



Welens

EDUCATIONAL
PRACTICES THROUGH
A GENDER LENS

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & VIOLENCE TOOLKIT

MODULE 2

Prostitution and trafficking



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Summary

0. GLOSSARY	4
1. INTRODUCTION	7
2.1 Street or visible prostitution	9
2.2 Sexual slavery/debt-bonded prostitution	9
2.3 Prostitution in exchange for goods or services	10
2.4 Escorting or call-girls.....	11
2.5 Cam girls	12
2.6 Sugar dating	13
3. RISK FACTORS OF ENTERING INTO PROSTITUTION	15
3.1 Weakening Factors	16
4. OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN LEGAL FRAMEWORKS	23
5. UNDERSTANDING SEX TRAFFICKING.....	36
.....	44
6. TAKING ACTION.....	45
7. EXIT PROGRAMS EXAMPLES	61

While the terminology used in the English, Spanish, Estonian and French versions of this Toolkit refer to Prostitution as lacking of agency and harmful in any of its forms, this Toolkit in its Italian and Greek versions have been developed in the recognition of an ongoing debate about prostitution, sex work and sexual exploitation which better reflect the official position of CESIEETS, and that of Greece's legal framework and of the Center for Security Studies' researchers.

Specifically, in the Italian and Greek toolkit the term "sexual exploitation in prostitution" is used, which refers to a form of sexual violence that involves a person profiting from the use of another person's body in a sexual manner, whether financially or through other means and which is non-consensual and harmful.

Both CESIE ETS and researchers of the Center for Security Studies recognise the importance of distinguishing what is mentioned above, from "sex work" meant as the consensual provision of sexual services between adults, which takes many forms, and varies between and within countries and communities for money, goods, or reward recognising the agency of individuals engaged. As a result, "prostitution", even if valid in legal frameworks, will not be used, as it is an umbrella term which does not take into consideration abovementioned nuances.

0. GLOSSARY

Prostitution: In the dictionaries, prostitution is often defined from the point of view of the person who is in a situation of prostitution. The Merriam-Webster dictionary, for example, describes prostitution as “the act or practice of engaging in sex acts and especially sexual intercourse in exchange for pay”. Another way to describe the phenomenon is from the point of view of the client/perpetrator, defining it as an act of imposing or obtaining a sexual act in exchange for money or by physical or psychological constraint. The latter definition puts emphasis on the exploitative and violent dimension of prostitution and the inherent violence of the act of undergoing an undesired sexual act in exchange for money. Mutuality is absent in the context of prostitution, and there is none of the sexual giving and receiving that constitutes the reciprocity inherent to a mutually willing sexual exchange.

Sex work: In this toolkit, the term ‘prostitution’ is used instead of ‘sex work’, as using the term ‘sex work’ is found problematic by the majority of the partners involved in the writing of these modules. Sex work, as a term, depicts prostitution as an activity functioning similarly to any other type of work. It fails to take into account the serious human rights violations characterising the prostitution system and the lack of a “career progression” usually associated with a profession. Prostitution is about buying access to a person’s body and sexuality, not compensating someone in exchange for their skills or workforce.

Prostituted person: In this toolkit, this term is used instead of ‘sex worker’ to describe persons engaged in prostitution, to emphasise the systemic and exploitative nature of the phenomenon and due to the issues a majority of the partners find describing prostitution as ‘sex’ or as work’. The term underlines the fact that a prostituted person is in this situation *by* a system, *by* a pimp and the clients that exploit a

vulnerability. It's also noted that the term 'sex worker' isn't recognised or defined in international law.

Prostitution Survivors: This term is used by persons who have exited the prostitution system, putting emphasis on the different forms of violence they have endured and survived.

Prostitution system: Instead of talking of prostitution, the term prostitution system is sometimes used to describe more precisely the different aspects of the phenomenon. This term shifts the accent from the individual person in the situation of prostitution to the other actors involved, such as the "client" who imposes the sexual act via money and the pimp that profits from the prostitution of the person involved. This system enables and organises the selling and access of bodies and sexuality in the commercial market.



INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

This module on prostitution and trafficking is part of the Violence and Sexual Toolkit, developed collaboratively by the partner associations of the “Welens – educational practices through a gender lens” project funded by the Erasmus+ program. The aim is to give educators a more thorough understanding of the phenomena of prostitution and sex trafficking and how they are linked to the system of gender-based violence. The first section of the module shortly covers the different forms that prostitution can take, and the risks associated, from street prostitution to more recent phenomena such as sugar dating and escorting.

The risk factors of entering prostitution cover the weakening and triggering factors that are in play when a person enters the prostitution system. Finally, a short overview of the different legal frameworks concerning the regulation of prostitution worldwide is laid out, with more detailed examples from partner countries of the project.

The second part of the module concentrates on sex trafficking and gives educators a comprehensive overview on victim's and traffickers profile, the recruitment methods used to lure victims and information on global trends and statistics. A specific section is dedicated to taking action with information on helplines and associations working to help victims. We hope this module provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding on the root causes as well as the mechanisms of the prostitution system and sex trafficking globally as well as practical tools and information on how to support and help the victims and survivors.



PROSTITUTION
A SPECTRUM OF
CONTEXTS

2.1 Street or visible prostitution

Street or visible prostitution involves soliciting clients for sexual services in public places, i.e parks, street corners, alleyways, bus stops or any visible area. This type/form of prostitution is characterised by the prostituted person's public presence and solicitation, often accompanied by provocative attire. Key aspects include public solicitation in visible areas such as street corners or parks or walking along streets. The prostituted person offers their services either in outside or inside locations, including cars, abandoned buildings, secluded streets or rented apartments or rooms. This is the most known and visible example of prostitution, often leading to increased stigma and negative community impact. Street prostitutes face a very high risk of physical and sexual assaults from their clients and pimps. The persons most at risk of being recruited into street/visible prostitution are runaway youth, juvenile offenders and persons from low socio-economic backgrounds, along with persons with social or psychological problems. Societal impacts of street/visible prostitution are often controversial and multifaceted and raise concerns on several aspects. Individuals involved in prostitution often face significant social stigma, which can lead to isolation, mental health challenges, and difficulty reintegrating into society. Street prostitution can contribute to the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, especially in areas where access to healthcare and preventive measures is limited. It is also often associated with human trafficking, organised crime, and exploitation. Vulnerable individuals, including minors, may be coerced or forced into prostitution. In some areas, street prostitution can lead to tensions within communities, including concerns about safety and public order (Dedel & Scott, 2006).

2.2 Sexual slavery/debt-bonded prostitution

In the context of trafficking in women, debt bondage occurs when traffickers force women into prostitution to pay off an unlawful 'debt' purportedly incurred through their transportation, recruitment, or even their crude 'sale.' Different tactics are used to trap the victim in an endless cycle of debt, which

can never be repaid and may even be passed on to their families. The women are kept in a situation where it's made impossible for them to repay their debt to their traffickers. They can be charged for room and board, for transportation or payments may be withheld. Debt-bonded prostitution feeds on impoverished people's hopes for a better life, and victims are often lured by promises of lucrative work abroad. Minorities are also especially vulnerable, and in some countries like India and Nepal, the caste system disproportionately affects women and girls of the lower castes known as Dalits (Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, n.d.; The Advocates for Human Rights, 2018).

2.3 Prostitution in exchange for goods or services

The term "prostitution" is commonly associated with street prostitution, which is often visible and publicly recognized. However, this form of prostitution represents only about one-third of the global prevalence. Less visible forms of prostitution involve the exchange of sexual acts for goods (such as food, drugs, alcohol, or gifts) or services (including housing or payment of bills). This is often referred to as "survival sex" when individuals engage in such acts as a means of fulfilling basic needs due to extreme financial or social distress. These practices are widespread globally, with particular risk groups including homeless individuals, youth, displaced persons, and undocumented migrants. These vulnerable groups are frequently subjected to broader societal inequalities, which may manifest across various contexts, including familial, personal, and social dimensions. These inequalities can also be linked to traumatic experiences from childhood or early adulthood, such as abuse or neglect.

Perpetrators of such exploitation often present themselves as benevolent, helping individuals in need, particularly women and children. They may initially provide housing, food, and protection. Over time, once trust is established, they exploit the victim's dependency and vulnerabilities, coercing them into providing sexual favours. As the terms of the exchange

are rarely made explicit, victims may not even recognize themselves as being subjected to sexual exploitation.

Another term used to describe this phenomenon is "sex arrangement." This term refers to specific services exchanged for sex acts, such as access to exclusive events, private parties, hitchhiking, or even simple tasks like running errands. Victims can range from minors to adults, spanning all social classes, ethnicities, and nationalities, whether they are in precarious situations or not.

As previously mentioned, while victim profiles may vary, commonalities often emerge in the experiences of trauma, such as familial violence, abuse, abandonment, or lack of emotional support. These factors significantly contribute to the vulnerability of individuals involved in such exploitation.

Ultimately, prostitution can take multiple forms, some of which are glamourized in societal discourse. The broader prostitution system includes a variety of activities that intersect with the formal economy, such as tourism, hospitality, bars, and transportation services. Additionally, it can extend to the production of adult content (pornography, photographs...), online platforms, media, and advertising. These practices are often framed using euphemistic or glamourized terminology to avoid the negative connotations typically associated with prostitution, which is frequently seen as degrading and stigmatized. Despite the variations in practice, all these forms of prostitution share a common underlying element of exploitation, whether it involves escorting, call-girls, cam-girls, or "sugar dating."

2.4 Escorting or call-girls

The term escort girl or boy refers to a prostituted person with whom the "client" establishes contact via the internet or by phone, instead of in a public place. Escorts may be working independently but also for a pimp.

In many countries, street or visible prostitution has largely moved to the internet. In addition to specialised escorting websites, escorting services are

often proposed on classified ads sites and dating sites. Instagram has also become a common platform for proposing escort services. This type of “discreet” prostitution takes place mostly in apartments (either of the clients or the prostituted person’s), or in hotels, rented houses or apartments. The level of risk and violence to the prostituted person working as an escort is nevertheless just as high as for one in street prostitution.

2.5 Cam girls

Camgirling can be defined as being in vocal and visual contact with another person via webcam during a private show, and paying this person to undress, strike suggestive poses or perform touching or object penetration on themselves. The usual definition of prostitution explicitly implies physical contact, so camgirling doesn’t fit this traditional definition.

Common characteristics exist, nevertheless; a person buys another person's body and sex so that he or she can take possession of it at will, according to his or her own desires, in a relationship of domination. As far as the person carrying out these acts is concerned, while the physical and psychological risks and consequences are not on the same scale as in a “classic” form of prostitution, she is still forced to trade her body, to obey demands, to be confronted with fantasies and sexual demands, often in a dehumanising way. In addition, these acts are carried out via platforms managed by networks that keep people in a situation of slavery, taking a large share of the income of those who find themselves there, and can therefore be described as pimps (Fondation Scelles, 2020). Adult webcamming is a billion-dollar industry that employs thousands of people. Some of the large Internet platforms that stream the content produced by these studios are making massive profits. Women are incited to become camgirls with a dream of easy money earned working independently from home and celebrity. Competition on the sites is nevertheless fierce, and camgirls are often pushed to perform much more extreme acts than simple striptease, such as oral, vaginal and anal penetration with increasingly bigger objects (Amicale du Nid, 2024).

Specific webcam studios or “livecam mansions” exist especially in developing countries, where models have been subjected to horrific abuses and created child sexual abuse material. The abuse includes performing non-consensual sexual acts, pressure to stream for hours without breaks and physical and mental harm from working in dirty, cramped cubicles (Kenner, 2024).

2.6 Sugar dating

Sugar dating or sugaring refers to the practice of an older, wealthier person (usually a man) offering financial and material support to a younger “companion” in exchange for sexual acts. In most cases, sugar babies are young females, often students in economic distress, seeking a way to make ends meet. There exists a multitude of online sites proposing to connect a sugar baby with a sugar daddy, promising a romantic connection without ever mentioning sex or prostitution. The term “sugar dating” is used to euphemise the phenomenon, but there's always the idea of something in return – even if it's not necessarily money, it's still paid sex (Tarlé, 2018). When the sexual or financial interest of the “sugar daddy” or the attractiveness of the “sugar baby” disappears, the parties part ways. The power imbalance of the two parties is at the heart of the practice, making the younger person vulnerable to being pressured to perform sexual acts in exchange for financial benefits. Sugar dating platforms also lack serious age verification, allowing minors to be listed and abused, with cases being documented of men explicitly seeking underage minors via the platforms (Trauner, 2023).



RISK FACTORS OF ENTRERING INTO PROSTITUTION

3. RISK FACTORS OF ENTERING INTO PROSTITUTION

To effectively identify and assist victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking through prostitution, it is crucial to recognise the key risk and vulnerability factors. Common victim profiles often reflect broader societal inequalities: women in vulnerable situations, young girls, individuals living in poverty, those who have experienced childhood violence and abuse, individuals with limited access to education and job opportunities, and members of marginalised groups.

Besides, the spectrum of profiles is more heterogeneous than it initially appears. Indeed, traffickers can belong to networks and mafia, but they can also be young people below 25 years old who are very conscious regarding the use of social media and information technologies and people linked to other criminal activities such as drugs, arms trafficking and terrorism. Regarding the youngest but also older individuals, it is essential to notice that abusers can belong to close social circles of the victims, even when it comes to minors.

To illustrate the factors that increase risk and vulnerability, we can look at two types: **weakening factors** (a phenomenon that can alter judgement when decisions must be made) and **triggering factors** (which initiate the exploitation process, such as leading to prostitution). These factors can be examined through three main lenses: intrafamilial, personal, and social context.

When working with vulnerable individuals and victims, educators and social workers play a crucial role in recognising and addressing the risk factors that can lead to sexual exploitation through prostitution. It is vital to understand the weakening and triggering factors that heighten a person's vulnerability—factors that are often rooted in complex familial, personal, and societal dynamics.

These influences are frequently subtle, overlapping, and deeply interwoven. The following section offers an in-depth analysis of these elements, structured

within a framework of interfamilial, personal, and social contexts, each divided into weakening and triggering categories. This model serves as a critical tool for educators aiming to design effective prevention strategies and provide informed, targeted support to individuals at risk.

3.1 Weakening Factors

Weakening factors are **long-term influences** that gradually undermine a person's resilience, sense of self-worth, and ability to make autonomous, informed choices. These vulnerabilities often begin in early childhood and are shaped by systemic dysfunctions and social norms.

Interfamilial context within the family environment, where individuals are supposed to feel safe, valued, and supported. However, in many cases, the family can become a source of emotional and psychological weakening.

- **A weak self-esteem and devaluation:** Repeated criticism, neglect, or lack of affirmation within the family can lead to a persistent sense of worthlessness. Individuals who grow up feeling unvalued are more likely to seek validation in dangerous or exploitative relationships.
- **Trivialisation and internalisation of violence:** When violence is normalised within the household, either through observation or experience, individuals may internalise abusive dynamics as acceptable.
- **Body self-consciousness:** Negative body image instilled by family members or reinforced by comparisons among siblings can lead to vulnerabilities, particularly in a hypersexualised culture.
- **Gender biases:** Gendered expectations and discriminatory attitudes can restrict a person's sense of autonomy and identity, especially for girls and LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Struggling with assuming one's sexual orientation:** In families where sexuality is stigmatised or ridiculed, individuals may

experience inner conflict, isolation, and a lack of belonging.

Personal context on an individual level, the accumulation of trauma, neglect, and identity struggles, weakens a person's ability to resist manipulation and coercion.

- **Violence and abuse:** Physical, emotional, or psychological abuse erodes trust and self-worth, leaving individuals more vulnerable to grooming and exploitation.
- **Sexual assault, rape, incest, and incestuous environments:** These traumatic experiences, particularly when unaddressed, can normalise sexual exploitation and break down personal boundaries.
- **Porn exposure during childhood:** Early exposure to pornography can distort perceptions of sexuality, intimacy, and consent, sometimes desensitising individuals to sexual objectification.
- **Parental abandonment and lack of affection:** Emotional neglect and absence of supportive parenting may lead to attachment issues and the search for affection in risky contexts.
- **Parental injunctions:** Authoritarian or contradictory parental messaging can generate confusion and dependency, weakening decision-making capabilities.
- **Intergenerational trauma:** Families marked by unresolved traumas (e.g., war, poverty, abuse) often pass these emotional legacies down, compounding vulnerabilities.

Social context – society plays a key role in shaping perceptions, behaviours, and opportunities. The broader cultural and economic environment can reinforce the personal and familial vulnerabilities.

- **Gender stereotypes:** Societal expectations around femininity, masculinity, and gender roles can be deeply limiting and discriminatory.
- **Prostitution trivialisation:** When prostitution is portrayed as glamorous, empowering, or financially beneficial in media and public discourse, the reality of exploitation is obscured.
- **Hypersexualisation and porn:** Popular culture often normalises hypersexualised behaviours, influencing individuals to view sexual availability as a measure of worth.
- **Precarity:** Economic instability can foster a sense of urgency and desperation, making prostitution seem like a viable option.
- **Social isolation and wandering:** Disconnected individuals are more likely to fall into dangerous environments due to the absence of positive social networks.

Peer pressure and addictions: The influence of peers and addictive behaviours (e.g., drugs, alcohol) can cloud judgment and lead to risky choices.

3.2 Triggering Factors

These factors are **immediate catalysts** that push already vulnerable individuals toward high-risk situations. These factors often result from or compound the weakening influences described above.

Interfamilial Context: The breakdown of family structures and the emergence of acute family dysfunction often serve as the immediate triggers.

- **Emotional shock:** Events such as the sudden loss of a loved one or betrayal can destabilise individuals emotionally.
- **Family breakdown:** Divorce, domestic violence, or the incarceration of a parent can dismantle a person's sense of security.
- **Fleeing from family and fugue:** Individuals who run away often do so in desperation, lacking resources or safe alternatives.
- **Foster placement:** While sometimes necessary, foster care can create a sense of impermanence, rejection, or lack of belonging.
- **Domestic control (abuser, trafficker):** Some individuals remain in the home under the control of a manipulative or abusive adult who introduces or forces them into sexual exploitation in prostitution.
- **Social disaffiliation:** Rejection by family or cultural community for identity-related reasons (e.g., LGBTQ+ status) can lead to marginalisation.
- **Social reputation:** A tarnished or misrepresented social image (e.g., being labelled as promiscuous) may push individuals to embrace the label out of defiance or resignation.

Personal Context: on a personal level, individuals experiencing acute hardship or failure may turn to sexual exploitation in prostitution as a perceived solution.

- **Precarity:** The lack of basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing can lead individuals to exchange sex for survival.
- **Social isolation:** Without emotional support, individuals may be drawn to those who offer attention or material goods in exchange for sexual favours.

- **Academic failure:** Dropping out of school or underperforming can diminish self-esteem and limit future prospects.
- **Addict behaviours:** Substance abuse impairs judgment and increases dependency on exploitative networks.
- **Housing struggle:** Homelessness or unstable housing is one of the most direct pathways to prostitution for survival.
- **Lack of perspectives:** When individuals see no future or escape from their circumstances, they are more easily manipulated or coerced.

Social Context: Finally, specific social dynamics can act as the spark that propels at-risk individuals into sexual exploitation in prostitution.

- **Meeting risky groups:** Association with individuals or groups involved in criminal or exploitative activities increases exposure to danger.
- **Internet/social media:** Online platforms can be grooming grounds for traffickers who exploit individuals' desire for connection, validation, or opportunity.
- **Client encounter:** For some, the first experience in sexual exploitation in prostitution occurs through a direct encounter with a paying client, often orchestrated by a third party.
- **Being trapped and sold to a sex trafficking network:** Vulnerable individuals may be deceived, manipulated, or physically coerced into networks from which escape is extremely difficult.

3.3 Miscellaneous factors

Additionally, several other important factors need to be considered. A prior history of abuse can increase vulnerability, as victims may not recognise warning signs or may have been conditioned to normalise abusive behaviour. Trauma

from bullying, neglect, or sexual abuse can leave victims with unmet emotional needs that predators can exploit. About 64% of adults in the United States reported they had experienced at least one type of ACE (adverse childhood experience) before age 18. Nearly one in six (17.3%) adults reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs. Psychologically, victims may experience dissociation, creating a mental divide between the body and mind as a defence mechanism against violence. This can lead to a reduced awareness of warning signals, increased tolerance to pain, suicidal thoughts, and other severe impacts. While dissociated, traumatic memories can overwhelm the victim in fragmented ways, without triggering emotional responses or stress.

For educators and workers surrounding victims, the importance of early identification and intervention cannot be overstated. Recognising the warning signs and understanding the complex interplay between weakening and triggering factors is crucial to protecting individuals at risk of sexual exploitation in prostitution. Educational institutions must collaborate with social workers, psychologists, and community organisations to create safe environments, offer psycho-social support, and provide alternative pathways. By fostering resilience, self-esteem, and connection, educators can serve as a critical line of defence against the exploitation of individuals through sexual exploitation in prostitution.

Preventive education, inclusive environments, and trauma-informed teaching are vital tools in this mission. Educators must be trained not only to recognise signs of distress but also to build trusting relationships and implement programs that empower individuals to make informed, autonomous decisions about their bodies, relationships, and futures.



OVERVIEW OF MAIN LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

4. OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

4.1 Criminalisation/prohibition

Criminalisation refers to the legal approach where both selling and buying sexual services are illegal. This model aims to eliminate prostitution by penalising all parties involved. The rationale behind criminalisation is to deter individuals from engaging in prostitution and to reduce associated social harms, such as human trafficking and exploitation. Examples of countries with this approach include the United States (except the State of Nevada), Russia, and most Middle Eastern countries.

In the United States, the legal framework involves strict penalties for both prostituted persons and clients. Law enforcement agencies conduct regular raids and sting operations to apprehend individuals involved in prostitution. Critics argue that criminalisation drives the industry underground, making it more dangerous for prostituted persons and harder to regulate (Vuolajärvi, 2022).

In Russia, prostitution is also illegal, and both prostituted persons and clients can face fines and imprisonment. The government views prostitution as a social ill that needs to be eradicated. However, it has been noted that the lack of legal protection for prostituted persons often leads to exploitation and abuse (Alikhadzhiev, 2018).

In many Middle Eastern countries, prostitution is strictly prohibited due to cultural and religious beliefs. The penalties for engaging in prostitution can be severe, including imprisonment and corporal punishment. The criminalisation approach in these countries aims to uphold moral values and prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

4.2 Partial Criminalisation/Abolition

Partial criminalisation, also known as the "Nordic model," criminalises either the selling or buying of sexual services but not both. For example, in Sweden,

Norway, and Iceland, buying sex is illegal, but selling sex is not. This model aims to reduce demand and protect prostituted persons from prosecution.

In Sweden, the purchase of sexual services has been illegal since 1999. This legislation, known as the "Sex Purchase Act", criminalises the buying of sex while decriminalising the selling of sex. The aim is to reduce demand and protect prostituted persons from exploitation. Hence, it targets clients rather than prostituted persons, with the goal of reducing demand for paid sex. The Swedish government provides support services for prostituted persons, including access to healthcare, social services, and job training programs. The Nordic model has been praised for its focus on reducing exploitation and trafficking, but critics argue that it can still push prostitution underground (Jakobsson, 2013).

Norway and Iceland have adopted similar approaches, criminalised the purchase of sex while decriminalising the sale. These countries also provide support services for prostituted persons and focus on reducing demand. The Nordic model has influenced other countries, such as Canada and France, to adopt similar legislation.

4.3 Legalisation with Regulation

In countries like Germany, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, prostitution is legal and regulated. Prostituted persons must adhere to specific regulations, such as health checks and licensing, to ensure safety and reduce exploitation.

Germany has one of the most structured and regulated sex work industries in the world. Prostitution has been legal since 2002 and is subject to taxation and labour laws. Brothels operate openly, and prostituted persons have access to health benefits, contracts, and legal protections under the Prostitutes Protection Act of 2016. This legislation requires prostituted persons to register with authorities and ensures brothels meet health and safety standards (BMFSFJ, 2017).

The Netherlands is famous for its tolerant stance on sex work, particularly in cities like Amsterdam, where regulated red-light districts are a well-known feature. Since 2000, brothels and organised sex work have been legal, provided all parties are consenting adults. The government enforces strict regulations on brothel operations, health standards, and the rights of prostituted persons to ensure a safe and controlled environment.

Critics point that especially Germany, and the Netherlands have become destinations for sex trafficking, particularly from Eastern Europe and Africa. Legalization has, paradoxically, made it easier to mask coercion and trafficking behind a legal facade. Many sex workers also avoid registering or working in legal brothels due to stigma, taxation, bureaucratic burden etc, which leaves them vulnerable and excluded from labour protections.

4.4 Decriminalisation

In some places, such as New Zealand and parts of Australia, prostitution is decriminalised. This means that sex work is treated like any other profession, with minimal government intervention and regulation.

The Prostitution Reform Act of 2003^[5] decriminalised prostitution in New Zealand, ensuring that prostituted persons have the same rights and protections as workers in other industries. The law also mandates health and safety regulations for brothels, allowing registered prostituted persons to access employment benefits and workplace protections. It further decriminalised all other aspects of sex work, including street solicitation, aiming to improve the safety and rights of prostituted persons by removing criminal penalties and providing access to health and social services. Prostituted persons in New Zealand have reported increased job satisfaction and safety since the implementation of the law (Ministry of Justice, 2003).

In Australia, the legal status of prostitution varies by state and territory. In New South Wales, sex work is almost entirely decriminalised. In Victoria, Queensland, and Tasmania, prostitution is legal and regulated, meaning brothels and independent workers must follow specific laws. However, in Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory, independent

sex work is allowed, but brothels and third-party management (pimping) remain illegal.

Decriminalisation advocates argue that treating prostitution like any other profession reduces stigma, improves safety, and allows prostituted persons to access legal protections and social services. Critics, however, express concerns about the potential for increased exploitation and trafficking in a decriminalised environment. Sex work doesn't abide to conventional job logics and critics point out that it's more difficult to regulate, for example concerning working conditions and hours in private homes and the power imbalance between pimps and prostitutes.

In conclusion, the legal frameworks for prostitution vary widely across the globe, reflecting different cultural, social, and political attitudes. Each

Issue/Injustice	Abolitionist Model	Full Decriminalisation/ Legalisation
Demand for prostitution	Reduced	Increased
Sex trafficking	Reduced	Increased
Decriminalise/ do not arrest those bought for sex	✓	✗
Criminalise buyers, pimps and brothel owners	✓	✗
Decriminalise buyers, pimps and brothel owners	✗	✓
Dedicated support for survivors	✓	✗
Reports of incidents of violence against prostituted people	N/A	Increased
Societal attitudes	Increased belief in gender equality	N/A

approach has its own set of arguments, and the ongoing debate continues to shape the future of prostitution regulation.

4.5 Impact and analysis: examples around the world

Guyana

Prostitution in Guyana is a complex issue that has been governed by a prohibition approach for many years. The method, which criminalises all aspects of prostitution, aims to reduce the incidence of prostitution by imposing legal penalties on those who engage in it. The prohibition approach is rooted in both moral and health concerns, seeking to curb the spread of sexually transmitted infections and to address social issues related to prostitution.

Guyana's legal stance on prostitution has evolved over the years, influenced by colonial history and changing societal norms. Laws prohibiting prostitution were established during British colonial rule, reflecting Victorian-era attitudes towards sexuality. These laws have persisted post-independence, though enforcement and public perception have fluctuated. Under the Consolidated Laws of Guyana, prostitution is illegal. Both soliciting and engaging in prostitution are criminal offences, punishable by fines and imprisonment. Brothel-keeping and pimping are also prohibited, with severe penalties for those found guilty.

The prohibition approach has faced criticism for its effectiveness and ethical implications. Opponents argue that criminalising prostitution drives it underground, making prostituted persons more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They contend that this approach fails to address the root causes of prostitution, such as poverty and lack of education. Critics also highlight the health risks associated with the prohibition approach. By pushing prostitution into the shadows, it becomes harder to implement health initiatives, such as regular medical check-ups and the distribution of condoms. This increases the risk of sexually transmitted infections and other health issues among prostituted persons. There are significant human rights concerns, as prostituted persons often face discrimination and

stigmatisation, both legally and socially. Arrests and legal penalties can exacerbate their marginalisation, making it difficult for them to seek help or improve their circumstances. Some suggest that decriminalisation or legalisation might provide better outcomes. These approaches can offer regulation and support, helping to protect prostituted persons' rights and improve their health and safety. Models from other countries show that such policies can reduce exploitation and acts of violence, while also providing economic benefits. The prohibition approach to prostitution in Guyana has been the subject of much debate. While it aims to reduce the incidence of prostitution and associated issues, it has faced criticism for its effectiveness and impact on the rights and health of prostituted persons.

Greece

In Greece, prostitution operates under a legal and regulated framework designed to oversee and control the practice while safeguarding public health and addressing exploitation. Prostitution in Greece is legal under specific conditions laid out by law. It is permitted for individuals over the age of 18 who are registered with the authorities. Sex work can only occur in licensed venues such as brothels, and street prostitution is generally prohibited, although enforcement varies.

Prostituted persons are required to register with municipal authorities and obtain a work permit, which is renewable. Regular health checks are mandatory for prostituted persons to ensure public health safety. These checks typically occur every two weeks and include screenings for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A medical certificate confirming these checkups is required for the work permit to remain valid. Condoms are encouraged or required to minimise health risks. Brothels must acquire official licenses to operate. These establishments are subject to zoning laws, which stipulate their location, such as maintaining a minimum distance from schools, churches, and other sensitive areas. The manager or operator of a brothel must also adhere to legal guidelines, and any involvement in exploiting or trafficking individuals is strictly prohibited. While prostitution is legal, activities like pimping, trafficking, and unlicensed prostitution are criminal offences. The legal framework aims to protect the autonomy of

prostituted persons and provide safeguards against exploitation, but challenges remain in enforcing these protections effectively.

Although regulated, prostitution in Greece is a socially complex issue. The stigma around sex work persists, which can hinder prostituted persons' access to legal protections and social support. NGOs and advocacy groups often call for improvements in the law to better address issues like human trafficking and provide more robust support systems for prostituted persons.

Italy

The legal issue of prostitution in Italy is complex and reflects a series of social and cultural ambivalences (Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana, 1958). Prostitution itself is not considered a crime, but the activities connected to it are criminalised; for this reason, the Italian approach is defined as “partially prohibitionist.” Specifically, in order to be considered legal, sexual activity must be carried out voluntarily and must involve adults who are mentally capable and consenting. The main law regulating prostitution is the Merlin Law (Law No. 75/1958), which imposes penalties for incitement to and facilitation of prostitution, exploitation, and trafficking of women. The same law also abolished brothels, previously known as “houses of prostitution.” It imposes prison sentences of two to six years for anyone who “recruits a person for the purpose of engaging them in prostitution or facilitates prostitution for that purpose,” as well as for anyone who “in any way profits from or promotes another person’s prostitution.” It also targets anyone who manages “a house of prostitution,” rents out property “for the purpose of operating a house of prostitution,” or “habitually tolerates the presence of one or more people engaging in prostitution” within their “public premises.”

The law, promoted by socialist senator Lina Merlin, aimed to liberate women from state control and from forms of exploitation, in line with post-war values related to dignity and human rights (Bellassai, 2018). However, the outcome was not as hoped. A sort of legal grey area has developed, in which women remain in prostitution, but authorities cannot intervene because prostitution itself is not a crime if it is “carried out voluntarily.” Fortunately, some

municipalities—such as Rimini, Asti, and Palermo—have started to adopt local regulations through specific ordinances that aim to find clients, increasingly moving toward the recognition of prostitution for what it is: exploitation. Regarding legal issues, feminists in general have supported the Merlin law, which banned brothels and regulation; and stood for decriminalisation, with the exception of exploitation by third parties (pimps) (“Prostitution in Italy,” n.d.).

In contrast, however, the national government has moved in the opposite direction. Starting from April 1, 2025, it introduced a professional activity code to identify occupations “connected to social life,” including services such as escorts, dating and matchmaking agencies, as well as the “provision or organisation of sexual services,” the “organisation of prostitution events or management of prostitution venues,” and finally the “organisation of meetups and other speed networking activities.” This represents an expansion of the existing classification code, which previously included only escort services, dating agencies, and matchmaking agencies, and has now been significantly broadened (Pons, 2025).

Argentina

Whether a regulatory, prohibitionist, or abolitionist legal framework for prostitution is adopted, we ask ourselves: What happens in the reality of vulnerable people who are recruited by the prostitution system? The case of Argentina's abolitionist legal framework shows us some particularities.

Argentina has adopted an abolitionist legal framework (Ley Sobre Trata De Personas, 1913). It adopted laws and international treaties prohibiting the licensing of places where prostitution is practised and establishes the State's obligation to prevent human trafficking through public policies and social assistance to victims of this terrible organised crime. The following are crimes punishable by law²: the promotion or facilitation of prostitution, the economic exploitation of the prostitution of others, and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Prostitution is neither prohibited nor punished, but the legal framework establishes that the State must prevent it

from occurring by generating opportunities for vulnerable people to access housing, healthcare, and work. However, despite having an abolitionist legal framework, the State does not have public policies that effectively discourage prostitution and warn vulnerable people about the potential risk of becoming victims of sex trafficking. Girls and young women from vulnerable backgrounds are sexually exploited. However, when the circumstances of sexual exploitation cease, the State provides neither social nor economic assistance, leaving the victim unable to build a life free from sexual exploitation resulting from prostitution or human trafficking. Therefore, an abolitionist legal framework alone is not enough.

It is essential to consider that states and governments must create real public policies and continue over time to eradicate organised crime and provide real-life opportunities for the vulnerable population who are victims.

Estonia

Estonia adopts a partial criminalisation model. The exchange of sex for money between consenting adults is legal, but third-party involvement—such as pimping, brothel management, or recruitment—is criminalised (Sexual Rights Database, n.d.). Selling and buying sex between adults is legal in Estonia if done independently and in private settings. However, buying sex from someone who has been trafficked is a criminal offence punishable by up to five years of imprisonment. Following independence, Estonia debated full criminalisation or legalisation but ultimately opted for a middle-ground approach that avoids both.

- **Pimping and brothel operations:** Facilitating or profiting from someone else's prostitution is illegal.
- **Procuring and trafficking:** Coercing or recruiting individuals into prostitution is punishable by up to 5 years in prison.
- **Aiding prostitution:** Knowingly assisting prostitution, including advertising sexual services or renting premises for sex work, is illegal.

- **Involving minors:** Engaging or encouraging underage individuals in prostitution is strictly criminalised.

Due to Finland's more restrictive laws on prostitution, many Finnish clients travel to Estonia to purchase sexual services. This dynamic has contributed to Estonia becoming a sex tourism destination, particularly for Finnish nationals (Aral, 2006) . Estonia is identified as a **source, transit, and destination country** for trafficking. While trafficking for sexual exploitation was the primary form among the formally identified victims (27 cases between 2018 and 2021), presumed victims mostly experienced labour exploitation (264 cases, primarily men from Ukraine and Poland) (GRETA Publishes Its Second Report on Estonia, 2023).

The abolition approach/Nordic model in Sweden, France and Canada

The Nordic Model, also known as the abolitionist or equality model, criminalises the purchase of sexual services while decriminalising the sale. This approach aims to reduce demand for prostitution, protect individuals involved in it, and combat trafficking and exploitation. Rooted in feminist and human rights frameworks, it views prostitution as a manifestation of gender inequality and seeks systemic change rather than penalising prostituted persons.

Sweden pioneered the Nordic Model with the 1999 Sex Purchase Act, which criminalises the purchase of sex but not its sale. This legislation positions prostitution as a form of violence against women and is part of Sweden's broader gender equality agenda. Support services for individuals in prostitution include housing, healthcare, counselling, and exit programmes. Authorities report a reduction in street prostitution and a shift in public

attitudes. However, critics argue that the law pushes prostitution underground, increasing isolation and risk for prostituted persons.

In 2016, France adopted a similar model by criminalising the purchase of sexual services while offering support to individuals exiting prostitution. The law includes financial assistance, access to vocational training, and residency permits for undocumented individuals in prostitution. Clients face fines and mandatory awareness training. The reform aimed to reduce demand, discourage exploitation, and provide real alternatives for individuals in prostitution. Despite its progressive intent, implementation has been uneven. Reports suggest that prostituted persons continue to face policing and marginalisation, particularly migrant workers and those without stable housing.

Canada's legal framework was restructured in 2014 with the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA), which reflects Nordic Model principles. The purchase of sex, profiting from the sale of sexual services, and third-party advertisement are illegal, while the act of selling sex itself is not criminalised. PCEPA's stated goal is to reduce demand, protect vulnerable individuals, and provide exit strategies. Yet, the law has been contested by prostituted persons' rights groups, who argue that it increases risks and reinforces stigma. Enforcement practices, particularly targeting public spaces, have continued to impact prostituted persons negatively.

The abolitionist model frames prostitution as inherently exploitative and seeks to shift responsibility onto buyers rather than individuals selling sex. Across all three countries, the model includes investment in support services for exiting prostitution. Nevertheless, it remains controversial. Critics argue that while prostituted persons are technically decriminalised, the criminalisation of clients, coupled with heavy surveillance and police involvement, creates unsafe working conditions. Furthermore, marginalised groups—especially migrants, trans people, and racialised communities—often experience disproportionate harm.

The abolitionist model continues to influence global debates on prostitution legislation. While praised for addressing structural inequality and targeting

demand, its real-world outcomes highlight the complexity of implementing policies that aim to balance protection with autonomy and rights.



UNDERSTANDING SEX TRAFFICKING

5. UNDERSTANDING SEX TRAFFICKING

Sex trafficking is defined as human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The perpetrators are called sex traffickers or pimps and manipulate victims to engage in different forms of commercial sex with paying clients. It often involves exploitation through threats, manipulation, or abuse of power. Sex trafficking is closely linked to prostitution, as traffickers commonly force victims into prostitution to generate profit. While not all prostitution involves trafficking, many trafficking victims are found within the sex trade, where they may appear to be participating voluntarily but are actually under control. What appears to be voluntary sex work can hide exploitation and abuse. The UNODC's 2022 data shows that the detection of trafficking for sexual exploitation equals that of trafficking for forced labour, at just under 40 % each. Sexual trafficking is driven by 'push' factors (poverty, unemployment, lack of education, gender inequality, conflict) and 'pull' factors (false promises of better conditions, demand for cheap labour and sexual services). Trafficking is linked to economic vulnerability.

5.1 Victims' and Survivors' Profile

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by sex trafficking, with many victims being young and vulnerable. In many cases, girls are particularly targeted for exploitation due to societal and gender inequalities.

The majority of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are female (64 % women and 27 % girls).

Although less discussed, men and boys also fall victim to sex trafficking, particularly in certain regions or through organised crime rings.

Even though the share of male victims in 2019–2020 rose compared to 2017–2018 (from 23 % to 33 %), women and girls account for 87 % of the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. Children represent one-quarter of the victims (23 %), a large majority of whom have EU citizenship (85 %) and are female (75 %) (European Parliament, 2023).

Concerning the European Union, 61% of victims are EU citizens, often from Eastern European countries (e.g., Romania, Bulgaria, Poland) (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, 2010). For non-EU victims, key source countries include Nigeria, Albania, and China, with diaspora communities often facilitating exploitation. Russian-speaking women, stateless individuals, and those from unstable socioeconomic backgrounds are disproportionately targeted. Victims often come from backgrounds of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Traffickers exploit these prior traumas, offering false promises of safety and stability. Individuals from impoverished backgrounds or those facing economic hardships are especially targeted. Traffickers exploit these vulnerabilities by offering false promises of a better life. Vulnerable individuals, particularly runaways or homeless youth, are prime targets. Traffickers prey on their desperation and need for food, shelter, and safety. Immigrant populations, particularly those who are undocumented or lack access to basic services, are particularly vulnerable to trafficking due to their precarious status. Intersectional factors such as being part of an ethnic minority, LGBTQIA+, or having a disability can further heighten vulnerability to trafficking due to compounded discrimination and reduced access to protection mechanisms. Victims may also be recruited knowingly to provide sexual services but still end up in exploitative situations. Sometimes victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation may be forced to recruit others, making their situation more complex. They're often not recognised due to limited understanding by authorities, stereotypes about "ideal" victims, and victims not seeing themselves as such. These issues make support and identification harder.

5.2 Traffickers' Profile

While traffickers are often male (over 75% of traffickers are men), women are also involved in the recruitment and exploitation of victims. Data show that women comprise 23 % of suspected and 22 % of convicted traffickers. Women may act as "recruiters" or "madams" in managing the victims in sex trafficking rings. Traffickers often share the same nationality as their

victims. Traffickers can be of any age, from young adults to older individuals, though criminal organisations involved in sex trafficking may have a hierarchy of older, experienced traffickers overseeing younger recruits. The primary motivation for traffickers is profit. Traffickers exploit vulnerable people for monetary gain, profiting from their sexual exploitation. The industry is highly lucrative, with traffickers taking a substantial portion of the money earned by victims.

It is estimated that profits made from forced sexual exploitation were about US\$33.9 billion, with profits made from forced sexual exploitation as a result of trafficking estimated to be about US\$27.8 billion. Almost half of these profits were made in industrialised economies alone (US\$13.3 billion) (International Labour Organization, 2013)

5.3 Recruitment methods and perpetrator strategy

Traffickers use coercion, force, and deception, promising jobs, housing, and high salaries. Common tactics include offering opportunities for modelling, dancing, or studying abroad. The "lover-boy" method involves feigning romantic interest to gain trust and later coercing victims into sexual exploitation. Victims are often recruited by nationals of their own country, sometimes with the involvement of acquaintances or family members. Traffickers confiscate passports and use psychological manipulation to maintain control.

- **False Promises:** Traffickers often use deceptive tactics, promising victims opportunities for work, education, or a better life, which they later exploit.
- **Manipulation and Emotional Abuse:** Traffickers often build emotional connections with victims, pretending to care for them before isolating them from their support systems. Over time, this manipulation ensures the victim's dependence.

- **Threats and Violence:** Victims are often threatened with harm to themselves or their loved ones. Physical violence and emotional abuse are used as tools of control to prevent escape.
- **Control and Power:** Traffickers may be driven by a need to control and dominate others. This can be tied to personal issues of power and control or a way of asserting dominance over vulnerable individuals.
- **Use of Intermediaries:** Traffickers may also use intermediaries—sometimes former victims or trusted community members—to recruit others, making the offer appear more legitimate and lowering suspicion.
- **Recruitment through Institutions:** Seemingly legitimate institutions, such as recruitment agencies, language schools, or marriage bureaus, are also used to lure victims under the guise of legitimate opportunities.
- **Organised Crime Syndicates:** Some traffickers are part of larger, organised criminal syndicates involved in multiple illicit activities, including drug trafficking, arms dealing, and human trafficking. These syndicates use sex trafficking as one of the many ways to generate income.

The internet plays a central role in modern trafficking, allowing traffickers to recruit, advertise, and control victims. Fake job ads and social media are common recruitment tools. Digital tools like GPS tracking and blackmail help traffickers maintain control remotely. The internet enables traffickers to operate across borders, increasing anonymity and making detection harder while also facilitating mass exploitation for profit. Many traffickers work within international networks that operate across borders. These networks often involve corrupt officials, transport workers, and other individuals who help facilitate victims' movement. In addition to international trafficking, local networks in some countries may operate on a smaller scale, with traffickers recruiting victims and selling their services in nearby cities or communities.

5.4 Global trends, statistics and routes

According to the *UNODC 2024 Report*, approximately 38% of all identified trafficking victims worldwide were trafficked for sexual exploitation. This remains the most common form of trafficking globally, particularly for women and girls. 77% of victims of sexual exploitation are women, and of this group, 24% are underage girls, often recruited through deception, violence, or coercion. Men are a minority, and boys are likely underrepresented in data due to underreporting and misidentification.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) states that sexual exploitation of trafficking victims generates an estimated \$99 billion annually in profits, making it the most profitable form of human trafficking.

Sexual exploitation through human trafficking is a transnational crime involving a complex network of origin, transit, and destination countries. These roles often overlap, shaped by migration routes, socioeconomic conditions, political instability, and demand for sexual services. It is possible to find annually updated data on the website of the U.S. Department State. The following information comes from the 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report.

Women and girls are most frequently trafficked from regions marked by poverty, conflict, or weak law enforcement. Nigeria has emerged as one of the most prominent origin countries, with many women trafficked to Europe, particularly to Italy and France, often under false promises of work or education. Similarly, Venezuela's humanitarian crisis has driven a surge in trafficking of women and girls throughout Latin America and into Europe. Within Europe, Romania and Bulgaria are consistent origin countries for victims trafficked across the continent, especially into Western European sex markets. The war in Ukraine has exacerbated an already critical situation, with a notable rise in women and children being trafficked for sexual purposes since 2022. In Asia, countries like Bangladesh, India, and the Philippines continue to be key sources, particularly for trafficking into the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Many victims are not taken directly to their final destination but instead pass through one or more transit countries. Libya, for example, remains a central hub for the trafficking of women and girls from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe, particularly along the Central Mediterranean route. Turkey serves as a critical gateway between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, and is frequently used by traffickers to move victims toward Western European destinations. In the Americas, Mexico and Central American countries like Honduras and Guatemala are common transit points for victims who are ultimately exploited in the United States. Similarly, Balkan countries such as Serbia and Albania act as corridors for the trafficking of individuals from Eastern Europe into Western Europe.

Demand for sexual services, coupled with the existence of organised trafficking networks, positions countries like Germany, France, Italy, and Spain among the top destinations for trafficking victims in Europe. These countries have large, often unregulated sex industries, and remain attractive to traffickers due to high profit potential and inconsistent legal responses. Outside of Europe, the United States is one of the most significant destination countries, with both foreign and domestic victims — many of whom are minors — trafficked for sexual exploitation in cities, online platforms, and illicit massage businesses. In the Gulf States, including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, women from South and Southeast Asia are often trafficked under the guise of domestic work, only to be subjected to sexual exploitation. In Asia, countries like Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines are not only destinations for sex trafficking but also epicentres of child sexual exploitation and sex tourism.

5.5 International legal frameworks for sex trafficking

Sex trafficking is a severe violation of human rights, and various international and national legal frameworks have been established to combat it.

United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) (UNODC, 2000)

Adopted in 2000, this protocol is part of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. It provides a comprehensive definition of trafficking and mandates the criminalisation of trafficking in national legislation. It emphasises victim protection, preventive measures, and international cooperation.

Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (Council of Europe, 2005)

This convention aims to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute traffickers. It highlights a human rights-based approach and provides measures for victim assistance and protection.

SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (SAARC, 2002)

This regional convention encourages South Asian countries to collaborate and harmonise legal procedures to combat trafficking.

International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions (ILO, 1930)

The ILO's Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour (1930) and its updated protocol (2014) highlight the need for member states to take effective measures to eliminate forced labour and protect victims.

EU Anti-Trafficking Directive (2011/36/EU) (European Parliament, 2011)

The EU Anti-Trafficking Directive is the fundamental legislative act addressing trafficking in human beings within the EU. It establishes minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions, as well as common provisions to strengthen victim protection, assistance, and support. The directive emphasises a victim-centred, gender-specific, and child-sensitive approach anchored in human rights.

Revision of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive (European Parliament, 2024)

In June 2024, the EU adopted a revised Anti-Trafficking Directive, which includes new rules to reinforce the fight against trafficking. These rules provide stronger tools for law enforcement and judicial authorities to investigate and prosecute new forms of exploitation, including those that take place online. The revision also includes the formal establishment of National Referral Mechanisms and the criminalisation of the knowing use of services obtained from [victims of trafficking](#).

***EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025)
(European Parliament, 2021)***

The EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings provides a comprehensive response to the crime, focusing on prevention, protection, and prosecution. The strategy aims to prevent trafficking, protect and empower victims, and bring traffickers to justice. It also emphasises the importance of cooperation among EU Member States and with international partners.



TAKING ACTION

6. TAKING ACTION

6.1 How to recognise sex trafficking

Sex trafficking is often hidden behind layers of manipulation and coercion, making it difficult to identify. However, there are several warning signs and red flags that may indicate someone is being trafficked. These indicators can appear in the victim's behaviour, physical appearance, and lifestyle, as well as in their interactions with others. Victims of sex trafficking often display certain behaviours that suggest they are under duress or control.

- **Fearfulness or anxiety:** Victims may appear fearful or anxious when interacting with others, particularly when the conversation touches on their personal lives or when they are separated from their trafficker.
- **Avoidance of eye contact:** Many trafficked individuals may avoid eye contact as they have been conditioned to be submissive and obedient.
- **Depression or emotional detachment:** Trafficked people often exhibit signs of emotional numbness, depression, or withdrawal due to the traumatic experiences they have endured.
- **Inconsistent stories:** Victims may provide inconsistent or implausible stories about their personal history, or they may have scripted answers that suggest someone else is controlling their narrative.
- **Lack of control:** Trafficked individuals may not be allowed to make decisions independently, particularly when it comes to their whereabouts, money, or interactions.

In addition to behavioural cues, **physical signs** can help identify someone who may be a victim of sex trafficking:

- **Signs of abuse:** Victims often bear visible signs of physical abuse, including bruises, burns, cuts, or scars. They may also exhibit signs of poor hygiene or malnutrition.
- **Unusual tattoos or branding:** Some trafficked individuals are branded or tattooed by their traffickers as a form of ownership or control.
- **Lack of identification documents:** Many trafficking victims do not possess their identification documents, which are often taken away by their traffickers to prevent escape.
- **Inappropriately dressed for the environment:** Victims may be seen in clothing that is sexually provocative or inappropriate for the weather or location.

Social Indicators include isolation from family, friends, and support systems.

- **Isolation from others:** Victims may not be allowed to interact with others without the presence of their trafficker, which can be a form of control and manipulation.
- **Lack of social or family ties:** Victims may have no contact with their family or friends, and their social circle may be limited to other individuals who are also involved in the trafficking network.
- **Controlling relationships:** Victims may have a “pimp” or “manager” who exercises complete control over their lives, dictating their activities, appearance, and income.
- **Displays of wealth:** A sudden increase in wealth, such as bragging about having or making large sums of money, can indicate involvement in exploitative situations.
- **Changes in appearance:** Wearing less appropriate clothing than before or acquiring expensive new clothes, accessories, or shoes may suggest outside influence or financial support from an unknown source.

- **New social circles:** Forming relationships with an older boyfriend or making new friends with a significantly different lifestyle can be a sign of vulnerability to manipulation or coercion.
- **Party involvement:** Talking about wild parties frequently or inviting others to attend parties may indicate exposure to high-risk environments that facilitate exploitation.

Some **industries** are more susceptible to sex trafficking, and workers in these environments may be at heightened risk:

- **Adult entertainment venues:** Victims may be found in strip clubs, illicit massage parlours, go-go bars, or other adult entertainment venues where individuals may be coerced into performing sexual acts.
- **Domestic work or escorting:** Victims may work as domestic servants or be forced into escort services, with little to no freedom or personal autonomy.
- **Massage, health, and beauty businesses:** Some victims may be exploited in massage parlours, spas, nail salons, or beauty businesses that serve as fronts for trafficking operations, where they are coerced into providing illicit services under the guise of legitimate work.

Examples of Alerting Signs and Behaviours

- **Scared or reluctant to leave the situation:** A person might express a desire to leave the sex trade but feel unable to do so due to fear of retribution, violence, or threats from their trafficker. They may be trapped in a cycle of dependency on their trafficker for basic needs like shelter, food, or even affection.
- **Children in vulnerable situations:** Children who live in abusive households or are dependent on a family member with substance abuse issues are particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking. Traffickers often prey on these vulnerable children, offering them the illusion of love, care, or protection in exchange for their bodies.

- **Living where they work:** Some victims of sex trafficking are forced to live at their place of work or are transported to and from their workplace under strict surveillance. This minimises their chances of escaping or seeking help, as they are often monitored by a “guard” or “chaperone.”
- **Presence of a controlling figure:** A victim may have a controlling partner, family member, or manager who closely monitors their activities and communication. This individual may make all the decisions for them, including who they can speak to or where they can go, and may even restrict their ability to leave the premises.
- **Frequent movement or forced relocation:** Traffickers may move their victims around to different locations to prevent them from being identified or escaping. Victims who are constantly relocated without warning or control over their movements may be trapped in a trafficking ring.

Common Myths That Prevent Identification

Despite growing awareness of sex trafficking, several persistent myths continue to obscure recognition and delay support for victims. Understanding and challenging these misconceptions is essential for effective prevention and intervention.

“If someone smiles or looks fine, they can't be trafficked”

Many victims are trained or pressured to appear composed in public. They may smile, work, or socialise as a coping mechanism or survival strategy, even while experiencing extreme control or abuse

“Victims always want to escape”

Due to trauma bonding, manipulation, threats, or fear of retaliation, many victims may not see themselves as being trafficked or may be afraid to leave. Their survival may depend on staying in the situation.

“Sex trafficking only happens in poor or foreign countries”



Trafficking occurs globally, including in cities and rural areas of wealthier

nations. In fact, many victims are citizens of the countries where they are exploited, including children and young adults from vulnerable communities.

“It’s only trafficking if it happens across borders”

Trafficking can occur entirely within one city or even one neighbourhood. Movement across countries is not a requirement—exploitation is.

What to Do and Not to Do when suspecting someone is a victim of sex trafficking

 What to do ?	 What not to do ?
<p>Keep yourself safe</p> <p>You do not have to approach an individual, as the trafficker might be nearby or watching. However, if the person is alone and you feel comfortable, you may approach the person safely at a time and place that is confidential.</p>	<p>Don’t confront the trafficker</p> <p>Confronting a trafficker could put both you and the victim in danger. Traffickers are often violent and may take extreme measures to control their victims, including physical harm or even murder</p>
<p>Gather information discreetly</p> <p>If possible, gather information about the victim’s situation in a safe and discreet manner. This may include details about their location, physical description, or any statements they make that could help authorities understand their circumstances.</p>	<p>Don’t judge or blame the victim</p> <p>Trafficked individuals are often manipulated, coerced, and controlled by their traffickers. They are victims of a serious crime, and blaming or judging them can further harm their mental and emotional well-being.</p>
<p>Contact authorities</p> <p>The most effective way to help someone trapped in sex trafficking is to contact local law enforcement or a human trafficking hotline. In many countries, there are dedicated resources for reporting trafficking situations, and these organisations are trained to handle such cases with discretion and care. Reporting through these channels ensures that authorities can intervene appropriately and ensure the safety of the victim.</p>	<p>Don’t force the victim to speak</p> <p>Many trafficking victims are frightened of speaking out due to fear of reprisal. Pressuring them to speak before they are ready can retraumatise them and may even endanger their safety.</p>
<p>Offer support without pushing</p> <p>If you have the opportunity to speak with a potential victim, approach them with sensitivity and without</p>	<p>Don’t take matters into your own hands</p> <p>While it’s tempting to try to rescue a victim on your own, this can be dangerous for both you and</p>

6.2 How to Report Sex Trafficking: Step-by-Step



Prioritise your safety

Do not intervene directly unless the situation is clearly safe. Traffickers often use violence or intimidation to maintain control. Avoid confrontation, especially if the trafficker may be nearby.



Observe and gather details discreetly

Take note of specific information that could help investigators:

- Location, time, and setting
- Physical appearance and clothing
- Vehicles involved (license plate, model, colour)
- Names, accents, or phrases overheard
- Behavioural patterns or signs of control



Contact the appropriate authorities

In most countries, you can report trafficking to:

- A national human trafficking hotline
- Local police or emergency services
- NGOs specialising in anti-trafficking support.



Some hotlines accept anonymous tips.

In the EU, the number 112 is used for emergencies, while each country may also have specific trafficking hotlines and victim assistance services.

Use online or anonymous reporting platforms

Many organisations accept reports through encrypted or anonymous forms, especially if you feel unsafe making a direct call.



Don't overstep – support, don't "rescue"

If you are interacting directly with a potential victim, be kind and non-judgmental.

Don't make promises you cannot keep. Offer support, not pressure.

If the person seems open to help, you can share information about local shelters, legal aid, or helplines.



Follow up when possible

If you report through an NGO or hotline, ask if you can follow up.

Some organisations provide updates on whether action was taken or connect you to further guidance.

6.3 List of specialist associations/helplines

NOTE! If the situation is urgent or occurred within the last 24 hours, it is recommended to call, text, or use the chat option (if available) for immediate assistance.

6.3.1 FRANCE

- **France Victimes**

Description: A national federation of victim support associations offering legal, psychological, and social assistance to victims of all crimes, including sexual violence and human trafficking.

Contact: Call 116 006 (Free call, 7 days a week)

Website: <https://www.france-victimes.fr/>

- **Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes (FNSF)**

Description: A network of 81 organisations providing support to women victims of violence, with a particular focus on domestic violence.

Contact: Call 3919 (Anonymous and free)

Website: <https://solidaritefemmes.org/>

- **Collectif Féministe Contre le Viol (CFCV)**

Description: Provides a confidential helpline for victims of sexual violence, offering support and guidance.

Contact: Call 0 800 05 95 95 (Free call)

Website: <https://cfcv.asso.fr/>

- **ECPAT France**

Description: Works to prevent child prostitution, trafficking, and sexual exploitation, offering support to victims.

Website: <https://ecpat-france.fr/>

- **Comité Contre l'Esclavage Moderne (CCEM)**

Description: Provides legal and social assistance to victims of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Contact: +33 (0)1 44 52 88 90

Website: <https://www.ccem.org/>

- **Association ALC – Dispositif National Ac.Sé**

Description: Offers protection and support to vulnerable victims of human trafficking, including the possibility of relocation within France.

Contact: Call +33 (0)4 92 38 70 70

Website: <https://www.acse-alc.org/>

- **La Strada International – National Hotline for Victims of Trafficking**

Description: Provides assistance and information for victims of human trafficking.

Contact: Call 0 825 009 907

Website: <https://www.lastradainternational.org/>

- **UNHCR France – Protection Against Exploitation**

Description: Offers information and support for individuals at risk of exploitation, including sexual abuse and forced labour.

Website: <https://help.unhcr.org/france/en/>

6.3.2 French overseas departments

- **Mouvement du Nid Martinique**

Comprehensive support for prostituted persons. The association is made up of activists and volunteers who know that prostitution is a form of violence against women, and who provide unconditional support to women who are its victims (health, psychological, social, etc.).

Contact : 06 96 71 66 22 martinique-972@mouvementdunid.org

- **Croix-Rouge Martinique**

Access to the “parcours de sortie de prostitution” program in Martinique. A program that enables women in prostitution to stop prostitution by joining an exit program. By signing a contract, there is a possibility to be recognised as a victim and have access to housing, financial aid, vocational training and social and psychological support.

Address: Avenue Jacques Roumain, Quartier Dillon, Fort de France

Phone: 0596 721917

- **Union des Femmes Martinique (UFM)**

Feminist association helping victims of all types of violence

Contact: accueilfemme@uniondesfemmes-mq.fr

Website: <https://uniondesfemmesmartinique.com/>

- **Association Culture Egalité in Martinique**

Kay Fanm is a reception and listening centre open to all women, not just victims of domestic violence, helping them to rebuild their psychological, social and economic autonomy and become full-fledged citizens.

Contact: contact@cultureegalite.fr

Website: <https://www.cultureegalite.fr>

- **Croix-Rouge Guadeloupe**

Access to the “parcours de sortie de prostitution” program in Guadeloupe.

Address: Rez-de-chaussée gauche, Lotissement Dugazon de Bourgogne,
Les Abymes

Phone: 0596 73 85 13

- **Association Ile y a Guadeloupe**

Ile y a, in collaboration with the Red Cross, supports and accompanies women in the process of leaving prostitution.

Address: Rue Raspail, Résidence Roger Bambuck, Pointe-à-Pitre

Phone : +590 590 48 45 36

- **Croix-Rouge Saint-Martin**

In the French side of Saint-Martin, access to the “parcours de sortie de prostitution” program is guaranteed through the delegation of the Red Cross in Guadeloupe.

Address: Rue Raspail, Résidence Roger Bambuck, Pointe-à-Pitre

Phone : +590 590 48 45 36

- **Mlezi Maore Mayotte**

Comprehensive support for prostituted persons and access to the “Parcours de Sortie de Prostitution” in Mayotte.

Website: <https://www.mlezi-maore.com>

- **Association Guyanaise d'Aide aux Victimes (AGAV)**

Victim support and access to rights services. Regional information centre on women's and family rights in French Guiana

Website: <https://www.agav973.fr/>

6.3.3 ITALY

- **The Anti-Trafficking toll-free number 800 290 290**

Active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the entire national territory. Designed to help uncover cases of human trafficking and exploitation and to support victims by providing information on available assistance and connecting them with local social and support services. This number,

established by the Department for Equal Opportunities, is also available to social service workers, law enforcement officers, and citizens who wish to report situations of exploitation. The service is available in multiple languages, including English, Albanian, Russian, French, Spanish, Romanian, Hungarian, Arabic, Chinese, and Nigerian.

Website: <https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/it/politiche-e-attivita/tratta-degli-esseri-umani-e-grave-sfruttamento/numero-verde-antitratta/>

- **Gruppo Abele (Turin)**

Founded in 1965 by Don Luigi Ciotti, this organization offers including shelters, support for victims of trafficking, and reintegration programs.

Contact: 800290290 or +390113841022 , trampolino@gruppoabele.org

Website: <https://www.gruppoabele.org/>

- **Casa Rut (Caserta)**

Established in 1995 by Sister Rita Giaretta and fellow Ursuline nuns, Casa Rut provides refuge to women escaping prostitution and trafficking, many of whom are migrants. The community offers housing, support, and vocational training.

Contact: 0823 278078 **e-mail:** rut@orsolinescm.it

Website: <https://www.orsolinescm.it/caserta-rut/>

- **D.i.Re (Donne in Rete contro la violenza)**

A national network comprising over 80 anti-violence centres across Italy, D.I.Re offers assistance to women experiencing various forms of violence, including those related to trafficking and prostitution.

Website: <https://www.direcontrolaviolenza.it/#>

6.3.4 GREECE

- *A21 Greece hotline*

Helpline: 1109 (24/7, with multilingual support)

Services: Rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration support for trafficking victims.

Website: <https://www.a21.org/content/greece/gr4wco>

- *National Center for Social Solidarity (E.K.K.A)*

Helpline: 197 (24/7, toll-free)

Services: Emergency social aid, shelters, and psychological support, including for trafficking victims

Website: <https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/el/>

- *General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality*

Helpline: 15900 (24/7)

Services: Counselling and support for women victims of violence, including trafficking.

Email address: sos15900@isotita.gr

- *ARSIS – Association for the Social Support of Youth*

Contact: +30 213 212 8888 (Monday–Friday, 10:00–22:00)

Services: Street outreach, legal aid, and support for unaccompanied minors at risk (including trafficking risk).

Website: <https://arsis.gr/en/home/>

- *The Smile of the Child*

Helpline: 1056 (24/7)

Services: Support for child victims of violence and abuse, including trafficking.

Website: <https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/>

- Hellenic Police – Anti-Trafficking Units

Contact: 210-6476826 (Athens) or 2310-388401 (Thessaloniki)

Services: Investigation and intervention in trafficking cases.

6.3.5 ESTONIA

- **Social Insurance Board (SIB) Human Trafficking Prevention and Victim Helpline:**

Offers information, social and legal counselling, and assistance to victims.

Phone: (+372) 660 7320 (weekdays, consultations in Estonian, Russian, English).

24/7 hotline: 116 006, from outside of Estonia: (+372) 614 7393.

Website: www.palunabi.ee

- **NGO Lifeline (Eluliin) centres:**

Located in Tallinn, Jõhvi, and Tartu, providing legal, psychological, and social counselling to victims of trafficking and those involved in prostitution.

Phone: (+372) 655 6140.

Offers shelter for victims of human trafficking. Phone: (+372) 551 5491.

Website: www.eluliin.ee. Working hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 15:00 – 19:00; Tuesday and Thursday: 12:00 – 16:00.

- **NGO Living for Tomorrow**

Looking for ways to transform Sexual Health Education and Human Trafficking prevention: engage gender-sensitive active learning, make it inclusive, acceptable, interesting and comprehensible.

<https://lft.ee>

- **Victim Support Hotline:**

A 24/7 helpline provides extensive assistance to people who have been abused or mistreated. Phone: 116 006.

- **Police and Border Guard Board:**

Contact point for reporting suspected cases of human trafficking. Contact Ago Leis, phone: (+372) 6123646.

- **Tallinn Women's Crisis Centre:**

Offers support, understanding, and help, including primary counselling, psychological and legal counselling, and shelter during crisis periods. Phone: +372 5396 9834.

Website: <https://naisteabi.ee>

- **Human Trafficking Prevention and Victim Help Hotline: +372 6607320478**

6.3.6 ARGENTINA

- **NGO Madres Víctimas de Trata**

Offers information and provides legal and social assistance to victims of child sexual abuse, modern slavery, sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

Email : mvtlegales@gmail.com

Website :

<https://www.instagram.com/madrestrata?igsh=MWdvdmVva3RpZG5ha>
[g==](https://www.instagram.com/madrestrata?igsh=MWdvdmVva3RpZG5ha)

- **145 official State free hotline open 24/7**

6.3.7 GUYANA

- **Counter –Trafficking in Persons Hotline – 592-227-4083 open 24/7
alternative number 592-623-5030**
- **Ministry of Human Services & Social Security located @ 1 Water
Street, Stabreok, Georgetown, Guyana Tel# 592-225-4186**

Website: <https://www.mhss.gov.gy>

- **914 Hotline open 24/7**

The 914 hotline is a toll-free number that provides telephone services to victims/survivors of sexual offences, domestic violence, and child abuse.

**Help & Shelter located @ Homestretch Avenue, D'Urban Park,
Georgetown, Guyana Tel# 592-225-4731 or 592-227-8353**

Hotline# 592-613-1811 or 592-633-3788



EXIT PROGRAMS & BEST PRACTICES

7. EXIT PROGRAMS EXAMPLES

7.1. FRANCE

- **Parcours de Sortie de la Prostitution (PSP)**

A national program established by the 2016 law, offering comprehensive support—including social, legal, and professional assistance—to individuals wishing to leave prostitution.

Website: <https://www.egalite-femmes-hommes.gouv.fr/sites/efh/files/2024-05/Strategie-de-lutte-systeme-prostitutionnel-et-exploitation-sexuelle-mai-2024.pdf>

- **Dispositif National Ac.Sé – Association ALC**

Provides secure accommodation and comprehensive support to victims of human trafficking, facilitating their social reintegration and access to rights.

Website: <https://www.acse-alc.org/>

- **Amicale du Nid**

Offers individualised support to individuals in prostitution, focusing on social reintegration, access to rights, and professional development.

Website: <https://amicaledunid.org/>

- **Comité Contre l'Esclavage Moderne (CCEM)**

Provides legal and social assistance to victims of modern slavery and human trafficking, aiming to facilitate their exit and integration into society.

Website: <https://www.ccem.org/>

- **Mouvement du Nid**

Engages in prevention, support, and advocacy work to combat prostitution and support individuals wishing to exit it, offering personalised assistance and raising public awareness.

Website: <https://www.mouvementdunid.org/>

- **Project STEP (Supporting Trafficked People)**

Implemented by France Terre d'Asile, the STEP project aims to improve the identification and support of trafficking victims, particularly among migrant populations. It includes the development of practical guides for frontline workers to recognise and assist victims effectively.

Website: <https://www.france-terre-asile.org/actions/demandeurs-d-asile/projet-step-identifier-les-victimes-de-traite-des-etres-humains>

- **Awareness Campaign during the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games**

In anticipation of increased risks of human trafficking during major events, this campaign aims to inform both French and international audiences about the dangers of sexual exploitation and trafficking. It provides communication kits to raise awareness.

Website: <https://arretonslesviolences.gouv.fr/focus/campagne-dinformation-sur-la-prostitution-lexploitation-et-la-traite-des-etres-humains-dans-0?>

7.2 ITALY

- **National Action Plan against Trafficking and Serious Exploitation**

It defines multiannual strategies for preventing, combating and assisting victims.

Website: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwid07GFx2MAxWVnf0HHTUjDalQFnoECBgQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pariopportunita.gov.it%2Fmedia%2F2427%2Fpiano-anti-tratta-2022-2025-ita.pdf&usg=AOvVawllOP7-qqr0L6i_wlr4gEvr&opi=89978449

- **Kinbè e Waslala**

Project implemented by the social cooperative Parsec in Rome offering residential accommodation for women victims of trafficking at the “Kinbé” escape house and the “Waslala” semi-autonomy project.

Website:

<https://www.cooperativaparsec.it/web/progetti.php?areaID=2&projectID=14>

- **SATIS Tuscany**

A social intervention system in Tuscany that aims to combat trafficking and serious exploitation by offering assistance and social integration to victims.

Website: <https://www.satistoscana.org/satis/>

- **On the road Social Cooperative**

They work with mobile units to identify women who need help. In addition, they have installed 5 drop-in centres near the places of exploitation that function as counters to which the women can turn for help. Finally, professionals accompany the victims in achieving autonomy and socio-occupational integration.

Website: <https://www.ontheroad.coop/aree-di-intervento/tratta-e-sfruttamento/>

- **ACT project**

Act! is a European project of the Erasmus programme involving 7 associations. An awareness-raising campaign was developed for the prevention of trafficking and sexual exploitation through the effective and synergic use of social and other ICT tools. A toolkit with guidelines for professionals was also developed.

Website: <https://www.beeecom.org/associazione/progetti/act/>

- **[SAFE HUT – Holding safe spaces for women and girls' empowerment:](#)**

The project was mentioned on the European Commission's website as a project contributing to the protection of third-country national women/girls and potential survivors/victims of trafficking. Safe Hut responds to the provisions of the EU Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025 to improve the assistance, support and integration of VoT for sexual exploitation in the host society and to the last European Parliament Motion for a Resolution (2022) which calls on the EU to prioritise protection from sexual and gender-based violence. The main target of the project is third-country national women and adolescent girls who were exposed to trafficking, with a special focus on women and girls' survival of trafficking due to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. SAFE HUT involves 7 experienced partners from 6 EU countries (Italy, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria) and aims to the building of 4 new WGSSs in Greece, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria, on the WGSS model developed by the International Rescue Committee experienced at Centro PENC as well as to the creation of a child care service in WGSS in Palermo. Finally, the project will advocate for a long-term financial sustainability of the WGSS created and its replication in different countries.

7.3 GREECE

In Greece, most of the best practices pertinent to assisting victims of human trafficking also pertain to providing exit strategies regarding prostitution.

- **A21 Greece – Freedom Center**

Provides comprehensive support for survivors of human trafficking, including safe housing, counselling, and vocational training to facilitate reintegration.

Website: <https://www.a21.org/content/greece/gr4wco>

- **ARSIS – Association for the Social Support of Youth**

Offers legal aid, psychological support, and vocational training for vulnerable individuals, including those exiting prostitution.

Website: <https://arsis.gr/en/home/>

- **National Center for Social Solidarity (E.K.K.A)**

Operates shelters and provides social services, including counselling and reintegration programs for victims of trafficking and exploitation.

Website: <https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/el/>

- **The Smile of the Child**

Focuses on child victims of exploitation, offering shelter, psychological support, and reintegration services.

Website: <https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/>

- **Diotima – Centre for Gender Rights and Equality**

Provides legal aid, psychosocial support, and empowerment programs for women, including those affected by trafficking and prostitution.

Website: [Survivor Support Services – Κέντρο Διοτίμα](#)

7.4 ESTONIA

- **Raising awareness on domestic violence and reducing the demand for sex (2021–2022)**

“Mõtle õige peaga” campaign. The aim of the campaign was to reduce the demand for sex and raise awareness about prostitution and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/motleoigepeaga/>

Podcast (in Estonian): <https://creators.spotify.com/pod/show/motlepeaga>

- **Nordic-Baltic joint campaign against trafficking of women (2002–2003)**

The Nordic and Baltic Campaign against Trafficking in Women in Estonia aimed to initiate a discussion on trafficking in women as a social problem and to change current attitudes towards this issue. The aim was also to map Estonia's readiness to recognise and combat human trafficking as a social problem, as well as to inform strategically important social groups about the causes of the phenomenon and its consequences.

Document (in Estonian): [Awareness of human trafficking among high school graduates as future job seekers, Marion Pajumets \(2002\)](#)

- **Integration of women involved in prostitution, including victims of human trafficking, into the legal labour market (2005–2008)**

The project aims to socially rehabilitate women involved in prostitution and bring them into the labour market. The indirect objective is to reduce the spread of prostitution by raising public awareness and, as a result of rehabilitation, to increase women's economic independence and develop such abilities that would enable them to achieve a full position in society.

Training materials (in Estonian):

- [Training material for vocational and career counselors](#)
- [Training material for youth workers](#)
- [Training material for women's organisations](#)

Informative documents:

- [Prostitution in Estonia: an overview of the situation of women involved in prostitution](#)
- [The meaning of prostitution in Estonian society. Internal security or economic benefit](#)

7.5 Focus on the Mouvement du Nid delegation in Martinique

The Martinique delegation was established in 2017 and the premises are located in the center of Fort-de-France, within the Trois Lieu, a feminist and activist space organized into three structures: the MDN, the FLAM association (Latino-American Women in Movement), which advocates for women's rights and the integration of migrant women in Martinique, and D'Antilles et d'Ailleurs, an international NGO. The latter works on the integration of individuals with fewer opportunities, such as young people and women, while fighting against discrimination and inequality they face. Additionally, a LAEP (*Early Childhood Parent Support*) is hosted, called Trois Lieu Ti Moun, located in the Terres Sainville area, a precarious neighbourhood. It welcomes children aged 0 to 3 and their parents, with an external team dedicated to the service.

The Trois Lieu runs various integration projects benefiting the women supported by the MDN, such as French as a Foreign Language (FLE) courses, food aid distribution, sewing and culinary training for regularized women, and various workshops (CV writing, cover letters, administrative procedures, cooking, cultural outings, health, art therapy, creative arts, etc.).

The MDN provides unconditional support to adult women, whether they are victims of prostitution or in vulnerable situations that suggest a risk of entering prostitution. This risk is systematically taken into consideration. The beneficiaries engage in street prostitution in the Terres Sainville area, but also in other forms (payment for rent, meals, groceries, housing, etc.), and increasingly, on the internet. The support team is predominantly female, creating a safer environment for these women, who are continuously assaulted by men, who represent 99% of the clients. The team consists of a coordinator, two social workers, a trainee specialized educator, and occasionally interns and volunteers. Support is provided both within the office and through outreach in the women's living environments, adapting to the necessary steps (filing complaints, CHRS (Emergency Center, medical appointments, etc...)).

Additionally, external service providers offer regular office hours to provide multidisciplinary support, including two doctors, a nurse, a gynaecologist, a lawyer, and two psychologists.

With funding from various public sources as well as other private grants, the Mouvement du Nid runs numerous prevention campaigns aimed at a wide variety of audiences in collective formats (schools, youth shelters for girls and boys, women in prison, leisure and sports associations, and medical-social field professionals...). These campaigns touch on the topics of pornography, gender-based and sexual violence, consent, harassment and sexual health.

Website : <https://www.dantillesetdailleurs.org/mouvement-du-nid-martinique/>

7.6 Focus on the French legal exit model

“parcours de sortie de prostitution »

France adopted the "Nordic model" in 2016, which criminalises the purchase of sex but decriminalises those who sell it. The law includes support measures to help individuals exit prostitution, such as financial aid, housing, healthcare, and access to education or employment programs. It seeks to reduce prostitution through demand reduction and support for exit, although there are issues with the application of the measures and access to the “parcours de sortie de prostitution” (PSP) pathway.

Open to adults identified as victims of prostitution, pimping, or sexual exploitation, the admission is granted by the departmental prefect after evaluation by a commission, often based on a dossier prepared with an accredited association. Initial support is provided for six months, renewable up to a maximum of 24 months depending on the need and adherence to the program's rules. The program especially allows foreign nationals to obtain a temporary residence permit valid for six months, renewable up to three times, without the obligation to report their exploiters. A personalised support plan is drafted for each person, with access to housing, healthcare,

language courses, and job training, facilitated by accredited associations. Participants must cease all prostitution-related activities and actively engage in the reintegration process, with progress monitored through regular updates to their support plan.

The amount of financial aid given to the persons enrolled in the program has been criticised as insufficient, as it only stood at around 400€ per month. In May 2025, the amount of the aid called 'AFIS' was increased to 635€ per month, putting it on the same level as the French social welfare benefit (RSA). The associations working on the field welcome the increase, as it especially benefits the youth under the age of 25, who are ineligible for RSA. According to a recent report called FACT-S (FACT-S, 2025) by a coalition of grassroots associations working in the field of prostitution in France, since the PSP pathway was launched, 2102 persons have benefited or are still benefiting from it, of which 90% are employed and 100% are housed. Associations regret that despite its comprehensive approach, the PSP faces challenges such as limited funding, inconsistent implementation across regions, and a relatively low number of beneficiaries compared to the estimated 40,000 individuals involved in prostitution in France. Even though challenges exist, the PSP represents a significant effort by France to provide viable alternatives to prostitution through a combination of legal, financial, and social support mechanisms. Globally, the PSP program's data perfectly illustrates gender-based violence, as amongst victims, 98% are women. In Martinique, the PSP program was launched in 2020, and to this day, 17 women have benefited from it. Unfortunately, some of them reported that they occasionally kept having prostitutional activities due to the cost of living and the insufficiency of their income compared to their compulsory expenditures.

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