

WORKSHOP**“WOMEN AND PRISON: CONSEQUENCES OF CONFINEMENT”****Facilitator: Alicia Alonso Merino**

“Law sees and treats women as men see and treat women”¹

In our societies (capitalist and patriarchal), criminal law constructs an image of women delinquents not only as offenders of law, but it also reflects the patriarchal structures that surround us, the stereotypes that exist with respect to the behaviours referring to gender, and the distinct moral assumptions for each gender ².

During the last years, the increase of the number of imprisoned women has become remarkable. The total of women population imprisoned has increased 50% since the year 2000 (while the number of men imprisoned increased by 18%). As a consequence, the proportion of women and girls imprisoned at global level has increased since the year 2000 from 5,4% to 6,8% approximately according to the last data available³.

The majority are women with little economic and educational resources who have suffered from violence throughout their life. More than half of the women are imprisoned due to crimes related to drug trafficking. These data make evident, apart from other causes, the failure of the global policy of “war against drugs”, which had disastrous consequences that have led to the confinement of thousands of women. Furthermore, they are a clear example of the punitive disproportion which has to do with the construction of crime, the construction of the delinquent and the selective character of the organisms of criminal control.

If, as confirmed in practice, prison has no preventive or dissuasive utility, nor does it facilitate reintegration, then we ask ourselves about the sense of prison, especially in the case of women. In the majority of cases it is minor crimes and without the use of violence where the costs of confinement and the social consequences are higher and represent a cause of direct exclusion.

It is in this context in which we want to reflect in a collective, horizontal and participatory way in a workshop about the consequences of confinement for women, in the women themselves and in society. Generate a space where to share experiences, knowledge and reflections about women and prison in the frame of feminist abolitionism, helping to create and strengthen the networks of work in this area.

¹MACKINNON Catharine, “Feminism, marxism, method and State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence”, en Signs, vol. 8, no 4, 1983 (pág. 644)

²LARRAURI, Elena; “Mujeres y Sistema Penal. Violencia doméstica”, Euroeditores, Argentina, 2008. (pág. 23)

³ ICPR, “World Prison Population List”, UK, fev. 2016.