



25 November 2011: International Day on Violence against Women

Stop violence against women

For feminist movements worldwide the 25th of November is a day of battle, accusation, reconnaissance and resistance against violence against women since the General Assembly of the United Nations 1999 has declared it as the “International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women”. This phenomenon reveals the patriarchic oppression and existence of machist and misogynist cultures in different societies and its persistence even in the heart of capitalistic modernity, where democracy and universal rights are formally accepted.

- Violence against women is far spread and does not seem in the least to decrease. Every third woman in the world and every fourth woman in Europe is exposed to this kind of violence.
- Women experience violence by men. Of course not all men use violence against women, but in any case it is a specific kind of violence used by men against women and girls. Men use violence to preserve or to strengthen their power over women or to regain it, in case they have lost it.
- This kind of violence has long been invisible, it happened in the shadow and in absence of prosecution. In fact, it was corresponding to dominant values, traditions and laws up to a point, where this phenomenon was considered natural and normal. Today it is a crime, but the violence continues to be regarded by individuals, institutions and the state as a question of order strictly private and not as a crime relevant to the public sphere.
- Women are victims to violence in everyday life as well as in their homes. Violence against women is committed by partners or relatives, a phenomenon present in all social classes.
- Violence against women takes different shapes: the violation of the right to self-determination, forced marriage, sexual or psychological molesting, exploitation or discrimination. It is an especially important factor regarding immigrant women and adds to the suffering of obstacles these women experience living with full rights inside the European borders.
- The laws and rules of religions, especially the monotheistic ones, are based on male predominance and often on violence. Women are considered lesser beings or sometimes objects of male pleasure and will. Or they are subject of various family

codes. They suffer the violence and power of the sacred and of laws, traditions, practices built on their submission to the male gender. The submission is often presented as natural or wanted by God.

- In modern wars 70 to 80% per cent of the victims are civil and in majority women. They are tortured and humiliated in the refugee camps and prisons. They are systematically violated, with this practice being used as a weapon in numerous conflicts. There is, in fact, a deep link between militarism and patriarchal oppression.

For these reasons as EL we demand:

- Division of the religious and the political sphere, secularism as the foundation of any state or social and political community. Therefor we intend to defend the rights of womens' self-determination, contraception and abortion. Particularly we fight against the claim of the Vatican State to determine women's condition, their freedom, their sexuality and the sexuality and sexual freedom of Igbtiq people.

- The adoption of penal law against sexual mutilation and forced marriage.

- The Europe wide approval and completion of laws that put an end to violence against women and their children. At the heart of those laws must lie the prevention and individuation of the harbingers (first symptoms) of violence with an adequate budget to help the victims of this kind of violence and garantuee the full rights to immigrant women, without a single reference to their legal and administrative status in Europe.

- The limitation and control of individually owned weapons, which can be used against women.

- Womens' rights may not justify new wars or more restrictions to immigration rights.

- The immediate conversion of European policy guidelines into the civil rights of residency for victims of trafficking and the transcription into the national laws.

The EL considers as fundamental not only the fight to modify the relations between the classes, the abolishing of exploitation and oppression, but also the fight against patriarchal structures of society and the resulting social and cultural consequences.

The crisis of economy, society and culture which is afflicting Europe reveals the failure of neoliberal capitalism, thus illustrating the chance for hope, that instead of the barbaric reign of profit and capital a new socialist society can be established respecting nature and capable to create conditions to realise a womens' revolution: the EL fights sexist violence, which stems from machism and patriarchal domination.