



## Punish sex buyers to reduce prostitution, EP committee says

Committees Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality [23-01-2014 - 11:09]

**Poverty and economic problems have led to an increasing number of women and girls being forced into prostitution, says the Women's Rights Committee in a report adopted on Thursday. MEPs call for measures to reduce prostitution by criminalising sex buyers, Europe wide awareness raising campaigns and prevention strategies, especially for socially-excluded, vulnerable and poor persons.**

"I am pleased the FEMM Committee has voted through my draft report on sexual exploitation and prostitution, and its impact on gender equality. It is good that the Committee has come together to state its position on this growing phenomenon, at a time when a number of member states are considering how to reduce it", said lead MEP Mary Honeyball (S&D, U.K).

Text approved by 14 to 2 with 6 abstentions, stresses the need to reduce prostitution and trafficking and to help victims of sexual exploitation to reintegrate again in the society. Education should play an important role in the prevention of prostitution, MEPs added.

### Reducing demand for prostitution

Members of the Women's Rights Committee agree that the best way to combat trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation is the so-called Nordic model, which criminalises sex buyers and not the prostitutes. This model views prostitution as a violation of women's human rights and as a form of violence against women, MEPs say, calling on members states to take the Nordic model as a reference.

### Prostitution linked to trafficking and sexual exploitation

MEPs stress that prostitution feeds trafficking and according to the Commission's data, 62 % of persons are trafficked for sexual exploitation reasons and 96 % of the identified and presumed victims are women and girls. EU countries should strengthen policies to combat trafficking, say Committee MEPs. They also urge member states to provide social services for victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation and help women leaving prostitution.

### Poverty and desperation

The approved text calls on national authorities to help prostituted women to find alternative ways to earn money other than prostitution and to put exit programmes in place. Furthermore, MEPs say that prostitution and exploitation can have detrimental health impact, physical or psychological traumas or alcohol and drug addiction on women in prostitution, especially on children and adolescents. MEPs call on member states to tackle on-going economic and social crisis which, in some cases, forces women, men and children into prostitution and to support women who want to get out of prostitution.

Women's Rights Committee also call on member states for cooperation between different sectors, NGOs, police, judicial, medical and social services.

### Next steps

# Press release

The full Parliament is expected to vote on the non-binding resolution in February.

*Procedure: non-legislative resolution*

*In the Chair: Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL, SE)*

*Rapporteur: Mary Honeyball (S&D, U.K)*

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