

# Statement Against the Licensing of Strip Clubs

Chris Green OBE UN Leader Founder White Ribbon Campaign UK

I give the information below about myself not to 'blow my own trumpet' but to show how seriously work to end violence against women is taken at the national and international level. Work that councils directly undermine every time they license a strip club:

In 2009 I was invited by the **UN** Secretary General to become one of only 11 men globally to be a UN Network of Men Leaders. Others in this group included the Prime Minister of Spain Jose Zapatero, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu . The UN General Secretary Ban Ki Moon called on us to **"Unite to change attitudes that incite, perpetuate and condone violence against women."**

For three years I served on the **Council of Europe Task Force** to eliminate violence against women as a representative of the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe. This Task Force set the basis for the Istanbul Convention. Article 12 of this legally binding convention, which the UK has signed and agreed to ratify, states **"Parties shall take necessary measures to encourage all members of society, especially men and boys, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence covered by this convention"**

I have addressed the Parliamentary Assembly of the **Council of Europe**, the **Inter Parliamentary Union**, the **Oxford Union** and many conferences on the theme of Engaging Men in Tackling Violence against Women.

In 2004 I founded the UK branch of The White Ribbon Campaign – engaging with men and boys to end male violence against women and girls. In 2017 I was awarded an OBE for my work on promoting equality between women and men.

This is why it is the absolute duty of elected representatives to challenge the commodification of women and attitudes which condone harmful attitudes and behaviours.

Sex Entertainment Venues by their nature (promoting and selling sexual encounters) directly support and promote attitudes which constitute and foster discriminatory behaviour by men and boys towards women and girls, and which are the major causes of men's violence against women and girls.

The licensed availability of sex for sale on the high street encourages people with sexist views to think that their views are 'normal', acceptable and shared by others.

These premises condone the sexism and culture of violence and entitlement (from unequal pay to domestic abuse) present in the everyday lives of people who have developed harmful attitudes, that public bodies with responsibility for the public health of citizens are directly tasked with preventing and eliminating.

Instead of continually licensing venues to legitimise harmful attitudes -and often much worse - councils need to stop legitimising this form of the sex trade and support all women to exit who require it.