

Barcelona, 24 April 2014

Dear Friend,

Our cities are home to a number of **women that do not live there voluntarily: they have ended up there through deception or force by someone or through unwanted circumstances**. Most of them are engaged in prostitution.

Trafficking in women is deemed to be twenty-first-century slavery as it constitutes a form of violence perpetrated against women and girls, often treated as objects of **sexual exploitation**, as well as a violation of human rights: to freedom, to dignity, to safety and to health, to name but a few. This practice, often committed within the context of **organized crime**, comes to pass in many settings on an international scale as it affects the countries of origin, transit and destination. The stakeholders involved are just as plentiful as the victims, as an impact is borne not only on the victims but also on international networks, intermediaries, families, immigration authorities and security forces, social platforms, etc. The few cases that come to the authorities' attention make it difficult to measure the extent of these types of practices throughout the world.

Given its complexity, there are different ways to approach this problem and to work toward effectively preventing and combating such treatment and to **protect victims**, but joint reflections and work are important, and the matter especially has to be treated from the **municipal perspective**, as these local organizations end up in confrontation with each other and having to resolve derived social problems, requiring a metropolitan perspective that allows the issue to be approached globally.

In order to set the issue in context and to discuss the international trafficking of women and girls at the international and national, global and local levels with participants from UN Women, among other invited persons, and to share experiences that focus on measures to prevent such trafficking and to protect victims enduring this situation, the Metropolis Women International Network and Barcelona City Council, with the support of Barcelona Provincial Council and the Government of Catalonia, **invite you to take part in the conference entitled "Safety and Protection of the Victims of Sexual Exploitation. New Forms of Slavery and its Local Impact"**, which will take place on **13 June 2014 at the Espai Francesca Bonnemaison, at the Barcelona Provincial Council offices (c/ Sant Pere més Baix nº7) between 9.30 am and 2.30 pm** (see attached program).

We recommend you register before 12 June 2014 via the following link: <http://womennetwork.metropolis.org/es/evento/barcelona-2014>. Places are limited and attendance will be strictly by order of registrations.

I look forward to seeing you there.



Francina Vila
President
Metropolis Women International Network