



**european
sex workers
rights
alliance**

European Sex Work Research Network (ESWORN)

Terms of Reference

With the European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance ([ESWA](#))

1. About ESWA

The European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA) – previously the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE), is a sex worker-led network representing more than 100 organisations in 35 countries across Europe and Central Asia. Our aim is to ensure that all sex worker voices are heard and that their human, health and labour rights are recognised and protected. With our actions and approach inspired by our membership community, we work to build a strong, vibrant and sustainable network that mobilises national, regional and international advocacy activity that moves us towards long-term, systemic change.

Our Vision:

ESWA's vision is of a world where all sex workers are respected and their rights are upheld and where gender, racial, social and economic equality and freedom of movement are a reality; enabling individuals to start, continue or leave sex work safely, free from violence, coercion and exploitation.

Our Mission:

ESWA is a network of sex worker organisations and their allies that work together to support the development of national and international law, policy and practice, which respects and upholds the human and labour rights of sex workers throughout Europe and Central Asia.

2. About ESWORN

Over the years, ESWA has worked in various ways with many researchers (for example: participation in public events and conferences, consulting on the draft of reports, interviews for research projects, partnership in research projects). Many researchers and academics have been supporters / allies of ESWA, involved in ESWA's member organisations or worked in collaboration with ESWA members. Many researchers and academics are sex workers themselves, or have done sex work in the past.

To strengthen collaboration and partnerships, ESWA aims to develop a network of sex work researchers and sex workers' rights activists. The overarching objective of this network is to ensure that meaningful collaboration and partnerships can take place between researchers and our communities. ESWA recognises academia as an institution which plays a significant role not only in sharing knowledge about sex workers and their rights, but is also critical in bolstering or refuting policies which have real-life consequences for sex workers across Europe and Central Asia.

This proposed research network has three core aims: networking, research and knowledge production, and policy and advocacy. The network's aims are as follows:

NETWORKING

- The research network will foster networking between researchers, sex workers and sex worker-led organisations
- Information and knowledge sharing of research projects, policy updates, and on the ground experiences as captured by sex worker-led organisations
- Networking and connection between researchers and sex workers/ sex worker-led organisations
- The establishment of networking opportunities such as joint conferences, workshops and collaboratively produced online webinars
- Production of database of researchers and sex worker-led organisations to foster efficient and transparent collaboration

RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

- The network will aim to identify research and funding opportunities to address key issues faced by sex workers and to resolve the research gap
- Development of resources (guidelines to researchers, ethics, community involvement) and coordination of joint events (such as a European research conference) between researchers, sex workers and sex worker-led organisations
- Active recruitment of sex workers in key coordination and research management roles
- Joint applications between researchers and sex worker-led organisations / sex workers for funding and collaborative grants with real-life impact embedded

POLICY & ADVOCACY

- Timely and inclusive responses to law and policy development at national, European or global levels, in particular to address the lack of evidence / use of flawed and biased research behind policy proposals such as the criminalisation of sex work
- Dissemination of relevant policy activities at the national, European and global level

3. Principles and core values of the research network

The network will be facilitated by ESWA with the support of a steering committee composed of ESWA Board and staff, and trusted researchers, including researchers with sex work experience.

ESWORN's core values are:

- Recognition of sex work as work
- Opposition to criminalisation of sex work
- Support of sex workers' self determination and self organisation
- Commitment to sex workers' inclusion, leadership and accountability of researchers to the communities they work with

4. Membership

The membership is open to researchers (doctoral / postdoc / PhD), as well as to Master's students with sex work experience or a strong connection to sex worker-led movement and based in / researching sex work in Europe and Central Asia. We are interested in key thematic issues (such as criminology, public health, socio-legal processes, etc.), but we welcome researchers from all disciplines.

To join the ESWORN, please fill the application form available [here](#).

*Individuals who do not fit these criteria might still be approved by the decision of the steering committee. Please contact us on researchnetwork@eswalliance.org for more information.

Communications

The communications of the research network will be via a list-serv. Communications will be in English - the use of Google translate or equivalent is recommended for non-English speakers.

Contact information

Contact Luca Stevenson on researchnetwork@eswalliance.org for more information.