

Recommendations of the European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration Brussels 2005

The following recommendations were formulated by sex workers and their allies. They contain the key recommendations on the protection of sex workers' human rights, violence against sex workers, labour rights, migration and trafficking. This is a summary of the main recommendations. The full list will be included in our report and used to advocate and lobby sex workers rights in Europe.

Prostitution policies

Policies that aim to make sex work invisible and that exclude sex workers from public places, add to the stigma, the social exclusion and the vulnerability of sex workers. We reject the double morals that allow prostitution only when it is hidden. All laws and measures that undermine the dignity and self determination of sex workers should be abolished. Sex workers have the right to represent themselves. They should be part of any debate on laws, policies and measures that affect their lives. Self organization of sex workers should be supported.

Sex Workers Rights are Human Rights

Governments should protect the human rights of all sex workers, female, male and transgender, migrant and domestic. These are common and accepted rights that apply to every citizen and that governments already have signed up to, but are denied to sex workers

Sex Work is Work

Sex work is work and a profession, sex workers are workers and must be recognized as such.

We demand the protection of our labour, social and human rights on an equal footing with other workers, especially social rights such as access to social security, health care and minimum wages.

Sex workers, including migrant workers, should be able to work legally.

Governments should ensure safe and healthy working conditions for sex workers, similar to other workers. Mandatory medical checks and mandatory police registration, to which only sex workers are submitted, and other discriminatory measures should be abolished.

Violence against sex workers

Sex workers should have the right to unite and to work together to protect themselves from violence. Laws that prohibit sex workers to work together should be abolished.

Sex workers should have the right to support and protection when they are faced with violence, irrespective of their immigration status.

Migrants rights are human rights

The EU should integrate a human rights impact assessment in all anti-trafficking and migration policies and programmes in order to protect and promote the rights of migrant sex workers and trafficked persons.

In order to protect their human rights, in particular the right to a legal remedy, the EU should provide migrant sex workers and trafficked persons with appropriate residency permits in order to ensure them effective access to justice.

Migrant sex workers and trafficked persons, regardless of their immigration status, should have access to support services, including housing, education, vocational training, psycho social counseling and legal assistance, in order to protect their human rights.

Background to the Conference and Recommendations

In response to increasingly repressive legislation, policies and practice across Europe, a small group of sex workers and allies in the Netherlands got together in 2002 to organise a conference to give sex workers a voice. This small group put out a call across Europe to sex workers, sex work projects and sex workers' rights activists to ask others to join them. An Organising Committee was formed, the majority of whom were sex workers. A legal body, the International Committee on the Rights of Sex workers in Europe, was created to raise funds and host the conference.

The committee decided it wanted the conference not only to give sex workers a voice but to create tools that sex workers could use in defending their rights across Europe and to create alliances with human rights, labour and migrants organisations. During the conference workshops were organised where sex workers and allies shared their experiences, knowledge and expertise in analysing the reality of sex workers situations across Europe. Out of these workshops came a number of recommendations.

The recommendations were elaborated and endorsed by 120 sex workers and 80 allies from 30 countries at the European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration on 16 October 2005 and presented on the third day of the conference, hosted by Monica Frassoni, Italian Member of European Parliament, Greens – European Free Alliance in the European Parliament, on 17 October 2005.



The Future

The recommendations will be distributed across Europe and through the sexworkeurope website, initially in English. Sex workers are translating the document into French, German, Russian and Spanish (the other conference languages). We hope to arrange translation into many other languages used in Europe in the future.

For more information go to www.sexworkeurope.org or email info@sexworkeurope.org

**INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF
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