



EWL – GA

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The first weekend of June, the European Women's Lobby held its Annual General Assembly and Board meetings. It was some exciting few days in which we discussed how to progress in the implementation of our vision of a Feminist Europe.

On Thursday, the EWL board has revealing a publication about a dramatic subject "From conflict to peace? Women's and girls' voices on the move". It's a five-month project partnering the European Women's Lobby and the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) and aiming to raise awareness on the situation of women and girl's refugees in Europe. Women and girls fleeing conflicts and travelling to or settling in Europe are at higher risk of suffering from male violence. On the way and in the centres, they face rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, from different perpetrators; they have to resort to prostitution in order to get access to food, housing or transport; they face domestic violence; girls are being sold for marriage or trafficked for sexual exploitation... Some women refugees told their story during this afternoon. Unbelievable, today on the 21st century. A real nightmare.

On Friday morning, several talks were proposed. About Care, Money resources and Women's present and future. I choose the talk about Care. One person told us that most of political choices are made for saving money. However, inequalities do not have positive effects in the economy of a state. The austerity brings a lot of problems. More and more women must work. They also need to work at home too! Don't forget, in most European countries, men and women do not get the same salary for the same work, women earn less money. If our government would invest two percent of the revenues in Care, it would change a lot of things for everybody. In Malta, for example, Day-care are free which gives a huge difference in women's life. Since 74, the Sweden law allows men to stay at home raising the children. Men earn 3 months of paid salary when taking care of the children. In comparison with Sweden, the law is not so old in other European countries. Unfortunately, it's more useful in the public sector than the private one.

In the afternoon, during the meeting of the executive committee and the board of administration, the delegate (what we are) could participate to a discussion group with few possibilities: I choose "surrogacy". It has been a few years that Europe wants to establish some laws about surrogacy. Most of feminist women are against it because it's a trade with women's bodies and children as well as a threat to women's basic human rights and body integrity. Personally, I felt uncomfortable because, in Israel, surrogacy is permitted by law (since 20 years) under some conditions (surrogate mother must be the same religion as both parents, unmarried, yet having already given birth to a child, but not delivered through caesarean section... together with a number of other restrictions. It was a deeply emotional discussion group.



The next discussion group was the projection on a documentary from Gail Dines "Pornland". The video was about how the porn industry has hijacked our sexuality. In short, porno movies become much more violent. It wouldn't be a problem if Internet didn't exist. But now, according to few researches, we know that at the age of 10, a child will face for the first time sexuality through Internet. Images are violent, extremely violent. You can imagine how much damage it will cause later. At the end of this meeting, we were all deeply shocked.

On Saturday, The General Assembly discussed and approved the activity report, accounts for 2015, and an exciting work program for next year. The 2017 work program is based on the 8 goals of EWL Strategic Framework:

3 internal goals to build our movement:

1. To raise more, better and sustainable funding for women
2. To work together effectively at different levels and in different contexts: local, national, European Union and International
3. To promote and debate diversity, advancing consensus, and strengthen our collective voice.

5 external goals to transform society:

1. To ensure sustainable and strong institutional mechanisms for equality between women and men in Europe
2. To put an end to all forms of violence against women and girls and promote a society of peace, human security and dignity
3. To challenge and change the culture of sexism and stereotypes and promote positive roles for women and men
4. To promote the feminist transformation of a sustainable economy based on new economic models based on equality, well-being, care and social justice
5. To position women at the heart of political, social and economic participation and decision- making

During the afternoon after the presentation of the future candidates (president and executive committee), we elected a new board for 2 years. At the end of this election, we said an emotional farewell to our outgoing President Viviane Teitelbaum, who has served as President for the past 4 years. She will continue her feminist engagement as President of the Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique.

On Sunday 5 June, the Board elected a new President and Executive Committee. The new president is Edith Schratzberger-Vecsei, a practicing doctor and psychotherapist from Vienna. She has already served as Vice President during the past 2 years.

Finally, that election closed the AG 2016!

I would like to share something else with you. Pierrette Pape, Policy and Campaigns Director from the EWL, asked me if our European Council WIZO would like to sign the



Brussels 'Call "together for an Europe free from Prostitution". More than 200 organizations have already signed. In France, on April, the abolitionist law was enacted. It is a beginning! However, the EWL wants adopt this law in Europe and also enacted and applied on the Parliament. For this reason, they need a lot of signature in every European country...

I just received the position of a part of WIZO Israel about surrogacy and prostitution and it's very interesting:

Surrogacy: Today, surrogacy in Israel takes place in a vacuum and as a "free market" from economic point of view.

Wizo Israel position is that the state of Israel has to take more responsibility for that subject.

The Israeli federation begins to study all the issues, has set up support groups for the surrogates, and for the future mothers and fathers.

We also established a focus group in order to learn the needs and after that we'll act to law and to give an equal promote a policy which will force the state of Israel to change the fair opportunity for parenthood.

Prostitution:

In Israel today, there are about 12.000 people in the circle of prostitution, 10.000 women, 1.000 underage girls and the rest are men and young boys.

WIZO Israel position is against establishment of prostitution. We support in carrying out the prostitution by incrimination the client, hopping by that to minimize the phenomenon. There is also a need to develop programs and vocational rehabilitation for the women who are at the prostitution circle.

I am planning to continue to receive information from WIZO about this subject. And, put this topic in our program of next year. To know exactly which position we should support in the future.

Thank you