



P R E S S R E L E A S E

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS HISTORIC DECISION: A MAJOR STEP FORWARD FOR MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST PROSTITUTION

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The European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW) celebrates a landmark decision by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *M.A. and others v France*. This ruling upholds the French abolitionist model, which criminalises the purchase of sexual acts and provides support to victims of prostitution.

The Abolitionist Model is The Only Approach That Protects Victims of Prostitution

This decision by the European Court of Human Rights marks a monumental victory for migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women across Europe. **Prostitution entails severe human rights violations.** The French model, also adopted by Sweden, Norway, Ireland, and Iceland, addresses these by criminalising buyers and supporting victims.

The ruling recalls that the French abolitionist law:

- Offers crucial support, including temporary residence permits for those involved in programs to exit prostitution, benefiting migrant women who constitute around 83% of the victims of prostitution in France.
- Has led to a 54% increase in pimping investigations (since 2015) and a doubling of dismantled networks, with a 66% rise in prosecutions for human trafficking.
- Puts in place a broad protective framework, recognising victims of prostitution as a vulnerable group and criminalising buyers of sexual acts who profit from this vulnerability, with

a positive impact, including on the protection of minors against prostitution.

Paving The Way For Positive Global Impact

The ruling builds on significant milestones such as the 2023 European Parliament's resolution recognising prostitution as a form of violence against women and girls and the 2024 report by UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, its causes and consequences, which highlights the human rights violations inherent to prostitution and advocates for an abolitionist approach.

The European Network of Migrant Women calls on all states that profit from prostitution to recognise that they are on the wrong side of history. These states must uphold the fundamental rights and dignity of women and girls by amending their legislation and providing robust protection for victims. The time to act is now, to ensure a future free from exploitation and violence.

The European Court of Human Rights decision removes the Damocles sword hanging over the heads of countless vulnerable women and girls in prostitution. It solidifies the protection and support they desperately need, ensuring their rights and dignity can be upheld through an abolitionist approach.

The European Network of Migrant Women celebrates this victory. Together, we can create a safer, fairer world for all.