

# CONGRESS ON PROSTITUTION

## PARIS - 2009

Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe

In light of the precariousness experienced by prostitutes both socially and in terms of health, on the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the LSI (Internal Security Law) and for the third consecutive year, the Assises de la Prostitution (Congress on Prostitution) will take place, on Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2009, at the Odéon Theatre in Paris.



### Repression = lack of security, abuse, health risks

Since the enforcement of **the Internal Security Law**, in March 2003, it has become increasingly difficult to reach prostitutes, despite the action of the numerous peer health projects and social workers in the field.



Since March 2003, we have been witnessing a **worsening of prostitutes' living conditions**, and an increase in risk-taking due to economic difficulty and to the pressure coming from the police and from a number of clients. Moreover, many organisations have observed an increase in STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) for most marginalised prostitutes (transgender, drug users, migrants). New forms of prostitution have also emerged (internet, bars, etc.), making prevention a more complex task.

### Strategy: giving a voice to prostitutes and their allies, involving them and encouraging them to become active participants

Why at the Odéon Theatre? Because ever since the dawn of Ancient Greece the purpose of theatre has been to shed light on the underground areas of our societies, and to openly raise issues that we are used to bury out of fear, uneasiness, and ignorance. That is the case of prostitution, even more so of the so called 'chosen' prostitution.

This meeting will be both professional and public, and will essentially give voice to those who identify themselves as 'sex workers', prostitutes, or share similar practices.

By **privileging the voices of prostitutes**, of peer associations, and others who are directly active in the field, we aim at providing concrete answers concerning issues of prevention, and prostitutes' health and access to fundamental rights in France.

On the one hand, the direct involvement of prostitutes will facilitate their access to **prevention tools and to fundamental rights**.

On the other hand, bringing together different members of society, as well as prostitutes in France and throughout Europe, will help constitute a strong **European network of expertise** on the key themes related to prostitution.

## Programme: sharing experiences, disseminating prevention tools

**9h00: Welcoming and coffee**

### **9h30-13h: Workshops**

Addressing good practices of HIV/AIDS-SDT prevention and of prostitutes' fundamental rights

### **15h-16h45: Output from workshops**

Discussion. Discussants will also address the issue of how to involve prostitutes in the elaboration of health and rights projects.

### **17h-18h: Press Conference**

Synthesis of the day and presentation of a common declaration to the press

### **18h00-19h00: Reading of Grisélidis Réal texts**

Grisélidis Réal was a prostitute, a writer, an activist and a poet. Among her publications (Editions Verticales) feature *Le noir est une couleur*, *La Passe imaginaire*, *Carnet de bal d'une courtisane*, *Suis-je encore vivante?*

### **Photo exhibition 'Prostitutes of Europe' by Mathilde Bouvard**

Artistic and sociological project representing prostitutes (by choice) in 15 European cities.



### **The actors: UNALS, Droits et Prostitution, ICRSE, the prostitutes and their allies**

The **UNALS (National Union of Organisations against Aids)** and the **Collectif « Droits et Prostitution »**, the **ICRSE (International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe)**, the prostitutes, the politics, the civil society organisations, the social sciences specialists will be involved in this event.

### **Goals: Proposing the main thrust of thought and action**

Endorsement of a **common declaration** including both analysis and proposals based on the afternoon debate and the morning workshops;  
Establishment of a **network of study and action on prostitution** for future collaboration;

Dissemination of a **congress report** including main interventions, exchanges and conclusions.

## VENUE AND CONTACT

**Address** : Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe - place de l'Odéon - 75006 Paris.

**Metro station**: Odéon (line 4) or Luxembourg (RER B)

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