
EU Parliament: prostitution in Europe, “efficient policies against poverty. Create exit programmes”

In the document on prostitution approved by the European Parliament today, there is no lack of ambiguous paragraphs and troubling silences. MEPs rightly call for support for and cooperation with police and other law enforcement agencies, social and medical services and NGOs “to address trafficking and sexual exploitation and protect women in prostitution”, as if it should be viewed as a normal activity. “The worsening social and economic situation [...] have increased all forms of abuse and violence against women - MEPs say -, including sexual exploitation”. MEPs therefore call for “efficient policies that eliminate poverty and improve social protection, tackle school failure, promote education” and for “the establishment of inclusive policies that support women’s empowerment and economic independence, along with measures that condemn those who exploit them”. People in prostitution “face the constant threat of police and judicial persecution, and are marginalised and stigmatised”, the report notes. MEPs call for “full access” to high-quality health and social services as well as to the justice system and pathways out of prostitution. German MEP Maria Noichl, rapporteur for the text, said: “Today Parliament is giving a voice to people, and especially women, who have traditionally been overlooked, marginalised and stigmatised in our societies. We are standing by those who have warned for a long time about the reality of prostitution. This report outlines the reasons why the big majority of people end up in prostitution, and it highlights the way forward: create exit programmes and alternatives, eradicate poverty and social exclusion, dismantle stereotypes and inequalities, and reduce demand by tackling the ‘buyers’”.

Valentina Bombelli