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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Statement: response to ratification of European Convention Against Trafficking In Human Beings (ECAT)**

“It is good to see the UK Government taking the lead among members of the European Union in ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Human Trafficking, setting a positive example to the 21 other European nations which have signed but not yet ratified.

“We hope this signifies a broadened commitment to trafficking for all forms of exploitation in the UK.

“We believe it is imperative that those involved in the decision-making process are fully trained in how to identify victims of trafficking, and to this end we look forward to sharing our expertise with the UK Border Agency.

“We hope to see the Convention implemented within a Human Rights framework and we encourage the Government to draw on the existing expertise in this country with regards to all future work on witness protection, prosecution of traffickers and prevention.

“We are delighted that the Government has finally ratified the Convention, displaying a continued commitment to assisting victims of trafficking, but we now encourage them to look closely at existing examples of best practice and to develop policy accordingly. For example, Council of Europe best practice currently advises a 90-day reflection period for victims of trafficking; the UK Action Plan offers 45 days. It also advises that victims of trafficking should not be charged with possession of false documents, but we are still aware of women who are referred to the POPPY Project still being charged with that offence.”

Denise Marshall OBE  
Eaves Chief Executive

**– NOTES TO EDITORS –**

The POPPY Project is funded by the Ministry of Justice to provide accommodation and support to women trafficked into the UK for the

purposes of sexual exploitation. It is the only Government-funded service in the UK supporting women trafficked into prostitution. It has 35 bed spaces and an outreach team which works with women still involved in the sex industry. It also has a research and development unit, which specialises in counter-trafficking and exiting-prostitution work.

Eaves also runs Eaves Women's Aid – a series of refuges for women and their children fleeing domestic violence – and a research department called the Lilith Project, which works to support the violence-against-women sector through research, education and training.

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