

Madrid sex workers and Colectivo Hetaira's Manifesto

Madrid, 6 February 2014

Madrid sex workers and Colectivo Hetaira denounce the increasingly precarious conditions in which we are carrying out our work, due to regulations and laws that punish prostitutes who get their clients in the street while favoring the owners of big clubs -forcing us to work in those places where there are no laws to protect our rights, since prostitution is not recognized as work.

We are against municipal bylaws and plans that are being sanctioned in many Spanish towns, which pursue, harass, criminalize us, and shoo away our clients by fining them with different excuses. **We are against the passing of the *Bylaw for Civic Coexistence within the Public Space* project** launched by the Madrid City Council, whose draft was supposedly agreed upon, but was in fact presented without any real and equal participation of all of Madrid's social entities. If they fine our clients, they fine us, since they are making things more difficult for us, we'll have to hide more and we will work in conditions of greater vulnerability, thus worsening our working conditions and reducing our earnings. Besides, the Madrid City Council started a campaign against our clients which distorted the figures about women working freely as prostitutes by presenting made up figures -since there are no reliable studies to support such data. This way, they expect to make us -women who work at our own will- invisible, and that's why we decided to launch a counter-campaign: **"I have sex with men for money whenever I want to"**.

We state our **rejection against the Home Office's proposal of an Organic Law for the Protection of Public Safety** which, among many other things, will penalize those who offer or hire sexual services near schools. We will also get fined if our presence is considered to cause some "risk to road safety" - a surreptitious ban on the negotiation of sexual services for money in the streets in any circumstances. For all these reasons, and also for our rejection of the banning of unauthorized demonstrations and rallies, demonstrations before the Congress, "escraches" (spontaneous protests), etc. **we are against the gag law.**

For many years we have **reclaimed a space negotiation** between neighborhoods, public administrations and sex workers, in which we would be regarded as equal interlocutors in order to reach agreements on where to organize spaces with all the conditions we need for our work **without disturbing and without being disturbed or harassed**. Spaces where we could work in peace, in greater safety conditions, clean, with dustbins, places to rest, have a coffee or cool off, well lit and with good access, etc. **Space negotiation now!**

We carry out our activities in increasingly precarious and arduous conditions, but **we are fed up with hearing that we are all trafficking victims**, and with being denied our capacity of decision to do this job.

We need our activity to be recognized in order to have tools with which we can face **all kinds of abuse** (police, business world, clients, assailants) and making it impossible to pass bylaws that criminalize us, worsen our working conditions and cause more stigmatization and vulnerability. We are fed up with being ignored and **never being listened to** -either due to social rejection or theoretical debates. We are NOW, HERE and while waiting for better times for us to come, we need to improve our living and working conditions -and it's essential to recognize the rights on the job we do.

Come to the demonstration next Saturday, February 15, 2014, at 5,30 PM, at Montera street / Puerta del Sol corner.

If your group/organization/entity/movement wants to SUPPORT this call and sign in support to the MANIFESTO, write and e-mail: hetaira@colectivohetaira.org.