

THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE

# PROSTITUTION POLICY IN SWEDEN – TARGETING DEMAND

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#### **AUTHOR**

Anthony Jay Olsson

#### **EDITOR**

Rikard Lagerberg, Lagerberg Media

#### **FACT-CHECKING**

Per-Anders Sunesson

*Ambassador at Large for Combating  
Trafficking in Persons,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs*

Thomas Ahlstrand

*Senior prosecutor,  
Swedish Prosecution Authority*

Petra Tammert Seidefors

*Senior officer | THB team,  
Swedish Gender Equality Agency*

Endrit Mujaj

*Adviser, Council of the Baltic Sea  
States – Task Force against Trafficking  
in Human Beings*

Olga Persson

*Secretary General, Unizon*

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# PROSTITUTION POLICY IN SWEDEN – TARGETING DEMAND

Prostitution is a difficult subject that is not often spoken about in public. It happens somewhere else, to other people. Countries have taken different approaches to deal with prostitution, most revolving around different levels of criminalisation or decriminalisation of the act of prostitution. And then, 20 years ago, something radical happened as Sweden decided to criminalise only the buyer of sexual services. The results are in, and other countries are following Sweden's lead.

**THIS NEW LAW** clearly changed the perception and focus away from the person involved in prostitution and towards the buyer of sexual services and hence the person responsible for prostitution. The decision to single out demand was taken based on an emerging consensus of gender equality and a human rights perspective, where prostitution was seen as an obstacle.

In the years since Sweden enacted the Sexual Purchase Act, several other countries have observed the positive effects of the law and introduced similar legal frameworks, including neighbouring Norway and Iceland, as well as France, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Canada.

## OTHER COUNTRIES' POLICY MODELS

**FINLAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM**, meanwhile, following a recommendation from the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, have criminalised the purchase of sexual services from a person subjected to force or who is a victim of trafficking.

The other models adopted by countries of the European Union (EU) can be broadly divided into three types of legislation. Either prostitution is legal and regulated (e.g., Austria, Germany, Greece, Latvia and the Netherlands), legal and non-regulated (e.g., Belgium, Denmark and Portugal) or criminalised (e.g., Croatia and Lithuania).

None of these models solely penalises the buyer, unless the purchase is from a trafficked individual. Procuring is mainly illegal and penalised, solicitation is illegal, curtailed or constrained to designated areas, and brothels are illegal (except in countries where prostitution is legal and regulated). In an environment where all parties are criminalised, prostitution becomes clandestine and the free agency of individuals involved in providing services is curtailed while stigma and risks increase.

## THE INHERENT POWER IMBALANCE OF SEX TRADE

**THE ORIGINAL IDEA** with the introduction of the Sexual Purchase Act in Sweden was to mitigate the reduced agency of the seller, equalise the power balance, and lessen the exploitation of the individual, mostly women, while still disrupting the market and reducing the demand. It also marks prostitution as a societal activity to be curtailed.

The Swedish government rationalised that it is not reasonable to prosecute the party that in most cases is in a weaker position and is exploited by others to satisfy their sexual drive. The law is also meant to encourage individuals involved to seek help to leave prostitution, as they can be safe in the knowledge that there will be no criminal consequences of having been involved in prostitution.

Statistics show that street prostitution and demand has decreased as a result of the new law. This in contrast to the legalisation and decriminalisation frameworks which have both proven not only to multiply and increase prostitution but also to normalise the activity.

This legislative approach was totally new and has over the years been complemented with options of social services, including exit strategies for both the buyer and the person involved in prostitution.

## EFFECTS OF THE LAW – CURRENT SITUATION

**SINCE THE LEGALISATION** in Sweden went into force, the prostitution market has become global, diversified and virtual alongside other developments in society. Prostitution is particularly problematic to accurately assess in numbers, as statistics are difficult to compare, and figures overtime vary as different studies have categorised groups differently. In some studies, the group ‘young people’ can be aged 15–30 and in other studies the age span can be completely different.

# SUPPORT PROGRAMMES AND EXIT SERVICES

## NATIONAL TASK FORCE

The National Task Force against Prostitution and Human Trafficking (NMT) is a national platform of governmental bodies working against prostitution and all forms of human trafficking. NMT offers support to municipalities, governmental authorities and NGOs in human trafficking cases. In addition to a support line, they have also published *National Referral Mechanism: Protecting and supporting victims of trafficking in human beings in Sweden*. NMT is steered by the Gender Equality Agency.

## REGIONAL COORDINATION

The regional coordinators function as a link to social support services and referral in cases related to prostitution and human trafficking. According to the Swedish Social Services Act, the municipality is ultimately responsible for making sure people receive the support and help they need in the municipality.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

In addition to NMT, social services and police, there are several specialist centres and clinics giving support to people in prostitution. *Mikamottagningen* in Stockholm and Gothenburg and the Prostitution Centre (*Kompetenscentrum Sexuella Tjänster*) in Malmö also conduct outreach work and

are mainly staffed by social workers. The buyers of sexual services are provided with counselling at KAST (*Köpare Av Sexuella Tjänster*, buyers of sexual services) if they want support to stop purchasing sex. The service is provided in Sweden’s three largest cities to those over the age of 16.

## CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The Swedish Civil Society Platform against Trafficking in Human Beings is an umbrella platform which was formed in 2013 to coordinate civil society efforts, visualise vulnerable groups and combat human trafficking in all forms. The platform consists of a group of about 20 non-profit organisations and actors working on human rights. They involve pressure organisations as well as NGOs doing outreach to victims and providing direct assistance and shelter to victims.

## RETURN PROGRAMME

The Gender Equality Agency furthermore runs an Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme for victims of trafficking operated by the UN Organization for Migration (IOM). Payments to beneficiaries in relation to support type can either be monthly cash allowances or in-kind support such as housing and medical allowance.

One certainty is that street prostitution has declined in Sweden since 1995, by more than 50 per cent including a few fluctuations and a minor recent increase. However, just like in other countries, availability has increased due to the internet.

Before the law came into existence, there was concern that the legislation might lead to increased vulnerability for those in prostitution, but in fact, it has become more secure because the balance of power has moved away from the buyer.

In 2010 the Swedish government conducted an official evaluation of the law and its effects which noted that:<sup>1</sup>

- Street prostitution has decreased.
- The law has had a deterrent effect on prospective buyers of sexual services, reducing demand.
- The law has deterred trafficking as criminals have not sought to establish organised trafficking networks so readily in Sweden.
- The number of foreign women in prostitution has increased but not to the extent noticed in neighbouring countries.
- Online prostitution has increased in accordance with all other sold services since 1999 but not to the extent it can be said that street prostitution has simply migrated.
- Exit strategies and alternatives have been developed.
- There has been a significant change of attitude and mindset in society.
- Adoption of the law has been a pioneering model for other countries.

Up until the 90s, the women involved in prostitution were mainly Swedish or from the Nordic countries whereas they currently come not only from other neighbouring countries but also from countries outside the EU.

1. Government of Sweden 2010 Official Evaluation of the effects of the Law and gathered information from operative staff.

It is estimated today that between 200–250 women are involved in prostitution in the capital Stockholm and two other larger cities in Sweden, Gothenburg in the west and Malmö in the south.

## FINDINGS FROM 2014

**IN A 2014 MAPPING** of prostitution published by the County Administrative Board of Stockholm, findings included that public support for the sex purchase laws is substantial and widespread (72 per cent of respondents being positive, 85 per cent among women and 60 per cent among men), which can be interpreted as saying that Swedes do not want a society where buying sex is allowed.

In the same study, 0.8 per cent of Swedish men said that they had purchased sexual services sometime in the last 12 months. Around half of these men had purchased sex abroad. The study also revealed that 7.5 per cent of men between 18–65 years of age had paid for sex at least once in their lifetime. This is lower than in all other Nordic countries.

## WHY SWEDEN?

**SWEDEN'S PROSTITUTION POLICY** and the development of the Sexual Purchase Act did not appear in a vacuum but evolved over decades. Direct activism from the women's movement and the shelter movement in the 1970s and 80s led to a broader understanding of issues of violence against women and society's reaction to these phenomena.

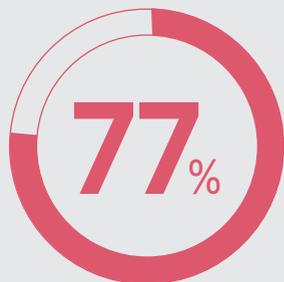
In 1977 the Swedish government established the Sexual Crimes Committee. It published two reports: Rape and Other Sexual Assault (SOU 1982:61 *Våldtäkt och andra sexuella övergrepp*) as well as Prostitution in Sweden: Background and Actions (SOU 1981:71 *Prostitutionen i Sverige: Bakgrund och åtgärder*). This was followed by the Prostitution Investigation in 1995 (*Könshandeln* SOU 1995:15).

# 2014 STUDY OF PROSTITUTION IN SWEDEN

SEX BUYERS:  
MALE



ADVERTISEMENTS  
INDICATING A NATIONALITY  
OTHER THAN SWEDISH



ONLINE ADVERTISEMENTS  
FOR SEXUAL SERVICES  
PROVIDED BY WOMEN



ONLINE PROFILES



In 1993, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health set up the Commission on Violence against Women (*Kvinnovåldskommissionen*) which published the report *Security and Integrity of Women (Kvinnofrid* SOU 1996:60) focusing on sexualised violence and the normalisation processes of such violence. It stated that physical violence is closely related to other phenomena in society such as prostitution, pornography, incest and sexual harassment in the workplace.

The proposals of the report were to form the basis of the 1998 government proposition *Security and Integrity of Women (Kvinnofrid* Prop. 1997/98:55). The law on gross violation of women's integrity is part of the bill alongside measures against rape and sexual harassment at work. Sweden's current Sexual Purchase Act came about as part of this bill.

## A NATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY

**PROSTITUTION AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION** are highly gendered issues. Men are the predominant purchasers of sexual services whether that service be provided by women (including transgender women), girls, men or boys. Most people involved in prostitution as sellers and providers of sexual services, meanwhile, are women. That the pioneering Sexual Purchase Act hails from Sweden is perhaps no surprise. The social and political climate in Sweden has a long history of standing up against injustices and promoting equality, and especially gender equality.

Gender equality has been a political priority in Sweden for over 40 years. A commission for research on gender equality was appointed in 1972, and since 1976 there has been a government minister responsible for gender equality affairs. Since 1971, when a new taxation law meant that spouses were taxed individually and not as a joint unit, the Swedish government has sought to identify and limit gender equality barriers, so that individuals can be self-empowered and freed from structural obstacles. The taxation law

# THE 'SEX PURCHASE ACT'

## FOUND IN CHAPTER 6, SECTION 11 OF THE SWEDISH PENAL CODE

'A person who, otherwise than as previously provided in this chapter, obtains a casual sexual relation in return for payment, shall be sentenced for purchase of sexual service to a fine or imprisonment for a maximum period of one year. The provision of the first paragraph shall also apply if the payment was promised or given by another person.'

If the purchase of the sexual service is from a person between 15 and 18 years of age, the act is considered as purchase of sexual service from a minor and carries a higher punishment, fines or prison up to two years. If the purchase of a sexual service is from someone under the age of 15, the act is considered rape of a minor, regardless of the circumstances.

'If the purchase of a sexual service is from someone under the age of 15, the act is considered rape of a minor, regardless of the circumstances.'

## TRAFFICKING

The Swedish law against human trafficking is based on UN's convention against transnational organised crime, known as the Palermo Protocol, which defines human trafficking as: 'The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion. It also includes abduction, fraud or deception for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or the removal of organs.'

was followed by gender-neutral parental insurance in 1974, under which both parents were entitled to take paid leave for childcare.

The 1970s and the 1980s also saw a gradual increase in the participation of women in governmental structures. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union data presented by the World Bank in 1990, 38.4 per cent of members of parliament were women, and by 1998 the proportion of seats held by women stood at 42.7 per cent. The figure has stayed continually over 40 per cent for the last 20 years.

In 2018 Sweden set a new standard by inaugurating a Gender Equality Agency. One of the rationales behind the new authority was to respond to the national strategy for combating men's violence against women and develop knowledge about preventive work. In 2015 Sweden became the first country in the world to formulate and pursue a feminist foreign policy. As stated by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency 'The overarching goal of Sweden's national gender equality work is for women and men to have the same power to shape society and their own lives.'

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

**SWEDEN ALSO HAS** a strong history of pioneering work when it comes to protecting children (another group victimised by trafficking and prostitution). As one example, in 1979 Sweden was the first country to introduce a law against corporal punishment of children. And Sweden was the first country to join the Global Partnership as a pathfinding country under Agenda 2030.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which became effective in 1990 and the optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which entered into force in 2002 are cornerstones of the international framework on children's rights. In June 2018 Sweden adopted a bill which will incorporate the Convention into Swedish law on 1 January 2020.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse is another instrument

that entered into force in Sweden on 1 October 2013. It requires criminalisation of all kinds of sexual offences against children. It also ensures that certain types of conduct are classified as criminal offences, such as engaging in sexual activities with a child below the legal age and child prostitution and pornography. The Convention also criminalises the solicitation of children for sexual purposes ('grooming') and 'sex tourism'.

## THE ISSUE OF CONSENT AND AGENCY

**SWEDEN'S POSITION IS** that not only underaged people but all who engage in the selling of sex do so because they have a reduced capacity of exerting power over their situation. The economic drivers behind the decision to sell sex can vary but apply mainly to vulnerable women, whether they be migrants, minorities, or face discrimination and decreased employment opportunity in society at large.

If an individual believes they have a lack of viable or sustainable alternatives to escape poverty, improve their safe employment stability and make empowered life choices, then the individual also lacks *free choice* of involvement in prostitution.

Most women engaged in prostitution in Sweden come from abroad. They operate in Sweden temporarily or on a more long-term basis and are most often not connected to Swedish society or the opportunities it provides in terms of jobs and social welfare. The levels of exploitation the women experience of course vary and not all are trafficked, but the service they provide is bound by demand and various extents of control.

According to Swedish state agencies and NGOs, most of the women in prostitution do not operate independently but are controlled by a 'pimp'. The report from 2014 by the County Administrative Board of Stockholm stated that the women in online escort ads have usually not written the ads themselves and are sometimes not even aware of them. They are instructed only to answer calls from sex buyers.

Sweden's policy is clear, as stated in the *Handbook to Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy*, that prostitution can never be regarded as a profession; prostitution is always exploitation. In this sense the extent of the consent to provide prostitution is deemed secondary to the understanding that the transaction involves exploitation at some level. Trafficking is therefore a continuum of extremity down the scale.

## THE LINK BETWEEN PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING

**PROSTITUTION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING** are clearly intertwined and cannot be viewed as two entirely separated phenomena. The driving forces are primarily the same. Socio-economic factors and globalisation trends have given freedom of movement and choice to many, but pockets of poverty, social exclusion and gender inequality have remained or hardened in certain communities.

Self-determination over one's body is essential in self-care and healthcare alongside sexual and reproductive rights. Total control over one's own body in a patriarchal system where men still hold the balance of power is still not a total reality. Prostitution is at the centre of this power imbalance. Political factors in other countries have a knock-on effect globally; instability, conflict, corruption, weakened rule of law and poor governance exacerbate difficult economic situations, especially for women.

Trafficking is a broader phenomenon than prostitution, but an individual can be trafficked for sexual exploitation and the two phenomena are often linked to the same crimes and involve the same actors. This interconnection is further increased with the growth of online prostitution. Parallels can be drawn between advertisements to facilitate prostitution and online recruitment of victims of trafficking.

# TIMELINE

20 years of action  
– development of policy  
from 1999 to 2018

1999

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

## 1999

Sweden becomes the first country in the world to prohibit the purchase of sexual services.

Sweden becomes the first country in the world to have a majority of female government ministers.

## 2004

Sweden revises its law against human trafficking.

## 2002

Human trafficking is criminalised.

‘The first country in the world to prohibit the purchase of sexual services.’

## 2005

The provision of the *Sex Purchase Act* is transferred to the Penal code as section 11 of a new sexual crimes chapter (6) as Sweden also tightens its legislation on procuring.



2005

2006

2007

## 2008

The Swedish government adopts the first Action Plan for combating prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes.



2008

## 2009

The Swedish government commissions the County Administrative Board of Stockholm to nationally coordinate and strengthen the work against prostitution and trafficking. The NMT started within this framework.

The Safe Trip information campaign is launched, carrying messages in six languages, including Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Thai, directed at women at risk of violence or of being trafficked.

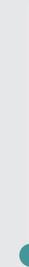


2009

2010

## 2011

Sweden increases the maximum sentence for the purchase of sexual services from six months to one year after recommendations from the 2010 evaluation report.

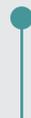


2011

2012

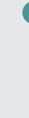
## 2006

A new ambassador is appointed for international cooperation in the fight against human trafficking.



## 2010

The government commissions an evaluation of the Sexual Purchase Act (1999–2008).



‘The world’s first feminist government.’

## 2014

Sweden's government declares itself the world's first feminist government. A campaign (*Resekurage*) is launched to raise awareness about sexual exploitation of children in tourist destinations abroad, and to inform the Swedish public that those who sexually exploit children abroad can be punished for this in Sweden as well.

Sweden launches an Action Plan to protect children from human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse.



2014

## 2015

The report *Prostitution in Sweden 2014, a Survey* is presented by the Stockholm County Administrative Board.

The Gender Equality Enquiry publishes the report *Policy Objectives and a new Government Agency – Effective Governance of Swedish Gender Equality Policy*.



2015

2016

## 2016

As a UN Security Council two-year member, Sweden raises efforts on conflict prevention and the link between women, peace and security.

Sweden launches an updated and strengthened Action Plan to protect children from human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse.



Sweden creates a new position for an ambassador to combat human trafficking. A report titled *Makt, mål och myndighet – en feministisk politik för en jämställd framtid* (Power, Aims and Authority – Feminist Policy for a Gender-Equal Future, only available in Swedish) is handed to the parliament.

## 2017

The *Du Avgör!* (You Decide!) campaign is launched as an awareness-raising campaign regarding the purchasing and selling of sex, with focus on reducing demand.

A 10-year national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women goes into effect.



2017

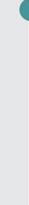
2018

## 2018

The new Swedish Gender Equality Agency is inaugurated. The national coordination against all forms of trafficking in human beings is transferred to the new agency.

The government adopts a new National Action Plan to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings.

A new law which recognises sex without explicit consent as rape takes effect. Prosecution will no longer need to prove violence or vulnerability. Sex must be voluntary – if it is not, then it is illegal.



**‘Sex must be voluntary – if it is not, then it is illegal.’**

# INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Sweden's commitment in the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN additionally inform government policy in this field.

## THE UNITED NATIONS

**CEDAW** – The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – was adopted by the UN in 1979. Sweden was the first country to ratify it on 2 July 1980. Article 6 obliges states to ‘take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.’

The UN Palermo Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, is a comprehensive instrument to fight trafficking. The protocol was ratified by Sweden in 2004. Article 9.5 declares that state parties ‘shall adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures (...) to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking.’

The UN Sustainable Development Goals include three goals that specifically address prostitution and human trafficking. Goal 5 – Gender Equality (target 5.2 to end all violence against and exploitation of women and girls); Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth (target 8.7 to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms); and Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (target 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children).

## THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

**THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE** Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted in 2005. It affirms the necessity to act against the demand for sexual exploitation (Art 6) and on the criminalisation of the use of services of a victim (Art 19). The convention entered into force in February 2008 and became law in Sweden in September 2010.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) is based on the understanding there can be no real equality between women and men if women experience gender-based violence, and it provides a comprehensive legal framework to tackle sexual violence against women and girls. It entered into force in Sweden in November 2014. The convention has a monitoring mechanism called GREVIO.

The Council of Europe has another monitoring mechanism called GRETA which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Sweden has undertaken two evaluation rounds by GRETA.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION

**EU ANTI-TRAFFICKING DIRECTIVE** 2011/36/EU obliges EU Member States to take strong prevention and protection measures, as well as increasing the prosecutions of trafficking in human beings as a crime. Article 18.1 states that ‘Member States shall take appropriate measures, such as education and training, to discourage and reduce the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation related to trafficking in human beings.’

Article 18.4 states that ‘In order to make the preventing and combating of trafficking in human beings more effective by discouraging demand, Member States shall consider taking measures to establish as a criminal offence the use of services which are the objects of exploitation...’.

The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016 focuses on concrete measures that will support the transposition and implementation of Anti-trafficking Directive, bring added value, and complement the work done by governments, international organisations and civil society in the EU and third countries.

The European Parliament Resolution of 5 April 2011 on priorities and outline of a new EU policy framework to fight violence against women (2010/2209(INI)) recognised prostitution as a form of gender-based violence.

Other EU legal instruments that are important are the Victims of Crime Directive 2012/29/EU and the European Union Community Directive on temporary residence permits for victims of human trafficking.

In 2016 Europol released a report on trafficking in human beings that clearly states that prostitution is a risk sector for trafficking and that countries where prostitution has been legalised face a higher grade of exploitation. The demand question and how best to address it is also analysed in the European Commission Study on the gender dimension of trafficking in human beings published in 2016.

Both the Council of Europe and the European Union encourage the creation of National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms and the creation of National Coordinators. Sweden appointed a National Rapporteur at the Police Authority in 1997, and a National Coordinator has been in place since 2009.

**‘In order to make the preventing and combating of trafficking in human beings more effective by discouraging demand, Member States shall consider taking measures to establish as a criminal offence the use of services which are the objects of exploitation...’**

# STATISTICS

Women are in the absolute majority in terms of exposure to violent or sexual crime. Men are in the absolute majority in terms of being the perpetrators of those crimes.

## VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING EUROPEAN UNION

### THE TOP FIVE EU COUNTRIES OF CITIZENSHIP OF REGISTERED VICTIMS

1. Romania
2. Hungary
3. The Netherlands
4. Poland
5. Bulgaria

### THE TOP FIVE NON-EU COUNTRIES OF CITIZENSHIP OF REGISTERED VICTIMS

1. Nigeria
2. Albania
3. Vietnam
4. China
5. Eritrea



# NUMBER OF VICTIMS EUROPEAN UNION

2015–2016

**20,532**<sup>1</sup>

2013–2014

**15,846**<sup>2</sup>

2010–2012

**30,146**<sup>3</sup>

1. The European Commission presented its second report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings in December 2018. The Commission stated the actual number is likely to be significantly higher as many victims remain undetected.

2. *The Progress Report* from the European Commission to the European Parliament and Council from 2016 but these figures cannot be compared to Eurostat's due to different methods of data collection. These numbers are reported from the Member States to the European Commission and the hidden figure is expected to be much higher.

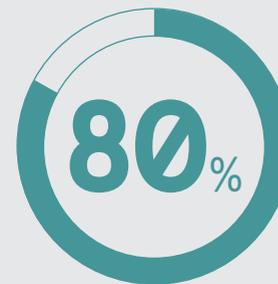
3. The Eurostat (European Statistical Office) paper *Trafficking in Human Beings* from 2015.



WOMEN AND GIRLS



CHILDREN



REGISTERED VICTIMS  
WERE FEMALE



TRAFFICKED FOR SEXUAL  
EXPLOITATION



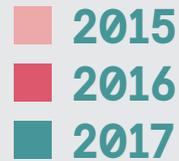
TRAFFICKERS  
WERE MALE



FEMALE VICTIMS  
OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

# CRIME STATISTICS SWEDEN

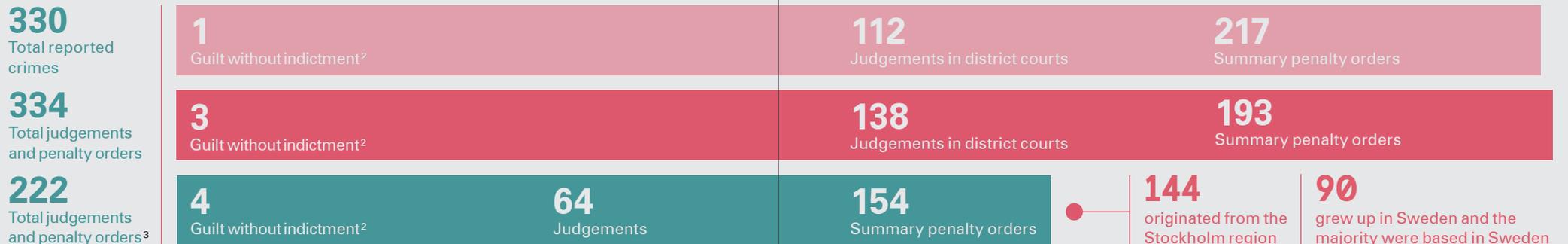
**SOURCE**  
Statistics Brottsförebyggande rådet BRÅ 2017



## PURCHASE OF SEXUAL ACT FROM CHILD



## PURCHASE OF SEXUAL SERVICES



1. 2015  
2. Prosecutor's decision of guilt but without indictment or fine.

# VICTIMS<sup>1</sup>

female  
20–40 years  
75% non-Swedish

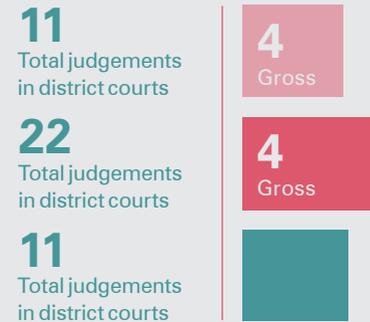
Mainly Romania and Bulgaria but also Russia, Lithuania and Poland as well as Nigeria and countries in South America (with Spanish citizenships).

# BUYERS<sup>1</sup>

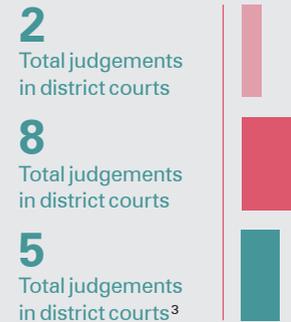
male  
18–71 years  
75% Swedish

The other men were a mix of 25 different nationalities.

## PROCURING / GROSS PROCURING



## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS



3. The women came from Romania and Nigeria but also Albania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Poland, Thailand, Russia, Ukraine, Columbia, Cuba and Brazil.

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING SWEDEN

## POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IDENTIFIED BY THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE'S SUPPORT LINE 2017

The majority were identified as victims of human trafficking for sexual purposes, including a small percentage of men. Bulgaria and Romania were the main countries where the victim has been brought up, but Nigeria, Albania and Russia also figured, as well as Sweden. Among the children about the same amount were exploited in forced begging as for sexual purposes (including a few boys) and Morocco and Afghanistan figured more prominently in the statistics.

**169** adults  
**56** children  
**108** women  
**61** men

## STATISTICS ON ASSISTED RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

**2017** **65** referrals, **39** returns  
**2** received reintegration assistance in home country



Physical and/or medical needs



Sexually exploited

A further 6% experienced dual exploitation, including sexual exploitation and forced begging, and 2% experienced forced marriage and sexual exploitation. The majority were forced to beg. The main country of origin was Bulgaria followed by Romania.

**2018** **31** referrals, **31** returns  
**55** ongoing reintegration cases



Sexually exploited among returnees



Medical needs among returnees

While the majority come from Bulgaria and Romania, a more mixed country of origin, citizenship and country of return can be detected, including the countries Gambia, Nigeria, Uganda and the Philippines. Among the beneficiary profiles one had been exploited jointly for organ removal and sexual exploitation.



# CRIME STATISTICS SWEDEN 1999–2017

**SOURCE**  
Statistics Brottsförebyggande rådet BRÅ 2017

**SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCE**  
Länsstyrelsen Stockholm 2015

**COMPILATION** Author

Sweden appointed a National Rapporteur at the Swedish Police in 1997. The responsibilities of the National Rapporteur include information collection, evaluation and dissemination.

## TOTAL REPORTED CRIMES

## TOTAL JUDGEMENTS AND SUMMARY PENALTY ORDERS

### PURCHASE OF SEXUAL SERVICES

1999–2014

5,919

1999–2017

3,075<sup>1</sup>

### TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES

2003–2017

563

2003–2013

34

### PROCURING AND GROSS PROCURING

1999–2017

1,530

1999–2017

285

1. These figures do not include purchase of a sexual act from a child.

# LINKS, #, CAMPAIGNS AND FURTHER RESOURCE MATERIALS

## MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

government.se  
@SweMFA  
#swefeministgov

**SWEDISH CIVIL SOCIETY  
PLATFORM AGAINST HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING**  
manniskohandel.se

## GENDER EQUALITY AGENCY

jamstalldohetsmyndigheten.se  
@jammy\_sverige

## UNIZON

Unizon represents over 130 Swedish women's shelters, young women's empowerment centres and other support services which work together for a gender equal society free from violence.  
unizon.se/english  
@unizonjourer

## NATIONAL TASK FORCE AGAINST PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING

nmtsverige.se  
@NMT\_Swe

–  
DuAvgör campaign website  
duavgor.se  
#DuAvgör

–  
Travel courage campaign website  
resekurage.se  
#resekurage

## ROKS

The National Organisation for Women's Shelters and Young Women's Shelters in Sweden  
roks.se/about-roks  
@roksnytt

## KVINNOFRIDSLINJEN 'SWEDEN'S NATIONAL WOMEN'S HELPLINE'

+46 (0)20 50 50 50 | kvinnofridslinjen.se/en/  
@KvinnofridNCK

## RESOURCES

A full list with references and resources is available upon request. Please send an email to [order@si.se](mailto:order@si.se)

Sweden's road to combat prostitution looks quite different from that of other countries. The decision to exclusively target demand is Sweden's way to equalise an inherent power imbalance while still disrupting the market. The Sexual Purchase Act comes in the wake of Sweden's long history of standing up against injustices and promoting equality, in particular gender equality. In the 20 years since the legislation came into effect, the results are overwhelmingly positive. It's no wonder other nations have started to look at ways to incorporate Sweden's initiative.



Government Offices of Sweden  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

