

# SWEDISH WOMEN'S LOBBY

## **Letter to CSW regarding the security at the parallel events at the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.**

Every year organizations from civil society organizes parallel events at the sessions. Because of covid-19 we have not been able to come to New York for the past two years and have had to keep the events digital. It is positive in the sense that more civil society organizations have the chance to participate. But this has also made it easier for anti-feminist, anti-women's rights and extremist voices to also access the events and the chatrooms. Last year civil society organizations had to face threats and hatred, we need that to change. In the Swedish CSW Network, at the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the CSW, we experienced not only one occasion, but several occasions where organizers and hosts were harassed and threatened. At one of our partner organizations parallel events the panel was attacked by anti-abortion-organizations and they got very uncomfortable and disturbed by the disruption. Organizations in our network are now scared to take part and arrange parallel events and are considering not to arrange such due to the lack of security in the digital forum. We would kindly like to ask you to consider ways that you can prevent this from happening at the 66<sup>th</sup> session. We urge you to make the digital forum for civil society safe at the 66th session.

We believe that there are ways for you to close the chatrooms from getting unfriendly and intimidating. If civil society organizations are too scared to host their parallel events, it effects the entire conference and it may lead to lack of a wide representation and the freedom of speech.

Kind regards,

The Swedish Women's Lobby coordinator for the The Swedish CSW Network