

WORKERS  
THE WORLD  
UNITE!



INTERNATIONAL UNION  
OF SEWING MACHINE  
WORKERS

Abolition des  
Discriminations

# The Sex Workers in Europe Manifesto: 10 Highlights

The Sex Workers in Europe Manifesto lists sex workers' demands for changes needed to create a more equitable society — one that acknowledges and values sex workers, our rights, and our labour. It was endorsed by approximately 120 sex workers from 24 countries in Europe at the European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration in Brussels, Belgium (2005) and presented to the European Parliament. Ten sex workers stood up and each read aloud a statement selected from the document.

## 10 Sex Workers; 10 Statements:

1. We condemn the **hypocrisy** in our societies whereby our services are utilised while our profession or businesses are made illegal. Legislation that criminalises sex work results in abuse and in a lack of control for sex workers over our work and lives.

**WE DEMAND** an **end to legislation** that criminalises our partners, children and other family members for associating with us and being supported by our earnings.

2. **WE DEMAND** that our right as human beings to use our bodies in any way we do not find harmful be respected. This includes the right to establish **consensual sexual relations**, no matter the gender or ethnicity of our partners, and regardless of whether or not they are paying.
3. **WE DEMAND** an end to the discrimination and the **abuse of power** by police and other other public authorities. Offering sexual services is not an invitation to any kind of violence. The credibility of sex workers must be respected.
4. **WE DEMAND** that our voices be **heard, listened to and respected**. Our experiences are diverse, but all are valid, and we condemn those who would steal our voices and say that we do not have the capacity to make decisions or articulate our needs.

5. **WE DEMAND** the **repeal of all legislation** that criminalises us; our clients; our families; those we work with; and any employer, organiser or manager who follows **fair practices**.

6. The threat of having our children taken from us removes our ability to seek **support and assistance**, if we need it, in relation to parenting or abusive relationships.

**WE DEMAND** an end to the **unjustifiable** practice of social service agencies and courts **taking our children** from us simply because we provide sexual services.

7. Registration and mandatory sexual health and HIV testing are a **violation of sex workers' human rights**. Such practices reinforce the myth that sex workers are a threat to public health, and promote the stereotypical view that sex workers transmit infections.

**WE DEMAND** an end to registration and mandatory testing.

8. The lack of opportunities to migrate can put our health, and indeed our very lives, in danger. We assert our **right to travel** and to work in any country without discrimination. Information about working in the sex industry and its different sectors should be made available.

9. **WE DEMAND** that our governments **prohibit** authorities from confiscating condoms and other safe-sex products from sex workers and sex-work establishments.

10. To improve our working conditions, it is important that sex workers have opportunities **to organise and to advocate** for our rights. We call upon trade unions to support us in our efforts to organise and in our struggle for fair working conditions. □

♥ For the full text of *The Sex Workers in Europe Manifesto*, see p. 69.

