



**STATEMENT FOR THE 47th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF
WOMEN FROM THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ON THE THEME OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN**

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) welcomes the fact that the CSW will review the implementation of policies and actions taken to address violence against women over the past decade and states the following:

The European Women's Lobby recalls that the Beijing Platform for Action clearly states that violence against women is the result of the *historically unequal power relations between women and men*, and notes that over the past decade the gender dimension of violence against women is being eroded and replaced by neutral concepts that describe the issue in terms of family dynamics (domestic violence) and/or market policies (prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation). **The EWL calls on the EU and the UN to explicitly recognise that violence against women is the direct result of unequal power relations between women and men in all public statements, policies and programmes.**

The EWL notes that while many commitments to address violence against women have been made both at regional (EU) and international (UN) level over the past decade, the issue of follow-up and monitoring has been seriously neglected as systematic data and statistics on all forms of violence against women are still lacking. Systematic analysis of the impact of male violence on women experiencing multiple discrimination as a result of the intersection of gender, ethnic origins, sexual orientation, colour, disability and/or religion is also lacking. **The EWL calls for greater use of existing mechanisms** such as national reports on the implementation of the CEDAW Convention and calls for guidelines to facilitate data on violence against women for those sections of the report that are relevant. **The EWL invites both the EU and the UN to consider the work already done in this area** and especially its proposal on indicators to measure progress, to determine gaps and to identify and address emerging issues in combating violence against women¹.

The EWL considers trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation as one of the most pressing issues to emerge on an international basis over the past decade and insists that prostitution and trafficking are directly linked to the lack of economic independence of women and the structural power relationships between women and men. Measures fighting poverty and contributing to women's empowerment will have a decisive impact in combating trafficking and all forms of exploitation of women. **The EWL strongly opposes any measure that aims to legalise prostitution** as a form of work on the pretext that this will guarantee better social and economic conditions for women in prostitution. Moreover, such an approach undermines the progress achieved in some areas of equality for women over the past fifty years. Therefore, efforts to combat trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation should be multi dimensional and include addressing the demand side, i.e. the buyers/clients of the sexual market.

The EWL also calls on the EU and UN governments to be vigilant of emerging forms of violence against women, these include: the use of new technologies as a means of exacerbating violence against women and the rise of cultural and religious fundamentalism, which undermine women's human rights, their dignity and equality.

¹ European Women's Lobby, "Towards a common European framework to monitor progress in combating violence against women", second edition 2002, developed with the input of the experts of the EWL Observatory on violence against women.



**LOBBY EUROPEEN DES FEMMES
EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY**

EWL, Brussels, 14/1/2003

The EWL is the largest coalition of women's non-governmental organizations in the European Union (EU) representing 3,000 member organizations working together to achieve equality of women and men and respect of women's human rights in EU policy-making.

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