



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

STATEMENT

'Sport and prostitution: enough is enough!'

European Women's Lobby Statement on the Occasion of the 2010 South Africa World Cup

It is World Cup time once again, and already the media attention devoted to the competition and its surroundings has been huge, including regarding how to entertain male fans and athletes outside of the stadiums. Estimates have circulated about how many brothels were being set up near stadiums, how many prostitutes were 'mobilised' within the host country or coming/being brought in for the event, exactly how many condoms were being stockpiled and distributed, etc. For the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the way that the media consistently links international sporting events with prostitution leaves no choice but to believe that sports are considered to be all about men and catering to their needs, including supplying women for sex. Do we really believe nowadays that men cannot survive a few weeks away from home without sex? Let's inverse the media trends and think about the World Cup differently for a change: we know that the event will bring thousands of men to South Africa; what do politicians plan to do to ensure that women there (including prostituted women) will not become victims of male violence?

Police records show that male intimate partner violence against women increases during sporting events, and women throughout the world are victims of male violence against women – women in prostitution disproportionately so. For the European Women's Lobby, the political focus on whether or not to legalise prostitution which arises in the host country during major international sporting events is little more than an opportunist debate which reflects a lack of consideration of women's situation in the countries welcoming such events. Whom do we want to protect from HIV/Aids and sexually transmitted infections? Women and girls in prostitution in Cape Town? Or rather the male fans and athletes, many of whom will go back to their unsuspecting wives and partners in Northern countries? The fact that prostitution and trafficking in women for sexual exploitation are intrinsically linked to gender inequality and are violations of women's rights to dignity, health, and bodily and sexual integrity, is almost never discussed.

The European Women's Lobby calls for a stop to clichés in the discussion surrounding the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and the general perpetual linking of international sporting events to prostitution, thereby reinforcing the erroneous myth that men are entitled to on-demand access to women's bodies and that the role of women is to be sexually available to men at all times. Instead, one must look further at the status of women in South Africa and worldwide; determined and consistent efforts should be made towards implementing gender equality policies everywhere, irrespective of whether there is currently a major international sporting event taking place or not. In this prospect, the European Women's Lobby calls on international, European and national sporting organisations to develop codes of conduct respectful of women's rights and gender equality.

For more information on the EWL and its position on the prostitutional system and trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, please visit www.womenlobby.org and www.ewlcentreonviolence.org.