 on Ms Honeyball's report on sexual exploitation and prostitution

Dear Members of European Parliament,

The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) and the 560 NGOs and Civil Society Organisations listed below (472 in Europe, 560 internationally) urge you to reject Ms Honeyball's report on sexual exploitation and prostitution.

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, FEMM has voted to support the criminalisation of clients of sex workers, a policy that, under the guise of protecting women, will only increase their vulnerability. This policy goes against the recommendations of all sex workers groups as well as hundreds of health organisations, women's and LGBT rights organisations as well as ant-trafficking NGOs.

Criminalisation of clients has not only been ineffective in reducing prostitution and trafficking, but also been evidenced as increasing the vulnerabilities of sex workers. And contrary to the claims of Ms Honeyball, it has also led to the criminalisation of sex workers.

Amongst other evidence, a recent Police report from Sweden mentions that: "In 2009, the National Bureau of Investigation estimated that there were about 90 Thai massage parlours in Stockholm and vicinity, most of which were judged to be offering sexual services for sale. At the turn of 2011/2012, the number of Thai massage parlours in the Stockholm area was estimated to be about 250 and throughout the country about 450."¹ Such numbers are a clear indicator that the Swedish model has been ineffective in its main mission.

¹http://www.polisen.se/Global/www%20och%20Intrapolis/Informationsmaterial/01%20Polisen%20nationellt/Engelskt%20informationsmaterial/Trafficking_1998_/Trafficking_report_13_20130530.pdf

In Norway, where the purchase of sexual services has been criminalised in 2009, Pro-Sentret, Oslo's official help centre for sex workers, published a report based on a survey of 123 active sex workers that clearly demonstrate that **sex workers are now less likely to demand protection from the police because of the increased stigma** and the understanding that they themselves are seen as criminals.²

Many organisations working with victims of trafficking and migrant sex workers are also denouncing Ms Honeyball report and the conflation of sex work and trafficking. La Strada International, a network of 12 anti-trafficking NGOs have published a statement asking MEPs to vote against the Honeyball's report. They wrote: *"Criminalisation stigmatises and marginalises both domestic and migrant sex workers and it deprives them of the tools to protect themselves from violence and seek redress. **It drives the sex industry even more underground, which results in less access to health, social and legal assistance for sex workers, and significantly lower chances to identify individuals who have been trafficked.**"*³

We also remind MEPs that **there is no evidence that legalised prostitution increases trafficking**: Regarding the relation between legalised prostitution and human trafficking, The Dutch National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking in Human Beings concluded *"that it is not (yet) possible to give an answer to the question of the extent to which legalisation of prostitution leads to more human trafficking."*⁴ (November 2013)

A large number of HIV and health organisations have warned policy makers of the dangers of criminalising either sex workers or their clients. Worryingly, **the question of public health is largely ignored in this report**. We quote UNAIDS Advisory Group on HIV and Sex Work in their 2011 report to accompany the UNAIDS Guidance Note on HIV and Sex Work (2009):

"States should move away from criminalising sex work or activities associated with it. Decriminalisation of sex work should include removing criminal penalties for purchase and sale of sex, management of sex workers and brothels, and other activities related to sex work."

Finally, we denounce the ideological bias and lack of evidence of the report. A letter and counter-report signed by more than 70 academics and researchers and published on ICRSE's website clearly demonstrated that this report is not based on data and evidence and should not be accepted by the European Parliament.

The position of the European Parliament's Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee and the criminalisation of clients are based on ideology and denounced by all sex workers organisations in Europe as well as many anti-trafficking, health organisations, LGBT and

² <http://www.thelocal.no/20120622/rip-up-prostitution-law-says-top-oslo-politician>

³ <http://lastradainternational.org/Isidocs/STATEMENT%20-%20FEMM%20report.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.dutchrapporteur.nl/current/news/archief/new-article-does-legalised-prostitution-generate-more-human-trafficking.aspx?cp=64&cs=16855>

women's rights organisations (including Transgender Europe⁵, the German Women's Council⁶ and International Planned Parenthood Federation – European Network,).

For our safety, health, respect and human rights, we say NO to the Swedish Model of criminalisation of clients and we ask you to:

- **Vote against Ms Honeyball's report on sexual exploitation and prostitution.**

Signed:

The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe – network of 59 organisations in 28 countries in Europe and Central Asia.

Organisations endorsing this letter:

Regional and international networks: [NSWP](#), Global Network of Sex work Projects (represents 128 organisations in 28 countries); [APNSW](#), Asia Pacific Network of Sex Work projects (represent 58 member organisations in 25 countries) ; [SWAN](#), Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (represents 23 organisations in 21 countries); [TAMPEP International Foundation](#), European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers; [AIDS Action Europe](#), [CORRELATION network](#), European Network Social Inclusion & Health; [EATG](#), European Aids Treatment group; [INPUD](#), International Network of People who Use Drugs; International Planned Parenthood Federation – [IPPF European Network](#) (includes 40 members organisations in 40 countries); [Transgender Europe](#) (represents 79 organisations in 31 countries); ICW, [International Community of Women living with HIV/Aids](#); [La Strada International](#), European NGO network against Trafficking in Human Beings (represents 12 NGOs)

Funders: [Red Umbrella Fund](#), [Mama Cash](#)

National organisations in Europe:

Albania: [Stop AIDS](#)-Action Plus, Humanitarian organization

Austria: [maiz](#), autonomous centre for and by migrant women in Linz; [LEFÖ/TAMPEP](#), Support and European Network for Migrant Sex Workers, [Sexworker Forum Verein sexworker.at](#), sexworker forum association sexworker.at, Vienna; [Aids Hilfe Wien](#), AIDS/HIV Service Organisation

Belgium: [vzw Pasop](#), service provision for sex workers in Ghent; [Espace P](#), sex workers' service providers, Bruxelles; [Ghapro](#), health care and assistance for male and female prostitutes, Antwerpen

Bosnia and Herzegovina: [PROI](#)

⁵ http://www.tgeu.org/TGEU_Statement_on_Abolitionist_Call

⁶ <http://www.frauenrat.de/deutsch/infopool/nachrichten/informationdetail/article/-f303b1b78e.html>

Croatia: [NGO Flight](#)

Denmark: Sexarbejdernes Interesse Organisation

Estonia: [AIDS Tugikeskus](#), Aids information and support center

Finland: [Pro-tukipiste](#); Feminist Initiative -network , Finland

France: ARAP-Rubis Nîmes, Action communautaire avec les personnes prostituées, service provider for sex workers, Association Grisolidis, community-based health organisation, Toulouse; [ACCEPTESS-T](#) transgender rights organisation; [STRASS](#), French union of sex workers; PASTT; [Autres Regards](#), sex workers service provider, Marseille; [Collectif Droits et Prostitution](#), collective of 9 organisations for the rights of sex workers; Support Transgenre Strasbourg

Germany: [BesD](#) - Trade Association Erotic and Sexual Services; [Hydra e.V.](#), Meeting and counselling centre for prostitutes, Berlin; [Deutscher Frauenrat – Lobby der Frauen](#), National Council of German Women’s Organisations (umbrella organisation of more than 50 nationwide women’s associations and organisations); [Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe e.V.](#) (DAH) is the umbrella association of 130 organisations in Germany, including ASOs, prevention projects, drug help centres, residential and health-care projects, and self-help networks; [move e. V.](#), association for education and communication between sexwork; [Online-Magazin “menschenhandel heute”](#) Online magazine for a critical and human rights based approach to human trafficking and related topics, like sex work and migration; [Projekt „Nachtfalke“](#), Support for Male Sexworkers in Essen; [Niedersächsische AIDS-Hilfe Landesverband e.V.](#) (NAH) (AIDS Service Organization in Lower Saxony); [Nitribit](#), Meeting and counselling centre for prostitutes, Bremen; [Madonna e.V.](#), Meeting and Counselling Centre for Sexworker, Bochum; [BSD](#), German association of sexual services; [Münchener AIDS-Hilfe e.V.](#), AIDS Service Organization in Munich; [Phönix](#), counselling centre for prostitutes, Hannover; [Theodora](#), (Consulting for prostitutes ad job changing for women an girls, Herford; [AIDS-Hilfe Aachen e.V.](#)’ AIDS Service Organization in Aachen; [Ban Ying e.V.](#), [Koordinations- und Beratungsstelle gegen Menschenhandel](#), Coordination- and consultation office against trafficking, Berlin; [Regenschirm e.V.](#), Self-help organisation for people, who work in the field of prostitution; [Ban Ying Zufluchtswohnung e.V.- Zufluchtswohnung für Migrant innen](#), shelter for Migrant Women; [Ratschlag Prostitution Hamburg](#), Advice Group on Prostitution, Hamburg; [TAMPEP-Germany](#), European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers; [BASIS-Projekt](#) - Health Care Prevention for Male Sex Workers and their Customers, Hamburg; [ragazza e.V.](#) Support for drug using female prostitutes, Hamburg; [Ver.di Fachbereich](#) 13 Hamburg- trade union verdi, area 13 for special services; [OPERA BildungsRaum](#), basic vocational courses, job-related qualification, support, counselling and information for sexworker, Nuremberg; [Kassandra e.V.](#) counselling, information, professionalization and support for sexworker, Nuernberg; [bufas e.V.](#) Union of conselling organisations for prostitutes; [HAW](#), Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, department social work; [DSTIG, GSSG](#) – Charitable Foundation Sexuality and Health, as legal body of the project [sexsicher.de](#), Foundation for Sexuality and Health

Greece: [Positive Voice](#)

Hungary: [SZEXE](#), sex workers advocacy association

Ireland: [UglyMugs.ie](#), Working together for sex workers' safety in Ireland

Irish Sex Workers Alliance, alliance of individuals (sex workers, ex-sex workers and others) and organisations involved in health and social support services

Italy: Associazione radicale [Certi Diritti](#); Rete Italiana della Riduzione del Danno, Italian network of harm reduction; [LILA Onlus](#), Lega Italiana per la Lotta contro l'Aids -Italian League for Fighting Aids. Centro Antiviolenza Antistalking [La Nereide](#) Onlus, Siracusa; [MIT-Movimento Identità Transessuale](#), Bologna; [ARCI GAY nazionale](#), [Associazione XXD](#), association publishing monthly feminist e-magazine; [Progetto Stella Polare](#), project North Star, Paths of Social Protection to facilitate processes of self-determination and to support those who are asking to get out of situations of serious sexual and labor exploitation; Le Grazie - CDCP Genova; [Comitato Diritti Civili delle Prostitute Onlus](#), Committee for the Civil Rights of Prostitutes; [PIAM Onlus](#), project migrant integration, Asti; [Associazione culturale Etnoblog](#)- Trieste; [Equality Italy](#)

Lithuania: [Demetra](#), Association of HIV affected women and their families;

Macedonia: [STAR-STAR](#), sex workers' rights organisation; [Healthy Options Project Skopje](#); [Coalition Sexual and Health Rights of marginalized communities](#); [ESE](#), Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women in the Republic of Macedonia; [Opcija – Ohrid](#); [Open Gate – La Strada](#); [Reactor](#) - Research in Action; NGO HELP Gostivar, work with sex workers and needle exchange

Netherlands: The Dutch Platform on Sex Work; [Rights4Change](#), making human rights work; [Buro Brycx](#), advice on prostitution; Sex Work Projects STI Aids Netherlands-
<http://www.prostitutie.nl>; [Tampep](#) International Foundation

Norway: [PION](#), association for the interests of prostitutes

Poland: [Sex Work Polska](#), Coalition for sex workers' rights; [Social AIDS Committee](#); Stowarzyszenie Program [STACJA](#), 'Program STACJA' Association; [La Strada Poland](#)

Portugal: [APDES](#); RTS, Portuguese sex worker network; Associação Acompanha; Associação Existências; Associação Novo Olhar; Associação Positivo; [GAT](#), HIV/AIDS organisation; Liga Portuguesa Contra a Sida; Obra Social das Irmãs Oblatas do Santíssimo Redentor; [Médicos do Mundo](#); Panteras Rosa; SOS Racismo; UMAR

Romania: [Carousel Association](#), Romanian human rights and harm reduction NGO; [ACCEPT Association](#), the first LGBT rights NGO in Romania; [Romanian Harm Reduction Network](#), Romanian network formed by 11 harm reduction NGOs; [ARAS – Against-AIDS Romanian Association](#), HIV/AIDS service NGO in Romania; [Spiritual Police](#), Human Rights NGO aiming to raise awareness on active civic consciousness and solidarity; [Feminist Centre SofiaNadejde](#), antisexist, antiracist, antitransfob, antihomofob, anti-ableist and anticapitalist group, Bucharest; [H.arta group](#), knowledge production and (re)writing histories to gender issues in global capitalist times, Timisoara, Romania; [Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives](#), supports public initiatives in promoting human rights and non-discrimination; [Society of Contraceptive and Sexual Education \(SECS\)](#), sexual education, HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning and maternity services, Romania; [Solidarity for Freedom of Conscience Association](#), fights discrimination based on faith and religion in [Foundation Center for Critical Consciousness](#), official branch of [Center for Inquiry, Transnational](#) in Romania; [CeRe Resource Center for Public Participation](#), fighting for a political environment where citizens actively participate in the decision making process, Bucharest; [Foundation Family and Child Protection](#), protection to children in need of assistance, Bucharest; [Center for Action and Responsibility in Education CARE](#), community development and provider of opportunities for students, teachers and parents, Bucharest; [Alliance to Fight Alcoholism and Drug Addictions ALIAT](#), prevention, care and treatment services in addictions, Bucharest; [Parada Romania Foundation](#), services

for homeless children, young people and families

Russia: Silver Rose, sex workers' rights organisations; UHRA, Ukraina and Assistance

Spain: [Projecte dels NOMS-Hispanosida](#); [Fundación Triángulo](#), LGBT rights' organisation [hetaira](#), sex workers' rights organisation, Madrid; [Comite de Apoyo a las Trabajadoras del Sexo \(CATS\)](#)

Slovakia: [Odysseus](#), Harm reduction organisation; Zuzana Pachová, Civic organization Helping Hand

Switzerland: [ASPASIE](#), association for prostitutes and their rights, Geneva; [Verein Lysistrada](#), health improvement and consultation for sexworkers in Olten; [Prokore](#), swiss network for improvement of working conditions of sexworkers; [FIZ](#), FIZ Advocacy and support for migrant women and victims of trafficking, Switzerland; [MariaMagdalena](#), Conselling center for women in sexwork, prevention and health promotion in kanton St.Gallen; Association Boulevards, Geneva

Sweden: [Rose Alliance](#), sex workers' rights organisation

Turkey: [Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association](#), [MoreL LGBT](#), LGBT rights organisation, Eskisehir

Ukraine: All-Ukrainian League "Legalife"

United Kingdom: [English Collective of Prostitutes](#), for sex workers' rights and better wages and welfare for women; [Sex Worker Open University](#), advocacy, support and events by and for sex workers, London, Leeds, Glasgow; [International Union of Sex Workers](#), campaigning organisation for the human, civil and labour rights of those who work in the sex industry; [X-TALK](#), sex workers-led cooperative offering english classes to migrant sex workers and interventions on themes of migration, labour and gender; [Scot-PEP](#), promoting health, dignity and human rights for all involved in sex work, Scotland; UK Network of Sex Work Projects, [UKNSWP](#) (represents 60 front line service providers in the UK); GNGS - Glasgow Network for Gender and Sexuality (network of feminist and LGBT orgs in Glasgow)

