



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Rights groups: Rights Not Violence for Sex Workers

December 17, Budapest– December 17th is International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers. This event was created to call attention to violence committed against sex workers all over the globe.

Sex workers' rights groups and their allies in Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine are marking the occasion as part of a joint campaign with SWAN – the Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia - a network representing 19 organizations providing health and social services in 17 countries in the region. Actions across different countries will include marches of sex workers and allies, meetings with politicians and press conferences.

According to SWAN Coordinator, Aliya Rakhmetova in Budapest : *“Police repression and abuse compromises sex workers’ access to law protection and justice and creates a climate of impunity for violence against them. This in turn, fuels violence against sex workers by others. The only way to end such human rights violations is for governments to uphold sex workers’ human rights.”*

In 2008, SWAN published “Arrest the Violence” a community-based research project on human rights abuses against sex workers by state-actors in 11 countries in the CEE/CA based on interviews with 238 sex workers. The report found that across the region 41.7% of sex workers had faced physical violence by police in the past year; 36.5% had faced sexual violence by police in the past year.

Originally started by the Sex Workers Outreach Project USA as a memorial and vigil for the victims of the Green River Killer in Seattle Washington, International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers has empowered workers from cities around the world to come together and organize against discrimination and remember victims of violence.

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NOTES FOR THE EDITOR:

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Link to “Arrest the Violence: Human Rights Abuses Against Sex Workers in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia”

http://swannet.org/files/swannet/File/Documents/Arrest_the_Violence_SWAN_Report_Nov2009_eng.pdf

Short history of International Day against Violence against Sex Workers (audio file):

<http://emedia.art.sunysb.edu/swirl/Dec17PSA.mp3>

SWAN is a project of the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, HCLU, www.tasz.hu

SWAN Members:

Aksion Plus, Albania, www.aksionplus.net

HESED, Bulgaria, www.hesed.bg

Bliss Without Risk, Czech Republic, <http://www.rozkosbezrizika.cz/cz/aktuality/>

MPEE, Hungary, www.prostitualtak.hu

Kovcheg, Kazakhstan, fsz@mail.ru

Tais Plus, Kyrgyzstan, www.taisplus.com

Dia+Logos, Latvia, www.diacentrs.lv

I Can Live, Lithuania, www.galiugyventi.lt

HOPS, Macedonia, www.hops.org.mk

STAR-STAR, Macedonia

Juventas, Montenegro, www.juventas.co.me

TADA, Poland, www.tada.pl

ARAS-Romanian Association Against AIDS, Romania, www.arasnet.ro

Association for Assistance, Russia

Siberian Initiative, Russia, <http://www.sibin.ru>

JAZAS, Serbia, www.jazas.net

Odyseus, Slovakia, www.ozodyseus.sk

All Ukrainian Association on Harm Reduction, Ukraine, www.uhra.org.ua

Ukrainian Charitable Organization “LegalLife”, Ukraine, www.legalife.com.ua