

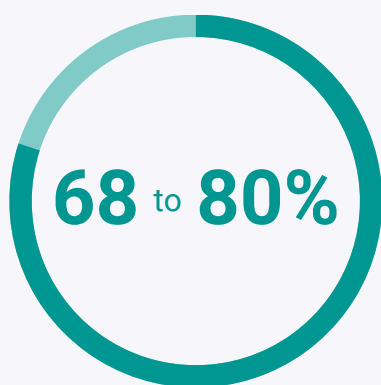
WHY SUPPORT THE EQUALITY MODEL ON PROSTITUTION?



The prostitution and trafficking for sexual exploitation systems are widespread in the EU. The lack of legislative harmonisation on prostitution across the EU prevents the efficient protection of victims and benefits the impunity of exploiters. In the context of the EU elections, we call on candidates to mobilise in favour of an EU approach based on the Equality Model!

Prostitution is a form of violence

Prostitution is rooted in a long patriarchal tradition of men's sexual entitlement to women and desire to control and access the bodies of women. Survivors of prostitution underline that the repetition of **sexual acts without desire** but that are physically, psychologically or socioeconomically **coerced** is in and of itself a violence.



of prostituted persons suffer from **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**.

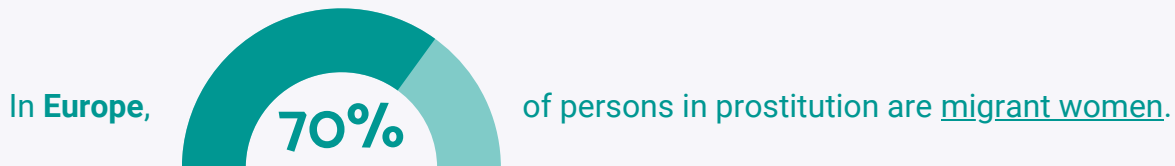
"The consequences of the exercise of prostitution for mental health are similar to those suffered by persons subjected to torture."



Medicos del Mundo,
Spain

Who does the prostitution system target ?

The prostitution system disproportionately impacts women and girls from **discriminated** groups: Indigenous, migrant, refugee, poor, from minorities or oppressed castes.



Women and girls from the **Roma** community, are widely impacted by prostitution throughout Europe and especially in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania[1]. Women and girls from **Nigeria** are also overrepresented among the victims of prostitution in Europe and under the strict control of violent **trafficking rings**.

In addition to mostly belonging to discriminated groups, women and girls in prostitution cumulate **vulnerabilities**: poverty, homelessness, experience of childhood sexual abuse, addictions, minority of age are all push-factors to prostitution[2].

“I was supposed to stay in prostitution for three weeks, a month. After 22 years, I was still there. And always with the same financial problems. One thing is sure, we end up ruined. I don't what made me take the plunge: a depression, the feat of an empty wallet... you get into it, you don't realise.”



Rosen Hicher,
survivor of prostitution, France

What is the Equality Model?

The Equality Model law recognises prostitution as a violence against women and girls and an obstacle to human dignity. It relies on 4 pillars:

- 1 The decriminalisation of persons in prostitution
- 2 The guarantee of exit pathways and support services for persons in prostitution
- 3 The criminalisation of sex buyers
- 4 The criminalisation of pimps, traffickers and any party facilitating or profiting from the prostitution of others
- 5 The establishment of national prevention strategies targeting boys and men in particular, on the non-commodification of women, consensual and equal relationships

The Equality Model adoption timeline



It has proven efficient in **reducing demand** while increasing protection for persons in prostitution.

Why ban the purchase of sexual acts?



Discouraging the demand: an obligation enshrined in International Human Rights Law



The **UN Palermo Protocol** (Article 9) calls on Member States to discourage the demand that fosters trafficking for sexual exploitation.



The **UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women** highlights that criminalising the purchase of sexual acts has strong legal basis in international human rights law and is recognised as a legitimate tool to protect women victims of violence.



The **EU Parliament in the Noichl Resolution** (§41) calls on Member States to criminalise the purchase of sexual acts.



Criminalising the purchase of sexual acts to tackle the demand and create a normative effect.

The male-driven demand for the purchase of sexual acts is met by trafficking victims. This demand is thus an incentive for trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Criminalising the purchase of sexual acts is an effective deterrent and is efficient to tackle demand.

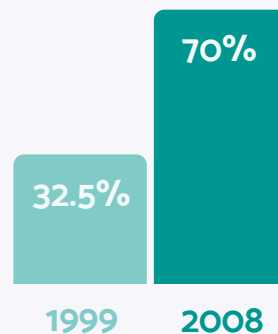


In **Sweden** for instance, first country to penalise sex buyers, **demand** has **halved** in 25 years of implementation going from 13.6% of men purchasing sexual acts in 1999[3] to 7% in 2023.



The country is since considered a “**dead market**” for traffickers that have moved away from it[4]. In the country, the penalisation of sex buyers has also had a **normative effect** and succeeded in challenged the attitudes of men purchasing sexual acts.

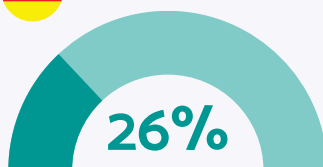
Evolution of Swedish population supporting the ban[5]



On the other hand, in countries that have **legalised** prostitution, the “legality contributes to **normalisation**, which in turn increases the likelihood of paying for sex” according to a study from the London Metropolitan University.



In Germany



of men purchase sexual acts.

“Basically the State says exactly the same thing as my trafficker did. So the German State helped him to prostitute me. Our legislation helps traffickers push young women into prostitution, because by saying prostitution is a normal job, all the harm and violence becomes invisible.”

Sandra Norak,
survivor of prostitution
and lawyer, Germany



Equality Model vs Regulatory Model: what results?

Different laws on prostitution exist in the EU Member States: the Prohibitionist Model, the Abolitionist Model or the Regulatory Model (also called “Full Decriminalisation”).

 <p>PROHIBITIONIST MODEL</p>	 <p>REGULATORY MODEL (also known as Legalisation Model or Full Decriminalisation Model)</p>	 <p>EQUALITY MODEL (also known as Abolitionist Model or Nordic Model)</p>
<p>Prostitution considered as a criminal activity and persons in prostitution as perpetrators</p>	<p>Prostitution is considered as “sex work” and persons in prostitution as “sex workers”</p>	<p>Prostitution is considered as a form of violence and persons in prostitution as victims of violence</p>
<p>Criminalisation of persons in prostitution</p>	<p>Decriminalisation of persons in prostitution</p>	<p>Decriminalisation of persons in prostitution</p>
<p>Criminalisation of pimps</p>	<p>Decriminalisation of pimps becoming “managers” and “brothel owners”</p>	<p>Criminalisation of pimps</p>
<p>Criminalisation of sex buyers</p>	<p>Decriminalisation of sex buyers considered as consumers</p>	<p>Criminalisation of sex buyers considered as perpetrators of violence</p>



Germany



400,000

persons in prostitution
according to the
highest estimates



Only **23,000**
registered in the
system in 2021



81%

of the women registered are
foreigners in 2021



x5

of the number of **Ukrainian**
women in prostitution in
the red-light district of
Berlin since war in Ukraine



men purchasing sexual acts per day

3,500

officially registered
brothels including
mega-brothels offering
package deals with
women



France



37,000

persons in prostitution
according to the
highest estimates



+8,000

sex buyers arrested or
attended an awareness-
raising course in March 2023



person in prostitution penalised
on prostitution charges since
adoption of the Equality Model
in 2016[7]



+1,247 persons

benefited from an exit
programme in March 2023

with a success rate of **95%**

+54%



increase in procedures
against pimps between
2016 and 2019



x7

more compensation for
victims between 2016
and 2019



**You are a candidate to the EU elections and wish to
commit in favour of the Equality Model:**

SIGN OUR MANIFESTO



Sources

- [1] European Roma Rights Centre, Breaking The Silence: A Report By The European Roma Rights Centre And People In Need, 2011
- [2] CAP International, Last Girl First ! Prostitution at the intersection of sex, race and class-based oppression, Editions Libre, 2022
- [3] Swedish government report SOU 2010:49: "The Ban against the Purchase of Sexual Services. An evaluation 1999-2008"
- [4] Swedish government report SOU 2010:49: "The Ban against the Purchase of Sexual Services. An evaluation 1999-2008"
- [5] Swedish government report SOU 2010:49: "The Ban against the Purchase of Sexual Services. An evaluation 1999-2008"
- [6] Swedish government report SOU 2010:49: "The Ban against the Purchase of Sexual Services. An evaluation 1999-2008"
- [7] Data from FACT-S, The situation of prostitution in France, 2021