

Dear Ms Darrah,

We have received your letter of 3 October offering us the opportunity to comment and express our views on the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Bill, introduced into the NI Assembly on 24 June 2013. I would like to thank you very much for your letter and your interest in our work.

I would like to comment on the article 6 of Part 1 “Paying for sexual services of a person”. The EWL very much welcome the recognition, through this clause, of the direct link between the demand for prostitution, and sexual exploitation and trafficking.

You could propose to add, amongst the sanction, the possibility to ask the perpetrator to attend a course/workshop raising awareness on the reality of prostitution and on gender equality. This proposal should never be an alternative to the formal sanction – fine or imprisonment), but it should be considered as a complementary proposal to bring long-term change to mentalities.

In the section on aggravating factors (article 3, part 1), there could be a non-exhaustive list of situations where an adult is considered vulnerable: due to a disease, any form of disability, or being pregnant (non-exhaustive list).

We believe it would be important to guarantee, for victims, as long as the criminal procedure is taking place, access to temporary residence permit.

Part 4 about prevention should also include reporting on the measures prohibiting paying for sexual services of a person. Prevention should include sustainable and adequate funding for prevention activities, as well as for services to support and assist persons in prostitution and victims wishing to exit the system of prostitution. We strongly welcome the involvement in NGOs in the elaboration of strategies to raise awareness and reduce prostitution and trafficking.

Addressing trafficking and the demand for prostitution should be accompanied by a strengthening of the legislation criminalizing all form of pimping and procuring. We hope that this is foreseen in the discussions and proposals. We strongly welcome the bill and its provisions, and we want to stress on the crucial importance to address the system of prostitution and the phenomenon of trafficking from a broad perspective, that is including measures to support and assist victims, prevent women and girls from entering prostitution, and strong social services to provide exit programmes, alternatives and successful reinsertion into social life.

Would you have any question about those comments, please don't hesitate to contact me. I thank you again for giving us the opportunity to comment on the bill.

Best regards,

Pierrette Pape

Policy Officer & Project Coordinator / *Chargée de politiques et Coordinatrice de projet*

Violence against women / *Violences faites aux femmes*

European Women's Lobby / *Lobby européen des femmes*



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**European Women's Lobby / Lobby européen des femmes**

T: (+32) 02/210 04 25 · F: (+32) 02/219 84 51 · E: [pape@womenlobby.org](mailto:pape@womenlobby.org)

A: 18, rue Hydraulique, B-1210 Brussels/Bruelles, Belgium/Belgique

[www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org)



The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. EWL membership extends to organisations in all 28 EU member states and three candidate countries, as well as to 20 European-wide bodies, representing a total of more than 2000 organisations.



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