

Women's entitlement over their own bodies

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Stockholm, Sweden, on 30th and 31st October 2008:

Whereas:

- Gender equality issues have been part of the foundation that constitutes the Treaty of Rome for half a century, yet complete levels of gender equality are still to be obtained.
- Every woman's right over her own body is one of many important gender equality issues, though still lacking in being fully respected in each and every European member country.
- Many women are being inhibited from the right to undergo legal and safe abortion.
- It is unacceptable that we, in today's relatively developed societies, suffer from new modern forms of slavery; trafficking, prostitution as well as exploitations on the labour market.
- Many women suffer from repression, rape and also other different sorts of violence, mainly domestic abuse.
- Illegal trade in women's, and also youth's, organs is prevailing, hence starting another objectionable concern that needs to be addressed.

Noting:

- Several European countries are, for example, violating women's rights to control over their own bodies. Among others, Poland, Ireland, Portugal and Malta have enforced restrictive, conservatively founded, regulations regarding the legalisation of abortions. As a result, many women die after being forced into seeking illegal and unsafe abortions.
- The above stated forms of slavery mainly originate from poor economic standards often characterised by economic gender inequalities.

Considering:

- In 1979 the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which defines discrimination against women as:

"...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental

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freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.[1]"

- As liberals we are committed to freedom, dignity and rights of human beings.

Calls for:

- Member States to take a more humane position regarding every woman's right to her own body.

- Member States to take a more humane attitude regarding every woman's right to legal and safe abortion.

- Member States to actively work to protect women from repression, rape and all other forms of violence, such as domestic abuse.

- Member States to actively work to protect women from trafficking, prostitution, exploitation on the labour market, and illegal trade in organs.

- Member States to sign and ratify the council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings.

- Member states to take their responsibility to actively work for the equalisation of wages, in order to obtain economic gender equality, both within as well as outside the Union.

- Creating an EU-wide telephone hotline for the victims of human trafficking.

- Considering the Harmonisation of Common Standards a necessity to better coordinate actions in the fight against human trafficking.

- Sustaining the proposal of the European Commission which plans to introduce penal sanctions for the employers who use trafficked persons as workers.

- Member States to work preventively by spreading information increasing the awareness of the citizens regarding illegal abortions, human trafficking, prostitution, violence, and illegal trade in organs.

- Member States to work together in creating an action plan on how to care for abused women.

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