Getting in the door, getting to the microphone, getting to be heard: a long journey
Making space in civil society for sex workers’ rights

The International Union of Sex Workers
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Se non e vero, e ben trovato.

(Even if it’s not true, it’s a good story.)
Italian proverb

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
A feminist is any woman who tells the truth about her life.

Virginia Woolf

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
...prostitute use creates harm to those involved and to communities...
Eaves Housing (Poppy Project) response to government consultation

... the term “prostitution” recognises the harm and exploitation inherent within the industry, the vulnerability of those selling sex, and the exploitative nature of paying for sex.
Eaves Housing information sheet

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
There are many "sex work" projects in the UK, which provide a range of services, from needle exchange and condoms, legal advice and counselling to housing and exiting support. Some projects prioritise "harm minimisation" – measures to make the lifestyle more comfortable and to reduce risks for the continuation of prostitution; other projects promote exiting – routes out of prostitution, providing an holistic framework of specialist services to assist women who want to leave the lifestyle.

....

Effective harm reduction should operate in a context where harm elimination is the ultimate goal. There is evidence that the promised government funding towards exit strategies does not always materialise in those countries where brothel prostitution is legalised and street prostitution tolerated.

.... It should be noted, however, that such schemes can only reduce, rather than eliminate harm, and can be seen as a way to maintain women in the sex industry, as opposed to assisting their exit from it.

Eaves Housing publications

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
I'm fighting for the sex workers right to be human here, the right for which they are themselves unable to fight. In a way I care more for them than they do themselves.

Prohibitionist posting on a newspaper website in response to a sex worker rights article.

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
Eaves Housing Press Release:
Harriet Harman says: “Prostitution is the abuse and exploitation of women by men…”…Helen Atkins, co-author of *Big Brothel*, comments: “it has been said that we are never more than six feet away from a rat in London. Apparently, something similar applies to brothels…

Catherine Briddick, Rights* of Women*: Only a very small percentage of women are in the sex industry from choice and “I’m not interested in protecting them.”

* exclusions apply

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
You cannot be free, before you act like a free person and stop letting others abuse you, stop going out, in fact, looking for people to abuse you. Wanting to ADVERTISE looking for people to abuse you! No, sorry, we're going to have to stop you doing that.

Prohibitionist responding to a sex worker writing about their right to advertise.

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
When you pass laws stating that one minority does not deserve equal rights, you encourage society, as a whole, to view that minority as less than human.

Vic Basile,
First Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, & co-founder of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Lila Watson, Australian Aboriginal activist

The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010
Everyone's making everything up / There is no one in charge except for those / Who pretend to be / No one is coming / No one is going to / Rescue you, Mind read your needs, Know your body better than you / Always fight back.  
Say no when you don't want to do something / Say yes if your instincts are strong / Even if everyone around you disagrees / Decide whether you want to be liked or admired / Decide if fitting in is more important than finding out / What you're doing here / Believe in kissing.

from The Manifesta to Young Women and Girls, Eve Ensler
The International Union of Sex Workers, IHRA 2010