



Sex Workers Rights Advocacy Network in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

SWAN NEWS, Issue 26, 2009

World AIDS Day, Human Rights Day, Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers **IN FOCUS**

World AIDS Day, 1 December

Ever since its inception in 1988, the focus of the World AIDS Day campaign has been to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education. The 2009 World AIDS Day theme is 'Universal Access and Human Rights'. The key slogans adopted for 2009 are: *I am accepted. I am safe. I am getting treatment. I am well. I am living my rights.*

•Each day 7400 people contract HIV According to UNAIDS estimates, 33.4 million people live with HIV, including 2.1 million children. During 2008 2.7 million people got infected with the virus and an estimated 2 million people died from AIDS. Half of the people who contract HIV do so before they turn 25 and are killed by AIDS before they are 35. The overwhelming majority of people with HIV and AIDS live in lower- and middle-income countries. However, HIV is a threat to men, women and children on all continents [around the world](#). Sex workers face special risks, further enhanced when condoms are confiscated by the police as evidence, an unlawful and extremely hazardous, yet widespread measure. The protection of human rights is a fundamental effort to combat the global HIV and AIDS epidemic. Human rights violations increase the spread of the disease, putting

marginalized groups, such as [intravenous drug users](#) and [sex workers](#) at a higher risk. By promoting individual human rights, new infections can be prevented and people who have HIV can live free from discrimination.

•Global scorecard on state responses to women's needs AIDS Accountability International has released the first ever global scorecard analyzing country responses to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women in the context of the AIDS epidemic. The reason is that HIV and AIDS is the leading cause of death and disease in women of reproductive age worldwide. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to, and disproportionately affected by the disease globally. Lack of accountability for addressing women's needs hampers efforts to measure the impact of different approaches, reward effective efforts, adjust or stop ineffective ones and ensure good use of resources.



Human Rights Day, 10 December

2009 marks the 61st anniversary of the acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly. The aim of Human Rights Day is to raise awareness of the need to end all forms of discrimination. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" – goes the famous first line in the Declaration, establishing the basic premise of international human rights law. 61 years later, the fight against discrimination remains a daily struggle for millions. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay who this year will mark Human Rights Day in South Africa said: "Discrimination lies at the root of many of the world's most pressing human rights problems. No country is immune from this scourge. Eliminating discrimination is a duty of the highest order." The realization of all human rights – social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights – is hampered by discrimination. Political leaders, government officials and ordinary citizens, when faced with prejudices and discrimination, all too often remain silent or complacent. Students from around the world will celebrate Human Rights Day 2009 by taking part in the first World Human Rights Moot Competition, organized by the University of Pretoria with the support of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Participants will argue a fictional human rights case on the principle of non-discrimination before a mock court of high level judges in South Africa.

SWAN newsletter is the voice of the Sex Workers Rights Advocacy Network, a network of civil society organizations engaged in advocating the Human Rights of the sex workers in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Currently SWAN consists of 17 member-countries of the region. If you wish to learn more about SWAN activities, please visit WWW.SWANNET.ORG.

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IN FOCUS (continued):

17 December Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers

The commemoration dates back to 2003, when it was first organized, originally to remember the victims of an American serial killer who singled out sex workers and teenage runaway girls and killed them. It has since become an international event, with more activists and organizations joining every year, as sex workers face similar, institutionalized abuse, violence and discrimination globally.

Hate crimes and violence against sex workers stem from prejudices, social stigmas and the corresponding laws and regulations that ban prostitution. This harmful situation perpetuates the abuse and persecution of people who, in all other respects, observe the laws.

ICRSE's 2009 campaign urges safer working conditions and respect for sex workers. Punitive laws against sex workers or their clients forces the sex work scene into a shaded zone, where the access to services and support needed by sex workers is limited, while the risk of becoming victims of violence is high.

The most effective way to promote sex workers' rights and to fight the various forms of hate crimes and discriminating laws is through enhancing community work. The 17 December campaign focuses on intensifying social participation in events and activities related to sex workers' rights.

The red umbrella was first used by sex workers as a symbol of resistance to discrimination in 2001 in Venice, Italy. On the occasion of the 49th Venice Biennale of Art sex workers walked the streets of the city in a Red Umbrellas March as a part of the "Prostitute Pavilion" and CODE: RED art project of Slovenian artist Tadej Pogacar. Sex workers marched in Venice and used megaphones and red umbrellas, drawing attention to the bad work conditions and the human rights abuses they face. The march started at the Pavilion tent and went through the city centre.

The route involved the geography of the social history of sex workers, from the famous Venetian courtesans Veronica Franco and Gaspara Stampa until today.

In 2005 the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) adopted the red umbrella as the symbol of sex workers' rights. A march with almost 200 participants was organized as the closing event to the European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration conference held in Brussels, Belgium. Since that day the red umbrella has been welcomed by sex worker activists and their allies around the world.



Humanitarian Action, Russia

Therefore we call everyone willing to join to express their support, solidarity or concern through messages, statements and testimonies and to circulate those. We encourage activists to make and display or publish pictures, videos, installations, drawings, performances or any other form of expression suitable to manifest their support for safer working conditions for sex workers.

Sex workers or activists should also share effective or new examples of protection so that they can learn from each other's experience. This could include different self-organization and self-defense techniques. The easiest way to express solidarity for sex workers is through using the red umbrella symbol. It can be displayed in an infinite number of ways: it may be worn, drawn, printed, stickers can be stuck etc. The creative online use of the red umbrella is also unlimited. The general public, however, is not really familiar with its meaning, so some clarification may be necessary.



Odysseus, Slovakia

History of the Red Umbrella



SEX WORKERS REPORT

Nothing about us without us is a message repeated more often than ever before by sex workers around the world. This column in the SWAN News provides an opportunity for sex workers to express their opinions, tell us about their lives, problems and dreams. Contributions are welcome: write to sexwork@tasz.hu

Interview with Nata from Ukraine, who is involved in Lega-life, the Ukrainian National Network of Sex Workers about her experiences of working in Moscow, Russia as a migrant sex worker.

SWAN News (SN): Please tell us about your experience of sex work.

I worked for two years in Moscow on the main street for the "standing" girls [street sex workers]. We were standing on the street but the job took place in hotels or apartments.

SN: Did you have any trouble with the police?

In Moscow, we had no problems with the police because the pimps were dealing with them. The problems only affect immigrants: you must always have your papers with you. We would be fined for having no (legal immigration) documents, but owing to the pimps, we didn't get fined for prostitution.

SN: What was the relationship between sex workers and pimps?

The pimps got a 50/50 split of the profits from our sex work in Russia. They are not boyfriends or husbands, the relationship is strictly professional.

SN: Is it possible to work without a pimp?

Yes, independent girls can work without pimps. They are all Russians, though. But that was not the case for those of us without documents, who were in Russia illegally. Most of us in that situation were Ukrainians.

SN: Why can't migrant sex workers work independently in Moscow?

They can, but you would need a lot of money in advance to come to Moscow, to cover your costs of living and so on --- quite a big amount of money upfront. On the other hand, a pimp pays for everything. Also, to work individually is dangerous because of the clients and because you don't have anywhere to report problems to at all. The police are a major issue. If you have a pimp, he will speak to the police and

arrange the deals, and cover many things for you, so you are protected. If you are independent, you are at the mercy of the police – they impose administrative fines on you or force you to have sex with them.

SN: How do sex workers end up with pimps?

Women who want to work abroad, look for a pimp in Ukraine and he arranges for them to get to Russia and work for the Russian pimps. The women know they are going to do sex work, and that they are going to work for someone but they don't know for how much, under what conditions or in what deals with the pimps.

When you have paid off, the pimps say you can go and be independent, but every time they punish you for something and make you pay more. So it is difficult to go out and work on your own. I worked for two years in Moscow like this, and I couldn't bring home any money at all. Every time the pimps make you pay more. They will bring small things for you and then make you pay a lot.

In Russia, the pimps don't care about the girls at all. In the Ukraine, the pimps work professionally, they take 50-50 but they give security and as a sex worker, you feel safe.

SN: How did you leave your pimp?

A client was nice and he helped me get away. He became my boyfriend, I moved in with him and we came to Ukraine to have a child. After that, I lived in Russia for several years. I tried to live there legally but couldn't get papers because I have a health condition. They wouldn't let me stay in Russia or get any job so I went back to Ukraine with my child. My boyfriend still helps me by wiring money.





3rd SWAN network meeting a great success in Ohrid

The meeting brought together 32 participants from 16 countries with the aim to exchange experience, share problems and find solutions, renew and strengthen the partnership ties and get to know new network members better.

The aim of the meeting was to bring together sex worker activists and NGOs working on sex work issues in the SWAN region and in neighboring countries to discuss further strategies of the Network and its cooperation with other organizations to share their experience. Special focus was placed on developing a set of ways to address stigmatization and violence against sex workers and to develop a plan to document and report human rights abuse in the context of sex work in Eastern and Central Europe and Central Asia (ECE/CA).

The event lasted 7 days of intensive training and discussion. The program was shaped according to the members' suggestions and some parts of the training and discussion sessions were facilitated by SWAN members themselves.

The first two days were dedicated to the discussion of how SWAN members see the Network in the future. It should be noted that SWAN is a young network and has not had an official vision, mission and statement and based its actions on agreed basic principles of the Network. SWAN members believed it is time to make a step to put a clearer description of SWAN priorities. The Strategic discussion session was intended to provide time and space for developing a strategy to facilitate smoother functioning of the SWAN network and set membership conditions. The training was facilitated by the NESsT trainers (Nonprofit Enterprise and Self-sustainability Team - www.nesst.org) who had put a lot of effort to make these two days engaging, informative and fun. SWAN will be cooperating with NESsT in future.

The following days the participants had time and space to discuss human rights issues, December 17 campaign

NEWS FROM SWAN NETWORK

preparations and the participation in international conferences. The members, trainers and consultants brainstormed possible advocacy actions on national and regional levels. During these days HOPS presented their film *You Must Know About Me* prepared with the help and support of WITNESS (www.witness.org) that featured interviews with sex workers who had been arrested in the raid in Skopje in Macedonia and were forced to undergo HIV and Hepatitis testing while their clients were released (check WITNESS website for the stream video in English and Russian soon).

In addition, SWAN presented the results of the two-year research on violence against sex workers titled *Arrest the Violence* which lead to further discussion on how to address violence and hold perpetrators accountable. In small groups the participants also worked with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Sexual Health and Human Rights Resource Guide* and studies examples of advocacy efforts to address specific issues in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Macedonia.

The last part of the September meeting was dedicated to skill building in media sensitization and to the development of human rights abuse documentation strategy in some SWAN member-countries. Developing a healthy and steady relationship with local media is one of SWAN's priorities. In the framework of this project SWAN members hold sensitization seminars for local journalists in order to provide them more credible information and to overcome myths and stigma around sex work. As some SWAN members shared their experience in cooperating/ educating/ fighting media, the media experts and consultants gave advice and tips on making this relationship more productive.

HRADP is an abbreviation of Human Rights Abuse Documentation Project, which SWAN is determined to start soon in some countries of the region. This project will aim at documenting and studying cases of human rights abuse in the context of sex work, and use the data to reveal human rights abuse for a global audience, mobilizing civil society groups and sex workers' communities to urge states to address the issue.

Though the 7-day meeting was very intense and full of heated discussions, it was great to see so many inspired faces and hear people finding a common language even if they came from completely different countries.



NEWS FROM SWAN NETWORK (continued)

„You Are Not Alone, Together We Are Stronger”

The Ohrid network meeting was preceded by an activists' meeting. 18 sex worker activists turned the meeting room into an art workshop and a cafeteria to discuss issues and personal experience around sex work in their countries.

In September 2009 SWAN's third network meeting in Ohrid was preceded by a meeting of 18 sex worker activists from Eastern and Central Europe and Central Asia. They gathered to participate in an advocacy training and to get to know each other better before the "bigger" meeting started. This training involved not only local sex workers from different parts of the country, but also hosted 13 sex workers from other countries of SWAN region. The language gap did not stop or discourage the participants from sharing their positive experience and ideas.

ICRSE Coordinator and SWAN trainer Petra Timmermans, together with the editor of Macedonian sex workers' newsletter STAR shared their experience in advocacy and in developing newsletters for sex worker communities. The activists discussed difficulties of finding funds for publication and distribution, but also shared their own tips on involving colleagues and partners in the preparation of articles and images. It was also stressed how important it is to have a medium not limited or strained by censorship.

The second day of the Advocacy training was fully dedicated to creating a joint issue of a newsletter prepared by sex workers from 8 countries of the region and addressed to their respective communities, telling them their own stories and opinions. The articles and slogans were written in their own languages. The layout was discussed collectively. Also, a decision was made to translate all articles into English and Russian and possibly into Macedonian, so that this issue could reach a bigger group of sex workers in the SWAN region. What has not been decided yet is the title of the Newsletter! The SWAN Project coordinator took the liberty of titling it TEMPORARILY *You are not Alone, Together we are Stronger* (download it in English at http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/SWAN_Ohrid_Newsletter_2009_eng.pdf).

Such trainings became a regular practice for SWAN in cooperation with ICRSE (www.sexeurope.com). The previous training gave birth to the Macedonian community newsletter STAR. This year advocacy trainings took place in two cities in Ukraine and in Ohrid, Macedonia and it gave birth to the first community newsletter in Hungary called Hetérák (Haeteras in Hungarian at http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/Heterak1szam_2009.pdf).



Report on the Ohrid Meeting in Hetérák

(translated from Hungarian)

The participants included sex workers and representatives of organizations promoting sex workers' rights from 16 countries. When checking in it was already clear that we were about to have a training of relaxed atmosphere with a team of nice, intelligent and funny people. The level of the hotel service further raised our mood. During the first two days, sex workers from different countries shared their experiences and what they had achieved in terms of sex workers' rights. We met the Macedonia sponsors, HOPS, STAR, and STAR's Macedonian newsletter for and about sex workers. (Which inspired us to make our own Haeteras newsletter.)

We envisaged and created SWAN's newspaper, drew, cut, stuck and colored paper just like children, having fun and laughing while, in fact, working on a very serious issue.

From day 3, the emphasis shifted to the details of human rights and rights abuse in the region, and we discussed SWAN's opportunities for advocacy in these respects. We also shared experiences on working with a network of lawyers and mapping opportunities. The topic was updating SWAN's strategy and setting, realizing new objectives.

A number of excellent ideas were shared with enlightening discussions and debates, where compromise was always possible. We also touched upon 17 December, discussed strategies and actions taken previously, and envisaged a future.

Financing and operating NGOs is always very difficult. We could learn a lot from each other in this respect as well. Two working groups were set up, who will try to cooperate and make progress in specific issues.

Participating in the meeting was a fantastic experience. We met a number of interesting people, and spent together ten days like a large family, despite being very different. Different in language, culture, background, yet still so similar. We represent the same cause, and, in the light of our opportunities, we all do our best to ensure that the human rights of sex workers are respected and they can live free of discrimination.

We were told sad stories, absurdities and an infinite list of cases of rights abuse, which, fortunately, are not characteristic of Hungary any more. Still, we felt a strong empathy, as violence against and the abuse of sex workers was not unknown in our country some time ago.

Discovering that there are organizations promoting sex workers' rights are present almost everywhere, and that they cooperate and form international networks was an extraordinary experience. In the name of all 50 participants, we do hope that all will manage to make an achievement, as it became clear that sex workers are just as sensitive, sophisticated and intelligent people like anyone else. I have never participated at a meeting like this, and no matter how more trainings I'll have a chance to visit, for me Ohrid will always remain special.

NEWS FROM SWAN NETWORK (continued)

Media debate on sex work in Hungary

After a few years of relative silence on sex work legislation in the Hungarian media, the debate regained momentum this summer.

Péter Sárosi, the Drug Policy Director of HCLU challenged the end-demand legislation proposal of MONA (a Hungarian NGO that promotes gender equality and aims to uncover the unfair or inferior treatment of women) and other anti-trafficking organizations. In a newspaper article Sárosi pointed out that even if sex work in Hungary is de jure legal, street sex workers are often harassed by the police, hundreds of them are arrested each month because municipalities reject designating tolerance-zones as the law orders. He called for the inclusion of sex workers into political decision making.

Responses soon followed from anti-prostitution activists Emma Csapó, the head of the Way Out Ecumenical Association for a World Without Prostitution Anna Betlen from MONA. Both Ms. Csapó and Ms. Betlen accused Sárosi of trying to legalize slavery and violence against women. Ms. Betlen argued that all prostitution is rape, girls enter prostitution at the

age of 14, most of them were abused as a child, and 70-95 percent of them are forced into prostitution. She called the effort to listen to the voice of sex workers a “cynical blurb” because she thinks sex workers are brainwashed and intimidated.

In his reaction Sárosi emphasized that sex workers are a hidden population and one cannot make general statements based on the most marginalized group, namely street sex workers seeking help in shelters or who are arrested by the police. --In his view, a clear distinction must be made between consensual sex work and forced prostitution or child prostitution. According to new research the majority of sex workers are able to control their own lives and the majority of clients do not hate women.

The debate spread from print to the broadcast media: in September Emma Csapó, Anna Betlen and Peter Sárosi were invited to a live debate on ATV, a commercial channel, to present their ideas about sex work. When Mr. Sárosi suggested the editors to invite Ágnes Földi, the head of the Sex Workers Association in Hungary, they simply refused to comply, saying that she “doesn’t fit” into their editorial concept.

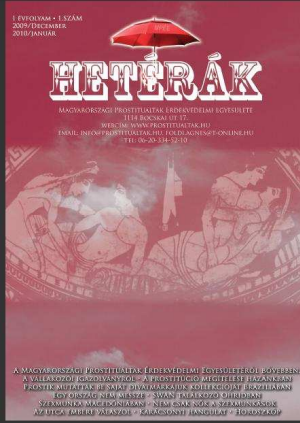


The newsletter is titled *Hetaeras* (Hetérák) after the elite mistresses in ancient Greece who alone, among all Greek women, were allowed to manage their own affairs. We translated an article on an opinion toll on sex work in Hungary.

Among other topics, the first issue deals with the entrepreneur’s license, a prerequisite for sex workers to operate legally in Hungary. Following is a brief summary of another article on how sex work is viewed by the general public in Hungary.

Sex Workers’ Association in Hungary and Fact Institute conducted a joint survey to map views held by the general public on sex workers. The phone survey was done on a sample representing the adult population of Hungary in terms of sex, age, education and location of residence.

The results indicate that Hungarians lack tolerance regarding sexual services, and are not consistent in their views regarding prostitution. According to sociologist László Tistyán people value the rule of law as far as their own rights are concerned, but when it comes to sex workers, gay people or the Roma, it becomes irrelevant.



Sex Workers’ Association in Hungary Start Newsletter

Prostitution is not regarded as a social problem of prime significance by the Hungarians. The majority of the respondents were indifferent, but quite a number reject prostitutes, especially female respondents. Most people blame poverty for prostitution, but the view that sex workers chose their profession because they are fast still holds on.

Every tenth respondent regard disdainful treatment of sex workers acceptable, and the same proportion of people would allow authorities to mistreat them. One third of Hungarians are indifferent to such treatments of sex workers.

60 per cent of the respondents accept prostitution as a legal profession, while 20 per cent would never consent to that. Three quarters of the people would permit prostitution in brothels and tolerance zones, but 20 per cent would ban all forms of it. More than half of the respondents agree that municipalities which, despite the legal regulations, fail to assign zones of tolerance must be punished, but only 40 per cent would approve Hungary’s pulling out of the UN convention against prostitution.

SEX WORKERS' ADVOCACY SCHOOL

New approaches can be invaluable in sensitizing a hostile public or achieving a shift in the tone of the media coverage of sex workers.



Tips on Using the Media for Our Purposes

The most important factor in having good media relations and a fair coverage is to nurture good working rela-

tions with a group of journalists. But even insensitive journalists can be educated or „tamed“, if we can offer them something in return for their cooperation. A sex workers' organization may, for instance, provide journalists with contacts to local sex workers (or ones relevant to the topic of the article) available for interview. Since this is always a very delicate affair and involves serious risks, special attention should be paid to the agreement it is based upon.

Prior to that, some sex workers need to understand and often be convinced why, every once in a while, they will have to make themselves available for selected journalists. The conditions of the interview must be set in advance. One can always request anonymity, or that no picture is taken of her/him. The media, however need visual information, therefore they will probably insist on taking pictures/shooting video footage. For this reason, sex workers should be selected for interviews who don't mind being appearing in pictures/video. This, however, doesn't mean that they agree to show their faces. Personality rights (the right of publicity) mean that one has control over the commercial use of his or her name, image, voice, likeness or other unequivocal aspects of one's identity.

For this reason, the reporter/photographer must agree to let the sex worker or the organization authorize the picture or the video before it is published or broadcast. This way, interviewees can make sure their face is blurred or voice is distorted. If the reporter has proved to be reliable earlier, this agreement may be oral, otherwise a disclosure form should be signed before the interview, stating what rules the journalist/reporter will comply with.

Sex workers have a right to decide if they want to show their faces or speak in a recognizable voice. Journalists/reporters don't like to manipu-

late pictures, video or audio, but will do so if they have to, because sex work is a „sexy“ issue for the media, attracting big audiences. When giving interviews, sex workers risk their safety and their privacy. Journalists therefore should bare the risk of losing their job, if they violate the agreement.

The cooperation may also be tied to the condition of a final check of the article, or that information the organization considers relevant is included. By selecting sex workers available for the media, the organization can maintain an indirect control over the content.

Safeguarding our interests and personality rights is crucial, but there are proactive tools as well. Journalists, on the one hand, like sensations and negative news. On the other, they like to include relevant, well prepared information into their articles, especially if doing so doesn't cost them time or energy. Having such information ready made and available, advocacy organizations can influence the coverage in a favorable way. One of the most important aims is to demystify sex work by, for instance, portraying sex workers as everyday people with everyday lives. During the seminar in Ohrid, a good tool came up to acquaint journalists or media professionals with reality: the daily schedule of a sex worker. Below is a transcript from the original Ohrid flipchart:

9.00-10.00 Wake up without alarm clock, drink water.
10.00-10.30 Have breakfast, listen to news on the radio.
10.30-12.00 Read books, chat on the phone or make beauty preparations
12.00-14.00 Have lunch, specially prepared vegetables
14.00-16.00 Meet friends in a café or pub, or work out every second day
16.00-18.00 Having clients (sometime) or have a sleep or visit parents
18.00-22.00 Have clients or use internet or be with boyfriend
22.00-9.00 sleep (no clients at night)

Other sex workers may work on tighter or less fancy schedules. Here is another example:

7.00 The alarm is ringing! Why do I have to get up again?
7.10 Cup of coffee. I have to prepare breakfast for my daughter Nastia and my husband Alexander. While the porridge cooks, I go to take a shower.
7.30 Every day I go to coax my children awake and out of bed, wake up my daughter. They have to get ready to go to kindergarten and school. We have breakfast and get dressed to leave.
8.00 Daughter to kindergarten and son to school.
8.15 I am running to work. I can't be late! My boss is strict-she says that if I am late to work, I can leave or pay the fine!
8.30 On my schedule is my first client. She is telling me her problems and also about her life: the husband is 'walking about', not paying her any attention and so on...
16.00 Next client... female client... problems of other people are getting to my head...
17.00 I am running to the kindergarten to pick up my daughter, so that she isn't the last one on her way home. I think about upcoming expenses for the kindergarten renovations, the gift for the director of the kindergarten, mobile telephone, rent, the medication of my mother...
18.30 We are home. I have to check my son's homework, do the laundry, tidy up, feed them and think up a bedtime story to tell them to be able to go out for night from 22.00
21.00 I say goodnight to my children. Nice bedtime story for the night
21.30 To live a normal life I need to have a second job.
23.00 My first client. I listen to his life story: wife is not listening to him, problems at work...
03.00 I am at home, the children are sleeping. LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL!

If enough members from any local community participate in a project to record what they do on regular working days, the resulting „database“ will provide a reliable depiction of their everyday reality. After that, journalists can be supplied with extracts they can use at their discretion or according to preset rules. On the other hand, if journalists misuse the material or break other deals made with sex workers or their organization during the preparation of the material by misrepresenting them, their editors may be notified of the ethical violation. In such cases, a correction can be requested, or a more professional form of cooperation developed with the given media outlet, to ensure a fairer representation. Many other approaches are possible. All of this can be done in a clever and compelling way, new aspects of the sex workers' life can be introduced in the media, without making the journalist and the audience feel that they are forced to take over a preset opinion.

There are many more indirect ways to change the tone of the media coverage that take much more time. The collection and true representation of all facts and opinions relevant to a story is probably the most important professional ethical standard journalists need to adhere to. If, despite our efforts to cooperate with them, when covering sex work journalists regularly fail this, other means of media advocacy may come to the forefront. Organizations can, for instance, set up an award for fair reporting on sex work, or, on the contrary, a mock award for abusive articles or coverage. The media loves to report on such issues, and the presentation of the award is always a great opportunity to raise awareness for sex workers' rights. Also, politicians, activists, researchers, academics, social workers etc who contributed a great deal to advance the cause of sex worker's rights could be acknowledged on an annual basis.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

“If you are independent, you are at the mercy of the police – they impose administrative fines on you or force you to have sex with them.”
—(Nata, Ukrainian sex worker)

CALLS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sex Workers Call Against Violence After Heatstroke Kills Prisoner

Sex worker's and allies are coming together in front of the Arizona Department of Corrections on December 18th in Phoenix, as part of International Day To End Violence Against Sex Workers, an annual event to call attention to violence committed against sex workers all over the globe. Marcia Powell was a prisoner of the State of Arizona who collapsed and died from heatstroke last May after being locked in an outdoor cage and ignored for four hours in 107 degree heat.

You are invited to join in Tucson, Arizona on December 17, 2009 (performance art/public installation and a candlelight vigil) and in Phoenix, Arizona on December 18, 2009 (protest rally on the steps of the Arizona Department of Corrections). Bring red umbrellas, to stand in solidarity! Signs are welcome.

To read International news please visit SWAN website at <http://swannet.org/en/taxonomy/term/2>



New Issue of STAR Newsletter and 2010 SW Advocacy Calendar from Macedonia

STAR (sex worker rights activist group) of Macedonia designed and launched a **calendar** for 2010, to mark December 17th and sex workers' rights. The calendar may be downloaded from SWAN's website (http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/STAR_kalendar_small_2010.pdf) in pdf format, and quality print versions may be requested from the STAR team (write to SWAN coordinator to swan@tasz.hu).

STAR Newsletter is celebrating its 1 year of existence! **Read issue 9** which features, among other articles, confession of a sex worker, quotes from famous people. There is a sex advice column, and information on sexual rights. Those interested can check what the Egyptian horoscope holds for them.

- http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/STAR_kalendar_small_2010.pdf

The **10th issue** of the STAR newsletter From Us to US is dedicated to December 17 and the issues of human rights.

- http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/STAR_kalendar_small_2010.pdf.

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