

HANDS OFF OUR BODIES



DEMONSTRATION FOR THE NON-COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EUROPE

*in support of the French Abolitionist law challenged at the
European Court of Human Rights*

27.11.2023 - 1PM
ALLÉE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
STRASBOURG

FOLLOWED BY A PRESS CONFERENCE - 3PM



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PRESS RELEASE

COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN & GIRLS IN EUROPE: IT'S STILL NO!

Mobilisation in front of the ECtHR on 27 November at 1pm followed by a press conference at 3pm in support of the French Abolitionist law challenged before the European Court of Human Rights.

On **27 November 2023**, our French and European feminist, survivor-led and grassroots organisations will be mobilising to defend the non-marketing of women and girls in Europe. While France's abolitionist law, and in particular its provision penalising the purchase of sexual acts, is currently being challenged before the European Court of Human Rights, we wish to clearly affirm our support for the law and for the societal commitment to equality between women & men and social justice that it embodies.

Our collective will be organising a **protest in front of the European Court of Human Rights from 1pm to 2pm**. We will be joined by activists from France, Germany, Spain and Ukraine. The various speakers will take the floor in front of the ECtHR. We invite all concerned citizens to join the gathering to safeguard the rights and dignity of women and girls in Europe.

Press conference at 3pm

Following the protest, a press conference will be held at 3pm at the Mouvement du Nid offices at **6 Rue d'Ingwiller**.



Survivors of prostitution and activists from France, Germany, Spain and Ukraine will be present, as will representatives of grassroots organisations and the CGT, who will share their views on the importance of criminalising the purchase of sexual acts in the fight against the commodification of women and girls in Europe.

Panelists:



ROSEN HICHER

Survivor of prostitution & activist (France)

"Whatever their situations "sex buyers" are always aggressors. They are not victims, nor sweet, kind or normal..."



AMELIA TIGANUS

Survivor of prostitution and activist, author of La Revuelta de las Putas and President of the Federation of Abolitionist Women (Spain)

"Abolishing prostitution is to legislate in favour of human rights and a truly democratic society for all women."



JULIA DOROKHOVA

Survivor of prostitution, lawyer and director of the NGO "All Ukrainian League of Legalife" (Ukraine)



JONATHAN MACHLER

Executive Director, Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution

"The sexual act obtained by prostitute "clients" is always coerced, either by the physical force of traffickers and pimps, or by the socio-economic coercion that systematically traps women and girls from the most marginalised groups in the prostitution system. This is a form of violence against women that must be abolished as a matter of urgency".



CLAIRE QUIDET

President, Mouvement du Nid (France).

"As long as men are entitled to sexually dispose of women in exchange for money, we will continue to condone relationships of power and domination, and no real equality between men and women will be possible."



SABINE REYNOSA

Member of the trade-union CGT (France)

"To the law of the market we oppose the principles of inviolability and non-patrimoniaity of the human body, which are the corollaries of the respect for the dignity of the person."



DELPHINE JARRAUD

Executive Director, Amicale du Nid

"The violence of the prostitutorial system is part of the continuum of violence against women and girls. The first chain of this system is are the sex buyers, overwhelmingly men, who, in the name of their "urges", reduce to commodities not the bodies of women and girls (but also of other men, boys and trans people), but their entire persons, with both physical and psychological consequences for the victims. This commodification is at the intersection of sexist, economic and racist oppression. As with all acts of violence perpetrated against others, the buyer must be penalised."



YVES SCELLES

President, Fondation Scelles

"We must maintain the abolitionist law and penalise the purchase of sexual acts because prostitution is nothing other than a rape organised by pimps and perpetrated by sex buyers. It's rape, rape and only rape."



**Representative from la CLES -
Coordination française du Lobby
européen des Femmes**



HELENE FRITZON

Member of European Parliament, S&D, FEMM, Sweden

"It should not be possible to buy girls' and women's bodies in the EU's internal market."



ANNE-LISE ROBIN

Programme Officer, OSCE Office on Combatting Human Trafficking

"If demand is the driving force behind all forms of trafficking, its role is even more pronounced in cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation, regarding the absence of distance between the exploited victim and the final "user". Users cause a serious and direct prejudice to the victims, by encouraging the market of trafficking and by the sexual act itself."



MARIE KALTENBACH

Activist and member of the Steering Group of the Bündnis Nordisches Modell (Allemagne)

"The German legislation considers prostitution as a job and has clearly failed by worsening the situation of prostituted women. It does not only offer any protection, but it also refuses to recognise the violent and harmful reality of prostitution. That is unacceptable. Germany needs the Equality Model."

CONTEXT

DEMONSTRATION & PRESS CONFERENCE FOR THE NON-COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EUROPE

in support of the French Abolitionist law challenged at the European Court of Human Rights

In February of 2019, the French Constitutional Court upheld the constitutionality of the law strengthening the fight against the prostitution system and the support for prostituted persons. After exhausting the domestic remedies, the plaintiffs have now made a complaint before the European Court of Human Rights. In the latter, they alleged that France, on behalf of its abolitionist legislation, is breaching rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

France has a longstanding commitment to the abolition of prostitution. As early as 1946, in the post-world war II context, France adopted the Marthe Richard legislation closing brothels throughout the territory. In 1969, it ratified the UN 1949 **Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others**, a binding human rights' treaty, enshrining in its preamble "prostitution [...] is incompatible with human dignity". In 2016, France, following the steps of Sweden and Norway, adopted a holistic abolitionist legislation centering prostitution as a form of violence, guaranteeing the decriminalisation of all persons in prostitution, providing them with State-sponsored exit pathways and shifting the burden to the perpetrators by criminalising sex buyers and pimps. This legislation has sent a strong societal message on violence against women and is a major tool to protect the most vulnerable women and girls in France. Today, nine countries have adopted the Abolitionist Model worldwide.



In September 2023, the EU Parliament in the **Noichl Resolution**, called for the extension of the French Abolitionist Model and the implementation of its different pillars in all the EU Member States. In October, the **UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women**, called on her part on France to intensify efforts to fight the demand for the purchase of sexual acts, to maintain its law as is and to implement it throughout the whole territory. This event gathers a collective of champion States, MEPs and experts underlining the importance of the French Abolitionist legislation in the fight for women's rights.

SIGNATORIES

- Coalition for the Abolition de la Prostitution
- Mouvement du Nid
- Fondation Scelles
- Amicale du Nid
- Osez le féminisme!
- European Network of Migrant Women
- Coordination Française du Lobby européen des Femmes
- Solidarité Femmes 39 19
- Réseau Féministe Ruptures
- Libres MarianneS
- Swedish Women's Lobby
- Women's Baltic Peacebuilding Initiative
- Coalition Internationale pour l'Abolition de la Maternité de Substitution
- Bündnis Nordisches Modell
- Resistenza Femminista
- ZéroMacho
- Regards de Femmes
- Elu.e.s contre les violences faites aux femmes
- RealStars
- Marche Mondiale des Femmes France
- European Women's Lobby

PRESS CONTACTS:

- **Jonathan Machler**

Executive Director - CAP International
jonathan@cap-international.org
+33651267771 ;

- **Héma Sibi**

Advocacy Coordinator (EU) - CAP International
hema@cap-international.org
+33698394074 ;

- **Céline Thiebault-Martinez**

Président of CLEF
presidence.clef@gmail.com
+33673382667

- **Frédéric Boisard**

Project Officer - Fondation Scelles
frederic.boisard@fondationscelles.org
+33684200537

- **Sandrine Goldschmitt**

Communication Officer - Mouvement du Nid
communication@mouvementdunid.org
+33662536351

