

22.05.2023

#FreeFromProstitution

DAY OF ACTION FOR A EUROPE FREE FROM PROSTITUTION



EUROPEAN NETWORK
OF MIGRANT WOMEN



SWEDISH
WOMEN'S LOBBY



SPACE
INTERNATIONAL



Equality Now
A just world for women and girls

PROSTITUTION: A VIOLATION OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

→ Action by **survivors of prostitution**

→ Roundtable with **members of the European Parliament**

→ Conference with **international experts**

Press Contact

European Network of Migrant Women

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SUMMARY

JOIN OUR DAY OF ACTION!

Europe-wide platforms, grassroots organisations, activists, experts and survivors of prostitution are gathering in Brussels on 22.05.2023 for a full day of engagement with the European Parliament. We are advocating for a [EuropeFreeFromProstitution](#).

Read our Press Release and Program!

GIVE SPACE TO THE VOICES THAT ARE NEVER HEARD!

Migrant & refugee women, victims of child sexual abuse, women and girls in poverty, women and girls with disabilities... The system of prostitution preys on the most vulnerable groups in the world... And their voices are rarely heard. On 22.05.2023, we

[#ListenToSurvivors](#).

Discover the stories of the woman with lived experience of prostitution.

WHO ARE WE?

To make this action a reality, EU-wide and global platforms organisations committed to ending violence against women and girls have joined forces with grassroots service providers as well as survivors led and migrant women led coalitions. Together, we bring forward the voices of the most marginalised women and girls and we are [#AllUnitedAgainstProstitution](#).

Find out more about us and how to get in touch!

PRESS RELEASE

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On 22nd of May 2023, the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW), CAP Intl, SPACE Intl, Equality Now and the Swedish Women's Lobby are calling for the European Parliament to commit to a Europe free from prostitution!

On 8th of March 2022, the European Commission adopted a legislative proposal on **combating violence against women and domestic violence**, to enshrine minimum standards in EU law for criminalising certain offences and improving access to justice, protection and support for victims.

Following this important step, and as the text was passed to the European Parliament for revision and approval, **the European Union Civil Society organised and mobilised to include the exploitation of prostitution of others as a form of violence against women tackled by the directive proposal.**

In a resolution of 26th of February 2014, the European Parliament already recognised prostitution as a form of sexual exploitation. Today, as the Members of the European Parliament are working on a new initiative report on prostitution, **we call for the upholding of this previous position in the upcoming texts - for women and girls in Europe to be truly protected.**

Votes for both the directive on combating violence against women and the initiative report on prostitution will occur in the European Parliament's committees and in plenary session in the next few months. Women's rights organisations are more committed than ever to ensuring prostitution and pimping are effectively tackled!

Women with a lived experience of prostitution, migrant & refugee women who make up the majority of victims of sexual exploitation, feminist experts and activists, EU-wide platforms, and grassroots service providers will gather on 22nd of May for a series of actions.

Join us!

- At 12pm for a Press Conference at **Silversquare Europe** followed by a networking lunch.
- From 1.30pm to 5pm for a conference with international experts on the intersection of systems of discrimination in prostitution at **Silversquare Europe**.

PROGRAM

22.05.2023

**DAY OF ACTION FOR A EUROPE
FREE FROM PROSTITUTION**

European Network of Migrant Women

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Join us!

Follow our day of action on Twitter @ENoMW with the
hashtags **#FreeFromProstitution** and **#ListenToSurvivors**

ROUNDTABLE

PROSTITUTION: A VIOLATION OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

European Parliament

9.30AM - 12PM

SPEAKERS:

- **Alyssa Ahrabare**, Advocacy and Legal Lead of the European Network of Migrant Women
- **Héma Sibi**, Advocacy Coordinator of CAP International
- **Melissa Farley**, clinical psychologist, researcher
- **Dr Esohe Aghatise**, lawyer, Executive Director of Iroko Onlus (Italy)
- **Luba Fein**, survivor of prostitution
- **Blessing Okoedion**, survivor of prostitution and trafficking, founder of Weavers of Hope
- **Yulia Dorokhova**, founder of the first Ukrainian self-organised collective of women with experience of prostitution

This is a closed session opened to Members and staff of the European Parliament only.

PRESS CONFERENCE

Silversquare Europe / The Parliament Room / Square de Meeûs 35 - 1000 Brussels - Belgium

12PM - 12.30PM

Journalists are invited to a Press Conference to get the chance to interview organisers of the action along with survivors of prostitution here to tell their stories, migrant women, experts, activists and CSO representatives from Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Ukraine and the UK.

Help us spread the voices and share the stories that are rarely heard!

RSVP: <https://shorturl.at/hlAMV>

NETWORKING LUNCH

Silversquare Europe / The Parliament Room / Square de Meeûs 35 - 1000 Brussels - Belgium

12.30PM - 1.30PM

Members of the European Parliament, staff and journalists are invited to share lunch with us and exchange with survivors of prostitution, experts, CSO representatives and feminist activists coming from Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Ukraine and the UK.

Join us!

Registration is mandatory: <https://shorturl.at/FNPZ3>

HYBRID CONFERENCE

INTERSECTING DISCRIMINATIONS IN THE PROSTITUTION SYSTEM

Silversquare Europe / The Parliament Room / Square de Meeûs 35 - 1000 Brussels - Belgium

1.30PM - 3PM

THE ROOT CAUSES OF PROSTITUTION

- **Dr Jennifer Okeke**, Board Member of the European Network of Migrant Women
- **Alexine**, survivor of prostitution, abolitionist activist
- **Rachel Moran**, survivor of prostitution, author & feminist activist
- **Melissa Farley**, clinical psychologist, researcher
- **Yulia Dorokhova**, founder of the first Ukrainian self-organised collective of women with experience of prostitution

3.30PM - 5PM

NOT FOR SALE: INTERSECTING SYSTEMS OF EXPLOITATION

- **Ana-Luana Stoicea-Deram**, co-president of ICAMS
- **Candida Alves**, survivor of prostitution, social worker
- **Mireia Crespo**, Director of Isala
- **Dr Esohe Aghatise**, lawyer, founder of Iroko organisation
- **Alyssa Ahrabare**, Advocacy and Legal Lead, European Network of Migrant Women

REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY

In-Person: <https://shorturl.at/yEOY1> | **Online:** <https://shorturl.at/akpMO>

THEIR STORIES

Julie Swede was appointed Director of SPACE international in January 2023. She works with an award winning project in Bristol called Bridging Gaps, enabling women with complex needs get better access to primary healthcare.

Julie's activism finds its root in her story: After a difficult childhood, Julie became a runaway and was groomed into prostitution at the age of 15. She got away from her pimp at 17, though he continued to terrorise her for years afterwards. She became hooked on heroin and continued to be exploited in prostitution until she finally could exit at 31.



Julie Swede

47 YEARS OLD MOTHER OF TWO SONS, JULIE USES HER LIVED EXPERIENCE TO SPEAK INTERNATIONALLY AGAINST THE STIGMA AND INEQUALITIES WOMEN IN PROSTITUTION FACE.

Blessing Okoedion



Blessing Okoedion is a survivor of sex trafficking.

Now, she is using her own experience to raise awareness about sex trafficking as a form of violence against women and girls.

In 2019 she founded "Weavers of Hope" a non profit organisation in Italy with the goal to support women and girls trafficked from Nigeria for prostitution in Italy. She also travels through her home country, Nigeria , to help women and girls in disadvantaged and remote areas to identify traffickers and their strategies.

Blessing received a **Trafficking in Persons Hero Award** in 2018. In 2017, she published a book "**The courage of freedom**", co-written with Italian journalist Anna Pozzi, to tell her story and shine a light on this abhorrent practice.

I am Candida Alves and I am a survivor of prostitution.

I am 58 years old and half of my life has been violence, loneliness, suffering and misery. Today I am fighting for a Europe without prostitution. I know what I am talking about, and it's possible. I went from whore to social worker. With my life experience, I want to show everyone why there is an urgency to put on the agenda the total abolition of all types of prostitution.

There are women in total danger who are waiting for solutions to live in freedom.



Candida Alves



Luba Fein

"The fight against incest and prostitution are two sides of the same coin."

Almost every prostitution survivor I meet is an incest survivor. That's pretty telling. If we fight to protect these children, we must also fight for the adults they become."

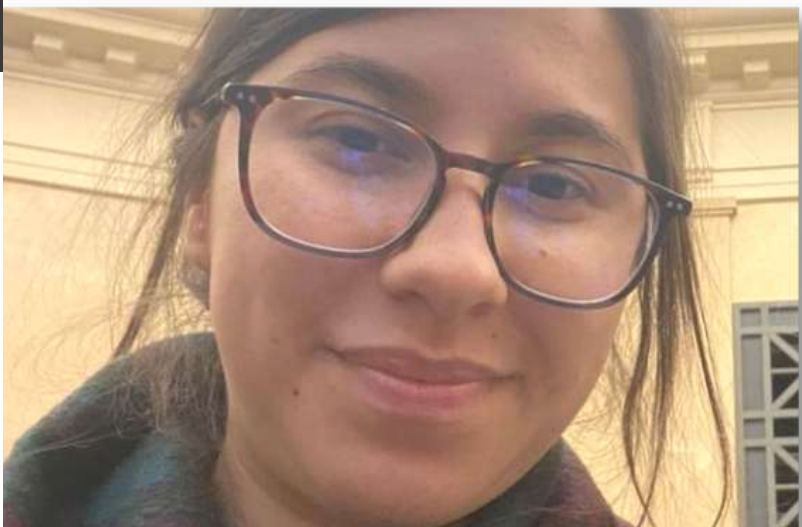


Julia Dorokhova

"Well-documented knowledge from European countries, which liberalized their sex industry, shows this approach does not work.

Any individual who trades women's bodies is a despicable criminal who will not turn ethical if granted a business license but rather more powerful.

Empower prostitution survivors, not their abusers."



Alexine

In her youth, Julia was immersed in the world of prostitution and drugs for two decades, during the Soviet period of Ukraine and the fight for independence. **In the early 2000s, breaking out of the vicious circle with great efforts, she started a new life and became a lawyer.** She founded the first organisation of Ukrainian women with experience in prostitution. For 15 years she has been supporting women in difficult situations, which has become especially important now with the outbreak of war, when women are more vulnerable to this threat.

"The war has destroyed peaceful life of women in Ukraine. **Over 7 million of women and children have become refugees in Europe.** But this did not break us and we keep fighting for our rights. We must stop legalisation of prostitution in Europe !"

On 22.05 hear the voices of Julie Swede, Candida Alves, Luba Fein, Alexine, Julia Dorokhova and more survivors from Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Ukraine and the UK calling for **a Europe free from prostitution! #ListenToSurvivors**

VIDEO CAMPAIGN

Migrant women, survivors and feminist activists from around the world are fighting for a Europe free from prostitution in our video campaign

We are calling for the Members of the European Parliament to adopt the Equality Model approach in the directive on combating violence against women and the initiative report on prostitution!

Listen to what we have to say! Find the campaign on Facebook **@ENOMW** and Instagram **@migrantwomennetwork** with the **#FreeFromProstitution** hashtag!



"Prostitution is enshrined in the long patriarchal tradition of men's sexual entitlement to women. On their desire to access and control women's bodies."

"Please we need protection, please we need access to fundamental rights and exit options too. Please put an end to the impunity of those who earns profit from women's misery!"

"Prostitution has given us nothing but trauma, shame and solitude."

"Women and men will never be equal in a society where women can be bought, deprived of their human dignity, exposed in windows like objects and sexually exploited in the system of prostitution."

#FreeFromProstitution



WHO ARE WE?

The European Network of Migrant Women (ENOMW) was created in 2012 with **an ambitious mission to transform the world into a place where migrant, refugee and ethnic minority women do not only act as recipients of help but decision-makers and leaders, fully in charge of their own lives.** Since then we have been strengthening our political presence, our advocacy and our membership. Our members are the reason this network exists. They come from all parts of the world and represent **a unique cultural richness of women's global struggle for economic, political, physical freedom.** We have over 50 member organisations in 23 European States. With them, we fight for equal rights and fair treatment for migrant and refugee women and girls living in Europe - **free from violence, oppression and discrimination.**

We create safe spaces for the most discriminated persons - migrant and refugee girls and women - where they come to heal, exchange, learn and co-create their own lives and stories.



Instagram
[@migrantwomennetwork](https://www.instagram.com/migrantwomennetwork)

Facebook/Twitter
[@ENOMW](https://www.facebook.com/ENOMW)

www.migrantwomennetwork.org

info@migrantwomennetwork.org

PARTNERS



CAP International is a coalition of 35 grassroots and survivor-led organisations from 27 countries, providing support to 17 000 persons in prostitution.

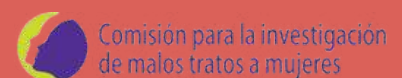
The Swedish Women's Lobby is an independent umbrella organisation gathering 50 associations and over 130 000 women and girls working for women's liberation and equality between women and men.

SPACE International is a non-secular, political advocacy group of survivors of prostitution from around the world that calls for the political recognition of prostitution as sexually abusive exploitation.

Equality Now is an international human rights organisation with the mission to achieve legal and systemic change that addresses violence and discrimination against all women and girls around the world. Ending sexual violence, ending sexual exploitation, ending harmful practices, and achieving legal equality are the main areas of Equality Now's work.

SUPPORTED BY THE BRUSSELS CALL

A COALITION OF OVER 100 ORGANISATIONS FIGHTING FOR A EUROPE FREE FROM PROSTITUTION



And many more! Find them at: <http://brusselcall.eu>