International Sex Workers Day 2020

article



On International Sex Workers Day, TGEU joins the voices of organisations and activists around the world calling for the end of police violence against sex workers and the decriminalisation of sex work.

On 2 June 1975, more than a hundred sex workers occupied the Church Saint-Nizier in Lyon, France, to draw attention to their exploitative and criminalised living and working conditions and demand an end to police harassment.

Today, 45 years later, trans and gender-diverse sex workers around the world experience constant and widespread structural, institutional, and interpersonal violence. High levels of police mistreatment and violence, accompanied by a climate of impunity, contributes to the well-founded assumption that trans sex workers are easy targets for violence, as they have no access to protection and justice. Criminalising laws and policies exacerbate trans sex workers' vulnerability to violence.

Here are some crucial initiatives run by some of our sex workers-led and/or focused members:

Acceptess-T **(France)**
Acceptess-T has launched the crowdfunding campaign "FAST" in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The organisation has refocused most of its work and their volunteers work toward a COVID-19 community response. They are supporting the most vulnerable people (mostly trans women engaging in sex work and/or undocumented) and provide daily support. Through this project, more than 600 community members received direct support and more than 1200 food packages have been delivered.

Sindicato OTRAS **(Spain)**
Sindicato OTRAS did a series of webinars, including one specifically about engaging with sex work during COVID-19 and the question of the rates. Another webinar was screened today for the International Sex Workers Day. It has been recorded and will be soon available on their YouTube channel.

MIT – Movimento Identità Trans **(Italy)**
MIT has an initiative called “Via Luna”. Via Luna is a harm reduction project for sex workers carried out in collaboration with the Municipality of Bologna with an operational team made of social workers, mediators, and lawyers. They reach out directly to sex workers and offer peer-to-peer support, as well as medical and legal assistance.

TransformA **(North Macedonia)**
TransformA has been supporting and promoting a campaign launched by STAR, the first Sex Workers collective in the Balkans, and Healthy Options Project Skopje. It’s a fundraising campaign as well as an awareness-raising and information sharing campaign. It aims at promoting COVD-19 protection and risk reduction protocols for sex workers.

- Read the brief report ***The vicious circle of violence: Trans and gender-diverse people, migration, and sex work***
- Read TGEU’s ***Sex Work Policy***
- Read TGEU’s ***Policy Brief on Ending gender-based violence***