



support and empowerment
for female sex workers
and trafficked women
working in hidden places



Outreach in indoor sex work settings

A report based on the mapping
of the indoor sector in nine European cities





INDOORS

Support and empowerment of female sex workers and trafficked women working in hidden places

This report is based on contributions by the nine partners of the INDOORS project. It was compiled within the framework of the INDOORS project (January 2011-December 2012), under the coordination of the following organisation:

Autres Regards
3, Rue de Bône
13005 Marseille, France
Tel. +33 (0)4 9142 4290
contact@autresregards.org
www.autresregards.org

Editors	Lucile Favet, Catherine Falch Autres Regards Marseille, France
Text correction	Nine nine@outofthisboringneighbourhood.com



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The INDOORS partners

AMSTERDAM

Tampep International Foundation | TAMPEP

Van Diemenstraat 194
1013 CP Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel +31 20 692 6912
Fax +31 20 608 0083
tampep@xs4all.nl
www.tampep.eu

TAMPEP is the European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers. It is an international project operating in 25 European countries. TAMPEP was founded in 1993 to address the needs of migrant sex workers in Europe. It is based on the principles of the protection of human rights and the direct representation of sex workers.

GENOA

Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute Onlus | CDCP

Via Della Maddalena 94R
16100 Genova
Italy
Tel +39 33 3155 8473
legraziosedigenova@hotmail.it

Le Grazie is the Genoese group of the Committee for Civil Rights of Prostitutes (CDCP-ONLUS). It is a non-profit association founded in 1982 by sex workers and promotes civil and human rights for sex workers, provides information and advice on issues related to sex work, applies empowerment strategies for sex workers, is involved in projects to combat exploitation and trafficking, and supports information campaigns on AIDS, STIs and harm reduction interventions.

HAMBURG

ragazza

Brennerstr. 19
20099 Hamburg
Germany
Tel +49 40 24 46 31
Fax +49 40 2805 5033
ragazza@w4w.net
tampep.germany@gmail.com
www.ragazza-hamburg.de

ragazza is an NGO that, since 1991, has offered support and counselling on health and social issues for drug-using female sex workers in Hamburg. It offers a room for safe consumption of drugs, needle exchange, meals, showers and overnight accommodation. Other activities are outreach work, harm reduction interventions, and advocacy to draw attention to the situation of drug-using sex workers and their lack of human rights.

HELSINKI

Pro-tukipiste

Vilhonkatu 4B 20
00100 Helsinki
Finland
Tel +358 9 2512 730
Fax +358 9 2512 7388
toimisto@pro-tukipiste.fi
www.pro-tukipiste.fi

Pro-tukipiste ry (Pro Centre Finland) is a registered non-profit organisation which supports and promotes the civil and human rights of individuals involved in sex work. It offers professional low-threshold social support, health care services and legal advice for sex workers in Helsinki and Tampere. Services are free of charge, anonymous, and politically and religiously independent. The organisation also offers consultations on issues concerning sex work and trafficking in human beings.

MADRID

Hetaira

c/ Fuencarral, 18, 4º F.
28004 Madrid
Spain
Tel +34 915 232 678
hetaira@colectivohetaira.org
www.colectivohetaira.org

Hetaira was founded in 1995 by female sex workers and allies, in order to advocate for sex workers' rights, to fight stigmatisation, to denounce the violence to which sex workers are subjected, to facilitate their organising and to sensitise the general public to their situation. The organisation offers counselling and focuses its outreach activities on face-to-face contact, going where sex workers are: streets, apartments and the internet.

MARSEILLE

Autres Regards

3, Rue de Bône
13005 Marseille
France
Tel +33 4 9142 4290
contact@autresregards.org
www.autresregards.org

Autres Regards is a community-based organisation which has worked with and for street-based sex workers of all genders since 1995. The organisation works on STI/HIV prevention, health promotion, and the improvement of access to health services and fundamental rights for sex workers. Since January 2009, Autres Regards' work has also been extended to indoor-based sex workers.

PORTO

Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento | APDES

Alameda Jean Piaget, nº 100
4411-801 Arcozelo
Vila Nova de Gaia
Portugal
Tel +351 227 531 106
info@apdes.pt
www.apdes.pt

APDES is a non-profit association founded in 2004 to promote sustainable development. It works with vulnerable communities and populations (sex workers, migrants, drug users, prisoners, and the unemployed), with the objective of improving access to health, employment and education, empowering populations and strengthening social cohesion.

SOFIA

Health and Social Development Foundation | HESED

87, Stamboliiski Blvd., 2nd floor
1303 Sofia
Bulgaria
Tel +359 2 851 81 08
Fax +359 2 953 34 55
mail@hesed.bg
www.hesed.bg

HESED was founded in 1998 as a successor of the first organisation working in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention in Bulgaria. The organisation's aim is to create opportunities for personal and community development, health and social well-being, to develop and promote effective approaches for successful integration of disadvantaged communities.

VIENNA

LEFÖ

Kettenbrückengasse 15/4
1050 Vienna
Austria
Tel +43 1 58 11 881
Fax +43 1 58 11 88 114
tampep@lefoe.at
www.lefoe.at

LEFÖ is an autonomous migrant women's organisation that was founded in 1985 in Vienna. LEFÖ supports migrant women, migrant sex workers and migrants who are affected by trafficking. It provides a broad spectrum of holistic and largely native-language-based outreach and empowerment activities, and counselling and support for legal, psychosocial and health issues. LEFÖ advocates for the rights of migrant women and sex workers.

The INDOORS project



The aim of the INDOORS project is the empowerment of female sex workers and women in situations of trafficking working indoors, i.e. in apartments, brothels, massage parlours, windows, bars, clubs, saunas, other private places and the internet.

The aim of the project is to develop strategies for female sex workers and women in situations of trafficking to protect themselves against violence, while giving them the means to become active agents in terms of their own well-being, physical and mental health.

Further objectives

- facilitate their access to social and health services, to labour and human rights;
- empower and improve their self-esteem and professionalism;
- support those who want to move on and leave prostitution;
- make more visible and audible their voices against violence, discrimination and stigmatisation;
- sensitise the general public to policies that reduce violence, discrimination and stigma suffered by female sex workers and women in situations of trafficking;
- enhance the knowledge of outreach workers and other professionals regarding the indoor prostitution setting;
- develop local networks of NGOs, social and health services dealing with indoor-based sex workers;
- facilitate and strengthen the exchange of information in Europe regarding indoor prostitution, good practices and lobby strategies for sex workers' rights, especially their right to protection and access to justice.

The INDOORS project is in its second phase, which was carried out from January 2011 to December 2012. The first phase was carried out between January 2009 and December 2010.

The main coordination of the INDOORS project was done by Autres Regards, Marseille, France. Both phases were financed by the European Union, within the framework of the Daphne III Programme of the European Commission for Justice and Home Affairs.

The first phase of the project had six partner organisations in five European countries – Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal. The project produced two final documents, available in PDF format at www.autresregards.org

■ **Indoor Sex Work** | an analysis and good practice manual on indoor sex work settings in seven European cities. The manual was published in English.

■ **Safer Work** | a brochure for sex workers and women in situations of trafficking. The brochure was published in six languages: Bulgarian, English, French, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish.

The second phase of the project had nine partner organisations, in nine different European countries – Austria, Bulgaria, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. The project produced four final products, available in PDF format at www.autresregards.org

■ **Equal Rights** | a video about the labour and human rights of sex workers

■ **Capacity Building and Awareness Raising** | a European guide with strategies for the empowerment of sex workers

■ **Outreach in Indoor Sex Work Settings** | a report based on the mapping of the indoor sector in nine European cities

■ **Pictures of a Reality** | a book in which sex workers talk about their work and life experiences within the indoor sex work setting in nine European cities.

INTRODUCTION

The last ten years have seen considerable changes to sex work settings in many European cities. Indoor sex work is a developing sector. This development can be partly explained by the increased use of new technologies in selling sexual services and by the repressive political agenda regarding sex workers, currently widespread in numerous European cities.

This report is based on the mapping of the indoor sex work sector in the nine European cities of the INDOORS project: Amsterdam, Genoa, Hamburg, Helsinki, Madrid, Marseille, Porto, Sofia, and Vienna.

The indoor venues vary from one city to another. The venues most frequently encountered during the course of this project were clubs, apartments, massage parlours, brothels, *Laufhäuser*¹, bars, saunas, clubs, sex shops and windows.

The information used in this mapping was collected by all partner organisations from the first quarter of 2011 to June 2012. Female, non-transgender sex workers were the main target but men and transgender indoor-based sex workers were also contacted.

This report aims to give a comprehensive overview and analysis of the indoor prostitution scene, its settings, trends, specific needs, working and social conditions.

While contributing to a better knowledge and understanding of the indoor sex work scenario, this report will help organisations working with and for sex workers to assess and address the specific needs of indoor sex workers, especially with regard to risk reduction.

¹ A *Laufhaus* is a multi-level building with several apartments dedicated exclusively to sex work. *Laufhaus* means 'walk house', because men walk around the corridors until they choose a sex worker.

This mapping does not constitute scientific research but is based on information collected mostly during outreach. It represents trends and draws a picture of a complex and multifaceted reality which is difficult to access and to analyse.

Indoor sex workers are more difficult to reach than outdoor sex workers. Some of their workplaces are less visible, and even when visible, access is not always easily granted to outreach programmes. Added to this is the variety of forms of indoor venues and their distribution all over the urban territory. As a consequence, indoor sex workers tend to be more isolated. It is thus especially important to reach and provide information to these sex workers, as well as to gather information on their working conditions and needs.

METHODOLOGY

This mapping reflects both trends in the indoor sex work sector and the methodology of the outreach work. To ensure consistency in the mapping report, the collection tools were identical for all partners, as was the information processing. A common questionnaire was created as a basis for the contacts with sex workers. The results were then entered into a communal database (referred to in the report as the INDOORS database).

All partner organisations share the same ethical process in their outreach activities: they respect the sex workers' autonomy, try not to interfere with their work, and guarantee their anonymity and confidentiality.

While most of the contact was made during the routine outreach work of each partner organisation, the mapping was an additional activity to this regular work. The outreach teams collected the extensive information required for the mapping by way of cautiously led conversations, all the more so when touching

upon sensitive issues. The mapping tool was filled in subsequent to the contact, to enable a more spontaneous conversation and to ensure enough space in the discussion for topics or needs raised by the sex workers.

Most of the contacts were individual contacts. They took place either during outreach or were initiated by sex workers. Indoor sex work being structured in very diverse ways, these contacts were either direct, face-to-face contacts, or contacts via the phone or the internet (Facebook, blogs, chat, etc.).

Some sex workers were met more than once. This explains why the number of sex workers contacted and the number of total contacts differ in most cases in this report. Some figures in this report are based on the total contacts; others are based on the total of different sex workers encountered, according to what is more relevant for the mapping.

The information compiled during outreach is combined with the analysis and the field knowledge of the partner organisations to provide a comprehensive and extensive picture.

The indoor prostitution scene differs within the nine cities. The general context and the political and legal environments are not the same, nor are the indoor venues. The outreach methods vary accordingly. One of the expressed priorities of this report was to reflect as much as possible the indoor sex work realities of each city. The choice was therefore made to present the results per city.

For each city, the indoor sex work context is presented through seven themes

- Methodology of contact with sex workers
- Prostitution scene
- Sex work venues and working conditions
- Autonomy at work
- Needs of sex workers: social and medical
- Mobility of sex workers
- Violence

Two overarching themes are highlighted through analysis based on the results

- Stigma
- Isolation and access to services

Each city provides a focus on an important issue linked to indoor sex work. This focus is about a specific trend, about the legal context or about the outreach methodology. It helps to provide an understanding of the daily work of the partner organisation and/or specific issues in the daily lives of indoor sex workers.

When dealing with human realities, figures should be treated very cautiously. This is all the more true when dealing with personal issues or topics related to human rights abuse such as violence, stigma, and discrimination. In this report, the figures tend to support and illustrate the overarching narrative.

It is not easy to establish and maintain contact with indoor sex workers, but this is essential for forging a relationship based on trust, and especially crucial when dealing with sensitive subjects. Moreover, the collection of information implies a longer conversation with the sex workers in which they agree to talk about their daily lives, experiences and opinions. These prerequisites – trusted relationships and availability – are not always part of the daily reality. This explains why some questions remain insufficiently answered.

These reservations aside, this report gives a detailed overview of the indoor prostitution scene in nine European cities, a field which remains largely unexplored.



Local reports by city



1. Methodology of contact with sex workers

Outreach context

■ **Mapping period:** 15 months, from March 2011 to June 2012

■ **Outreach location:** Amsterdam, The Netherlands

■ **Outreach coverage:** The mapping covered the following indoor venues: windows, bars, brothels, clubs, massage parlours, escort agencies, and apartments.

The regular coverage of the outreach team differs from the coverage of this mapping exercise. Outreach in Amsterdam is mostly conducted in licensed venues (windows, clubs and brothels). However, in order to compile a more comprehensive picture of sex work in the city, some mapping data collected came from other important venues due to collaboration by the outreach team and peers. This means that the data collected on outreach is mostly based on specific forms of sex work settings in the city, while the results presented in this mapping give a more comprehensive picture of the reality, taking into account other forms of sex work

which are normally not encountered and not licensed (apartments, bars, escorting and massage parlours). It is important to clarify, however, that outreach work does take place in unlicensed settings; however, this happens less frequently, because of the difficulty in accessing these venues, mobility of sex workers, and mixed forms of sex work.

Having said that, the methodological choice was to balance the mapping data collected by the outreach team and peers by selecting diverse forms of sex work venues. Particular attention was paid to massage parlours where predominantly Chinese women work. These venues are clandestine and normally not visited.

The current estimation of the number of sex workers in Amsterdam ranks from a minimum of 4,000 to a maximum of 7,850 sex workers per year.² As such, the outreach team could never cover a wider range of the sex work scene in the city. On top of that, little is known about the situation of sex workers working in the unlicensed venues or working only occasionally.

■ **TOTAL contacts:** The data entered in the INDOORS database is based on 200 comprehensive counselling conversations with sex workers; however, the trend analysis is based on around 700 contacts with sex workers.

■ **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 700

Methodological choices

■ Each contact entered into the INDOORS database is a new sex worker, based on a unique and comprehensive contact. No follow-ups were included in this analysis;

² Anton van Wijk e.a., *Kwetsbaar beroep. Een onderzoek naar de prostitutiebranche in Amsterdam* (2010), Beke-report, commissioned by the Municipality of Amsterdam. Gemeente Amsterdam, Bestuursdienst, Directie Openbare Orde en Veiligheid. Aanpak dwang en uitbuiting, Meer zicht en grip op de Amsterdamse prostitutiebranche. Nota van Uitgangspunten 2012-2017. 12 June 2012.

- Only contacts resulting in complete information and data collection were considered as comprehensive for this analysis;

- The selection of the mapping tool was based on the diversity of the sex work settings in the city;

- This report considers results in percentages, but the narrative also makes use of citations, employed to indicate preferences in order to make clear that an individual sex worker had multiple answers.

This methodological choice was necessary in order to have a more realistic picture of the situation of sex work and sex workers in the city. The data from the 200 counselling conversations function in this way as a 'sample'.

The mapping results should not be considered as absolute data or as entirely representative of the actual situation. This is primarily due to the extreme difficulty of collecting information that accurately quantifies and represents the sex industry and its workers. Systematic collection of information is further complicated by the fact that the sex worker population includes migrants who move from place to place and country to country. In addition, many sex workers work in sex work venues that are not easily identified as such. The only reliable source is the expertise of organisations and projects working in the field and/or those in direct contact with the sex worker population. Nonetheless, these sources of information are inevitably biased. Most services, projects and organisations focus on a particular sector of the sex industry and as a result get a partial view of it. By combining estimates from many different organisations in the field, TAMPEP hopes to get a general idea of the main trends in prostitution.

Outreach methodology

In Amsterdam, a number of different organisations contact sex workers and carry out outreach activities and services. The Prostitution & Health Centre is an initiative of the municipality of Amsterdam to attend to sex workers' needs. The team is composed of nurses,

counsellors, cultural mediators and social workers. Outreach activities in indoor venues – the only form of sex work scene in Amsterdam – are conducted by the Centre and other collaborating organisations. The Rode Draad (the Dutch organisation of sex workers), SOA/AIDS Netherlands and PIC (the Prostitution Information Centre) are also active in contacting sex workers in the city and in the country. Outreach is done regularly, on a weekly basis.

The frequency of these services depends, however, on the settings. In the windows, for example, different teams provide services normally once a week. The main service provision centre in the city is provided by the municipality, which has a comprehensive package of services (health, labour rights, social support, training programmes, cultural mediation, anti-trafficking protection, reintegration programmes for other labour sectors, policy advice, and referrals to other specific services). Additionally, outreach teams are capable of referring sex workers to different sorts of services when needed.

Having said that, the majority of contacts are made during outreach (73%), followed by contacts via the internet on specialised websites (16%). A small number of sex workers (4%) were contacted via other sex workers, through owners/managers of sex work venues, at events, workshops, meetings and/or through referrals by other sex work projects.

Outreach is the main form of contacting sex workers and is the setting in which most of the contacts take place (86%). Although visits always involve face-to-face contact, sex workers are often reached and/or followed up through phone calls and the internet. Sometimes the outreach combines more than one of these forms, i.e., first a call and then a visit. A further 12.5% of contacts are made at the service providers' premises. In a very small number of cases, contacts happened through peer meetings.

The main characteristic of the fieldwork is its potential for long conversations and provision of information and services at the workplaces of the sex workers which, in general, are easy to access by the expert outreach workers.

Moreover, there are other outreach programmes carried out by NGOs with different backgrounds and specificities (aimed at male sex workers, transgender sex workers, migrant sex workers, drug-using sex workers; targeting specific settings such as massage parlours or the escort sector; and some projects make use of internet facilities such as blogs and other websites to maintain contact). The transgender community is normally, but not exclusively, reached through the use of specialised websites (16.7% of the contacts).

These outreach projects and service providers frequently work together using a referral system based on the various positions, main goals, competencies and missions.

TAMPEP maintains direct contact with (migrant) sex workers, through peer-to-peer work and other community representatives and other NGOs which contact this target group. Moreover, different materials and sources from TAMPEP are used and integrated into the outreach activities implemented in the city.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

The method of contacting sex workers depends on each outreach project in the city. Given that most of the services available are provided by the municipality of Amsterdam, it is more likely that they will focus on the licensed sector: windows (135 licences, 409 windows), brothels/sex clubs (19 licences) and escort agencies (24 licences). In this sector, the owners are obliged to guarantee safer sex information as well as access to service providers.

The unlicensed sex work venues are still little known and, for this reason, the municipality has no official statistics regarding such venues. Sex workers who practise these independent forms of sex work are working in various settings

which (thus far) are not under the licensing obligation, as this obligation only applies to organised business premises. Moreover, many sex workers in the unlicensed sex work sectors work across the whole country, because they are not tied to a location and combine individual escort services with apartments, hotels, clubs, etc. Contact with this group of sex workers depends on specialised blogs and websites or via peer-to-peer contact. Moreover, face-to-face contact in many cases takes place only if sex workers know the service providers and visit their premises.

The method chosen takes into consideration that sex workers are vulnerable even when working in licensed venues. The basis for this assumption is the Rode Draad report which recently pointed out that Hungarian sex workers working in window prostitution are likely to become vulnerable to the exploitation of pimps³. This report is revealing of migrant sex workers' social vulnerability (language and cultural barriers, ethnicity, and exploitation by traffickers or boyfriends) even in the licensed sector.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

TAMPEP was founded in 1993 with the aim of carrying out methods and practices of cultural mediation and peer education among migrant sex workers. The objective during these years was to implement a methodology among organisations working in the field of sex work. Nowadays, it can be said that the methodology has been successfully integrated into these programmes; however, it does not always address the same comprehensive package and interdisciplinary methods. Many organisations use TAMPEP's multilingual education/information materials and cultural mediators.

Outreach to migrants is normally conducted using cultural mediators, for two reasons. First, migrants feel more comfortable talking about private issues with nationals of their own country, which establishes a trusting relationship

³ *Summary of Sex Work in The Netherlands in 2011: a Trend Report*, De Rode Draad, 2011.

and increases the effectiveness of the outreach. Second, many migrants don't speak Dutch or other languages, so communication is only possible through the sex worker's native language. Considering the high number of different nationalities of sex workers working in the city, only the main spoken languages among them are covered by cultural mediators and services.

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits, calls, internet)	172	86
At the service provider's premises	25	12.5
Other	3	1.5
TOTAL	200	100

Other

Peers and colleagues, encountered at a meeting

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	190	80
Direct contact over the phone	36	15
Email/internet	10	4
Accompaniment	1	1
TOTAL	237	100

Contact methodology

Why the majority of sex workers showed interest

All the sex workers were interested because the services are comprehensive, with a wide variety on offer. The organisations have different backgrounds, specifics and connections, which makes them appealing to sex workers.

The majority of the contacts were made by outreach workers. Of the 200 sex workers in the sample, 18% directly contacted the outreach teams, the majority of whom did so because they were already aware of the services they provided thanks to information from other sex

workers (50%); or they called the outreach team to invite them into their workplace (12%). In some other situations, other organisations referred sex workers to the outreach workers.

It is interesting to note that, because the methodological choice of entering data was to select only new contacts or first contacts, the number of outreach workers initiating contact with sex workers is very high (82%). This information does not necessarily reflect the reality but the fact that the sample was aimed at reaching this specific target: the first contacts.

Conclusions on the efficiency of the methodology

As explained above, the methodology varies by organisation and project. However, it may be adapted if the new prostitution law proposal (discussed later in this report) is approved by the Senate. The new methodology would have to consider the new situation, which would make all sex workers, including workers in the unlicensed sector, more vulnerable.

Lately, the method used in Amsterdam is comprehensive and based on the main needs of sex workers. Further services, however, should be developed targeting the unlicensed sector, which is more hidden and harder to reach, and in which sex workers are more vulnerable.

The efficiency of this method relies on the fact that all the data was collected by field workers during outreach, and for this reason, sex workers do not have to look for services themselves. The practical aspect of this methodology is that less time is wasted, since they do not have to leave their workplaces to find information. It is very significant, however, that nonetheless 18% of the sex workers sought out the services themselves. This demonstrates effective publicity and accessibility of the services in the city.

Identification of key people or intermediaries to facilitate contact

TAMPEP has good connections with sex workers, owners and managers of sex work venues, clients and peer educators, who are involved in outreach or sex work projects in the city. Working together with them facilitates the access of outreach teams to more hidden and varied forms of sex work.

Gender, age or origin as reasons for accepting or refusing contact

The methodology used does not allow us to draw relevant conclusions on this.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/outreach team	166	82
The sex worker	34	18
TOTAL	200	100

When contact was initiated by sex workers, how had they learned of the organisation?

	No.
Outreach	5
Word of mouth (through other sex workers)	18
Referral by another organisation/institution	4
Cards/flyers distributed by the organisation	4
Through owners/managers	2
Media and public events	1
TOTAL	34

2. Prostitution scene in Amsterdam

■ **Gender** – Based on the results of this mapping exercise, around 7% of sex workers working in Amsterdam identify as transgender, with the remainder comprised of 85% women and 8%

men. These results correspond more or less to the reality of the city, which consists of a majority of non-transgender women working indoors.

■ **Age** – The prostitution scene in Amsterdam is very diverse, and different sexual services are offered. The ages of sex workers vary considerably from setting to setting. 50% of sex workers are aged between 25 and 35, followed by younger sex workers (31%) in the 18-25 age group. The remainder, 19%, are aged between 35 and 50 years old. The trend is that, particularly in apartments, sex workers are over 30, with previous experience of other sex work settings.

■ **Migration** – Almost 70% of the sex workers are migrants, and 29 different nationalities were encountered during this mapping exercise.

■ **Origin and nationalities** – The results correspond to the national trend of the major migrant group of sex workers coming from new EU countries (with 60.4% of respondents coming from EU countries as a whole).

Because of the licensing system and its strict rules, which allow only nationals, EU citizens, or long-term migrants with permission to stay to work in the sex industry, the origin of sex workers has changed since 2000. Many women from Eastern European countries are working in window brothels, a group of whom appear to be working autonomously. In some window areas, there is a striking number of Hungarian women. In late 2011, however, the Dutch government unexpectedly announced that Romanians and Bulgarians would no longer be permitted to work legally in licensed brothels using the 'opt-in' scheme (a special working contract similar to that of a freelancer), but with no exemption from paying social taxes. This was done with no prior notice, giving people no time to make other arrangements. As a result of this sudden change, there is considerable unrest and uncertainty among the Romanian and Bulgarian women working in sex work, and a clear general trend to move to sex work organised through the internet.

TAMPEP believes that the data used for this report, which was based on a selection of information collected on outreach collection, is representative of the reality in Amsterdam.

However, for all organisations working with sex workers in Amsterdam and in the country as a whole, it is impossible at the moment to have extensive knowledge of the situation of non-licensed prostitution venues and the individual workers. Multiple forms of sex work are also hard to identify since these sex workers change venues and/or combine different forms of sexual services.

Other forms of invisible sex work include the massage parlours, saunas, and bars and hotels across the country, where sexual services are not explicitly specified but may be offered and, in many cases, are opportunistic. Occasional independent work, along with the sex workers who offer services in non-licensed prostitution venues, is underrepresented in the figures, as the majority of the information from the mapping exercise comes from the licensed sector.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	170	85
Male (non-transgender)	16	8
Transgender	14	7
TOTAL	200	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	139	69.5
Nationals	61	30.5
TOTAL	200	100

Origin of migrant sex workers

	No.	%
European Union	84	60.4
Eastern Europe and Central Asia (non-EU countries)	8	5.8
Balkan countries	1	0.7
Latin America and Caribbean	21	15.4
Asia-Pacific	16	11.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	5	3.6
North Africa	3	2.2
Data not recorded	1	0.7
TOTAL	139	100

Nationalities

1. Netherlands ⁴	6. Slovakia
2. Hungary	7. China, Ecuador
3. Poland	8. Colombia, Thailand
4. Romania	9. Ukraine, Dominican Republic, Germany
5. Bulgaria	10. Moldova, Ghana

Impact of Dutch migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Amsterdam

Residence permits

Only EU citizens are allowed to work in prostitution as they have no obligation to apply for a work permit. This is due not to prostitution regulation law, but to the general labour law on access to the labour market in The Netherlands. However, due to this labour law, only citizens of the newest EU member countries (Romania and Bulgaria) have access to labour in the form of self-employment. Other EU citizens are in the

⁴ This number is a relative percentage given that the total number of migrant sex workers is higher than that of Dutch sex workers.

same position as Dutch sex workers – there is no more specific legislation. For people from outside the EU, sex work is the only type of work for which it is not possible to obtain a work permit (WAV: Wet Arbeid Vreemdeling). The procedure and logical framework of this exception in the labour law for foreigners is as follows: as soon as a (non-EU) person intends to carry out work for a third person, the employer has to apply for a work permit. Given that prostitution is legal work, applying for a work permit should be possible, but is by definition not possible because the law makes an exception for activities that are connected to offering sexual services (including erotic shows) for and with third parties. This prohibition dates from before the legalisation of prostitution, when the law stated that it was not possible to obtain a work permit for an activity that was not legal.

Work in the sex industry

In the Netherlands, not all of the sex workers who possess residence permits and are legally in the country are working legally in sex work. This mapping reveals in numbers the contradictory nature of the Dutch prostitution system. Although 86.5% of the sex workers are not concerned (because they are EU citizens) or are in a regular situation in the country, 38% have an irregular status in the sex industry. This actual system excludes many sex workers from working legally (permission to stay does not allow sex work; working conditions are not authorised by the municipal authority; and other restrictions).

In the actual situation, the division between regular and irregular status in sex work is mainly based on the dichotomy between licensed and unlicensed. Under this system, nationals may also be working irregularly because the form of work they perform, for example, does not fit into the licensing system. For example, escorts (nationals or migrants) working in their apartments do not have permission (from some municipalities) to work under the licensed system, which forces them to work irregularly.

Since 2000, when the licensed system was introduced to legalise prostitution, the exclusion of non-EU sex workers without work permits had tremendous effect in pushing different groups into invisible forms of prostitution; on the other hand, this system made it possible for sex workers from the EU to work legally in the Netherlands. In practical terms, sex workers from new EU countries occupied the sectors in which the majority of sex workers had previously been Latin American and African.

In other words, it is labour regulation that determines the legal position of sex workers in the country. In some cases, sex workers make an informed choice to work outside of the licensing system due to the high number of obligations that this system incurs, which can affect sex workers' privacy, autonomy and income (more taxes, or payment of high fees to work in a brothel). In spite of these obligations, there is little protection and social acceptance of their profession.

Although this report presents a realistic picture of the 38% of irregular sex workers, there is still very little outreach to, and information about, this sector. Whether the actual number is higher or lower, this percentage is still an indication that many sex workers are outside of the legal system. This report suggests that this number could be even higher if outreach activities were to target more irregular settings.

Health insurance

Health insurance in the Netherlands is in principle compulsory for everyone (nationals and legal migrants). The number of uninsured sex workers (35%, all of whom are migrants) is explained by the high costs of medical insurance, even for the basic package (around 100 euros per month), particularly for those in the position of working independently.

It should be pointed out that independent work is the mainstay of sex workers in the licensed/legal sector in the country. Due to stigma and the economic barrier, there are two main kinds of behaviour/choices:

- some of the migrant sex workers have health insurance in their country of origin and, in case of an emergency, use this pass to apply for medical intervention in the Netherlands;
- some of them use the health services provided by outreach organisations, which are anonymous and free of charge.

This also explains why the number of uninsured sex workers is so high: the question relates to having health insurance in the Netherlands, while in reality many have it in their country of origin.

FOCUS

The impact of new legislative trends on sex workers' lives: a shift from labour rights to regulation as strong state control

Sex work was legalised in the Netherlands 12 years ago. Originally, the regulation was intended to create a licensing system that brought the sex industry into line with labour law, tax systems, immigration law, health regulations, and public order measures. In spite of that, most sex workers today would not describe the current situation in favourable terms, and would argue that they have less autonomy, more obligations, and little formal recognition or support of their rights.

Moreover, the focus of the policy and its enforcement has shifted to prioritise stricter checks of workplaces and sex workers, particularly migrant sex workers. In 2008, the Minister of Justice started drafting a new legal framework for sex work in the Netherlands. The aim of this initiative was to correct the disparities in policy implementation across municipalities and improve the means to combat trafficking and exploitation.

This resulted in a new law proposal which is to be voted on by the Senate in 2012. This law reflects how sex work is understood within the national political framework, and includes the following measures:

- Compulsory registration for all sex workers across all sectors of the sex industry, regardless of whether they only occasionally work in sex work, work alone at home, or work alone as escorts⁵ (penalty: fines);
- Stricter restrictions on licensing brothels, which means that more sex work venues will be closed down;
- Criminalisation of clients who pay for the services of unregistered sex workers (penalty: fines and/or imprisonment);
- Sex workers under 21 will not be allowed to work, nor to register as sex workers.

Despite the objectives of such a law, it is unlikely that the new legal framework will achieve its goals if it does not first prioritise the safety and well-being of (migrant) sex workers. It is expected, instead, to seriously affect the living and working conditions of sex workers, who will have fewer legal places to work, and more pressure to register (if registration is even possible for them). As a result, many sex workers will have to work in more hidden and unsafe venues.

Still in the framework of the Netherlands' paradigm shift over the last years, several municipalities, including Amsterdam, have already been implementing another local public administration law, known as BIBOB Act⁶. This law contributed to a 50% reduction in window brothels and other major forms of sex work settings in Amsterdam. More licensed sex work settings are still likely to lose their licences.

⁵ In the city of Amsterdam the police have recently shifted their attention to the escort sector, conducting entrapment procedures as a way to locate and identify undocumented migrant sex workers and unlicensed business operators.

⁶ 2003 Public Administration (Probity in Decision-making) Act (BIBOB Act). The BIBOB Act offers authorities and public services new instruments to prevent criminals making use of specific government provisions. The Act applies to three sectors, namely to permits (specified in the BIBOB Act), subsidies, and the tendering of government contracts.

This policy is part of the gentrification process that is taking place in Amsterdam, pushing sex work outside the downtown area or to indoor venues, in order to make the city visibly ‘clean’ of sex work. Due to this process, sex workers are now seen as a problem to be solved in the city, and no longer as part of the city’s life. The famous red light district is being constantly reformed to develop other businesses not related to sex work, damaging its intrinsic historical compatibility with sightseeing.

As an example of this political debate, which has serious consequences for sex workers, the mayor of Amsterdam and the councillor for the special programme related to the red light district recently presented a new prostitution policy report (2012-2017) to be implemented from 2013 onwards. It has not yet been approved by the municipality council, although consensus is expected. Part of the plan has to do with a range of repressive measures.

1. Compulsory registration of all sex workers at a special office in Amsterdam. Registration will include personal information, fiscal reference number, and telephone number. The registration number and data will be entered into a National Register. The penalty for non-registration is a fine of 380 euros. The plan also states that it is not possible to check or refuse the registration of sex workers who are victims of trafficking and coercion.
2. Greater responsibility of brothel owners for abuses in their businesses:
 - a compulsory business plan will be imposed for all prostitution businesses;
 - obligatory time sheets for sex workers;
 - it will be compulsory for the brothel owner to be on the premises during opening hours;
 - prohibition of the employment of unregistered sex workers on their premises;
 - language proficiency required for sex workers; and
 - implementation of the national guidelines regarding hygiene in prostitution businesses.

In sum, the conflation of sex work and trafficking has a long political history in the Netherlands, and today the debate is being formalised in legislative amendments and national and local policies. The result is an environment of uncertainty and misinterpretation of sex work, which leads to violations of fundamental human rights, such as the right to work, the right to privacy, etc. This change of attitude, heavily supported by media discourses and politicians at the national level, has contributed to decreased representation of sex workers in the law-making process which directly affects them.

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

In the Netherlands, any form of licensed enterprise is understood within the concept of brothel. However, within this category many forms of licensed brothels can be found, such as windows, apartments and clubs.

In this sense, to run a sex business in the Netherlands one must have a brothel licence, which has its own specificities according to the form in which sexual services are carried out. Specificities also vary from one municipality to another.

The mapping, however, has a different interpretation of the concept of brothel, if compared to Dutch law’s broad definition. Following this division, in the city the majority of the sex work venues are windows (33.9%), apartments (19.9%), and brothels (14%). It is noteworthy that apartments often fall within the sphere of the clandestine, unlicensed sector. Escort agencies comprise another form of sex work venue (14 contacts reported), through which two or more sex workers offer services online.

It is well known that sex workers in Amsterdam work in multiple premises, rather than sticking to one. The results of this mapping prove that many sex workers are working in more than one place, practising mixed forms of sex work (i.e. window + apartment; escort agency + apartment; escort agency + club or hotel, etc.). This explains why in the results there were 236 answers while only 200 sex workers were interviewed.

The results indicate that the window brothels are the main setting in the city.

Outreach is mainly conducted in the window area, which has the highest number of services for sex workers. This also relates to the high number of sex workers working alone (46%), which is the standard practice in this setting, although some of the sex workers working in the windows have a common area, a kitchen, and other facilities where they are in touch with their colleagues.

Amsterdam is known worldwide for this form of sex work venue, but it also appears in other Dutch cities, like The Hague, Utrecht, and Alkmaar. In this form, the window brothel owner has a licence to rent the venue (according to the specific municipal regulations) to independent sex workers. This rent can be for a day, week or month. The cost of renting a window is normally high; however, it is considered a safe place to work.

There has been a steady reduction in the number of (licensed) clubs and private houses (brothels) in the Netherlands: from 800 in 2000 to around 340 in 2011. The total number of window brothels has also decreased in recent years. This trend has a direct impact on the working conditions of sex workers: for example, higher rent for the windows, unfair employment practices, and bad workplace conditions. Sex workers complain about low prices for the services provided, decreasing numbers of clients and increased competition which leads to a reduction in the price of sexual services.

This unfavourable situation in licensed premises explains the trend of sex workers seeking new opportunities in the form of independent work.

There are numerous websites through which sexual services are offered. Most often, these are offered by the sex workers themselves, who either work from their own homes (providing services as independent escorts), rent hotel rooms in which to receive clients, or work in shared settings (rooms or apartments) rented together with colleagues. Sex workers in licensed clubs, private houses, massage parlours and escort agencies are also finding customers through the internet and then arranging appointments with them in licensed establishments.

One other remarkable trend is the increase in Chinese massage parlours. Some other forms of sexual services are being provided in an unknown number of these parlours.

If the new prostitution law proposal is approved, another scenario within the sex work industry will take shape. This is due to the fact that all forms of organised sex work settings will be obliged to have licences, with the same conditions in place across the whole country. In this new panorama, it will be harder to identify exactly where the unregistered sex workers are working, since they will go underground. It will be harder to know where sex workers working in this 'criminalised sector' come from and in which settings they are working.

In spite of the fact that the prostitution law has not yet been passed by the Senate, the mayor of the municipality of Amsterdam announced that the compulsory registration of sex workers will be implemented as of 1 January 2013, and all brothel owners must be obliged to submit a business plan with strong evidence of their measures to counter abuse, along with other regulations. Moreover, language proficiency will be used as criteria for registration for migrant workers.

Places of work

	No.	%
Window	80	33.9
Apartment	47	19.9
Bar	15	6.4
Hotel	6	2.5
Brothel	33	14
Club	13	5.5
Massage parlour	14	5.9
Sauna	8	3.4
Other	20	8.5
TOTAL	236	100

Other

Escort agency, gay bar, sex club, internet

Control over working conditions and safer sex practices may not be absolute; however, the fact that most migrant sex workers are EU nationals means that they have a more equal position with national sex workers, can take advantage of rights and protections under the regulation system, are able to self-organise around their work, and are generally able to exercise autonomy in their work as well as having a better negotiating position for condom use with clients.

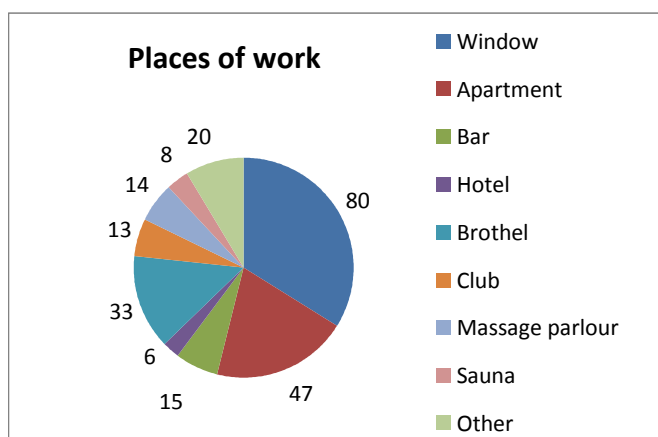
The vast majority of sex workers stated that they have a high level of condom use and safer sex practices. This result is based on the fact that the top five sexual practices mentioned by sex workers are safer sex practices. Moreover, mentions of inconsistent condom use relate to low-risk practices.

While levels of condom use and safer sex practices are still good among migrant and national sex workers, both are often under more stress, either financial or structural, and in a weaker bargaining position when negotiating with clients. Although the demand comes mainly from clients, club and brothel managers/owners also sometimes advertise, and pressurise sex workers to offer, unprotected (oral) sex, aiming for bigger profits.

The difficulty of refusing unsafe sexual practices is very often rooted in the financial and economic pressure many sex workers must cope with: coercion in the workplace, growing competition in the sex industry, and the lack of a clear understanding of the consequences of practising unsafe (oral) sex.

Therefore, it is of crucial importance to continually conduct outreach work and disseminate information on HIV/STIs and labour rights in order to prevent HIV, STIs, violence, and exploitation.

With the general erosion of the autonomy of many sex workers, and in light of the increasing pressures they face, their ability to confidently negotiate safer sex with clients has become severely compromised. The weak legal position of many migrant sex workers is one of the main factors of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Those



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Amsterdam, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

The experience of having control over working conditions and safer sex practices is very much the norm for both national and migrant sex workers. However, over-regulation and an absence of industry innovation have led to some sex workers being in a situation of greater dependency on organisers of the sex industry.

working for themselves are more likely to insist on condom use or refuse abusive clients.

4. Autonomy at work

How autonomous are the contacted sex workers?

78% of the contacts reported having control over their working conditions. This situation is possible because the majority of sex workers in the Netherlands work, in principle, autonomously (in clubs and brothels) based on a kind of freelance (opt-in) contract.

Sex workers working in the windows also have the status of autonomous workers, since they are registered with the Chamber of Commerce and have their own administration. The owner of the window, in this case, is only a landlord. In the future, if the new plan of the municipality is implemented, the position of the window brothel owners will change to hold them more responsible for the working conditions and the management of the enterprise.

An example of this autonomy is that 121 contacts reported that they themselves negotiate their working hours, and 83 their rental conditions. These, the main indicators of autonomy, are directly related to the main form of sex work in Amsterdam, the window brothels. Although the autonomy of sex workers in the windows is high, renting conditions still often concern them, especially when landlords raise the prices or do not permit, for example, renting by the day. The prices, however, are more or less fixed for all windows.

However, this does not mean that working conditions and earnings are perceived as favourable; control is not the same as good working conditions. Many sex workers, for example, complain about unfair working relations with brothel owners.

Evolution of autonomy

Another point deserving attention is that as of recently, because of the political tension around sex work and new upcoming regulations (and those already implemented, like the restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian sex workers), sex workers tend to work autonomously. As mentioned before in this report, sex workers set up their own businesses through websites or through all sorts of advertisements. This explains the high number (84%) of sex workers reporting that their autonomy remained stable or had increased.

5. Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

The themes discussed are numerous and they correspond to sex workers' social needs. The mapping reveals that the main social needs are related (in general) to working conditions, legislation, and legal issues. This was the result observed among nationals and migrants, regardless of gender. Other themes were also discussed, however, with results that vary by gender and migration status. Migrants tend to approach themes in connection with their migratory status: social support, isolation, living conditions, access to social services, housing, psychological support. As a result, it can be inferred that all sex workers are concerned with the circumstances of their work, their working conditions, their relationship with brothel owners, and the impact of the changing legislation, especially regarding the new rules and obligations. This trend is directly related to the ongoing political discussion in the Netherlands.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

In relation to health, it could be observed that the patterns of the needs vary greatly according to the gender of the contacts.

Non-transgender female sex workers, whether migrants or nationals, are mainly concerned with general health and gynaecological issues. Special attention should be paid to the fact that migrants in particular have a greater need for general health care. This result could be interpreted as a consequence of expensive and not easily accessible health insurance (for migrant workers) in the country, especially those working illegally.

For male and transgender sex workers, the needs relate heavily to HIV and STI issues, among others. It is important however to clarify that few male and transgender sex workers were contacted, so the results presented regarding this population can only be interpreted as a trend and not as conclusive data.

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to sex workers' needs?

The services in the Netherlands are comprehensive and address sex workers' main needs. More outreach and services, however, need to be provided to sex workers working in the unlicensed sector.

In general, new and/or additional services are required, geared towards covering the needs of (new) target groups and in relation to the new legal framework and regulations on sex work. These additional services and interventions should primarily focus on providing useful (legal) information, bridging language barriers and increasing the self-confidence of sex workers through services aimed at empowerment and support.

In relation to male and transgender sex workers, it is hard to confirm the extent to which the services are suitable, due to the fact that the number of contacts with these workers, as in this analysis, may be insufficient.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

National and international mobility

The actual situation reveals a high number of sex workers who, for many reasons (personal and professional), choose to cross borders. Mobility is high both inside and outside the country (54.5% and 50.5% of sex workers respectively) and relates to the opportunities available, which include a support network of people – friends and acquaintances – who can assist sex workers in moving and finding a job and a place to live.

The trend is that migrants are more mobile than nationals and that the chosen countries are all close by, within the EU, or neighbouring countries. Few sex workers travel outside this area to work.

Reasons for mobility

Mobility among sex workers is like mobility in any other profession. People look for jobs where the demand is higher and where they earn more money. The trend of having sex workers from new EU countries in the city applies to other forms of labour too. Contradictorily, some EU labour restrictions prohibit workers from new EU countries from working for an employer, but allow them to be self-employed. In order to be self-employed, however, one needs skills and sometimes money to set up a business, and people who come from these countries do not always match this profile. Sex work becomes a legitimate means, for many people, to earn money and work legally (as an independent worker).

In the Dutch case, many sex workers migrate to the Netherlands since prostitution is not criminalised in the country. In addition, some new EU migrants are not entitled to request working permission for other professions; however, working as an independent sex worker is allowed within the licensing system. There are, currently, special rules applied to Romanian and Bulgarian sex workers.

Another notable point is that 50% of the legal sex work venues were closed over the past five years. This has increased internal mobility in the Netherlands because renting a window, for example, is not always easy or possible in the city. Other sex workers began to work some of the time in neighbouring countries, like Germany and Belgium. Their stays in these countries are normally short-term, sometimes only for a few days working in a club or in a window (also a common setting in Hamburg, Germany).

Another fact is that nationals normally migrate to the nearby countries in the region, like Germany and Belgium. They are also less likely to cross borders, considering that their professional status in the Netherlands is better than in many other countries.

Migrant sex workers are by definition a mobile population. The results reflect mainstream migration (within EU borders). This phenomenon has increased since there are almost no border checks within the EU countries.

Moreover, cross-border mobility is related to personal networks and community relationships. As an example, Latin American women who have relatives in Italy are more likely to cross borders to Italy because they already have contacts there and information about the host country. The decision to migrate is certainly not made at random; it demands a choice within a cluster of factors that influence this decision.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

Violence is a sensitive issue for sex workers. Victims of violence often do not want to recount such experiences to strangers, so a positive response to this topic mostly requires a trusted relationship with the outreach team. This is harder to establish in first-time contacts with sex workers, which was the case for all the contacts featured in this analysis. In addition, violence is not always perceived or acknowledged by sex workers, due to processes of marginalisation and stigmatisation.

In spite of this, the results of this mapping show that 47% of the sex workers had experienced violence. This data is based on direct answers from the sex workers, rather than the opinion of the outreach team. For 46.5% of the sex workers contacted, no experience of violence was reported, or violence was not an issue discussed by the outreach team. In 4.5% of the cases, violence was observed by the outreach team. And in 2% of the cases, a sex worker reported a colleague's experience of violence.

Another significant result is that 51.5% of the contacts did not answer the question on frequency of violence. It could be that the sex workers did not want to talk about violence (which is especially liable to be the case in a situation of first contact with the outreach team), but given that this question is focused on the lifelong experiences of the sex workers, it is not always easy to tell the frequency. Conversations in counselling are normally based on the present situation, which also limits the chances of obtaining a more accurate result. In this sense, it is logical that violence could take place at different moments of the sex workers' lives, and for this reason, it is hard to measure the frequency of these violent acts since the question is not time-specific.

Finally, it should be noted that violence can also be related to sex workers' private lives, and not only in relation to their profession.

Forms of violence

Firstly, all answers reported in this section refer directly and only to those sex workers who reported cases of violence, and not to the whole range of contacts. This explains the high number for whom no data was recorded.

Additionally, as explained above, the psychological state of the sex worker – and his or her trust in the outreach team – greatly influences whether a question on violence will be answered or not. This can also explain the high number of contacts for whom no data was recorded on forms of violence.

Having said that, it can be inferred from the figures that the types of violence vary, and multiple answers were often reported. This has to do with the fact that many sex workers identified more than one form of violence, which leads us to conclude that the experiences of violence reported here are related to lifelong experiences as well as their environment and workplace. This means that sex workers did not necessarily answer this question based on their own experience with different forms of violence. This also explains why the majority of sex workers (94 contacts) report having experienced violence seldom or occasionally.

Secondly, violence against sex workers takes multiple forms (physical, economic, verbal, etc.). Moreover, one type of violence is often related to other forms of violence. For example, 48 contacts reported that they had been forced to have unsafe sex against their will. A further 26 contacts said that they had been forced to perform a sexual act against their will. In essence, both are cases of sexual abuse, and in the first situation the sex worker is put in a very vulnerable position, risking infection with HIV/STIs. Another 34 contacts reported having been hit or beaten, degrading and inhuman treatment to which sex workers have been subjected by different perpetrators. What all these types of physical abuse have in common is that they are not to be understood only as occurring within the working hours of the sex worker, but should be considered as an experience related to the life of the sex worker in general.

Economic violence, on the other hand, is mostly perceived as economic exploitation, an attack on their right to fair payment. 93 reported having provided services which were not paid for, or were paid for with an insufficient amount. This number is significant, especially in a country in which sex work is legalised. The tendency, however, is that this sort of economic abuse happens in the irregular sector, causing sex workers to feel raped with no recourse to justice. Moreover, it can be said that this sort of violence is even more perceptible to sex workers than physical or verbal violence.

Other forms of violence, such as verbal and psychological abuse, were also reported. These sorts of violence are directly related to processes of stigmatisation, marginalisation, and social exclusion. They also relate, in most cases, to feelings of fear associated with an environment which permits all sorts of abuses. In relation to migrants, fear of the police was frequently cited.

Perpetrators of violence

It is noteworthy that, because violence happens at different times, in different places, and with different perpetrators, this question has multiple answers. In this sense, one sex worker could have had more than one experience with violence from different perpetrators.

Most sex workers (85) reported that the violence they had experienced was perpetrated by clients. Private networks (relatives, friends, acquaintances) comprise the second most significant source of violence (34 contacts). Other perpetrators are directly related to the work environment (club owners) and institutional repression (police, authorities). Very few (2 contacts) referred to trafficking networks as perpetrators.

Indicators of violence

Violence against sex workers is multifaceted. Several conditions foster an environment in which violence takes place.

Based on TAMPEP's experience, it can be said that violence is more likely to occur in unsafe and isolated settings if the sex worker is working alone, without any of the safety measures that are present in the other types of premises (alarm systems, as in window brothels, or the presence of an owner/manager, as in clubs). Because of the industry's clandestine nature, sex workers often have to submit themselves to working conditions and situations which have a direct impact on their feelings of safety and well-being (both physical and psychological).

In this sector, most sex workers are migrants, who often depend on third parties (including traffickers) to perform their work. The less autonomous they are in their work, the more likely they are to be victims of economic exploitation, especially in the unlicensed sector. Stigma, marginalisation and discrimination (direct and indirect) contribute to an ongoing system of violence, and many times contribute to justifying it. The feeling of unworthiness, for example, can make many sex workers believe that violence is part of the profession, when in reality no one should be subjected to such abuses.

Frequency of violence

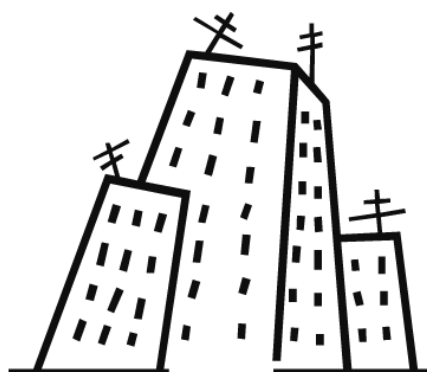
	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	94	47
Sex worker reported a colleague's experience of violence	4	2
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	66	33
Violence was not a discussed topic	27	13.5
Violence was observed by the outreach team	9	4.5
TOTAL	200	100

Perpetrators of violence

	No.
Client	85
Relative, friend, acquaintance	34
Colleague	15
Owner/manager of venue	29
Trafficking network	2
Public authorities/officials	12
Police	7
Other	13
TOTAL	197

Other

Would be pimps of independent sex workers, general public walking in the red light district, partner



GENOA

Italy

1. Methodology of contact with sex workers

Outreach context

■ **Mapping period:** 14 months, from April 2011 to June 2012

■ **Outreach location:** Genoa, Italy

■ **Outreach coverage:** The mapping exercise covered sex workers who worked in apartments, *bassi* and bars in Genoa, and through the internet.

The majority of the contacts were in the Maddalena neighbourhood, where there is a concentrated presence of sex workers working in apartments and *bassi* (rooms located on the ground floor or in the basement of buildings). In these cases, the contacts came about through visits from the outreach team and through sex workers who visited the CDCP's drop-in centre located in the heart of the neighbourhood.

Few contacts were made with the sex workers working in bars across the city. Outreach work was not possible inside these bars, specifically due to the fact they are only open at night and are very similar to clubs frequented by clients;

they are not easily accessible to unaccompanied women who are not there to do sex work. Contacting sex workers in bars was possible thanks to the help of sex workers already known to the team, and was conducted by phone and in the drop-in centre.

An existing sex worker mailing list, set up to share information and to debate various topics, was also used as a contact tool. A page on a social network (Facebook) was additionally created. The contacts made through the internet are comprised of sex workers advertising on websites indicating their area of work as Genoa or the Liguria region. Often, however, they replicate the same adverts for other cities in northern Italy as well. In some cases, the sex workers contacted stated that they were not exactly in Genoa but indicated their availability for appointments with clients in various cities. In essence, the team discovered that while adverts in the few local newspapers have a truly local, or at least regional, value, the adverts on websites are not always relevant to the area cited in the publicity. The team conducted internet outreach over approximately 50 day-sessions, with 20 contacts via email every day, amounting to around 1000 messages, which became slightly complicated to deal with.

■ **TOTAL contacts:** 299

■ **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 196

In compiling this report, the contacts taken into consideration were only the ones that offered a rather complete set of data. Some contacts online were not included in the INDOORS database, since contact via the internet at times did not allow for in-depth knowledge of the individuals contacted. Data on 196 people was entered into the INDOORS database. Some of these people were contacted more than once, which is why the total number of personal contacts is 299.

In the case of sex workers who were contacted more than once or who regularly take part in CDCP activities, the team did not enter all the repeat contacts but only those that were significant and/or provided new information.

Outreach methodology

The outreach team, composed of three professional educators with the collaboration of peer educators, chose to use the classic methodology of direct contact, showing up on a periodic basis at the *bassi* and apartments in the Maddalena neighbourhood where the sex workers work. The team visits these places and initiates a dialogue with the sex workers with the help of the condoms and leaflets, and by offering legal assistance. For the new workers in the area, information was given about the organisation and about the drop-in centre on Maddalena Street, which has fixed opening hours two days a week.

This area is where the CDCP is most active in Genoa and has the strongest connections with sex workers, which helps in meeting and contacting newcomers to the scene. This area, however, is also the one with the greatest amount of pressure, due to the high number of sex workers present and because it is the place where sex workers are more active in defending their rights and calling for decent working conditions. Both the weekly drop-in sessions and the periodic visits help to establish better connections and a better atmosphere of trust.

The team members introduce themselves on the first visit, explaining their reasons for showing up, and explaining the organisation they represent and the reasons for the work it carries out. Using flyers to help illustrate the services offered, the team attempts to foster dialogue on certain issues that are sensitive for sex workers, in order to bring their needs into focus.

Activities such as workshops or meetings are proposed at the drop-in centre to help with the empowerment of sex workers and to respond to their requests and suggestions.

When it is difficult to contact sex workers in person (such as those in bars), the outreach team calls them on the telephone with the help of a peer educator, and asks to meet with them.

During this second INDOORS project, use of the internet intensified to reach sex workers who would otherwise be unreachable. After having sifted through newspapers and specialised

websites – though none of the adverts openly offered sexual services – email addresses and phone numbers were collected along with the details of each advert. Thus, either by phone, email or entering chat rooms/advertising forums, the team initiated direct contact and asked for the opportunity to speak about the CDCP's project with those who responded. A lot of time was dedicated to attempts to establishing contact over the phone, but the team often received vague, though polite, replies, and was asked to call back later. Replies to emails were also rare.

In the end, the team was able to speak to only a fraction of individuals from a long list, and of this fraction, only around 50 had conversations with the team that made it possible to complete a profile extensive enough for this project. Many sex workers, not limited to those from Genoa, contact the CDCP by telephone, via email, or through the website.

From the recorded data, it is evident that the most effective work is through outreach which allows the team to visit sex workers at their workplaces. Sex workers who come by the drop-in centre were often made aware of it during outreach contact, and had been invited to visit the organisation regarding their work needs or, for new arrivals, information about daily life in the new city.

There is a deeper connection with those who come to the drop-in centre to ask for information or consultations about specific problems. A few also show up because they are interested in the activities of the CDCP.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

Different methods of contact have been attempted by the team, but not all had positive results. It is believed that the best way both to be trusted and to build a close relationship is to know the target personally and be introduced by someone who is well known in the community. Clearly the team cannot do the same with the online contacts, and this difference is illustrated in the feedback.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

The same approach is used with both Italians and migrants. With migrants, the team often has the help of a cultural mediator from the same country of origin, who can help in attaining a better understanding and insight into specific difficulties and complications. Attempting to establish virtual contact by telephone or internet with a migrant has its limitations in creating trust, due to linguistic obstacles. Having a peer educator or a linguistic mediator could create misleading suspicions about the organisation's identity and provoke a sudden end to the contact.

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits, calls, internet)	158	52.8
At the service provider's premises	128	42.8
Other	7	2.3
Data not recorded	6	2
TOTAL	299	100

Other

During public event

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	212	70.9
Direct contact over the phone	22	7.4
Email/internet	12	4
Data not recorded	53	17.7
TOTAL	299	100

Contact methodology

Why the majority of sex workers showed interest

Given that the method of making contact via the internet and telephone naturally filtered out uninterested contacts and that incomplete contacts were not entered in the INDOORS

database, the data shows a high percentage of interested sex workers (91.3%). Among direct contacts in the Maddalena area, the relationship with the sex worker population is very friendly and the team has won a lot of confidence.

Conclusions on the efficiency of the methodology

The CDCP is an organisation in which sex workers participate directly, which permits the team to plan its interventions based on their needs and interests. In Genoa, the team's first approach is based on labour conditions, which are very difficult at the moment. Next, the team speaks about rights, security, and prevention, taking into consideration the answers received, so that subsequent contact starts with the needs expressed during previous conversations.

The types of activities carried out by the committee also make it possible to meet with sex workers during events, public initiatives and meetings with other associations.

Identification of key persons or intermediaries to facilitate contact

The participation of the peer educator facilitates the encounters and the method used is, as a result, effective and extendable.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that indoor-based sex workers have high levels of distrust or disinterest towards those who try to enter their premises. It is difficult to initiate contact and almost impossible to enter apartments in which no relationship has been established with the sex workers.

Gender, age or origin as reasons for accepting or refusing contact

Among those who refuse contact and are not interested are many foreign women, especially from Eastern Europe, and also from China. It is likely that because of linguistic and cultural problems, they do not understand the aims of the team.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/outreach team	189	63.2
The sex worker	100	33.4
Data not recorded	9	3
Other	1	0.3
TOTAL	299	100

Other

Another sex worker

Response of sex workers to contact initiated by the outreach team

	No.	%
Interested	179	91.3
Refusal	2	1
Silence	2	1
No time, busy at the moment	9	4.6
Message left in mailbox	3	1.5
Data not recorded	1	0.6
TOTAL	196	100

When contact was initiated by sex workers, how had they learned of the organisation?

	No.	%
During outreach	52	41.3
Word of mouth (through other sex workers)	29	23
Referral by another organisation/institution	1	0.8
Cards/flyers distributed by the organisation	31	24.6
On the internet	2	1.6
During media or public events	5	4
Other	4	3.2
Data not recorded	2	1.6
TOTAL	126	100

Other

Sex workers who participated in the organisation's activities in various ways; sex workers who have known about the activities and services of the team and organisation for a long time.

2. Prostitution scene in Genoa

■ **Gender** – The contacted sex workers were mostly non-transgender women (93.9%), who are the only ones who work in the Maddalena area. However, at the bars, the team contacted mostly transgender people because the sex workers who helped introduce those contacts were transgender. Even through online work the contacts made were mostly non-transgender women. However, there are many transgender people who advertise on the internet, and some websites are mainly used by transgender people.

■ **Age** – Regarding online contacts, one can never be certain of the age if the person refuses to meet with the team; this includes cases in which there may be minors fearful of interventions. The average age of contacted sex workers was relatively high, with 39.8% aged over 36 years old, and this is certainly true for those met in person.

■ **Migration** – The majority of the people contacted were migrants with valid immigration papers.

■ **Origin and nationalities** – The largest group of migrants was comprised of Latin American women, mainly from Colombia and the Dominican Republic; this is due to the fact that there has been a well organised Latin American community in Genoa for many years. Specifically, some Colombian and Dominican sex workers settled in the Maddalena area and have assisted the arrival and stay of other sex workers from the same countries. They are typically adult women who have decided to stay in Italy for a few years with their families, but also maintain strong links with their country of origin.

On the other hand, there is also the unique situation in which sex workers arrive for brief periods of time at the invitation of friends who are residents. They arrive without partners or family, and work many hours and outside the unwritten rules established among the groups. These individuals create conflicts with the

people of the city, and certainly have a negative impact on the market by driving prices down.

It is noted that within the transgender community there is an equal presence of Italians and migrants, while among non-transgender women the majority is decidedly migrant. Even among the transgender migrants, the majority are Latin Americans.

Asian women are almost always from China, adult and single, and they typically live under the radar without legal documentation. They are supported by the Chinese community in Milan and Rome, which manages every sector of work: textiles, footwear, catering and sex work. In fact, every worker can contact the labour centre of the community and access the various options of work. Generally, the decision to work in erotic massage is made because of the potential to earn a higher income than through other work. Little is known about prevention measures taken in the workplace, but according to a well-informed peer educator, condoms are frequently used.

From the CDCP's experience, the scene that emerges from the collected data faithfully represents the reality of sex work in the historical downtown area. The situation of sex work in bars and clubs is only partially represented in the data.

Chinese massage parlours where sex work is practiced are not represented in the data, as it is very difficult to enter them as a team (while extremely easy as a client). The police are increasingly shutting these parlours down. In fact, on the day this report was written, there was an article in the newspaper which read: "Genoa July 4 – Two massage parlours managed by Chinese shut down in Genoa, eleven suspects, of whom two were arrested for abetting prostitution. This is a result of Genoa's part in Operation: Dragon, which has brought about dozens of arrests and charges at a national level." As in other cities, Genoa has seen a rise in prostitution in massage parlours and apartments in the last two years.

Male sex work in Genoa takes place in other areas and the CDCP has not targeted the male sex worker community as yet.

As far as the team knows about the sex work reality in other cities⁷, it certainly cannot be said that downtown Genoa is the same as the rest; everywhere there are diverse peculiarities.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	184	93.3
Transgender	12	6.7
TOTAL	196	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	158	80.6
Nationals	38	19.4
TOTAL	196	100

Origin of migrant sex workers

	No.	%
European Union	7	3.6
Eastern Europe and Central Asia (non-EU countries)	5	2.5
Balkan countries	3	1.5
Latin America and Caribbean	131	66.8
Asia-Pacific	6	3
North Africa	5	2.5
Data not recorded	39	20
TOTAL	196	100

⁷ Comparison available through the Italian network of street units, which provides information on the situation in other cities.

Nationalities

1. Colombia	6. Albania
2. Italy ⁸	7. Morocco
3. Dominican Republic	8. Romania
4. China	9. Brazil
5. Argentina	10. Russia

Impact of Italian migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Genoa

Work in sex work

Sex work in Italy is neither a crime nor is it regulated. However, the law penalises exploitation, soliciting and abetting, as well as underage prostitution. In recent years, the mayors of some cities, including Genoa, have enacted an ordinance that prohibits offering sexual services in public places and foresees fines against prostitutes and clients.

Residence permit

Legal residence in Italy for migrants is bound to a work contract or official family matters with Italian citizens or other legal migrants. Often, sex workers must stipulate fake work contracts with payment, since sex work alone does not offer a legal work contract.

Health insurance

In Italy, all citizens have access to the public health care service through the issuance of a health card. Payment for the service is calculated on a sliding scale. Disadvantaged citizens enjoy the right of access to free health care services.

⁸ This number is a relative percentage given that the total number of migrant sex workers is higher than that of Italian sex workers.

Most migrant sex workers are not legal migrants and, as a consequence, are uninsured. They can apply for the special health card for irregular migrants (STP or Temporarily Present Alien card), which guarantees treatment in hospitals and health care centres; however, many do not use it for fear of drawing attention to their irregular status. Health care centres for irregular migrants are decreasing in number. Romanian citizens, though their country is a member of the EU, must pay for health care services.

According to the CDCP's data, a high percentage of sex workers in Genoa have public health insurance (71.4%) because, in addition to Italian and other EU citizens, a high percentage of migrants have legal residence (55.1%), entitling them to public health care.



The legal situation and repression and its impact on working conditions, violence and stigma

In Genoa, the majority of indoor sex workers work in the centre and especially in the Maddalena district, in apartments and in flats situated at ground level, called *bassi*.

In the Maddalena district there are several problems (poor quality of life, drug use, drug pushing, dirtiness and high concentration of night clubs) which exasperate residents and shopkeepers. In recent years, the sharp increase in sex workers and consequent increase in aggressiveness on the part of residents and shopkeepers in the area have provoked strong protests and sporadic acts of intolerance.

In 2008 the municipality of Genoa issued a measure to prohibit the use of the *bassi* by sex workers. The majority of these premises are registered as storerooms and cannot be used for other purposes. According to this measure, if any person is found in one of these rooms with sofas, beds, etc., he or she will stand accused of breaching the measure.

As a consequence, sex workers moved to apartments on the upper floors of the same buildings, which led to more problems with the residents. Some sex workers went out on the streets, thus increasing their visual presence.

As a matter of fact, the measure had a sort of boomerang effect.

Sex workers organised themselves to defend their rights. They founded the section of the Genovese CDCP, formed by sex workers and social workers.

At the end of 2009, after several months of meetings and mediation between sex workers, the City Council, and residents and traders of the town centre, the City Council commissioned Le Grazie⁹ to carry out a mapping exercise, to plan, mediate and listen to the residents of the Maddalena district.

In October 2010 the mayor of Genoa signed an ordinance that prohibited prostitution in public areas, indecent clothing, and any behaviour that may offend public decency.

As soon as this measure was announced Le Grazie, together with some sex workers, organised protests and requested a meeting with the mayor, without results.

This ordinance was based on the decree of a security package from the Minister of Interior. The Constitutional Court has partially blocked the government's security package, defining it as unlawful because it violates the Constitution; however, the ordinance is still applied because the municipality of Genoa assigned the contents of the ordinance to municipal regulation. This implies that the potential to fight this administrative law on legal grounds has changed completely. (At the time of writing, Genoa has a new mayor and the majority governing the city has changed, so the fight continues with the hopes of changing the policies.) Some fines were issued, mostly in the areas of street prostitution at night. In the Maddalena area, a few fines were issued to women working on the street. For several months this ordinance has scared

customers away and decreased the amount of work for sex workers who work on the streets and in the *bassi*, but has not produced any important changes in sex work in Genoa.

The main effect of these repressive measures is to keep the sex workers in a state of fear and vulnerability. Consequently, it decreases the negotiating skills of sex workers and increases exploitation.

Fortunately, at the same time there has been an increase in protests and mobilisation of sex workers, who have increased awareness of their rights.

Le Grazie, together with some sex workers, organised meetings with a lawyer in order to determine what to do so as not to suffer injustice and an abuse of power, and also to provide support to sex workers who will appeal against the fines.

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

■ The majority of sex workers contacted work in **apartments** (81%). These apartments are typically one or two rooms with a bathroom, or *bassi* (described above), usually in the Maddalena district. Most of these apartments are rented and have some sex workers working together, each one paying a daily quota to the leaseholder. It should be noted that according to Italian law, it is a crime for more than one sex worker to work in an apartment. Nonetheless, many said that they share an apartment, mostly for security reasons as well as economic.

At the moment, about 20 *bassi* in the downtown area, called *ghetto*, are used for sex work by transgender sex workers (these *bassi* were not closed down thanks to an agreement with the city commune), as well as a few units in the Maddalena district (sex workers who work there

⁹ Le Grazie is a collective of sex workers and supporters founded in Genoa and affiliated to the CDCP.

risk being fined but have not been able to find a better solution).

■ **Bars** are where people meet, have a drink, and agree on the sexual service to be provided. In some cases, the managers organise and set up the availability of sex workers; in others sex workers are independent and the managers profit from the consumption of beverages.

Some sex workers, besides working in their own apartments, are willing to visit clients' residences and hotels. There is also a very small minority who place ads on the internet and typically are willing only to show up at hotels.

■ **Night clubs** are sometimes members-only, where sex workers are hired by managers to entertain the members, but they are illegal and there are only a few of them.

■ **Chinese massage parlours** are not included in this report. These parlours are open daily until late at night. Oriental massages are openly advertised and clients can request additional sexual services.

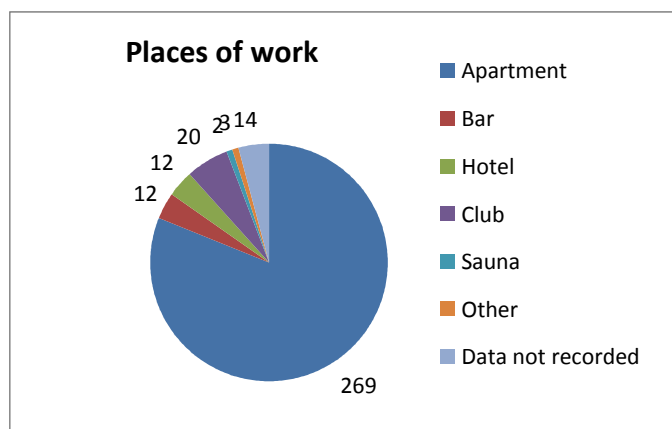
Some sex workers work in more than one setting (bars and night clubs, apartment and hotels, etc.).

Places of work

	No.	%
Apartment	269	81
Bar	12	3.6
Hotel	12	3.6
Club	20	6
Sauna	2	0.6
Other	3	0.9
Data not recorded	14	4.2
TOTAL	332	100

Other

Client's home



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Genoa, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

According to the results, a very small percentage of sex workers admit to having unprotected sex, and in fact 80.8% did not respond directly to the question. According to the CDCP's experience, this data does not correspond to reality.

In most cases in which sex workers offer or agree to unprotected sex, they do so to earn more money. In fact, those who admit to practising unprotected sex say that they do so in order to avoid losing clients, or to attract more clients and make more money.

According to the team's experience, many sex workers are ashamed to admit to these activities in an interview, because they are aware of the risks entailed. They prefer to ask for medical tests.

Sex workers with the least bargaining power (such as irregular migrants and/or those being exploited and controlled) are the most exposed to blackmail, and thus risks. Use of alcohol and drugs can give a false sense of security, but very few are willing to admit drug use to the outreach team.

4. **Autonomy at work**

How autonomous are the contacted sex workers?

From the responses it appears that there is a good level of autonomy in the working conditions. However, there are 29% who perceive an ongoing reduction in autonomy. Some of these individuals are now dependent on a workplace (apartment) from people who are taking advantage of the prohibition by the municipality.

The sample of sex workers who responded to this question have many years of experience in this line of work and have been living in the area for a long time, which explains why a lot of them are autonomous.

5. **Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical**

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

The peculiarities of the Maddalena district, with its social tensions and consequent public order measures like sanctions and discrimination against sex workers, make counselling and legal assistance necessary.

These are the issues with which the outreach team was most occupied, as well as rights and working conditions.

Legal issues are the main concern of migrants, including all migrants contacted via the internet. The main inquiry is about the possibility of legal residence for irregular migrants.

Social aspects regarding families are sometimes brought up in cases of divorce or marriage. Some older sex workers also ask about alternatives to sex work and the possibility of help in finding a job.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

Health issues were not talked about much during the contacts. With regard to health and prevention, there are active services in various areas that sex workers know and use (first aid station for migrants, street unit, public services, etc.). The outreach team chose not to overlap with the street intervention unit, but to intervene only when there were specific questions.

This year, the street unit service, which helped to circulate information about health and prevention, and accompanied sex workers to medical appointments on request, was suspended. The CDCP therefore foresees an expansion of prevention work. The team always gives out condoms, advice and counselling when needed about health and prevention topics. In particular, more requests and consultations about prevention come from transgender sex workers. For specific cases involving assistance with hormones, they are referred to the MIT (Movimento Identità Transessuale).

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to sex workers' needs?

The methods and approach suit the needs encountered. The working method and proposed initiatives take into account the changing circumstances and requests of the sex workers. As for the frequency of the interventions, there should be more time allocated. Furthermore, the interventions lack a certain lasting stability, which always makes them precarious.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

According to the collected data, mobility is low (14.7% in Italian territory and 9.4% in other European countries). About 55% of the sex workers contacted said they do not move around for work.

This is due to the fact that in the Maddalena district there is a small permanent community of sex workers. The Italians have been rooted there for many years and rarely move elsewhere. The highest mobility is among migrants for the reasons described below, and also because they are the most willing to move towards more lucrative opportunities.

International mobility

Based on the CDCP's experience, the percentage of mobility in other countries (9.4%) is less than what has been observed directly by the team. There are some migrant sex workers who have been in Genoa for some time and give turns to compatriots from their country of origin to work. This practice is not declared for fear of being accused of exploitation and abetting prostitution. The system was explained to the team by other sex workers.

Furthermore, there is a possible mobility between Italy and Spain, especially during holiday periods and festivals. The most conspicuous evidence of this is seen among South Americans with legal residence in Spain. The mobility is not declared (though quite visible) for fear of being boycotted and discriminated against by other sex workers.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

The fact that the area is structured like an informal community of sex workers partially creates protection against the worst forms of violence in the Maddalena district. The elements of violence are only slightly perceptible and rarely discussed, given that there is a small measure of physical violence. Psychological violence is more common and is often a by-product of the working conditions (rented apartments, illegal access to subsidised national services through compatriots). Often it is considered an inevitable part of sex work and is therefore never acknowledged as violence. Sex workers who had not known the outreach team for a long time avoided the question. Therefore, the team's conclusion is that levels of violence against sex workers are greater than shown by the results of this mapping exercise.

Forms of violence

The high number of non-responses (76.7%) shows the high level of silence on this topic. Forms of violence are taboo; it is difficult even to hint about it. This attitude is evident in both long- and short-term contacts. Sex workers have an easier time recounting violence faced by other sex workers rather than what they themselves have faced: the violence they have observed and not the violence that they have suffered.

The silence is broken if the topic touches on verbal abuse, which occurs mainly at the workplace. Theft at the workplace is also seen as a norm, a risk of the job and often underestimated; these are not considered as forms of violence.

Perpetrators of violence

The majority of cases of violence are attributed to clients. What was observed in the Maddalena area was a growing number of sex workers who

were less used to the market prices, and therefore had a tendency to lower prices, together with less bargaining power. The arrival of newcomers weakens the potential for protection and solidarity in the sex worker community. These two tendencies fundamentally allow clients and violence more space and power.

As for police and other authorities and institutions, the degree of pressure is based on the interventions ordered by superiors and public administrators. The more public attention is focused on the situation, the more clampdowns, and thus more situations of abuse. Police abuse often takes the form of small retaliations, such as threats to take stronger official actions if sex workers do not leave.

Indicators of violence

According to the CDCP's experience, a broad range of factors contribute to violence. The situation of migrants clearly facilitates various forms of racism. Furthermore, Italian legislation criminalises irregular migrants. This creates a situation in which they cannot report forms of violence for fear of being reported in turn.

Younger and new sex workers are typically less aware and knowledgeable about potential dangers and risks. In Italy in 2011 and 2012, 15 female sex workers were murdered; these figures are very high compared with the last ten years.

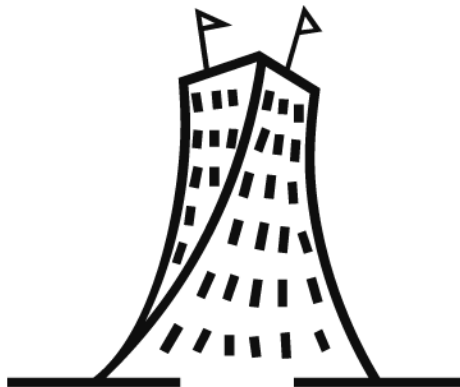
Another situation is that of victims of trafficking, for whom violence and coercion are part of their daily lives and, at times, of sex work.

Frequency of violence

	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	78	24.3
Sex worker reported a colleague's experience of violence	17	5.3
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	106	33
Violence was not a discussed topic	96	29.9
Violence was observed by the outreach team	6	1.9
Data not recorded	18	5.6
TOTAL	321	100

Perpetrators of violence

	No.
Client	73
Relative, friend, acquaintance	12
Colleague	8
Owner/manager of venue	3
Trafficking network	3
Police	35
Public authorities/officials	10
TOTAL	144



HAMBURG

Germany

1. Methodology of contact with sex workers

Outreach context

- **Mapping period:** 14 months, from April 2011 to June 2012
- **Outreach location:** Hamburg, Germany
- **Outreach coverage:** The mapping covered the following indoor venues: apartments, brothels, massage parlours, clubs and *Laufhäuser*¹⁰
- **TOTAL contacts:** 432
- **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 320

Over the period of the project, the outreach team contacted 320 different sex workers. However, some of those sex workers were visited a second time, giving the total of 432 contacts: 112 second visits were carried out. Each contact was entered into the INDOORS

¹⁰ *Laufhäuser* are very common in Germany. They are big houses with several individual rooms which are rented by sex workers on a daily or a weekly basis. *Laufhaus* means 'walk house', because men walk around the corridors until they choose a sex worker.

database as a new contact. This method does not exclude multiple answers but the team could verify that they do not significantly affect the results.

The reasons for visiting a sex worker a second time vary, though a significant reason is to create a relationship of trust. There were also cases in which the sex worker was receptive but busy during the first visit, which meant going back a second time to give, but also to receive, information. There were further cases in which the first contact was successful but the team felt that the sex worker was still reluctant, and therefore tried again some time later.

During these repeat visits the team was able to collect valuable additional information.

Outreach methodology

Sex workers are visited directly at their workplaces (apartments, brothels, massage parlours, clubs and *Laufhäuser*). Visits are carried out about once a week, from 12 noon to 6pm, with a car, because venues are spread all over town. Outreach work is conducted by cultural mediators and nurses. There are always two team members (a cultural mediator and a nurse, or two cultural mediators), and a driver.

Around 10 to 12 addresses per outreach session are chosen from an address list of about 250 indoor sex work venues. The duration of each visit ranges from five minutes to an hour. The address list is updated approximately every three months; addresses are mostly taken from specialised websites.

Venues are never phoned beforehand. Outreach workers ring the bell and introduce themselves as members of a women's organisation which is there to give information on legal and health issues, distribute leaflets, condoms and lubricants, and refer service users to medical and social counselling centres in town.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

Back in 1995, when sex work was still not recognised in Germany, phone calls were actually made, but the team quickly understood that women were afraid of giving their address on the phone, because they could have been talking to the police. Therefore this mode of outreach was discontinued.

Because of the high mobility of sex workers and the high number of nationalities found among migrant sex workers, the methodology was required to develop to be very flexible.

The mix of nationalities among the outreach team members – the cultural mediators and nurses are from seven different countries – is a sign of this adaptation. Because one never knows which nationalities will be encountered, the teams are usually mixed, in order to try to reach and communicate with as many sex workers as possible. This flexibility is also employed during the outreach itself, when the questions put by the sex workers lead the direction of the conversation.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

There are no methodological differences between contacting German or migrant sex workers.

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits)	432	100
TOTAL	432	100

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	432	100
TOTAL	432	100

Contact methodology

Why the majority of sex workers showed interest

In the majority of instances of contact with sex workers, 326 of 432 contacts (75.5%), interest was shown in the information the team offered either because it was exactly the information that the sex workers needed or because they already knew the team and wanted some follow-up on specific issues.

In 106 out of 432 cases the contact was very short: in 61 cases the sex worker was busy, and in 45 cases she refused contact because of lack of interest.

However, in both cases, information leaflets in their languages were handed out, as well as condoms and lubricants, which is why they were included in the INDOORS database as having been contacted.

During those 14 months, the project visited 445 different addresses, some of them twice. At about 30% of the addresses the door was not opened, and at about 10% of them, the building was being renovated or it did not exist anymore.

This means that contact was successful and carried out in about 60% of the visited addresses.

Conclusions on the efficiency of the methodology

The methodology used has proved to be efficient in the Hamburg context and will therefore continue to be employed.

Identification of key people or intermediaries to facilitate contact

Sex workers are approached directly, as the majority work on an autonomous basis. However, in the venues where there are managers, the team explains their intent, shows the materials on offer and avoids any sort of discussion or conflict. If they are not welcome,

they leave the premises, leaving the materials for the sex workers if permitted.

In some cases, sex workers themselves are the ones to bring the team's attention to other addresses, greatly facilitating contact with new sex workers.

Gender, age or origin as reasons for accepting or refusing contact

Age has no bearing on the quality of the contact. The issue of gender is not possible to compare because the team was always exclusively composed of women.

National origin is, however, a crucial issue, being the reason why the team is composed of cultural mediators from Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic, Bolivia and Thailand, and nurses from Poland, Kazakhstan, Colombia and Uganda. The fact that there is a common language and cultural identity considerably facilitates and supports the contact.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/outreach team	432	100
TOTAL	432	100

Response of sex workers to contact initiated by the outreach team

	No.	%
Interested	326	75.5
Refusal	45	10.4
No time, busy at the moment	61	14.1
TOTAL	432	100

Reasons for refusal

	No.
No need for services offered	30
Not concerned	11
Other	4
TOTAL	45

Other

In two cases the sex workers did not speak German or any of the languages of the cultural mediators, which made the contact impossible. In the two other cases, sex workers preferred to talk to the team only in front of the venue managers, which could signal a situation of pressure and/or dependency.

2. Prostitution scene in Hamburg

Due to the fact that ragazza's indoor outreach team reaches all parts of town, the figures below give quite a comprehensive picture of the indoor prostitution population of Hamburg, where 80% of sexual services are provided indoors.

■ **Gender** – The low percentage of transgender sex workers found indoors can be explained by the fact that many recently moved to Frankfurt, where a significant transgender prostitution scene has been developed in the last years. Those contacted were all migrants, from Asia or Latin America. Male sex workers were not contacted because they are not the team's target group; they mostly work outdoors or through escort agencies.

■ **Age** – The interesting fact to observe is that there is an increasing number of female sex workers older than 36. If we combine those in the 36-45 age group with those aged over 46, the total comprises almost 40%, together outnumbering the biggest group, which is the 35% of sex workers aged between 26 and 35. These 'older' women can mainly be found among Polish, Russian, Thai and German sex workers. The 18-25 age group is mainly comprised of Bulgarian and Romanian sex workers.

■ **Migration** – Hamburg, the second biggest city in Germany, with the country's biggest port along with significant red light districts, has always attracted people from all over the world. This is shown in the high number of nationalities found among migrant sex workers during the 14 months of the mapping exercise: a total of 37 different nationalities.

The difference between the amount of migrants and Germans in the indoor scene is not new, and has been increasing in recent years. It is, however, not as extreme as it may appear in the project's results. The fact that 10% were Germans and 90% migrants had to do with the specificity of the outreach work carried out by the ragazza indoor team, which aims primarily to target and contact migrant sex workers, because they comprise the biggest group in Hamburg. German sex workers are generally only met by chance, but if they want or need it, they too are provided with information, condoms and lubricants. However, the majority said they were not interested or did not need anything. The majority of the 45 cases who refused contact due to lack of interest were German sex workers.

A realistic estimation regarding the indoor scene would be that it is comprised of 70% migrants and 30% Germans.

■ **Origin and nationalities** – The Thai sex worker community, the biggest one in Hamburg, established itself in the city in the 80s and became, since then, an important transit point for those moving to Scandinavia. They mostly work together, in massage parlours or small brothels.

The number of women from EU countries increased considerably in the last 15 years, and more recently with women from Bulgaria and Romania taking the place of Polish ones, previously the main group among EU sex workers in Hamburg.

Numbers of Latin American sex workers are increasing again, mainly with women from Brazil, who had comprised a sizeable group in the 90s but had slowly disappeared in subsequent years.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	301	94
Transgender	19	6
TOTAL	320	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	283	88.4
Nationals	37	11.6
TOTAL	320	100

Origin of migrant sex workers

	No.	%
European Union	121	38
Eastern Europe and Central Asia (non-EU countries)	30	9.4
Balkan countries	2	0.5
Latin America and Caribbean	67	20.9
Asia-Pacific	95	29.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	5	1.6
TOTAL	320	100

Nationalities

1. Thailand	6. Romania
2. Germany ¹¹	7. Dominican Republic
3. Bulgaria	8. Brazil
4. Russia	9. Colombia
5. Poland	10. Latvia

¹¹ This number is a relative percentage given that the total number of migrant sex workers is higher than that of German sex workers.

Impact of German migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Hamburg

Work in the sex industry

Sex work was legalised in Germany in 2002. Around 40% of the contacted sex workers said they were in a regularised situation, and 10% said their situation was irregular. The absence of data on this in around 50% of contacts was likely due to a lack of opportunity to ask about it, or the sex worker did not make any comment about it. Those in a regular situation are likely to have a tax registration number as a sex worker, the only document needed in order to work regularly. This process is quite easy for EU citizens. Those who do not have a tax number as a sex worker may explain it through sex work not being their main activity, may be new to the industry and lack information, may believe that it makes no sense as their residence permit was issued in another EU country, or may be undocumented.

Residence permit

Almost 50% of the contacted sex workers, including the German ones, do not need a residence permit because they are EU citizens. Almost 35% are in a regular situation, mostly through marriage to German men. Those in an irregular situation number less than 4%. This low percentage could lead to the assumption that migrant sex workers have quite a stable situation in Hamburg, or that those in an irregular situation are so hidden that ragazza has no information about them.

Health insurance

The fact that almost 40% of the contacted sex workers are health-insured is attributable to those who have secure residence permits, for example those from the EU or those married to Germans. Those who said they were not insured

numbered slightly less than 20%. The absence of data on this in around 40% of contacts was likely because there was no opportunity to discuss this. However, it is estimated that at least half of that 40% is probably also not insured. This fact is confirmed in the section on the needs of sex workers, discussed later on in this report, in which one of their main problems appears to be the need to access general health care services.



Female sex workers active in apartments, brothels and massage parlours

The indoor sex work scene represents 80% of the entire sex work scene in Hamburg. The majority of sex workers work in apartments or private flats, spread across most of the city, including residential areas. There are also brothels, massage parlours and *Laufhäuser*, and a smaller number of clubs, swinger venues, bars, sex cinemas and hotels.

There are about 350 apartments or private flats, occupied by between one and three sex workers, mostly of the same nationality, although one may also find mixed nationalities as well as transgender and non-transgender women working together. These apartments are rented and managed by the sex workers themselves, and are often also their living space. Sex workers work an average of 10 hours per day, usually from midday until 10pm, and usually six days a week, but often also the whole week round.

The working conditions vary from luxurious to very poor. The windows are usually closed, it is quite warm inside as women are underdressed, and the TV is on all day. Sex workers often complain of backaches and weight problems, because of the lack of exercise, but also of loneliness and boredom, as they avoid leaving the apartment for fear of missing a client.

Brothels are bigger venues, run by a manager, in general with sex workers of mixed nationalities. Lately, some brothels have been identified with Romanian and/or Bulgarian sex workers, where dependency and exploitation is expected to be quite high.

A large number of Thai sex workers, including transgender sex workers, work in massage parlours, which are mostly run by a female Thai manager (the *mamasang*). Many Thais working in parlours do not identify as sex workers, because they claim that they offer only erotic massage and masturbation, even if also offering other sexual services; as a result, it is sometimes quite difficult to approach them with information on safer sex. These sex workers are independent, with about five present in each parlour.

There are also big houses, the so-called *Laufhäuser* ('walk houses'), with individual rooms spread across various floors, rented by sex workers on a daily or a weekly basis. Men simply walk up and down the corridors until they choose someone. These private rooms are appealing to sex workers because they offer both a working and a living space.

About 80% of those working indoors are migrants. About 50% of these are EU citizens (mainly from Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Latvia and the Czech Republic), 30% Asian (mostly Thais, the biggest national group), 20% Latin American (mainly from the Dominican Republic and Brazil), and 10% Eastern European (mostly Russians).

The majority have residence permits, and as sex work is legalised in Germany, they mostly work on an autonomous basis, although only about 50% have a regularised situation in terms of taxes and health insurance. Violence is not a theme among sex workers. Advertisements for sexual services are mostly placed on specialised websites rather than in newspapers, because the latter are more expensive.

The turnover is extremely high, with some sex workers changing workplaces in Hamburg itself every two to three weeks or so. Mobility within Germany is also very significant: it is common

for sex workers based in Hamburg to exchange apartments for a couple of weeks with those based in other German towns.

Despite the legalisation of sex work in Germany in 2002, and the advantages gained through the EU expansions of 2004 and 2007, lack of information on legal and health issues among migrant sex workers is very high.

Regular outreach work is therefore essential to reach this very mobile group. Only by spreading information about their rights and the services offered by support organisations in town will it be possible to empower sex workers, to foster the necessary self-esteem for them to be able to face exploitation and violence.

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

■ **Apartments** - About 80% of sexual services in Hamburg are provided indoors, and the majority of indoor venues are apartments. They are small, private apartments, run by autonomous sex workers. They are found in residential as well as industrial parts of town, and there are about 250 in Hamburg. For some sex workers these apartments are also their homes (22%), but for the majority they are only a workplace (30%). Some apartments consist of women who all share the same nationality, and others consist of mixed nationalities, including Germans and migrants.

The apartments are mostly shared by two to three female sex workers, occasionally including transgender sex workers. Apartments are shared in order to offer greater choice to clients, mainly if the sex workers are of different nationalities; for language and cultural reasons, if the sex workers share the same nationality; for security reasons, and for economic reasons, in order to share costs.

■ **Message parlours** – Numbers of these venues have increased in recent years. They are mainly populated by Thai sex workers, but lately other nationalities have also been present in parlours. The reason for this is to offer clients more choice. Massage parlours are mostly run by older Thai women, in some cases former sex workers. This explains why they are often present during the conversations between sex workers and outreach workers.

■ **Laufhäuser** – A *Laufhaus* is a type of big house, with a mixed population of German and migrant sex workers. In some cases, mostly among migrants, the *Laufhaus* is also their living space. Sex workers can rent the rooms on a daily or a weekly basis. They are mostly run by male managers.

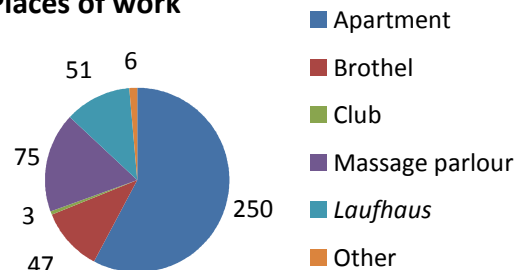
Places of work

	No.	%
Apartment	250	57.9
Brothel	47	10.9
Club	3	0.7
Massage parlour	75	17.4
<i>Laufhaus</i>	51	11.8
Other	6	1.3
TOTAL	432	100

Other

There were two cases in which African shops were visited. The team received information that many of these shops are contact places for sex workers. In two other cases, contact was made in sex cinemas, and another two situations concerned specialist clubs: one a swinger club and the other a nudist club.

Places of work



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Hamburg, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

Although vaginal sex with a condom was the most frequently reported practice, fellatio with a condom and anal sex with a condom took fifth and sixth place among the ten most common sexual practices.

The provision of oral sex without protection is the most common unprotected sexual practice among sex workers. This is due not only to increasing competition in the field and the potential to earn more money but, as they highlighted, increasing demand from clients.

Many sex workers said that if they were to insist on using condoms during oral sex, they would have no clients anymore. This situation is very difficult to tackle because there are no public campaigns in Hamburg or in Germany aimed at clients of sex workers, which increases pressure on sex workers in terms of their awareness and ability to negotiate and insist on safer sexual practices.

The high number of contacts (about 93%) in which no data was recorded on sexual behaviour reflects the difficulty of speaking about it or admitting to practising unsafe sex.



4. Autonomy at work

Due to the experience of the outreach team, in about 40% of the cases it was possible to observe and confirm that sex workers were working on an autonomous basis. Regarding the other 60%, it was not possible to confirm such a situation, although this does not necessarily mean that they were in a dependent situation. It is likely to be due to the fact that it was the first contact and that this contact was very short.

Because the majority of the contacts were new contacts (75%), there were few possibilities to get into detailed conversation.

Evolution of autonomy

Half of the individuals who spoke about it said that their level of autonomy had stayed stable, while the other half considered that it had increased in recent years. One reason for this is the legalisation of sex work in Germany in 2002, and the fact that the majority have legal status either because they are EU citizens or because they are married to German men.

This fact was confirmed by the outreach team, who in general observed a relaxed atmosphere among the sex workers who were visited.



5. Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

Although the number of German sex workers contacted only comprised 10% of the total, there is no great difference between the social needs of migrant and German sex workers. Both wish for better working conditions in general. There was no specific outline given of what sort of improvements are wished for.

What was surprising was the observation that German sex workers have the same difficulties as migrants in accessing information on sex workers' rights: that both need social support but also have difficulty accessing it. This fact could indicate that sex workers, independent of whether they are Germans or migrants in a regular situation, are very isolated, and cannot access information or be reached by it.

The only difference between migrant and German sex workers is the fact that among migrants, sex work is, at least for the time being, a stable activity or a consequence of a lack of alternatives, while Germans wanted information on how to move on from sex work.

Transgender sex workers differ from others only regarding their need for psychological support and more information on transgender issues.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

The issues are almost identical for both female migrants and Germans: general health care, HIV/STI testing and gynaecology. Although German sex workers represented only 10% of those contacted, it was surprising to see that they seem to have the same needs, and/or to experience as much difficulty as migrants in accessing the public health service. This could be explained by the fact that perhaps they do not want to go to a private doctor for HIV/STI tests, risking exposure of their activity in sex work, while if they go to the public health service which has decades of experience in dealing with sex workers, their anonymity will be preserved.

What is significant among the migrant group is that only about 40% are health-insured, which means a structured referral network is required to support the non-insured ones. Luckily, this exists in Hamburg.

Again, among transgender sex workers the theme of hormone treatment stood out, as was expected.

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to sex workers' needs?

It would seem that the interventions carried out in Hamburg suit the needs of indoor sex workers; the outreach teams have the necessary qualifications to inform migrant and German sex workers, transgender and non-transgender, on legal, social and health matters.

The fact that the different NGOs and the public health service in Hamburg are very well networked facilitates the referral actions. Collaboration among these organisations, which conduct outreach and provide services for sex workers, permits regular and continuous monitoring of the scene together with the required response where there is need.

The only issue which needs to be tackled more intensively is the dissemination of information on sex workers' rights, a theme that was identified as a need by the entire group of sex workers contacted.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

National mobility

Despite the fact that only 18% reported having worked elsewhere in Germany, quite a high percentage of contacts gave no data on this (56.6%), which suggests that this internal mobility is higher than the number shown here. What is surprising is the range of locations: 16 different cities were mentioned, indicating that changes of workplace are quite frequent between different towns.

International mobility

In terms of mobility to other countries, the statistic is the same as above. The interesting factor here is the quantity of countries mentioned: 18 in total, which suggests that:

- some women had already worked in the sex industry in their home country before coming to Germany, as in the case of Bulgarians, Romanians, Thais, Czechs and Polish women; or
- some EU countries give women the opportunity to work for a while during the migration process before they settle in Germany; or
- often they travel into and out of the country while living in Germany.

Another factor that is clearly shown by these numbers is that geography has an influence on the mobility of this group. It is quite common for Polish, Czech and Hungarian women to come to work in Germany just for a short period of time and then return back home.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

Violence is a very difficult issue to approach, which is why the topic was not even discussed in 75% of cases. As a very sensitive and personal issue, it is difficult to tackle for two main reasons:

- If the sex worker is a new contact, the necessary trust and confidence in the cultural mediators has not yet been established. This trust may never be established, or may evolve over a long period of time.
- Even if the contact is not new, there is a great deal of shame, insecurity and stigma associated with the topic of violence. Often its existence is simply denied in order to avoid facing the issue. The fact that 22% said they had never experienced violence may be true, but it may also camouflage a situation in which the sex

worker did not want to talk about it and simply denied it to put an end to the discussion.

Of 432 contacts, only 10 said they had experienced some form of violence, and three spoke of colleagues who had experienced it. This could be read in two different ways: that violence is not a common occurrence on the Hamburg scene, or that it is so hidden that there is no proper information about it.

However, experience shows that migrant sex workers, even those with legal status, are more vulnerable because, among other reasons, they often do not speak sufficient German to defend themselves or press charges.

When they do not speak the local language, migrant sex workers feel insecure and prefer not to press charges. It can be observed that, if these sex workers were to have regular contact with an organisation for migrant women, this problem would be solved more rapidly.

Forms of violence

Of the 10 contacts who reported experiences of violence, nine said that it had seldom been experienced, meaning once, and in only one case had it occurred more than once.

Physical violence was the most common type (8 cases), followed by economic (6 cases), verbal (4 cases) and psychological violence (3 cases). In some of those cases, the forms of violence suffered overlapped.

As there were very few responses to this topic, our results cannot be considered relevant or representative.

Perpetrators of violence

All cases of violence occurred during work, and clients were the main perpetrators of violence, an indication that violence in the indoor scene in Hamburg has more to do with the sex work context than with migration or legislation.

The remainder had to do with a social problem – robbery.

Frequency of violence

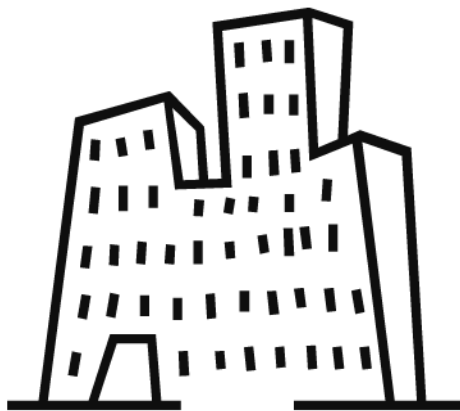
	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	10	2.3
Sex worker reported a colleague's experience of violence	3	0.7
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	96	22.2
Violence was not a discussed topic	323	74.8
TOTAL	432	100

Perpetrators of violence

	No.
Client	4
Police	1
Owner/manager of venue	1
Other	4
TOTAL	10

Other

Robbers



HELSINKI

Finland

1. Methodology of contact

Outreach context

■ **Mapping period:** 15 months, from March 2011 to June 2012

■ **Outreach location:** Helsinki, Finland

■ **Outreach coverage:** The mapping covers Pro-tukipiste Helsinki's drop-in and outreach work. Bars, massage parlours, internet outreach and drop-in contacts were covered.

Outreach was conducted in downtown sex bars, in two online chat forums, in Thai massage parlours and occasionally in some other venues. Pro-tukipiste's outreach is thought to cover the most important venues where migrant sex workers are working in Helsinki. Outdoor sex work is quite rare in Helsinki. With regard to the national sex work scene, coverage is insufficient.

The private strip scene¹², also, is not covered by the outreach work.

■ **TOTAL contacts:** 676

■ **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 180

At the beginning of the data collection only outreach data was collected, but in August 2011 the decision was taken to additionally include drop-ins and appointments in the mapping exercise. Most of the forms were filled in retrospectively, and only those contacts for which some written notes were available were included in the mapping. In internet outreach contacts are usually short and intensive, and demographic information (gender, origin etc.) is less frequently available. Pro-tukipiste decided to create a new entry in the INDOORS database for each contact, even if individuals had been seen before. This method does not exclude multiple answers but the team could verify that they do not significantly affect the results. The reason for choosing this method is based on the principle of anonymity: Pro-tukipiste does not collect ongoing information on individual service users. This means that the number of contacts is high but the information is extremely difficult to interpret and analyse. The emphasis is on narratives, not on numbers.

Outreach methodology

■ **Drop-ins:** General drop-ins are held twice a week and people can drop in without an appointment. A doctor and nurse are available for health services and a social worker for social services. Additionally, there are always two outreach workers working in a lobby, answering questions, providing safer sex materials, etc. There is food and information available and free access to the internet. During a drop-in session, the number of visitors ranges from 30-70 over a duration of four hours. A special drop-in for Thais is held every second week in the neighbourhood where most of the Thai massage

¹² Private strip means that dancers are performing only for one person in a small cabin, usually located in a sex shop.

parlours are located. People can come without an appointment and they can access social services and information in the Thai language. These drop-ins are open for three hours and there are two cultural mediators present.

Every staff member can also have individual appointments. The content of the appointments depends on the kind of services required. The most common issues are legal information, social benefits, and advice on bureaucratic procedures such as how to apply for residence, how to apply for social benefits, etc.

■ **Outreach:** Pro-tukipiste conducts outreach in two different **chat forums** once a week. The outreach team spends an hour and a half in a chat room where sex workers can request private chat with the outreach workers. The chat rooms are not exclusively for sex workers, but many sex workers are present in them. Pro-tukipiste logs on under its name and displays information about the organisation. Over time, the outreach team has been contacted more and more by users of the chat rooms. People are already used to Pro-tukipiste's presence and the target group finds the organisation more easily than it did at the beginning. Through the internet more contacts have been made with male sex workers and also with Finnish sex workers, in comparison with contacts made in other venues. The most common topics addressed are information about legislation, safety tips, and considerations around entering the sex industry.

■ Outreach in **sex bars** is carried out every third week. Over the course of 3-4 hours one evening, 2-3 sex bars are visited. In the bars contact is normally made with small groups rather than individuals. These groups often have a common issue they want to talk about (safety, police behaviour, opportunities to find work in Finland, etc.).

■ Targeted outreach in **Thai massage parlours** is carried out every second week. During each outreach session 4-5 parlours are visited and the duration is approximately three hours. A range of topics is covered (legal, social and health issues).

All the outreach workers have vocational training in social and/or health work.

All the outreach venues and times are publicised on Pro-tukipiste's website, in Finnish, English, Russian and Thai. All contact is anonymous and free of charge.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

Different methods have been employed over the last 20 years and these working methods have proved to be the most effective and successful. Outreach venues are selected by conducting a needs assessment and pilot monitoring the local scene. For the pilot, information is collected from different sources like the media, other service providers, Pro-tukipiste's service users, and authorities. If there are signs that outreach is needed in a location not currently covered, a three- to six-month pilot is implemented and needs are assessed. After the pilot phase, the outreach venues are re-evaluated. Changing venues, including new venues, and changes to the frequency of outreach depend on the resources of the organisation. Drop-ins are important; the feedback received by the outreach team is that it is also very important to provide a space for sex workers outside their working environment.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

There is essentially no difference in methodology between nationals and migrants, but in internet outreach some language skills are required (Finnish, English). Outreach in Thai massage parlours requires Thai-speaking staff and cultural mediators. Cultural mediation is part of Pro-tukipiste's regular methodology.

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits, calls, internet)	154	22.7
At the service provider's premises	497	73.5
Other	11	1.6
Data not recorded	14	2.1
TOTAL	676	100

Other

At the premises of another service provider; public places

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	563	83.3
Direct contact over the phone	36	5.3
Email/internet	69	10.2
Accompaniment	1	0.1
Data not recorded	7	1
TOTAL	676	100

Contact methodology

Why the majority of sex workers showed interest

The majority of sex workers included in this mapping contacted Pro-tukipiste of their own accord.

Conclusions about the efficiency of the methodology

The efficiency of the methodology depends on resources and communication skills. The better the team is able to meet the service users' needs and create a dialogue with them, the more the service users give feedback and tell their peers about Pro-tukipiste's services. A well-functioning dialogue is the basis for ensuring that the services provided are the ones that the service users need and consider beneficial. Cultural mediators are crucial for communication, and a

respectful attitude is required from all staff. Establishment of a relationship of trust and mutual respect greatly enables further steps to be taken. The service users also say that the delivery of outreach services is very important to them, because this enables better understanding of their working environment. The development of new methods of working depends on peer activity opportunities. There is also a need to extend internet outreach to new websites.

Identification of key people or intermediaries to facilitate contact

The opportunities and framework of the team's outreach work in downtown bars have been negotiated with the owners and security staff. They know the main principles of Pro-tukipiste's outreach work and they can refer sex workers to outreach workers when needed. The other important key group is chat website owners. Before embarking on outreach, contact has to be established with the owners, because without their permission, the outreach team won't gain access to the venues. Sometimes the owners consider the services of the organisation so important that, for example, they don't charge anything for banners on their website.

Gender, age or origin as reasons for accepting or refusing contact

Refusals are very rare. During outreach there are sex workers who are not interested in talking to the team, but at this stage they are not included in this mapping.

Those who reject contact usually say that they don't need the services offered or they are suspicious ("Is this some religious thing?", "what do you want from me?", etc.). New groups are usually suspicious at the beginning. Their attitude usually changes when they get more information. Confirmation from their peers of the quality of the services is important. Men are harder to reach than women, but since commencing internet outreach, the number of contacts with male sex workers has increased.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/ outreach team	63	9.3
The sex worker	609	90.1
Data not recorded	4	0.6
TOTAL	676	100

Response of sex workers to contact initiated by the outreach team

	No.
Interested	60
Data not recorded	3
TOTAL	63

When contact was initiated by sex workers, how had they learned of the organisation?

	No.	%
Outreach	275	43.7
Word of mouth (through other sex workers)	94	14.9
Referral by another organisation/institution	6	0.9
Cards/flyers distributed by the organisation	15	2.3
Through owners/managers	1	0.1
On the internet	37	5.8
Data not recorded	200	31.8
TOTAL	628	100

2. Prostitution scene in Helsinki

■ **Gender** – During this mapping (180 contacts), 79% (non-transgender) female, 13% male and 3% transgender sex workers were contacted. The non-respondents (5%) were mainly contacts on the internet.

The proportion of men was higher than expected. One reason for the increase is that the team has started to do outreach on the internet

and the majority of men were reached via this communication tool. It is hard to say how many of them are actually working in Helsinki.

■ **Age** – The most represented age group was between 26 and 35 years old. Approximately one third was aged 36 years or older.

This age profile is in keeping with previous observations. In Helsinki the average age is relatively high. Most of the contacts among this indoor sample are within the age bracket of 26 to 45 years. The picture changes slightly if different nationalities are looked at separately: Russians comprise the biggest group and the majority of them are within the age bracket of 35 to 46 years (compared to Finns, of whom only seven per cent of this sample is in that age group).

In the sample there were also three sex workers aged under 18. This is quite exceptional, but all three cases were contacted via the internet. It is hard to tell or confirm whether the given age is correct information or not.

■ **Migration** – The ratio of migrants to nationals was 60:40.

■ **Origin and nationalities** – The main regions of origin were Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The next most common regions were the EU (Estonia, Romania), Asia-Pacific, and Africa.

The main nationalities represented are Finnish, Russian and Thai.

There have traditionally been many Russian sex workers working in Helsinki, especially women from the area of St Petersburg and from Estonia. Helsinki is easy to access and there is an existing community of Russian sex workers which makes it easier for newcomers to slip into the scene. The Russian community is quite stable and the majority have been working as sex workers for more than five years. They mainly work in bars, although a shift from bars to the internet seems to have begun.

Thai sex workers comprise the second biggest group for Pro-tukipiste since the team began three years ago to work with Thais in massage parlours. Among Thais, the average age is relatively high.

In addition to the two abovementioned main groups, there is a wide range of nationalities. Nigerian and Romanian sex workers have recently been more visible, along with a small number of sex workers from various different countries. Because the services are anonymous, information on nationality is not requested or required. Finland is not an especially lucrative destination but it has become part of the route of global migration flows. Deteriorating financial conditions and recession have in particular brought a number of sex workers from Spain and Italy to work in Nordic countries.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	142	79
Male (non-transgender)	23	13
Transgender	6	3
Data not recorded	9	5
TOTAL	180	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	104	58
Nationals	74	41
Data not recorded	2	1
TOTAL	180	100

Origin of migrant sex workers

	No.	%
European Union	25	24
Eastern Europe and Central Asia (non-EU countries)	33	31.7
North America	1	1
Asia-Pacific	25	24
Sub-Saharan Africa	18	17.3
Data not recorded	2	1.9
TOTAL	104	100

Nationalities

1. Finland ¹³	6. Nigeria
2. Thailand	7. Ukraine
3. Russia	8. Portugal
4. Estonia	9. Italy
5. Romania	10. New Zealand

Impact of Finnish migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Helsinki

Work in the sex industry

Sex work is not officially considered work, which means that work permits are not available for it. In Finland sex work is not a labour issue at all.

Residence permits

'Regular' or 'irregular' status refers to permission to stay, rather than to the legality of working. The chances of getting permission to stay depend on the grounds on which it is applied for. Citizens of countries outside the European Economic Area in most cases need a worker's residence permit for work in Finland. The permit is issued for one or more fields of work and may be temporary or continuous.

The permit includes the partial decision of the employment office, and the residence permit decision of the Finnish Immigration Service or the city police department. The employment office makes a statement regarding whether or not foreign workers are needed in certain fields. If the decision is negative then usually the Immigration Office follows up on it.

Migration policy combined with criminal policy are the main aspects to consider when evaluating the status of migrant sex workers.

¹³ This number is a relative percentage given that the total number of migrant sex workers is higher than that of Finnish sex workers.

Among non-EU citizens the Alien Act is the most effective regulation, because if a non-EU sex worker is expected to sell sexual services, he or she may be refused entry into the country. This is the most important reason for non-EU migrants to avoid any contact with the Finnish authorities.

Many of the organisation's service users from African backgrounds are trying to get other jobs in Finland to make a living. Access to the formal labour market is, however, difficult. This is partly due to the work permit discretion which limits the opportunities of third-country nationals. Many of Pro-tukipiste's clients seem to commute between the Nordic countries.

Health insurance

Health insurance is based on residence. If one is registered as a resident in Helsinki he or she is covered by national health insurance. Those who do not have insurance have to use private and very expensive health services or Pro-tukipiste's low-threshold anonymous basic health services. 67% of the sex workers contacted during outreach have health insurance. This is due to the fact that many of the migrants permanently reside in Finland and are entitled to public services also.



The sex bar scene in Helsinki

There are some significant changes taking place in the sex bar scene in Helsinki. This scene has been quite stable for years and it has been the most common working environment for migrant sex workers because of its easy accessibility. During the past year, from March 2011 to March 2012, there have been major changes due to increased police surveillance, the tightening of licensing with regard to bar opening hours, and continued media interest. Pro-tukipiste conducts outreach work in the bars once a month and approximately 60-70 sex workers are contacted

per night. Sex workers working in the bars also use the drop-in services.

The increased pressure 'to do something about the prostitution problem in Helsinki city centre' came first from the media and this caused increased pressure to intensify local police operations in the area. The most common arguments are that visible prostitution does not belong to Helsinki's city image and that controlling the most visible forms of the sex industry is an efficient way to prevent and to fight against trafficking in human beings and against organised crime.

Police activity linked with the wide media coverage has promoted restrictive policy and punitive attitudes towards sex workers – especially migrant sex workers. The local police conduct raids and checks regularly in the bars, and the Regional State Administrative Agency no longer grants permission to extend opening hours (the bars must close at 2am instead of 4am). The aim is to reduce prostitution by making the business opportunities for the bars, and working conditions for the sex workers, so difficult that they are no longer lucrative options.

The consequences have been negative. Outreach work has become more difficult, because some sex bars don't allow outreach workers onto their premises. They have started to pick and choose their clients more carefully. They claim that they don't allow prostitution on their premises and that's why there is no need for outreach services.

According to the door staff, women who used to work on their premises can be found in the street area, other bars or in other indoor settings. Refusal of entry has also extended to other bars and clubs in the neighbourhood. Those bars which haven't changed their client policy complain about frequent police raids.

Sex workers have been complaining about the police's derogatory attitude and bad behaviour. The Finnish police used to have a good reputation among migrant sex workers, but this is no longer the case. Sex workers are stopped by police multiple times, even on the same

night, and condoms are used as evidence of selling sex. This has resulted in serious health hazards because women are afraid to carry condoms with them. They have told Pro-tukipiste that clients are more violent nowadays because they know that women are afraid of the police and will not report the violence.

Pro-tukipiste is following developments. Pro-tukipiste Helsinki conducted an exit poll (between 23 February and 19 March 2012) among the drop-in visitors and asked where they work. 94 service users responded and 134 different work venues were mentioned; 78% indoors and 22% outdoors. 65% of the respondents (61 of 94) said that they work in the bars (half of them exclusively in the bars). Pro-tukipiste has started to collect information about the violation of basic rights and liberties in order to make a complaint on behalf of the women concerned.

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

Indoor sex work represents 95% of Helsinki's sex industry. There are a few bars and night clubs, approximately 50 Thai massage parlours, and 10 to 15 shops and clubs where strip shows take place. There are also apartments and private flats which are used as workplaces. Venues are situated all over the downtown area and there is a specific area where most of the Thai massage parlours are located.

■ Indoor-based sex workers find their clients through the internet, sex bars and massage parlours. Some sex workers find clients through more than one venue. Sexual services are usually provided in **apartments** or **hotels**.

■ **Massage parlours** usually have 2-4 individuals present on the premises (the owner and 2-3 workers). The principal reason for this is security. In the **sex bars** women work in the

same venue in which they seek clients, but the service itself is provided elsewhere. There has been a shift from outdoors to indoors because of increased street controls based on the Public Order Act. The opening hours of the most popular sex bars have been restricted.

■ **Brothels**, where four or more sex workers work, are very rare. Sex workers prefer not to discuss them, however, because brothels are not legal in Finland.

Sex workers working in sex shops were not contacted during this project.

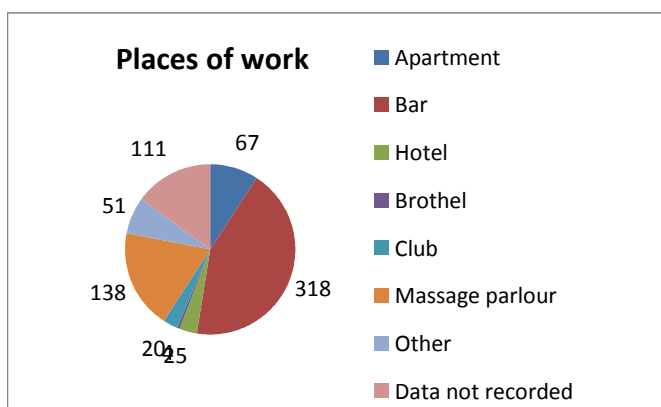
Usually sex workers don't talk much about their working or living circumstances if these are not related to their reasons for contacting the team. They are especially unlikely to discuss these issues if they have a pimp or some kind of facilitator. They are afraid that it could cause them difficulties (they know it is criminalised), or it is not something they think that the service provider should know about. Sometimes it is also a question of security; the less people know, the better. Pro-tukipiste's staff do not actively ask about these issues for the same reasons.

Places of work

	No.	%
Apartment	67	9.1
Bar	318	43.3
Hotel	25	3.4
Brothel	4	0.5
Club	20	2.7
Massage parlour	138	18.8
Other	51	6.9
Data not recorded	111	15.1
TOTAL	734	100

Other

Internet and shopping centres



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Helsinki, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

Usually sex workers talk about their work practices only if there is a link to their health or security. The most common reason for discussing them is because they want to know how to reduce health risks (both physical and psychological). Other than this, sex workers are not so anxious to talk in detail about the kinds of sexual practices they offer. In general safer sex practices are a high priority and sex workers are very concerned about their health and safety. Newcomers are most vulnerable if they come from regions where safer sex materials are hard to obtain or are very expensive. Concrete information and face-to-face counselling are very much appreciated by Pro-tukipiste's service users.

One reason for vulnerability and risky behaviour related to HIV/STIs is the tightening of police controls. Sex workers are afraid to accept condoms and lubricants from outreach workers, or they keep them in inappropriate places. This increases the risk of condom breakage.

4. Autonomy at work

How autonomous are the contacted sex workers?

The majority of the sex workers contacted told the team that they have autonomy and control over their work. Usually this issue comes up when there are lots of discussions in the media about trafficking or pimping.

Autonomy at work pops up every now and then. Usually service providers get to know about the problems: they are approached when the autonomy is somehow jeopardised. When sex work and trafficking are covered more in the media, people react by talking about their own situation. Usually they take a stand on the 'forced' versus 'voluntary' debate.

According to long-term experience, the majority of Pro-tukipiste service users see themselves as active agents, who have influence over their own work. Even if they work for somebody else, some rules are also negotiated, along with the framework within which they work. Those who are working alone decide for themselves how they work.

Pro-tukipiste regularly gets to know about cases in which autonomy is limited or is missing totally, but these represent a minority. Inevitably the organisation's knowledge about this group is limited, because there is a possibility that this part of the scene is not reached. Even if there is a lack of information about this, a lot of information is provided by service users about what is going on in the field, and the practice of peer referrals is a very effective tool to reach the most vulnerable sex workers. Peer referral means that sex workers bring in their peers when they think that they need help, and Pro-tukipiste can deal with the problems encountered.

5. Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

The services provided are traditionally focused on basic social services, and social support is quite broad in scope. It covers various topics, such as social benefits and information about social services in general. The need for legal advice has increased; it concerns both bureaucratic legislation and information about rights and sex work-related legislation.

There are some differences between nationals and migrants. The need for social services is more common among migrants. National sex workers can access the basic services from public services. Psychological support needs and security/safety issues are more pronounced among nationals. Male and transgender sex workers are so few in number that it is impossible to draw any conclusions about their needs.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

Many sex workers expressed a need for general health services, not restricted only to sexually transmitted infections. A holistic approach to health is essential. HIV/STI testing is the most often requested service. Quite often the opportunity to access anonymous testing with counselling which covers sex work issues is the reason for a first visit.

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to sex workers' needs?

According to feedback and frequency of use, the services offered hit the target. Cultural mediation has an important role in service provision. The option of accessing services in the

sex workers' own language increases their appeal and also offers an excellent opportunity to tell outreach workers what kinds of services they need and wish to have. Not all wishes are possible to grant, but Pro-tukipiste tries to consider these suggestions in its development plans. Cultural expertise is also very important in the distribution of safer sex information. Leaflets are not enough: personal counselling and guidance are also needed. Right now Pro-tukipiste's cultural mediation resources cover the main nationalities among its service users.

For the Finnish sex workers, the whore stigma and discrimination are common reasons for contacting Pro-tukipiste. Most of the national female sex workers in this mapping make contact through Pro-tukipiste's internet services. Security and psychological issues are the main topics discussed on the internet.

Particularly during internet outreach, sex workers talk about starting or quitting sex work, isolation and stigma.

Legal issues are of major concern nowadays. The more repressive the legislation and the clampdowns, the more legal advice is needed. All staff are trained to give basic legal advice and Pro-tukipiste's lawyer can be consulted on special issues when required.

Outreach workers usually begin contact by asking how it's going and offering condoms and lubricants. This is why, particularly with migrant female sex workers, the main themes discussed are general care and safer sex issues.

If the contact was initiated by the sex worker, there is usually a specific need which is expressed to the outreach workers at the beginning. Social and legal advice are the most common themes among migrants because of the lack of information about the Finnish social system and legal issues. Nationals in this mapping, who are mostly contacted through the internet, needed more psychological support, but also wanted to talk about working conditions. The potential to respond to all psychological support needs is limited because staff resources are insufficient.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

National/international mobility

According to the team's experience, mobility is quite common and has increased during the last two to three years. Mobility of sex workers is quite high, both cross-border and inside the country. Migrants are more mobile internally than nationals.

Reasons for mobility

The results support Pro-tukipiste's view that migrants from non-EU countries in particular are changing location within the country because of the threat of getting caught and deported. Repressive actions against visible prostitution in public venues have increased mobility. The shorter the time one stays in one city or in one sex work venue, the lesser the threat of deportation.

Sex workers' mobility follows general migration trends. There are no longer traditional links from the country of origin through the transit country to the country of destination, but migrant sex workers are in continuous motion.

Thai sex workers move from city to city. The owners usually have several massage parlours in different cities and the workers are sent to work in other places if they are needed there.

that Pro-tukipiste will focus on more in the future. Because of the methodological decision to create a new entry for each contact, it is also difficult to tell whether those who have experienced violence are discussing it during every contact or mention it only once or twice. Unfortunately this important topic is almost impossible to analyse on the basis of these numbers.

Thai sex workers' answers focused on the topic because as part of the Thai outreach programme (Saphaan), the staff have managed to establish relationships with the community based on a high level of trust. The likelihood of the topic coming up is higher among this group. This suggests that violence is a very sensitive issue and that a relationship based on trust is required in order for sex workers to talk about it.

Forms of violence

Because of the high percentage of non-responses, the specific forms of violence are difficult to identify. Although the results show that there have been discussions about violence and violent situations, on the basis of this data it is hard to perform any analysis. Half of the cases of physical violence discussed with the team were about sexual violence. Physical and sexual violence are discussed with the doctor or nurse if sex workers are seeking help for injuries caused. These topics can also come up in general discussions and when providing legal aid (how to press charges, where to find a good lawyer, etc.). Psychological violence is often linked with racism and the whore stigma/name-calling.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

Violence was not a topic discussed during the mapping exercise, which is difficult to analyse. It may be due to the fact that this is not an issue, or it may imply something else: violence is a topic which both service users and service providers avoid. Either way, the topic is an area

Perpetrators of violence

The most common forms of violence are violence from partners, friends and family, and from venue owners/pimps. Violent clients are also mentioned. The most interesting point is that the police are frequently mentioned. This is in reference to the situation in downtown Helsinki, where police clampdowns have increased. Migrant women working in this area have complained about the police's offensive

behaviour. It seems that some sort of saturation point has been reached: for the first time in Pro-tukipiste's history, a group of migrant sex workers has turned to Pro-tukipiste staff for assistance in concrete advocacy work. At the request of its service users, Pro-tukipiste reported ill treatment by police to the Councillor of Justice.

Indicators of violence

Migrants comprise the most vulnerable category. Their legal status being vague, they can be exposed to different forms of violence. They don't tend to know their rights, and even if they do, they are afraid to exercise them because the consequences might be worse than the violation of their rights and their safety.

Generally punitive attitudes have escalated and have made migrant sex workers' situation even worse than before. Women have stated that the police's negative attitude has increased violent behaviour among clients. This does not mean that all clients have become violent, but it has given more space to those who are.

The police's negative attitude has also meant that the threshold to cross before sex workers will call the police in risky situations is higher than before. Migrant women no longer trust the police's willingness to protect them.

These punitive attitudes have also led to increased discrimination. Migrant sex workers are denied entry to bars, cafes and hotels near the sex bars in Helsinki city centre. This means that they have nowhere to take a break at night.

According to Pro-tukipiste's observations, it seems that migrant women who work alone may be the most vulnerable targets of violence.

In accordance with the team's knowledge of Thai sex workers' working conditions, the most discussed subjects have been violence and the safety of work. More than domestic violence, there has been talk of increasingly abusive behaviour from clients. The massage parlours have been robbed by men of foreign origin and many of these venues have closed their doors to individuals perceived to be foreign. Outside of

work, Thai sex workers face harassment and psychological violence in their daily lives.

Finnish sex workers contacted via the internet are usually interested in personal safety issues. They request safety tips and information about how to reduce their risks of exposure to violence. In addition, those who are considering starting sex work are mainly interested in safety issues.

Frequency of violence

	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	77	11.4
Sex worker reported a colleague's experience of violence	5	0.7
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	153	22.6
Violence was not a discussed topic	440	64.9
Data not recorded	3	0.4
TOTAL	678	100

Perpetrators of violence

	No.
Client	21
Relative, friend, acquaintance	21
Colleague	5
Owner/manager of venue	14
Trafficking network	4
Police	18
Public authorities/ officials	2
Other	7
TOTAL	92

Other

Landlords, client's wife, neighbour



MADRID

Spain

1. Methodology of contact with sex workers

Outreach context

■ **Mapping period:** 15 months, from March 2011 to June 2012

■ **Outreach location:** City centre and periphery of Madrid, Spain

■ **Outreach coverage:** 17 venues were visited: bars, clubs and flats with non-transgender female indoor-based sex workers. The coverage is of a small percentage of the sex work venues in Madrid. There are no official figures on sex work venues. Some of the city centre area was covered and a few clubs along the motorway. There are many other clusters of sex work venues throughout the capital to which access was not granted by management.

■ **TOTAL contacts:** 460

■ **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 265

During this mapping, Hetaira made 460 individual contacts of which 265 were new contacts.

Outreach methodology

When Hetaira commenced outreach to indoor venues, the decision was taken to go to places that advertised female sex workers, because the association works with women and transgender people. In Madrid, transgender sex workers tend to work in male sex work venues. They comprise a minority in the indoor scene and it was decided that, due to limited capacity, Hetaira had to prioritise outreach to female sex work venues. Other organisations exist which focus on male sex workers.

Before establishing a routine, Hetaira needed to identify indoor venues. This was done by searching for them on the internet and then visiting them unannounced. It was found that if Hetaira phoned in advance, nobody would grant the outreach team entry. Face-to-face contact was much more effective.

As many sex work venues tend to be clustered in the same area, after identifying one many others were discovered by walking around on foot. This is especially the case in the city centre. Venues were also visited whose staff had contacted Hetaira. This greatly assisted with gaining entry, not only to the places in question but to others which had the same management/owners.

Sex work venues were visited approximately once a month. The outreach team would stay for as long as the sex workers wanted them to, but tried not to stay for longer than 40 minutes as they usually visited quite a few venues in one outing. During outreach, the themes and the problems that sex workers raised were addressed.

As many contacts were first contacts, the team introduced the organisation (Hetaira) and then encouraged or prompted sex workers to talk about their working conditions, worries, health issues, etc. Conversations revolved around what the sex workers wanted to talk about. When visiting for a second time, the team would bring more information addressing the specific themes that the sex workers had previously brought up. Usually sex workers would also be encouraged to visit or call the office to discuss whatever issues they wanted. Hetaira also gives workshops.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

From the very beginning, the outreach team has personal, face-to-face contact with sex workers so that they know Hetaira as an organisation and can feel supported by it. Once a month is frequent enough to touch base with them and for new questions, doubts or incidents to come up. Additionally, the team did not like to interfere with their working hours, so this seemed like a reasonable time between visits. Another important factor is that there are only two small outreach teams and they can only visit so many venues.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

There is no difference in Hetaira's methodology between contacting nationals and migrants. The migrant sex workers usually spoke Spanish. On the rare occasion that the sex workers could not communicate on their own, a fellow sex worker from the same country would translate for the outreach team.

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits, calls)	438	95.2
At the service provider's premises	18	3.9
Data not recorded	4	0.9
TOTAL	460	100

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	429	93.3
Direct contact over the phone	23	1.7
Data not recorded	8	5
TOTAL	460	100

Contact methodology

Why the majority of sex workers showed interest

There is a majority of interested sex workers because Hetaira makes direct contact with them in person at their workplaces. This alone conveys much about the organisation's dedication to them and to their rights. Although the outreach team may come to their workplaces, it does not enter their private lives (like calling their private phones or stopping them on the street), and this makes the sex workers more open to hearing what is said and offered. Furthermore, Hetaira's services are not restricted to only help and assistance, but also provide access to a community that is stigma-free and encourages them to feel validated in their work.

Conclusions on the efficiency of the methodology

The methodology is efficient in the sense that there is a good rate of first contacts who are interested in what is said. However, it is often the case that the team does not meet the same sex workers again, as sex workers move around Madrid, Spain or the EU a lot. In addition, it is a very new outreach programme for Hetaira, and trust takes time to be established. The outreach team would like to have more continuous contact with the sex workers. It is believed that with time and through word of mouth indoor sex workers will identify Hetaira as an ally and an organisation they can trust and want to be a part of.

Identification of key people or intermediaries to facilitate contact

When the outreach team enters a sex work venue, usually they first make contact with the manager or person in charge, who then calls over the women to listen. If this is not the case, then they speak with sex workers who are familiar with Hetaira so that they will introduce the team to their colleagues. This facilitates

contact with new sex workers. As each venue is different, so too is the team's approach to sex workers. The best results, however, come when there is peer involvement. This is difficult because the turnover is high in these venues.

Gender, age or origin as reasons for accepting or refusing contact

It would appear that acceptance or refusal of contact depends on whether the sex worker identifies herself as such. Usually those who refuse contact do not consider themselves sex workers. They claim to have no interest in what Hetaira is offering in terms of defending/fighting for their rights. Some will be silent and ignore the outreach team or move away, either because they do not know Hetaira or they do not identify with its cause. Occasionally a woman in a venue will say that she is only a 'hostess' (meaning she doesn't sell sex), but then she will ask for condoms too. The team is usually waved away because they claim to have their own condoms and lubricant.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/outreach team	433	94.1
The sex worker	23	5
Data not recorded	4	0.9
TOTAL	460	100

Response of sex workers to contact initiated by the outreach team

	No.	%
Interested	387	89
Refusal	6	1.4
Silence	16	3.7
No time, busy at the moment	6	1.4
Data not recorded	20	4.6
TOTAL	435	100

Reasons for refusal

	No.
No need for services offered	3
Not concerned	3
TOTAL	6

When contact was initiated by sex workers, how had they learned of the organisation?

	No.
Outreach	2
Word of mouth (through other sex workers)	10
Referral by another organisation/institution	1
On the internet	5
Other	2
Data not recorded	3
TOTAL	23

Other

Through clients

2. Prostitution scene in Madrid

■ **Gender/age:** The indoor scene in Madrid is primarily made up of female sex workers, mostly aged 18-35 years old.

■ **Migration:** The vast majority are immigrants from various parts of Latin America and notably Romania. There are few national sex workers.

■ **Origin and nationalities:** Spain has seen a large influx in recent years of Romanians and Latin Americans (especially Ecuadorians). This is the case in Madrid with the addition of Colombians, Dominicans and Paraguayans in particular. The sex industry reflects these large migration groups in Madrid and in the country as a whole. These migration patterns may be explained by Spanish being a common language among Latin Americans. Romanians claim to pick up Spanish quickly as their language is also Latin-based. And as always with immigration trends,

there have been large communities of these nationalities already established in Spain for a few decades. Many of the migrants have family members or friends here already.

These results reflect to a large extent the indoor scenario in Madrid. There are venues with male sex workers that cater to men, but Hetaira did not visit them because it works with women and transgendered people, so these venues are not included in the results. All of the venues to which access was granted had only non-transgender women working in them. Although there are indoor venues in which transgender sex workers work alongside other women, it is difficult to get access to these places.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	265	100
TOTAL	265	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	254	95.8
Nationals	9	3.4
Data not recorded	2	0.8
TOTAL	265	100

Origin of migrant sex workers

	No.	%
European Union	79	29.8
Eastern Europe and Central Asia (non-EU countries)	11	4
Balkan countries	2	0.8
Latin America and Caribbean	162	61.1
North Africa	2	0.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	2	0.8
Data not recorded	7	2.6
TOTAL	265	100

Nationalities

1. Romania	6. Paraguay
2. Dominican Republic	7. Spain
3. Brazil	8. Cuba
4. Colombia	9. Venezuela
5. Ecuador	10. Peru

Impact of Spanish migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Madrid

Work in the sex industry

As sex work in Spain is neither legal nor illegal, there is no need for a working visa in order to engage in it. During outreach, the sex workers were not asked whether they had regularised their situation, as it is a touchy subject and up until very recently, irrelevant with regard to their access to health care. Data is not recorded on this topic for 50.6% of the sex workers spoken to. A large number of sex workers encountered are Romanian and therefore they are EU citizens. In Spain, as in all EU countries, it is increasingly difficult to regularise one's situation, and the other side of this coin is that one may not get a contract in sex work in order to do so.

Health insurance

In theory, everyone in Spain had access to health care during the carrying out of this mapping exercise. There was a huge bureaucratic hill one had to climb in order to obtain a national health card, but once this was obtained everybody could regularly see a doctor whenever needed. Without it, one had to go to emergency health care or pay for a private consultation. Some migrants did not have the paperwork and were reluctant to go to the appropriate bodies to obtain the card. There were however free clinics which provided STI and HIV testing, where no identification or appointment was needed.

However, as of August 2012, free and universal access to health care is accessible only to EU citizens and those who have regularised their status in Spain. This means that immigrants who do not have a working permit will no longer be able to be treated by a general practitioner. It is assumed that NGOs like the Red Cross or Medicos del Mundo will treat them. Hospitals will take in undocumented people in emergency cases. It is not clear at the moment what the free clinics will do.

All of this contributes to the creation of a division of citizens, whereby some are protected and others are not. For migrant sex workers this will be an additional stigma added to their already heavy load when they visit a health centre. Hetaira observes that sex workers already have a hard time telling a doctor they trust about their profession. Now they will have only emergency care. No undocumented migrants will be medicated for free as before. Any person in this situation with chronic illnesses (cancer, AIDS, etc.) will have to pay for their own treatment. Very few will have the means.

Many NGOs have raised the question, “What is the point of testing someone for HIV if there will be no treatment for them?” This could mean that sex workers will no longer get tested now that there will be no free or affordable treatment. This is a setback in the fight against HIV/AIDS, for the public in general, because fewer people will be willing to find out if they are infected.

FOCUS



The structure of sex work venues organised by third parties

The structure of a workplace defines its working conditions. The indoor sex work setting in Madrid varies greatly from independent escorts to hotels hosting over two hundred women in the suburbs. The majority, however, are found in

three types of venues: clubs, flats and hotels. Clubs are usually small bars, with a disco-like atmosphere. The sex workers earn commission on clients' drinks. Rooms are available in which sexual services are provided, the prices of which depend on the venue. In some places they are fixed, while in others they are at the sex workers' discretion. Hotels tend to function in the same manner. Sex workers stay at the hotels and meet their clients in the hotel disco/bar. Flats are the most discrete venues and working conditions are more controlled in them. Here sex workers have less freedom to pick and choose their clients and the types of sexual services they offer.

Of these, almost all are organised by third parties. This is significant as these venues do not put sex workers at the centre of their workplace, and they are managed without their input. This means that their basic labour rights, well-being, health, and even safety tend not to be prioritised. Workers' rights are not recognised because third parties do not even acknowledge the working relationship that they have with the sex workers. Officially these women do not work for the venue owners: they just happen to show up and rent a space for their private use, and what happens behind closed doors is the sex workers' business.

In reality, this is very far from the truth. Venue owners make all marketing decisions. In many cases they dictate the price of sexual services (taking half or more); they determine which sexual services are provided and the working hours. They reserve the right to dismiss a worker without notice and without pay. Owners or managers can impose obligations, and fine or fire those who do not comply with them. An example of this could be to oblige sex workers to take a client or face a penalty or dismissal. Sex workers can also find that their clients expect an advertised service that they are not willing to provide, to which the same repercussions apply. This particularly happens in flats.

This state of affairs can make for deplorable working conditions. These are widespread across Madrid and are often non-negotiable. This combination leaves the indoor sex worker

feeling powerless to improve her working conditions, and detracts from her self-esteem in stark contrast to the experiences of workers in other sectors who feel valued in their workplaces and as professionals who can conduct their business in the best way for themselves. The stigma attached to this type of work is so powerful that it does not even occur to most indoor sex workers to demand better conditions. In general it is accepted as the way things are when one works indoors.

All the venues that were visited during outreach and recorded for the INDOORS project were organised by third parties. All of the sex workers were female. However, it is important to note that as an outreach team, Colectivo Hetaira is only given permission to enter venues with 'better' conditions where sex workers may have a minimal say in their work. The outreach team knows for a fact, given the countless affirmations from sex workers, that the norm is not so open. There are many variations within these indoor structures, and different degrees of venue owners' interest in staff well-being. Many times it is the lack of fundamental rights that impedes owners and/or sex workers from having better and safer sex work venues.

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

■ The venues visited are managed by third parties. The venues described as **hotels** in this report are hotels that usually only sex workers stay in. They are not hotels in which any tourist would stay – although technically this would be possible. The sex workers pay for their rooms every day and work as much or as little as they like. There is a disco/bar in the hotel, where clients make contact with them. These places are more upscale and the service charges are higher. The hotels claim to make money from the rooms and the drinks consumed, but not

from the sex work. However, they select which sex workers can stay and work there.

■ The **clubs** are like bars or mini-discos that have private rooms where the women work. The sex workers make money from sexual services and get commission on every drink their clients order.

■ In **flats** the sex workers pay per fifteen-minute slot for a room in which they provide services to each client. The sex workers can work 24 hours if they choose to and can live in the flat as well if they want.

Due to third-party management sex workers do not manage any place independently. There is always a group of women working together and a club manager or apartment overseer. It appears these are typical sex work venues. These venues are in the city centre and, in the case of the hotels, along motorways. On first visits, the management is targeted so that they will grant the team permission to visit the place and have contact with their staff. (This is important to take into account when looking at the results. Any venues with something to hide would not let the outreach team in.)

On regular visits they will call the women out of the rooms to introduce the outreach team and generally encourage the sex workers to speak to them. Most managers do not recognise the team as sex workers' rights advocates, but as social/health workers. They do inform the team of women who have left who they have suspected as trafficking victims, and of the general economic situation of the sex industry in Madrid.

Indoor sex workers work with other people because they have chosen to work in an establishment and not to work independently from home or rent a flat. Many feel that it is safer and cheaper to work this way than, for example, to work alone at home. It helps keep sex work separate from their private lives. It is equally important to recognise that there is also a fear of going solo. Sex workers known to Hetaira who wanted to start up their own cooperatives were unable to organise their colleagues or get them to commit. Autonomous

sex workers in Madrid are incredibly rare: only 2.2% of the sex workers encountered work alone. The sex industry is monopolised by just a handful of entrepreneurs.

The venues where outreach is conducted say they do not tolerate pimps and refuse sex workers who they suspect of being pimped, i.e. coerced into prostitution. The managers are usually present at their venues, but do not accompany the sex workers as such. They make sure there are no problems with the running of the place, but they let the sex workers get on with their work with relative freedom.

However, the outreach team has been told by sex workers that they have colleagues with boyfriends who hang around outside the clubs, and that they suspect that these men live off several other sex workers. The teams have observed these men as well.

The sex work venues visited are typical places for sex work in the city centre, the majority being clubs and flats. In Spain, there are various names for the same thing. What may be called a club or 'puticlub' is also known as a 'whiskeria' when on a smaller scale. There are also clubs that have shows in the city centre. Hetaira did not conduct outreach in them because access was not granted by the managers.

The management or organisation of the venues is to some extent atypical. The big clubs on the motorway actually do function as hotels. This is not considered the norm. Usually these macro-clubs/hotels take a percentage of what the sex workers make and enforce stricter working conditions.

The flats visited give the sex workers better working conditions than other flats. Sex workers in these venues have confirmed that very few flats function without enforcing strict working hours, forcing sex workers to provide specific sexual services, earning greater fees for managers, and denying the right to refuse clients. Hetaira has yet to be granted access to other flats.

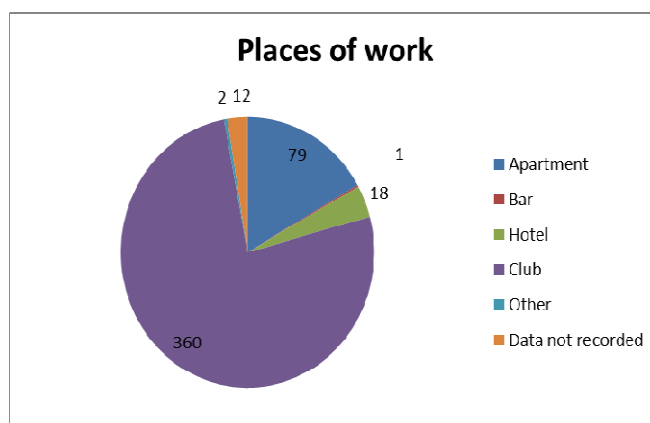
In addition to the clubs and flats, there are massage parlours and saunas, but they were not visited.

Places of work

	No.	%
Apartment	79	16.7
Bar	1	0.2
Hotel	18	3.8
Club	360	76.3
Other	2	0.4
Data not recorded	12	2.5
TOTAL	472	100

Other

Escort agency



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Madrid, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

Many factors can make a sex worker's behaviour risky in terms of HIV/STI infection.

The lack of labour regulations and the clandestine nature of sex work mean that sex workers are isolated and have fewer opportunities to access information on how to minimise risk and access health care.

The stigma attached to sex work also stops these women from asking for information and seeking medical help, because they feel ashamed and are scared that people will figure out what they

are doing. The majority of them do not disclose their work to their GP and do not ask for HIV/STI tests. It is important for them to know about, and visit, clinics that are free from prejudice against sex work.

Individual knowledge can be an important factor of risk. It would appear that protected vaginal sex is a given, but it is a different story when it comes to oral sex. It is hard to get a straight answer. Some say they give fellatio without protection, but most accept flavoured condoms. Many say that it is obvious when a client has a disease because of the look or smell of the penis.

Not many recognise that STIs can be symptom-free. Those who have brought up cunnilingus say they receive it without protection. The outreach team has shown them a few dental dams, a kind of protection which they did not know about.

Furthermore, there is a misconception that excessive hygiene keeps one disease-free. This can be observed when sex workers proclaim that they brush their teeth after oral sex, or use vaginal douches or thrush ointments daily. They do not know that this can make their body more vulnerable to disease, or in the case of vaginal creams break down latex like any oil-based lubricant.

There is a barrier with sex workers because the vast majority are first contacts and they are reluctant to talk about the sexual services they provide. Very few sex workers have spoken about anal sex for example, but it is known to be practised.

In terms of unprotected vaginal sex, no sex worker would admit to taking that risk, but it is also known to be practised. As the price of sexual services has decreased dramatically in the past few years due to the economic climate in Spain, more sex workers are taking the risk as a means to increase their earnings. This has been stated by sex workers about other colleagues, but never about themselves.

It would seem more of an industry problem that protected oral sex isn't as enforced or accepted as protected vaginal and anal sex. In fact many places advertise unprotected oral sex.

It has not been observed that violence or working conditions have a direct impact on sexual practices. The sex workers seem to be in control of this aspect of their job. Again this is only known to be true of the places that Hetaira visits.

It is known from sex workers that usually in flats, where the working conditions seem to be the most restrictive, sex workers may find themselves pressurised to provide sexual services they do not want to, to avoid losing their place.



Autonomy at work

How autonomous are the contacted sex workers?

Many sex workers did not talk about autonomy at work; however, it appears that in apartments and hotels, sex workers come and go as they please. They can work as much or as little as they choose. In clubs it is a little more restricted, but none of the sex workers complained about poor working conditions. It seems that they may not negotiate the rental conditions with management. Negotiations seem to be restricted to clients only.

In Hetaira's experience and from what sex workers have told the organisation, usually sex workers have less autonomy. They do not always get to choose their working hours or the rental conditions of the venues. Some sex workers have complained that in other venues they were not free to refuse sexual services or clients.

The prices of sexual services have decreased and there are fewer clients. From what has been said, sex workers are charging less and taking more risks. This would mean that economic pressure may limit freedom of choice. In the venues visited, no decrease in autonomy has been observed. However, it is logical that, with less revenue, sex workers may have to agree to more restrictive working conditions.

Outdoor sex workers who have had to move indoors because of repressive by-laws will have seen a decrease in autonomy in the past two years.

5. Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

There is virtually no difference between topics covered by nationals and migrants. Discussions are generally about working conditions and rights. The only difference that may be noteworthy is the focus on legal issues, which is mainly a conversation about how sex workers can get around their undeclared tax situation and start contributing to social security. This is something more valued by nationals as they see their stay in their own country as permanent.

Migrant sex workers appear to be less concerned about declaring income. Migrants, who make up the bulk of sex workers in Madrid, talk about leaving sex work or moonlighting because business is very slow due to the economic climate. This means that they are working longer for far less money.

Both migrants and nationals want advice on their legal and working rights, and they ask about legal support. Migrants tend to feel more restricted in their options. This is reflected in their conversations about working conditions and their wish for legal and social support.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

As can be expected, sex workers' health needs are mostly based on HIV/STI protection and gynaecological issues. Indoor sex workers know about HIV/STI prevention with regard to vaginal and anal sex, but their knowledge can be somewhat incomplete concerning oral sex and even more so the risks involved in excessive

personal hygiene rituals (i.e. too much teeth cleaning, vaginal douches, excessive use of yeast infection treatment creams, etc.). This is very much a grey area and should be clarified. There is a great difference here in results between migrants and nationals, which is easily explained in that there is only a very small sample of national workers (4) against a very large migrant sample (155).

Sex workers in general are very concerned about their health, and want to be STI-free and avoid getting pregnant. A lot of their concerns are around genital appearance, unusual discharge and condom breakages. An important issue is information on access to health services. Due to the national health reform, this need will increase greatly after August 2012.

Both nationals and migrants can feel the pressure of leading a double life which is expressed through feeling isolated and wanting psychological support. This is a running theme throughout outreach discussions: the difficulties of being in sex work and the fact that, psychologically speaking, it is tough.

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to sex workers' needs?

Hetaira's services and interventions match sex workers' needs and concerns. The outreach team takes the lead from the indoor sex workers on what they want to talk about. Hetaira may lead a themed workshop if one is planned at the venue. When making a second visit, the team will bring more information on specific themes previously raised by the sex workers. Usually sex workers would also be encouraged to visit or call the office, as well to discuss whatever themes they want. Because the sex worker is positioned at the centre of the interventions and services provided by Hetaira, they are set up to respond to their needs. At any rate, Hetaira is not just an organisation that offers assistance: it is a committed group of activists who wish to promote sex workers' rights and unite all women against the 'whore' stigma.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

National/international mobility

80.4% of women contacted did not speak about mobility within the country, and 84.6% did not discuss mobility outside Spain. Only 5.4% said that they moved around the country and 1.5% outside it. Madrid is a very large city so it is possible to move around venues without leaving the city.

Among these results, however, data was not recorded on many occasions because the topic did not come up in conversation, and it is not a routinely asked question.

Reasons for mobility

According to Hetaira's experience, sex workers are mobile because they go where they think the money is. Most of the sex workers who were encountered move around because clients like to see new faces; also because there can be more work in some areas of Spain depending on the season, or because they have heard that they can make more money in another city or country. Migrants and nationals are equally likely to move around if they can. Those in an irregular situation tend not to risk crossing national borders, but they will move around the country. It is not certain whether the new health care reform will cause these sex workers to move internationally.

Sex work, like other sectors, has been hit by the economic crisis and a lot of sex workers have felt a decrease in revenue. This may also be a contributing factor in migrating to another place in order to try their luck somewhere else.

It has been observed that a lot of women come to Madrid from other parts of Spain to work for a short while indoors, so as to preserve their anonymity.

It appears that many sex workers change country when they have contacts, friends or family at their destination. This can be why a lot tend to stay in Europe, notably the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

The main factor in these results is the lack of trust between Hetaira's outreach team and the sex workers. As mentioned above, most of these contacts happened only once. Sex workers are also reluctant to talk about violence if colleagues or managers are present, or because they don't want to talk about a bad experience, or they don't see the point. Most sex workers who were asked directly about violence denied experiencing or witnessing any. Perhaps they do not recognise all the types of violence that exist (economic, institutional, etc.).

The figures can be misleading because the team spoke mainly to sex workers who work together with colleagues. Violence is expected to be higher when working alone.

Forms of violence

It is hard to draw conclusions at this point because there are very few reported cases of violence. Additionally there have been stories of violence in every setting, with their different working conditions: flats, clubs and hotels; nationals and migrants. At a push it could be said that migrants appear to be victims of violence more, as they could be perceived as an easier target. Clients have threatened to report them and to get them deported from Spain as an intimidation tactic.

The women recognised physical violence above all, and a few spoke of verbal violence in the form of blackmail.

Perpetrators of violence

Violence itself was seldom brought up, which is why figures are very low concerning perpetrators of violence. Sex workers who are in apartments agree that when the police conduct raids they are rough and disrespectful. Club managers have also confirmed this attitude of the police. Where there were instances of violence, the police were seen to have been involved in the violence, as were some clients. Nobody has complained about violence from management. Sex workers have commented that some clients feel that they can do what they want with migrant sex workers, but they also say these cases are few and far between.

Sex workers do not feel protected by the police when they need to turn to them. Either they feel that the police can't help them because their complaint has to do with sex work; or they feel the police won't help them because they are sex workers and therefore not credible. This is illustrated by those who directly refused to press charges and also the hesitancy of other victims to go to the police. This speaks volumes about how non-legalised sex work affects sex workers' basic rights as individuals.

Indicators of violence

When sex workers are not protected by any law they can be subjected to many types of violence. Business owners may not recognise any type of working relationship or contract. They can get away with not paying sex workers, as can clients. Service providers can treat them with prejudice without consequences. Physical violence can take place and go unreported because perpetrators think they are immune to the law and/or sex workers think they will receive no protection from the police.

The stigma attached to sex work further isolates sex workers and cements the idea that there is no protection out there or that they do not deserve protection because they put themselves at risk. This can make them think that certain types of aggression are simply part of their work.

The abolitionist movement equally contributes to violence because it denies sex workers' autonomy and encourages governing bodies to make detrimental decisions about sex work without sex workers' input.

Sex workers have brought up the fact that they believe they are more vulnerable to violence, or to being taken advantage of, because they are migrants.

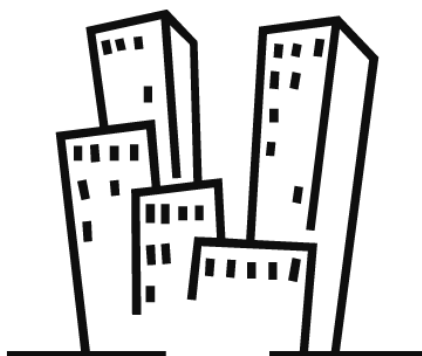
Other factors which can be strong indicators of violence include being new to the business without any professional training, being unsure of one's boundaries and of how to negotiate, and not knowing the tricks of the trade in order to avoid being taken advantage of.

Frequency of violence

	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	11	2.4
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	207	44.9
Violence was not a discussed topic	184	39.9
Data not recorded	59	12.8
TOTAL	461	100

Perpetrators of violence

	No.
Client	6
Relative, friend, acquaintance	2
Owner/manager of venue	1
Police	3
Other	1
TOTAL	13



MARSEILLE

France

1. Methodology of contact with sex workers

Outreach context

- **Mapping period:** 16 months, from January 2011 to June 2012
- **Outreach location:** Marseille and surroundings, France
- **Outreach coverage:** The team contacted sex workers who work in private locations such as apartments and hotels. Towards the end of the mapping period, outreach also commenced to venues such as hostess bars and sex shops, but as this is a new target group, little data is available as yet on these specific places. Other sex work venues exist in Marseille, such as saunas, where men work specifically with other men. Autres Regards' outreach was however focused on female sex workers, which is why the team concentrated on the venues where they are mostly represented.
- **TOTAL contacts:** 472
- **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 273

Each contact represents one entry in the INDOORS database. After each contact, the entry is updated with the additional information collected. This methodology reflects the team's aim of establishing a connection with sex workers based on regular contact.

Outreach methodology

96.8% of outreach is conducted through phone calls, visits and the internet, the main contact tool being the phone. Seven sex workers (3.2%) visited the service provider's office; some of them found the address on the internet (on the blog created for indoor sex workers) and others through word of mouth.

■ Sex workers' contact details are found on the internet (on specialised or general websites) and in a local newspaper. **Phone calls** are the main method (90.2%) of contacting indoor sex workers, and are made during the day between 11am and 5pm. The selected hours of contact take into account their working hours and those of the team. The outreach worker begins the phone call by outlining the organisation, its non-judgemental approach to sex work, and what it offers: medical, psychological and social support. It is explained that the approach is mainly based on health prevention, which is why the outreach worker often chooses to speak with sex workers about HIV/STI prevention and condom breaks. But rights and advocacy are also discussed.

Once a discussion has taken place, a text message is sent after the phone call with the contact details of the organisation (phone number, email, website). But the methodology is always adapted to suit sex workers' wishes and availability. At the beginning of 2012, a peer educator became involved in the outreach, which was previously mainly carried out by a social worker, and she is the main point of contact for phone calls.

Visits are also part of the outreach methodology, and the team offers, quite early in discussions, to meet sex workers at their workplaces, especially in private apartments, or in a more neutral location. However, no opportunities materialised to visit or meet sex workers outside

the office. The team proposed, via a phone call or text message, to meet them, but they were not really eager or ready for this action, and some of them cancelled the appointment just before it was due to begin. They want to remain anonymous and prefer to see the team at the office. They do not have enough confidence in the organisation.

■ Sex workers are also contacted on the **internet** by chat or email (6.5%). A profile has been set up on a general website where sex workers place ads, and the team tries to engage with them. It was very difficult to initiate discussions via chat and often only an outline of the organisation and its services was given. Its activities and services are briefly explained and the address and phone number given.

■ The team also contacts sex workers in **bars** at night, every three weeks. A peer educator is always present. At present there is insufficient data about this activity, but it is a part of the outreach and contact methodology. It is very difficult to have a discussion about sex work in hostess bars. Sex work is prohibited in these specific venues, and owners and bartenders could be punished for pimping. They have to protect themselves against the law. This is why hostesses are not really free to speak about sex work and the outreach team has to establish a strong link with them. For the time being, the team discusses general health and security, and the possibility for hostesses to have self-defence counselling with a teacher.

■ The last methodology of contact concerns **sex shops**, to which visits are paid every six weeks since January 2012. Sex workers are not directly contacted; the link is made through the shops' owners. The team distributes small cards with information about the organisation. The problem with this specific type of venue is the same as in hostess bars, because sex work is officially prohibited there. Sex shop owners often say that there is no sex work in their place. The methodology has to be adapted to this specific context by distributing small cards for sex workers, arguing that they might buy some sex toys in the sex shop.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

The methodology is directly linked to the way sex workers contact clients. The decision was made to contact sex workers mainly by phone because sex workers list only their phone number in ads on websites and in the newspaper, and because they are not really confident with face-to-face contact. It's easier and more effective for the team to use this method even though it's a little time-consuming because many phone numbers are invalid and a lot of sex workers never answer. Autres Regards also uses chat and forums because a lot of sex workers are present on forums and contact clients this way.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

The problem when contacting migrants is language, because some sex workers speak neither French nor English, and in such cases it is difficult to explain the organisation's activities by phone. According to Autres Regards' experience and to this mapping, numerous migrants publish ads on general websites. General websites are more accessible than specialised ones which require being more comfortable with French. On a general website, it is easier to create a profile and to publish an ad with few words and little information. If the team wants to contact more migrant sex workers, the methodology has to be adapted to this reality. This is why the team has started to contact more sex workers through general websites.

To place an ad in the local newspaper, sex workers need to have a valid passport or identity card and they need to visit the premises of the ad services the first time they publish an ad. The team decided to involve part of the newspaper team and leave some promotional cards at their office. Some sex workers may access the information this way and contact the organisation later.

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits, calls, internet)	457	96.8
At the service provider's premises	15	3.2
TOTAL	472	100

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	16	3.3
Direct contact over the phone	441	90.2
Email/internet	32	6.5
TOTAL	489	100

Contact methodology

Why sex workers showed interest/ no interest

The outreach team notes an increasing number of interested people (22.6%), which is a new development for Autres Regards because until July 2011, the ratio of refusals to interested sex workers was the same. The number of people interested may seem quite low but given the difficulty of establishing contact with indoor sex workers, this figure is rather encouraging. The new member of the indoor team, who is a peer educator, has certainly had a great impact. She has good contact with sex workers and she can follow up with them with a new approach based on her experience in sex work.

The issue of refusals is less important but it's relevant to note that 16.2% of the refusals are not absolute refusals: sex workers said that they would contact Autres Regards later if they needed to, and they noted the address and phone number. They listen to what is on offer and think that it is a good initiative: sometimes they call later when they need some help on specific issues.

For the other refusals, it is difficult to know why sex workers refuse contact. Sometimes they clearly say why they are not interested (they are

not in sex work anymore, they are not concerned, or they wish to remain anonymous), but sometimes they just say "I'm not interested" and it is difficult to prolong this discussion over the phone; sometimes they quickly end the conversation.

Conclusions on the efficiency of the methodology

For the moment, contact is still initiated by Autres Regards in 94.9% of cases, but 24 sex workers contacted the team directly.

Since the beginning of the year the methodology of the calls was modified slightly, as was the frequency. It was very time-consuming to leave messages on voicemail. The team stopped doing this and after four calls (one a week) to the same number without being answered, a text message was sent and the calls stopped. In fact 70 sex workers don't appear in this report because the team never had real contact with them. It was decided not to enter this group of sex workers in the INDOORS database because it was not relevant in terms of information.

Once a discussion with a sex worker has taken place, the outreach worker waits three weeks before contacting her for a second time for the follow-up. Depending on her wishes and needs (need to talk, isolation, specific problems), contact may or may not be regularly maintained.

Moreover, more sex workers advertising on a new general website have been contacted. They may be more interested, for it is thought that their involvement in sex work is more occasional than that of those who advertise on specialised websites or in the local newspaper and who tend to be more aware about risks.

The methodology is still evolving because the team is still learning from experience (what works, what doesn't work) and because it is adapted to changing trends in indoor sex work. The indoor sex industry is hard to reach and the outreach activity only recently began to show results. It can be said that the methodology is effective even if it is difficult to create and maintain a link.

Identification of key people or intermediaries to facilitate contact

A change has been noticed since January 2012, thanks to the good contact and good links the peer worker has been able to establish with sex workers.

It has also been noticed that Brazilian sex workers have an increasing presence in Marseille and share information about Autres Regards. They circulate the information in their community and often come to the office with other sex workers who are new to the organisation.

One owner of a visited sex shop offered to promote the indoor blog on his newly created website.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/outreach team	448	94.9
The sex worker	24	5.1
TOTAL	472	100

Response of sex workers to contact initiated by the outreach team

	No.	%
Interested	104	22.6
Refusal	61	13.2
No time, busy at the moment	20	4.3
Impossible to leave a message	20	4.3
Message left in mailbox	180	39
Contact details not valid	47	10.2
Other	29	6.3
TOTAL	461	100

Other

Some sex workers want to contact the organisation later if they need to: it's not an absolute refusal, but they do not need anything at the time of the phone call. Others work or live in another city: they can't come to the office, which is why they are not really interested. But the team gave them the address of another organisation for sex workers.

Reasons for refusal

	No.
Not concerned	2
No need for services offered	13
Not in sex work anymore	4
Will contact organisation later if needed	11
Other	10
Data not recorded	26
TOTAL	66

Other

Some sex workers hung up; others stated that they did not provide sexual services, only massages and/or companionship

When contact was initiated by sex workers, how had they learned of the organisation?

	No.
Outreach	14
Word of mouth (through other sex workers)	5
Cards/flyers distributed by the organisation	1
Through owners/managers	1
On the internet	4
TOTAL	25

2. Prostitution scene in Marseille

■ **Gender** – The majority of indoor sex workers are non-transgender women (88.6%) while transgender people comprise 10.3%. The low percentage of men can be explained by the fact that the decision was taken to contact mainly women and transgender people.

■ **Age** – The majority of indoor sex workers are aged between 18 and 35 years, with 18- to 25-year-olds comprising 46.9% and 26- to 35-year-olds comprising 37%. The data on age comes from the information given in ads or from what sex workers say during the calls when asked. But

the age given in ads is not really reliable because sex workers never state their real age: younger ones increase their age and older ones reduce it. However, it allows for the estimation of an average.

Transgender sex workers tend to be in the 18-25 age group. The team believes that it is easier for them to work in indoor sex work than outdoors because of transphobic stigmatisation and discrimination.

■ **Migration** – In Marseille the outreach team had difficulties determining whether the contacted sex workers were migrants, and if so, where they came from. 228 different people were contacted but only the nationality of 58 sex workers is known, of whom 32 are migrants. This information was provided by sex workers during the calls or was found in their ads.

It was decided at the beginning of the project not to directly ask about nationality in the phone calls. For the team and for sex workers, it could appear as a police investigation of migrants. But the majority of indoor sex workers contacted are French or speak very good French, sometimes with a light accent. The peer educator has less difficulty in asking directly where the sex workers come from: it seems that sex workers are more forthcoming with her.

■ **Origin and nationalities** – Migrant sex workers mainly come from two parts of the world: Latin America and the European Union (Spain and Romania in particular). This data is only partially representative because only a fraction of sex work venues have been contacted. The prevalence of migrants is considered to be more significant on general websites on which it is easy to publish an ad even if the sex worker doesn't speak very fluent French. In Marseille, in outdoor sex work, migrants are mainly Bulgarian women; this is a considerable difference from the indoor sector in which the team contacted no one from Bulgaria. This indoor/outdoor division by nationality remains unexplained.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	242	88.6
Male (non-transgender)	3	1.1
Transgender	28	10.3
TOTAL	273	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	32	11.7
Nationals	26	9.5
Data not recorded	215	78.8
TOTAL	273	100

Origin of migrant sex workers

	No.	%
European Union	13	40.6
Eastern Europe and Central Asia (non-EU countries)	2	6.3
Latin America and Caribbean	11	34.4
Balkan countries	1	3.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	3	9.4
North Africa	2	6.3
TOTAL	32	100

Nationalities

1. France	6. Portugal
2. Brazil	7. Russia
3. Spain	8. Czech Republic
4. Romania	9. Bosnia and Herzegovina
5. Cameroon	10. Moldova

Impact of French migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Marseille

Work in the sex industry

Sex work in France is not regulated: it is neither legalised nor criminalised. There is no specific permit needed to work in sex work. Citizens from other countries have to have regular status if they want to work in sex work or in another profession.

Residence permit

Attaining regular status has been difficult for many years in France. EU citizens enjoy the right to enter, to stay and to work in France if they have a valid passport or a valid identity card. However, Bulgarian and Romanian citizens need a residence permit to stay for a period that exceeds three months. There are special work regulations for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens, greatly limiting their opportunities to work in the country.

Non-EU citizens need to fulfil basic conditions in order to enter France. They must have a visa to cover their stay, possess a valid passport, prove that they have accommodation in France or a place to stay, and demonstrate that they have the financial resources to stay in France.

Health insurance

Access to health insurance depends on legal status and regular situation. The actual tendency is to reduce opportunities for migrants to stay in the country for medical reasons.

In France health insurance depends on several conditions: whether or not one works, receives minimal income (RSA), is a migrant, is in a regular situation, etc. If migrant sex workers are in an irregular situation, they have to justify having lived in France for more than three months and can access the AME (National Medical Aid Programme) which gives them

access to all medical treatments for free. They need to have their address registered somewhere to be eligible for this.

In any case they need to go through administrative procedures, facing more and more barriers, and it is not easy for migrants, especially when they are in an irregular situation. Often they are not aware of their rights or access to health care.

French sex workers can access public health care if they work, are unemployed, or benefit from social assistance. For French sex workers access to health insurance is better than for migrants even if they are not especially aware of their rights.

All these issues illustrate the difficulty of establishing contact with migrants, because they are suspicious of phone calls and it is difficult to have a follow-up and establish good links. The outreach team believes that many are probably in indoor sex work in an irregular situation.



Occasional indoor-based sex workers: specific trends and needs

In Marseille, a specific feature of indoor sex work is the occasional nature of the activity. A lot of sex workers identify as 'occasional sex workers'; they occasionally advertise on the internet and/or in newspapers, when they need money. Autres Regards chose to focus on this trend, believing that this category of sex workers has more needs in terms of health prevention, information and counselling, and because the outreach work is considerably influenced by their specific approach to sex work.

The word 'occasional' is used for several reasons by indoor sex workers. Some sex workers call themselves 'occasional' because sex work is not their only source of income: they have another job or they receive social benefits. They have few clients because they just need money

quickly, to pay their rent, their debts, etc. For others, sex work is their only source of income but they use the term 'occasional' because they have decided to limit their clients and/or see the activity as transitional. The word 'occasional' is used to denote that sex work is only a temporary activity, and a lot of sex workers consider that they have no specific needs linked to sex work.

But in fact, despite these reasons, the word 'occasional' is not simply linked to a source of income, to the time spent on the activity or to the number of clients – or at least not only these factors. 'Occasional' means 'I'm not a sex worker' or 'I'm not **only** a sex worker.' This word permits them to avoid belonging to a group, the 'sex workers' group, which is often stigmatised and linked to outdoor sex work. The word 'occasional' could be linked to that of 'escort': more 'glamorous', but, on the other hand, an escort is also seen as a professional, which is not how occasional indoor sex workers consider themselves. This kind of occasional indoor sex work is sometimes seen as a fast solution to get access to money. The potential side effects to health and to physical and psychological well-being are minimised.

The main challenge is that occasional sex workers are very difficult to reach because they are not in sex work all the time. The other difficulty is that occasional sex workers want to keep their anonymity; they don't want to be in contact with other sex workers or to get in touch with an organisation working with and for sex workers, because they don't feel concerned by what is offered. They are not socially excluded, and they don't want to mix their ordinary life with sex work. But they are isolated because they don't share information about sex work with others.

This perspective on 'occasional' sex work influences their working conditions and particularly the sexual practices offered. In Marseille, one of the factors behind unsafe sex is the occasional character of the activity. Occasional sex workers tend to minimise the risks either because they don't identify as sex workers or because they are badly informed. In

general, many occasional indoor sex workers don't know what to do in the event of a condom burst, they are insufficiently informed about sexually transmitted infections, and do not know where they can get free and anonymous HIV tests. They don't really know that some sexual practices are not safe without protection. Outreach reveals that occasional sex workers are more likely to offer unsafe sexual practices, along with practices that older and more professional sex workers refuse.

The isolation of this group of indoor sex workers and the lack of exchange of information among them have a strong impact on Autres Regards' outreach work and on HIV/STI prevention. It is not easy to establish and maintain links. Promoting empowerment or encouraging community-level mobilisation is nearly impossible or requires long-lasting efforts.

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

- In Marseille, indoor sex work venues are mostly **private apartments** (17.6%), located across the city.
- Some sex workers also work in **hotels** (4.7%). Others work in **sex shops**, but thus far the team has had no contact with this group.
- Autres Regards has resumed contacting sex workers in **hostess bars**, and one of them contacted the organisation following outreach.

The problem is that sex work is forbidden in these two last venues: they are not official workplaces and it is very difficult to make direct contact with sex workers in them. They can't speak about sex work, or they don't want to. The owner or the bartender in a hostess bar could easily be accused of pimping and it is assumed that they don't allow sex workers to speak freely about sex work.

In general, indoor sex workers also work in their own apartments (48.9%), in apartments rented specifically for sex work (13%), or visit clients on outcalls (14.1%). The high percentage of those who work in their own homes is very significant. It would cost too much for the individual to rent a place dedicated to sex work, especially if she is only an occasional sex worker, so this is why they prefer to work at home. Moreover, some sex workers say that they feel more secure when they are in their own home.

Those who can't or don't want to work in their own apartments choose to work at a hotel or do outcalls. There are many reasons: some sex workers prefer to maintain their anonymity or to be more discreet in their own neighbourhood, and prefer to receive clients in a more anonymous place like a hotel or an apartment rented only for sex work. Ultimately, each sex worker makes a decision according to her own constraints and wishes.

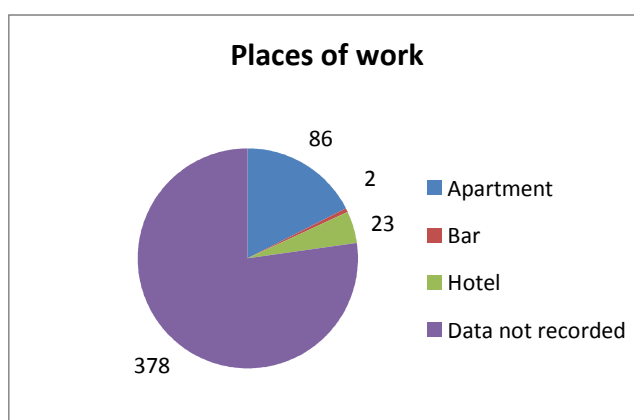
As for migrant sex workers, 40.9% work in apartments, and 50% of these in their own homes. This point is interesting because it is generally difficult for migrants to rent an apartment in France: they need a payslip, a regular situation, etc. For those who can't do this, the choice of venue depends, as it does for nationals too, on their own limits and their assessment of risks.

The majority of indoor sex workers work alone, a choice explained by several factors. In Marseille, indoor sex workers want to keep their anonymity, they don't know each other and they don't want to have contact with one another. The occasional nature of the activity for lots of sex workers could account for their tendency to work alone and their lack of interest in knowing each other and exchanging information.

Another reason is that the law in France is very broad concerning pimping. Working with other sex workers in the same apartment is allowed only if they are all named on the lease. This has a significant effect on the way sex workers work.

Places of work

	No.	%
Apartment	86	17.6
Bar	2	0.4
Hotel	23	4.7
Data not recorded	378	77.3
TOTAL	489	100



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Marseille, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

There is little information on discussed sexual practices because the decision was made to ask this quite sensitive question only after a real discussion had taken place with each sex worker. The available data is only based on what sex workers discussed during the phone conversation, and sometimes there is no time to discuss this because the sex worker has a client, is busy, or doesn't want to spend much time on the phone. Of the ten main sexual practices mentioned, three are unsafe and for two protection is not specified. The first practice without protection is fellatio. According to the team's observations, the main reason for unsafe sex is that sex workers downplay the risks and/or are unaware of the risks. Some of them

believe that cunnilingus or fellatio is not risky without protection, and some don't know what kind of protection they can use. Many sex workers estimate that the risk of HIV/AIDS through unprotected fellatio is minimal, underestimating the other STI risks.

Even if the client's preference is still important, ignorance plays a big role. This confirms the necessity of continuing to focus outreach on health prevention.

Many factors may influence the sexual practices offered: the occasional nature of sex work is one of the principal ones, linked to the age of sex workers. According to the team, occasional sex workers and younger ones (sometimes both) offer more unsafe sexual practices. Occasional sex workers don't want to acknowledge themselves as sex workers and don't use specific protection for sexual practices. They rationalise that they are not really concerned because sex work is not their only job, or because they have few clients and they minimise the risk this way.

4. **Autonomy at work**

How autonomous are the contacted sex workers?

In 90.9% of the contacts, no data was recorded regarding autonomy at work.

The majority of indoor sex workers contacted during outreach were nationals, and according to the team's observations, they freely choose to work in sex work. They make their own decisions about where and when they work, and they set the prices of sexual services. They can decide which practices they offer. Many sex workers are selective about their clients. For example, some sex workers refuse clients because of their tone of voice, or because of their age. Others look out of the window to see the client before he arrives at the premises, and then refuse him if they prefer.

Older sex workers don't speak about autonomy but about working conditions. They tend to say

that sex work is undergoing changes: clients want new sexual practices (French kissing, anal sex, massages, etc.) and increasingly request fellatio without protection. It is more difficult for them to negotiate practices and prices even if they are totally free and autonomous.

However, this situation may not be representative, because data about migrants is insufficient and it is not known whether they are totally autonomous, or the degree to which they have autonomy. In hostess bars it is also difficult to know whether sex workers have control of their working conditions, because of the taboo of sex work in these venues. They are known to not have sufficient freedom to speak about sex work, but it remains hard to access details of their working conditions.

Evolution of autonomy

Only three sex workers said that their level of autonomy remained stable over the two last years. The lack of data in the vast majority of cases is due to the occasional characteristic of indoor sex work. Many sex workers have been working for less than two years, and it is difficult for them, and for the team, to assess whether their autonomy has increased or decreased in this short time.

The other reason is that it is necessary to have a real discussion and establish a strong link with indoor sex workers, and a phone call is too limited.

5. **Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical**

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

The most relevant data concerns nationals, because only 39 sex workers were recorded as migrants, and of them, only seven expressed social needs. Transgender migrants expressed legal and social support needs, because some

are in an irregular situation and need information to change it. Transgender nationals are more likely to speak about transgender issues or about sex work (legislation and rights).

Generally, French women expressed a need to speak about sex work (working conditions, information on rights, legislation) with the outreach team or with another person (escort or other sex worker). This may be linked to the political context in France: sex workers are increasingly stigmatised and the government is considering a new law which would fine clients.

Some needed psychological or social support, but they were a minority. Their most expressed need is to speak to someone. This fact reveals their isolation.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

Indoor sex workers began to express more health needs than they had done at the beginning of the project, possibly because some of them got to know the organisation and felt a stronger connection to it. It could be that the presence of a peer encourages them to speak more easily.

Generally, both migrants and nationals need information or help related to gynaecological issues (abortion, pregnancy, consultation with a doctor). The other commonly expressed need is to see a general practitioner. This need may be linked to the presence of a doctor at Autres Regards' premises.

Women, including transgender women, also express a need for health insurance, especially National Medical Aid for migrants.

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to sex workers' needs?

The outreach work is primarily based on health and sexual risk prevention because this is the main activity of the organisation. This is why the

team discussed the organisation's activities and services along with HIV/AIDS, STIs, safer sex, condoms, etc. Experience shows that indoor sex workers are not really aware about sexual practices and safer sex and have insufficient knowledge of STIs. It is important to inform sex workers, especially occasional ones, about sexual practices, but this is not the information that sex workers request to begin with and generally they don't express this need.

Discussions are adapted to their circumstances and their need to speak about legal matters, about their social situation, their working conditions and their rights. Autres Regards, as a community organisation working with sex workers, can respond to these needs, offering among other things the possibility for indoor sex workers to exchange their experiences with other sex workers at the office or in a more neutral space if they want to.

Concerning health care, sex workers who came to the office wanted to see the doctor. The organisation meets the health needs of both indoor and outdoor sex workers, with access to a doctor and referral to public health services.

However, a large proportion of indoor sex workers say "We need nothing", never expressing social or medical needs. The reason for this may be that they don't have any health problems at the time of contact, or because they already have a personal doctor (in the case of French sex workers). Some of them expressed an interest in seeing a doctor, but only a few came to the office. The team believes that this tendency is related to the occasional nature of sex work activity for a large number of the sex workers. To say "We need nothing" is a means to deny the reality of sex work and the risks linked to it.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

Information is scarce on the mobility of sex workers, and data on this was not recorded in 86.4% of contacts. It is not easy to discuss this theme by phone, and instead the priority is to discuss sex workers' needs: health, violence, security, rights and general care.

National mobility

In terms of in-country mobility, 14 national sex workers stated that they move regularly between several cities, and numerous transgender people move around in France.

According to the team's field knowledge, the majority of indoor sex workers in Marseille are nationals and there are several reasons for their mobility within the country and between several cities (Paris, Marseille, Lyon). The first reason is to attract new clients who like to meet 'new' sex workers. Some sex workers go to another city to visit their friends and use this opportunity to work. In the majority of cases, mobility is motivated by the opportunity to earn more money, which is why many sex workers publish an ad in a newspaper or on a general website for one week, one month or longer.

Another reason for the mobility is linked to the fact that some sex workers might not want to work in the city in which they live. It can also be because of client demand, especially for those sex workers who have a personal website.

International mobility

Only migrant sex workers are mobile in other countries, and only four countries (Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom, Spain) have been mentioned. However, the results are too few to be considered significant.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

The team had difficulties discussing violence with indoor sex workers. It is an important theme which is not easy to talk about on the phone, especially during a first contact and without a strong connection. This is why in 28.6% of the cases it was not a discussed topic, and data on this was not recorded for a further 57% of contacts. After two or more contacts, some sex workers start to speak about violence, but they remain in the minority. It is as if violence were a secret, or something that they don't want to talk about with people they don't know well enough.

Since she began to conduct outreach in January 2012, the peer educator has asked during every contact whether the sex worker has experienced violence, and 12.3% said no. They are aware of the risks of violence in sex work, but they don't really discuss it. Of the 273 different individuals contacted, nine said that they had experienced violence, and the majority were non-transgender women. Generally they were hit or threatened by a client.

Among the nine cases, five said they had seldom experienced violence, and two said they had experienced it occasionally. But the response rate is too low to be representative.

Forms of violence

Physical, economic or verbal violence are the three main forms identified by sex workers. More specifically, sex workers who experienced violence were hit/bitten (3 cases), were threatened with a firearm (1 case), were not paid or had their money stolen (4 cases), and were insulted during work (3 cases). For example, one sex worker was hit by a client who was not satisfied by the sexual encounter and wanted to keep his money. Another sex worker said that the client was violent during the sexual encounter.

Psychological violence is the most difficult form to identify and the most personal to talk about, both for the outreach team and the sex workers. This can explain why it was not a discussed topic. For a lot of sex workers, psychological violence is so entwined with the activity of sex work that they don't necessarily point it out.

Perpetrators of violence

It is important to underline that 97.7% did not answer this question. This low level of response is not representative of the indoor prostitution scene in Marseille but it is linked to the fact that very few individuals spoke about violence.

For six sex workers, violence was perpetrated by a client (money stolen, refusal of payment, violent sexual practices or threats with a firearm or other weapon). In three cases, the police or the public authorities were the perpetrators of violence.

It seems easier for sex workers to speak about violence when it is perpetrated by the police, because normally the police are expected to protect people, including sex workers, but this is not always the case in France. When violence is perpetrated by clients, sex workers may consider it a hazard of their work, probably 'normal', and they don't want or need to speak about this.

Indicators of violence

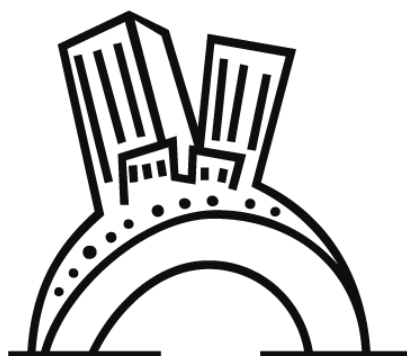
The data collected is not enough to explain the different indicators of violence. One small conclusion can be drawn from the few cases: violence generally occurs at the place of work (especially in hotels) and is perpetrated by clients or the police. Female sex workers who work alone are the most vulnerable. But it is very difficult to explain a complicated issue such as violence with only 10 cases.

It is thought that the occasional nature of sex work plays a significant role in violence; young and occasional sex workers are more vulnerable. They don't know how to protect themselves, how to select their clients and negotiate with

them, which workplaces are the most risky, etc. Neither do they know fellow sex workers with whom they could exchange information on practices and codes.

Frequency of violence

	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	10	2.1
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	58	12.3
Violence was not a discussed topic	135	28.6
Data not recorded	269	57
TOTAL	742	100



PORTO

Portugal

1. Methodology of contact with sex workers

Outreach context

- **Mapping period:** 15 months, from March 2011 to June 2012
- **Outreach location:** Porto and surroundings, Portugal
- **Outreach coverage:** This mapping covers indoor sex workers in Porto. APDES mainly makes contact with sex workers who work in private apartments, but also in massage parlours, night clubs/bars and hotels, which are thought to have the highest concentration of sex work in Porto.
- **TOTAL contacts:** 392
- **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 234

During this mapping APDES made 392 individual contacts, of which 234 were new contacts.

Outreach methodology

The outreach work conducted in the field of sex work involves different strategies such as **home**

visits, social support and referrals to social/health services, and a **helpline** in operation eight hours a day. Each strategy aims to respond to sex workers' needs within a comprehensive framework based on human rights and full respect for sex workers' choices.

The outreach team is composed of physiologists, social workers, nurses and two peer educators.

When approaching the field for the first time, the team consulted the newspapers in which sex work is advertised, and contacted sex workers to introduce its services and the organisation's aims and activities. Nowadays, this strategy for making contact is very seldom used, when the team wants to expand the range of its interventions or diversify its target population.

Nevertheless, APDES advertises its services in the same newspapers and also on the websites used by sex workers to advertise their own services. During this mapping exercise, this form of contact was not the most representative (accounting for 2.1%), as the team is already well established in the field.

The team only visits private venues (apartments/massage parlours) to which it has been invited, and tries to arrange the date and time in order not to interfere with sex workers' work or private lives.

The first visits/contacts are the most time-consuming. As sex workers move frequently, it is very common to meet new contacts in already known apartments, which requires a longer period of time spent in the venue. The average duration of an outreach visit to an apartment is 70 minutes.

Most contacts are made during these visits (56.2%), spontaneously during outreach work. Some sex workers get to know APDES' work through other sex workers and call of their own accord to request a visit or service (23.6%). It is also common for the owners of indoor sex venues to call the outreach team to inform them about the arrival of new sex workers (accounting for 7.3% of cases).

In addition to the visits, the outreach workers also accompany sex workers to social and health

services within the community (gynaecology, psychology, psychiatry, nutrition, dentistry, etc.) when needed. For this mapping, only a small percentage (1.5%) of these contacts was made during these forms of support.

The phone also plays an important role in the outreach work, being the means through which the team is in permanent contact with sex workers, who may call to request something or to complain, but also to share their feelings.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

The strategies mentioned above allow APDES to be in close contact with its target population, to get to know their main needs, to best respond to those needs and to develop a relationship based upon trust and respect. We believe that this relationship is crucial for the sharing of sensitive information (e.g. legal problems, situations of violence, concerns about health, negotiation with clients, etc.) and it is a basic requirement for discussion of more complex topics, such as empowerment and citizenship.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

The methodology used to approach nationals and migrants is quite similar, but when the outreach team is speaking only with migrant sex workers, it emphasises some subjects that are not addressed with nationals, such as the universal access to health services in Portugal regardless of legal status in the country.

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits, calls)	388	99
Other	2	0.5
Data not recorded	2	0.5
TOTAL	392	100

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	328	83.7
Direct contact over the phone	1	0.3
Accompaniment	6	1.5
Data not recorded	57	14.5
TOTAL	392	100

Contact Methodology

Why the majority of sex workers showed interest

The vast majority of visits only take place if the sex worker/owner is willing to receive the outreach team, which means that there were hardly any refusals or uninterested sex workers during the mapping exercise. The majority of contacts were initiated by the sex workers themselves (48%). Of course the welcomes differ, varying from very enthusiastic sex workers to silent ones, from sex workers who ask a lot of questions to others who don't, from sex workers who want to share only professional issues to sex workers who need to unburden personal issues, and so on: a variety of situations that reflect the variety of people involved in the field of sex work, as in others.

A high percentage (36.7%) of contacts was made by the team, which plans each field intervention on the basis of requests but also on the basis of the locations and date of last visit. The team covers a wide area and, in order to save resources, it is essential to have a monthly plan which can be adapted if needed.

Conclusions on the efficiency of the methodology

At present it seems that the strategies of approaching and establishing links with sex workers working in private apartments/massage parlours are effective. If the team decides to approach night clubs or any other sex work venues, the methodology would certainly require adjustments.

Identification of key people or intermediaries to facilitate contact

Along with preventive materials, the outreach team gives each sex worker two or three business cards with all their contact details (phone, email, address), and encourages them to keep one card and to give the rest to others who could benefit from the organisation's services. As a result, APDES' contacts have been made mainly through the snowball effect and word of mouth (over 40%).

Four types of influential or key people have been identified in spreading the word about the project/organisation:

■ **Cultural mediators** – These individuals are part of the sex work community and also part of the team. They are especially effective in publicising the project and its services to new sex workers, and also in introducing the outreach team to previously unknown sex work venues. Cultural mediators are the preferred channels of communication, due to their informal approach and proximity to the target group. Their message is easily accepted because they share the same social codes and language with the sex workers.

■ **Sex workers** – They often share APDES' contact details with colleagues and tell them about their personal experience with the project/organisation.

■ **Owners/managers of apartments** – It's crucial to create good relations with these key facilitators, because they have an important role in sex workers' lives given their direct influence on sex workers' working conditions. After establishing a good rapport with them, the team is able to find out whenever new sex workers arrive at the apartments (and schedule a visit in order to meet them), and also to get to know other apartments.

■ **Other service providers** – Other outreach teams give APDES' contact details to sex workers and refer them to the organisation when they move to the area it covers. APDES does likewise when they move to other areas of Portugal where there are outreach teams.

Gender, age or origin as reasons for accepting or refusing contact

Very few refusals were recorded in compiling this report. Most come from Portuguese sex workers (who are more worried than migrants about preserving their privacy) and also from some owners who are suspicious about the organisation or just think that contact with sex workers working in their venues will lose them time or money.

There are also some refusals from sex workers who advertise in the newspapers for 'natural oral sex' (meaning without protection). These sex workers say that everything is all right with them and that they do not need the services offered.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/outreach team	144	36.7
The sex worker	188	48
Other	59	15
Data not recorded	1	0.3
TOTAL	392	100

Other

Another sex worker, owner, receptionist or cultural mediator

Response of sex workers to contact initiated by the outreach team

	No.	%
Interested	185	88.5
Refusal	0	0
No time, busy at the moment	9	4.3
Silence	8	3.8
Data not recorded	7	3.3
TOTAL	209	100

When contact was initiated by sex workers, how had they learned of the organisation?

	No.	%
Outreach	95	43
Word of mouth (through other sex workers)	91	41.2
Cards/flyers distributed by the organisation	10	4.5
Referral by another organisation/institution	3	1.4
Media or public events	1	0.5
Other	6	2.7
Data not recorded	15	6.8
TOTAL	221	100

Other

Cultural mediator, newspaper, erotic fair

2. Prostitution scene in Porto

■ **Gender** – The vast majority (90.2%) of the sex workers contacted during this mapping were non-transgender women, 6.4% were transgender and only 3.4% were male.

Although it is frequently highlighted that sex work is mainly performed by (non-transgender) women, an analysis of the advertisements for sexual services also reveals a high prevalence of transgender and male sex workers. Nevertheless, the general impression is often that, as in other sectors of society, female (including transgender) sex workers are more vulnerable and need more support than male sex workers. So, it is to be expected that outreach teams design interventions more suited to female needs. In doing so, it is clear that female sex workers will be more receptive than male sex workers to contact from outreach teams.

■ **Age** – More than 67% of the contacts made in this mapping were between 26 and 45 years old. It is also significant that almost 15% of the contacts are more than 46 years old, countering the idea that only young people are sex workers.

■ **Migration** – More than 70% of the sex workers contacted were migrants, which is a highly representative percentage and has a direct impact on the interventions and services available. This high percentage of migrant sex workers in this sample may imply that the majority of sex workers are migrants, or that migrant sex workers are in a position of greater vulnerability and have more needs than national sex workers. Migrants are also believed to be less reluctant to reveal their identity because they are not in their home country. People from the same country tend to know each other and, as mentioned above, a great deal of the contacts are made through word of mouth.

■ **Origin and nationalities** – The majority of the contacted sex workers came from Brazil (95.2%). Brazilians are the most significant migrant population in Portugal, essentially due to shared history and also because of the common language. Portugal was known in Brazil, for a long time, as a place of opportunities to improve lives, even if this is far less the case nowadays.

Caution should always be exercised in making generalisations based on data. The collected data refers to a small group of sex workers which may not be representative. However, as far as is known from other outreach teams, the high percentage of migrant women is a common trend.

Brazilians comprise one of the most prevalent nationalities among migrants in Porto, and in Portugal as a whole, so it is also reasonable to expect a high prevalence of Brazilian sex workers.

Male and transgender sex workers may be underrepresented in this mapping. APDES' approach in the field is made through snowball contacts and also through responding to contacts received by the team, which makes non-transgender female sex workers the most common target. Most of the male and transgender sex workers contacted by the team share their work apartments with other women or are somehow linked to their social networks. It is expected that there are many other men and transgender sex workers working alone or

outside of these networks, with whom the team has never been in contact.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	211	90.2
Male (non-transgender)	8	3.4
Transgender	15	6.4
TOTAL	234	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	167	71.4
Nationals	67	28.6
TOTAL	234	100

Origin of migrant sex workers

	No.	%
European Union	1	0.4
Eastern Europe and Central Asia (non-EU countries)	3	1.28
Latin America and Caribbean	159	68
Sub-Saharan Africa	3	1.28
North Africa	1	0.4
Data not recorded	67	28.6
TOTAL	234	100

Nationalities

1. Brazil	6. Venezuela
2. Portugal ¹⁴	7. Romania
3. Ukraine	8. Bolivia
4. Colombia	9. Angola
5. Mozambique	10. Cape Verde

¹⁴ This number is a relative percentage given that the total number of migrant sex workers is higher than that of Portuguese sex workers.

Impact of Portuguese migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Porto

Work in the sex industry

In terms of the legal framework of sex work, criminal penalties for sex workers were removed from the Portuguese Penal Code at the beginning of 1983, but there is no specific legislation related to sex work in Portugal: it is neither legal nor illegal. Voluntary prostitution is not a crime – sex workers cannot be arrested for selling sexual services – although it is not recognised as a profession.

Given that sex work is not considered a profession, it is impossible to stipulate a work contract to carry out this activity, to declare it in the Portuguese financial system, or to make discounts with it for the national social security system. The lack of a legal framework to protect sex workers renders them vulnerable.

The owners of apartments or other sex work venues may be committing a criminal offence of ‘pandering’ (Article 107, 1995), which criminalises those who “professionally or with a profitable intention promote, favour or make easy the exercise of prostitution by another person or the practice of sexual acts of relief, exploiting a situation of desperation or of economic necessity”. Because of this, most of the owners don’t stay in the sex work venues and state that they are unaware of the activities performed there. Others prefer to take the risk and manage the business closely. Also, when two or more sex workers share an apartment to work, the person who is responsible for the rent can be charged with the same crime.

Residence permit

Migration and labour policies certainly affect sex workers’ lives. Even if Portugal is considered to be migrant-friendly, with integrative policies, it is not easy for a migrant to obtain a residence permit and it is even harder for a migrant sex worker to obtain one, as sex work is not

considered a legal profession. Not having a residence permit puts sex workers in a very fragile situation: they fear exposure, they fear contact with authorities and they are more vulnerable to violence; they face more discrimination, also in general services; they face real obstacles when accessing health services.

Health insurance

Nevertheless, in Portugal, everyone is entitled to health care through the National Health Service, although migrants in an irregular situation are expected to pay the stipulated price for each specific service, which is much higher than the price paid by Portuguese citizens. Some services related to public health (family planning, pregnancy, HIV diagnosis and treatment) are totally free of charge even for irregular migrants.

Also, according to the Portuguese Constitution, medical care cannot be refused to anyone, under any circumstances. If someone needs urgent medical care and has no possibility of paying for it, hospitals cannot refuse them entry and treatment, and health structures are not allowed to call authorities to report irregular migrants. However, most migrant sex workers are unaware of this situation and have little contact with public health services.

Furthermore, due to the stigmatisation and prejudice related to sex work, the majority of sex workers choose not to reveal their sexual practices and profession to doctors, such as gynaecologists.

APDES deals with a high percentage of migrant sex workers who are living in Portugal in a situation of greater vulnerability, due also to their irregular status in the country (38%).

FOCUS



APDES' Online Outreach

For two years, APDES has been focusing on online outreach, which aims to make contact with a wider range of sex workers, especially those who are more isolated, as well as aiming to involve sex workers' clients. For this purpose, different strategies have been developed, such as dissemination of a regular newsletter, creation of a Facebook account, advertisement of the projects' services on websites dedicated to selling sexual services, and participation in an online forum for clients.

Thus far, 11 newsletters have been developed, reaching 742 contacts (31 sex workers and 711 other contacts). Various topics were addressed, for example strategies for combating violence, sex workers' rights and self-organisation, access to public health services, STIs and safer sexual practices.

The Facebook account already has 384 friends, and the main themes discussed through it have been information on events about activism and sex workers' rights, and the dissemination of documentaries about sex work.

The projects' services are being advertised through six websites that sell sexual services. In addition to details of the organisation's services and contact information, the newsletters and some safer sex tips have been published on some of these sites.

Efforts were primarily made through participation in the web forum GP-PT.net. This forum was created by sex workers' clients, targeting mainly clients and some sex workers. APDES has posted 15 messages in the forum on the themes of safer sex, general information and legalisation issues. Several comments were left on each post, evidencing some degree of social discussion.

The internet has proved to be a powerful tool for keeping in touch with other sex workers who are outside of the most visible networks, but it is used mostly to reach their clients. The newsletters, Facebook account and ads have a

positive outcome in terms of the visibility of APDES' work and the opportunity to provide information to a larger population. The ads are a good opportunity to make contact for the first time with website moderators, to raise their awareness of the involvement of this social work and of sex workers' rights.

Some positive feedback has been received from sex workers and the website moderators, regarding the online outreach and the information provided. Specifically, the moderators have made contact with APDES to request the inclusion of additional information.

Participation in the clients' forum was the only interactive activity and the most successful strategy, allowing direct contact with sex workers' clients. This is a very difficult population to reach because of the anonymity and the invisibility of the target group. Clients are, however, key stakeholders in combating violence and prejudice against sex workers and the promotion of safer sexual practices.

One of the main challenges was to use informal language, avoiding technical terms, but at the same time keeping the message accurate. For example, clients frequently use disrespectful language towards sex workers, so the use of correct terminology is in itself a way to raise awareness of the rights and dignity of sex workers. Another challenge was the need to avoid being seen as an intruder in the clients' forum and thereby inhibit their participation or be eventually expelled from the virtual space. To overcome such challenges, a low profile and informal approaches are maintained, avoiding moralistic communication and formal styles.

In terms of future plans, there is a need to improve immediate online intervention through the use or creation of other interactive tools targeting sex workers, aiming to reach new and diverse populations and establishing close contact with them. This will, however, involve more work time and human resources.

The most positive achievement of the online outreach so far shows the potential impact of these strategies, through the spread of information and its multiplying effect among

peers (sex workers, clients and managers). It is also a way of empowering people without having direct contact, making it a non-invasive and powerful tool.

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

■ APDES mainly makes contact with sex workers working in **apartments** (85.5%), believed to be the most common sex work venues in the metropolitan area of Porto.

■ Less frequently, the outreach team made contact with sex workers working in **clubs** (6.6%) and **massage parlours** (3.3%), and sex workers who provided their services in **hotels/motels** (1.7%).

The majority of those working in apartments (76.6%) live in a different place. For 19.6%, their workplace is their home.

The sex industry in Porto, in the experience of the outreach team so far, is mainly structured in a collective way: there are often two or more sex workers in each apartment. According to this sample, 53.1% work with more than one person and 33.4% work with one other person. From what the sex workers have told the team, they mostly work together for security reasons, to minimise costs and also in order to offer greater choice to clients (not so much in terms of sexual practices, but mainly in terms of appearance of sex workers). There is no difference between national or migrant sex workers in terms of this structure.

When sex workers work with colleagues, 82.5% work with non-transgender women, 6.6% work with transgender sex workers, and 5.2% with men. These apartments are spread across the metropolitan area of Porto, with a concentration in the centre of the city.

Each apartment is usually managed by the receptionist, usually a woman trusted by the owner, whose duties are to place the ad in the newspaper, negotiate the price/services with the clients when they call, be alert to what's going on in the rooms, etc.

In terms of working hours, the team has encountered apartments open from 8 to 24 hours a day. Many apartments adopt a rotation system, with different sex workers every fortnight. When sex workers work in this system, rather than independently, it is expected that they will respect the schedule and the rules of the house, but, according to what they tell the team, they still decide which clients they will see and the services they will provide.

Less often, the team encounters sex workers who prefer to work by themselves (9.7%). Self-employment is, however, inaccessible to migrants in an irregular situation because of the difficulties in renting or buying a place to work or live and because of greater exposure to the police.

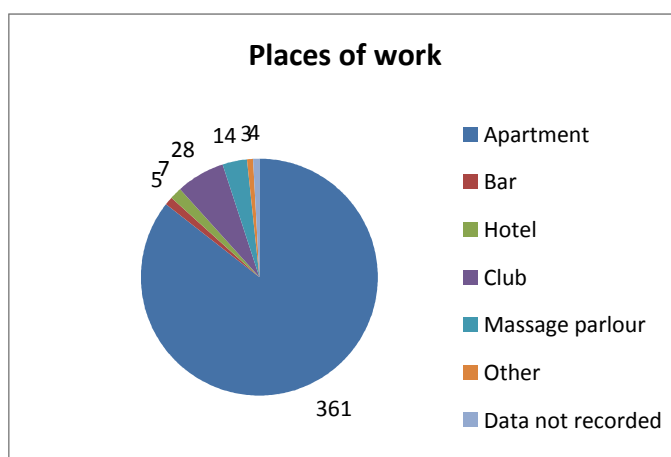
APDES' outreach team has been on the field for the last four years, during which time it has come to know a sector of indoor sex work which may not be representative of all indoor venues. Although APDES' interventions concentrate on apartments, other venues are also an important part of indoor sex work in Porto (such as night clubs, massage parlours, etc.), but the limited contacts with these environments do not allow the team to make a conclusive observation.

It is also quite obvious to the team that there are far more apartments in operation than the ones they visit. APDES only goes to where it is invited, where the organisation is welcomed and, mainly, where resources allow it to go.

Places of work

	No.	%
Apartment	361	85.5
Bar	5	1.2
Hotel	7	1.7
Club	28	6.6
Massage parlour	14	3.3
Other	3	0.7
Data not recorded	4	0.9
TOTAL	422	100

Other
Café



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Porto, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

It is generally the case that sex workers enter sex work because it is considered to be a high-income activity. Outreach reveals that clients pay more for unprotected sex. Very often the extra money outweighs the perceived risk.

As migrants, the majority of indoor sex workers have extra expenses (they send money to family members in their home countries; they sometimes work in apartments where cooking is forbidden and they have to pay for meals; they

face high health care costs, etc.), and are living in Portugal with no residence permit. Both situations can contribute to external pressures (at the workplace, from clients, etc.) and to the adoption of unsafe sexual practices.

The present economic crisis has a direct impact on these factors, increasing exponentially the probability of sex workers adopting high-risk behaviours.

4. Autonomy at work

How autonomous are the contacted sex workers?

The majority of sex workers (66.3%) who have been in contact with the outreach team have some degree of control of their working conditions. Most of them can negotiate their working hours (34.7%) and rental conditions (27.2%).

However, in many cases, this information was unavailable, which is why data on this is not recorded in 24.5% of cases.

Evolution of autonomy

The majority of sex workers say that their autonomy at work remained stable over the last two years; however, only 160 answers were given to this question. This was not easy information to obtain considering that it is based on subjective perceptions, that some of the sex workers only recently entered the industry or the country, and that there is a high turnover of sex workers among apartments and other sex work venues.

To be a completely autonomous sex worker implies a considerable investment, as advertising sex work and renting a workplace is very expensive. Many sex workers choose to work for another person, which does not mean that they cannot be autonomous in such a scenario.

The team often hears that the sex workers can leave their workplace earlier, come to work

later, or take a day to rest. When they have a (medical or social) appointment, sometimes they tell the team, “At this apartment, the manager is friendly and lets us go to the appointments.” This is not the case in all apartments or with all owners/managers.

It can therefore be concluded that having control of working conditions depends mostly on the rules that owners/managers impose in their venues. Some owners/managers are more flexible and friendly; others are more rigid and intolerant. It is expected that sex workers will respect the schedules and the rules of the house, but, according to what most of them told the team, sex workers are the ones who decide which clients they will see and which services they will provide.

It is also worth noting that APDES only enters into the apartments and sex work venues in which the team is welcomed. This means that APDES has no access to information about other venues, including potentially ones which are more hostile and which exercise more control over sex workers.

APDES has no significant data on or experience in other sex work venues (bars, clubs and others) to evaluate how representative these results are of such places.

5. Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

The indoor sex workers express more or less the same social needs, but the main themes identified by nearly all groups of indoor sex workers – regardless of gender identity or nationality – are access to social services and to psychological support.

The need for legal support and for information on rights and legislation regarding sex work is more common for migrants. This is related to the large number of migrant sex workers living

in Portugal in an irregular situation, usually not knowing their rights and needing legal advice.

Needs related to isolation and living conditions are mostly expressed by transgender and migrant women. This is related to social disapproval of sex work, and migrant and transgender women face double discrimination, hampering their access to social structures.

Only female, non-transgender sex workers expressed the need to talk about professional integration and about stopping sex work.

Transgender sex workers needed transgender-specific information.

Other needs expressed by sex workers concerned social support and working conditions.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

The main health needs expressed by indoor sex workers during this mapping are about vaccines, HIV/STI testing and hepatitis, indicated by almost all of the groups of indoor sex workers (across gender identities and nationalities). Access to public health services was a need expressed mainly by migrants. The stigma associated with sex workers and migrants, lack of information and the fear of repatriation prevent this population's access to the health system.

Almost all women (nationals and migrants) referenced a need to access gynaecological consultations.

Transgender sex workers expressed a need for hormone treatment, as well as emergency treatment in the event of a condom breakage. This group presents particularly risky behaviours related to hormone treatments and the practice of anal sex.

Other health needs expressed by sex workers are related to general health, to psychological/psychiatric treatment and to dental treatment.

The limited access to the health care system puts sex workers at greater risk.

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to respond sex workers' needs?

The services/interventions offered by APDES are the result of a needs assessment based on the opinions of sex workers and on an evaluation of the interventions. The interventions are based on Action Research Methodology focused on understanding and critical reflection on social reality and on team practice. The conclusions drawn from this process are included in the portfolio of intervention strategies and services.

The main themes approached by the team are related to health prevention (HIV and AIDS, STIs, hepatitis, safer sex, condoms and lubricants, sexual practices, what to do in case of a condom break) and to general health care. These themes are key points in APDES' intervention as they respond to the needs identified by the team and referenced by sex workers as health and social needs. The team always discusses these issues during a first visit, and on each subsequent contact, it tries to highlight preventive messages.

The team often encourages discussions of working conditions (with both migrants and national sex workers), as well as of strategies for improving sex workers' living and working conditions or the possibility of integrating social movements and events.

It is also essential to give information about the legal situation for migrants. For example, the outreach team explains how they can access the National Health Service and what their options are to regularise their situation.

Another important theme discussed with sex workers is strategies for negotiating with clients, because these are useful tools that they can use in order to promote both health and their personal safety.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

International mobility

The principal countries of mobility chosen by Portuguese indoor sex workers are, starting with the most popular, Spain, Switzerland and the Netherlands. Migrants choose Denmark, Spain and Switzerland.

According to the data in this sample, the majority of sex workers (63.5%) do not change their place of work in-country or travel to work in other countries (84.7%).

However, these results are not representative of the reality known to the team. Rather, the team has the clear impression that migrant sex workers change their place of work often and that they travel all over the country and, though less frequently, to other countries. The majority of them come from a large country (Brazil) and perceive distance in a different way than the Portuguese do. Brazilian sex workers have no problems in travelling 600 km as they consider this distance 'near'. When they have their legal situation in order, they often travel to other countries, mainly to Spain, but also to Italy and Denmark. Their migrant situation in Portugal is also a reflection of their predisposition to mobility.

Non-transgender women are known to be more focused on external mobility and transsexuals tend to be more focused on in-country mobility. However, most of the target population are non-transgender women and there is insufficient information about men on this topic.

National mobility

The majority of indoor sex work venues in Portugal change staff every fortnight, which implies high mobility among this population. Most sex workers (nationals and migrants) have to adapt to this market demand. Less often, the

same sex worker can stay for more than a fortnight, as long as it is agreed with the owner of the house.

Reasons for mobility

According to the team's observations, the managers of sex work venues try to have 'new arrivals' every fortnight to attract clients. They believe that men prefer to be with different people, with different characteristics. Sex workers may also freely choose to move from one place to another where more profit is expected.

This mobility can bring further constraints as sex workers don't have time to create effective bonds and personal links, and barely get to know the surrounding environment and services available to respond to their principal needs.

Nevertheless, sometimes this may be a way of breaking the isolation of being locked up in one particular place. Some other sex workers value the autonomy of work and the stability and, when possible, they rent their own apartments for self-employment.

To balance their constant movement, sex workers most of the time have a place they call home, which is not the same place as where they work.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

Most of the sex workers contacted said they never experienced violence (48.3%). Sex workers rarely report situations of violence, even when they are directly asked about it. It is believed that some situations are not understood as 'violent' by sex workers although the team would classify them as such. For example, the denial of access to health care, which happens quite often, is seldom seen as a form of violence. The word 'violence' is immediately connected to

‘physical violence’ as if no other forms of violence exist.

In 33.6% of the contacts, this topic wasn’t discussed. The most frequent themes approached are related to health and social services, in keeping with the needs expressed by sex workers and the main services the team has to offer them. Violence is usually discussed when violent situations arise and it also implies a high level of confidence established between the team and the individual. However, there are 51 cases of reported violence in this sample.

Forms of violence

The most reported form of violence is physical violence, with 24 cases. This number is related, as explained above, to the automatic association of violence with physical acts and not so much with other types of violence. However, similar numbers of non-physically violent cases were reported, with 18 psychological, 16 verbal and 15 economically violent situations.

Regarding the specific forms of violence suffered by sex workers, APDES registered 14 cases of insults/humiliation during work, followed by 9 cases of threats or harassment during work, 8 cases of being hit or beaten and 8 cases of theft at work (objects and/or money).

Perpetrators of violence

Clients (20 cases) and relatives, friends and acquaintances (12 cases) are the main perpetrators of violence, followed by the police, public authorities and service providers, with 4 cases each. The isolated nature of indoor settings and the unregulated system of sex work facilitate the exposure of sex workers to violent acts by clients and others. Additionally, the high level of prejudice against sex workers is reflected in the abuse of their rights and denial of protection from the public authorities, police and service providers.

Indicators of violence

Most of the victims of violence are non-transgender women (44), migrants (40), working in apartments (49) and from Latin American countries (36), as APDES’ main target group.

There is also no clear relationship between violence and isolation, since most of the cases reported are from sex workers who work with more than 2 colleagues (22 cases) and who have been in the business between 1 and 5 years (24 cases).

Frequency of violence

	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	51	13
Sex worker reported a colleague’s experience of violence	1	0.3
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	190	48.3
Violence was not a discussed topic	132	33.6
Data not recorded	19	4.8
TOTAL	393	100

Perpetrators of violence

	No.
Client	20
Relative, friend, acquaintance	12
Service provider	4
Trafficking network	2
Police	4
Public authorities/officials	4
Other	7
TOTAL	53

Other

General public, people in detention centre, contact magazine, restaurant



SOFIA

Bulgaria

1. Methodology of contact with sex workers

Outreach context

■ **Mapping period:** 14 months from April 2011 to June 2012.

■ **Outreach location:** Sofia, Borovets and Kalotina, Bulgaria

■ **Outreach coverage:** Outreach covered apartments, clubs, bars, brothels and truck stops¹⁵. Outreach was also conducted via the internet.

■ **TOTAL contacts:** 101

■ **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 101

All contacts were unique contacts.

Outreach methodology

HESED's outreach work is based on two methods of contact:

■ **Direct visits** – every sex work venue known to the team in Sofia and its surroundings is visited according to a schedule drawn up every week. Every indoor venue is visited at least once a month.

All venues are visited by two types of mobile team – one team of social workers and/or psychologists with a car offering safer sex materials and consultations on a range of issues; and a second team comprised of a social worker and a nurse with a medical unit (minibus equipped with medical supplies) offering free and anonymous testing and medical consultations directly where indoor sex work venues are located.

A visit to an indoor venue may take between 10 and 30 minutes depending on house rules and the presence and availability of sex workers. The team works according to the principle that they should not interfere with sex workers' work, and always respects their duties and internal rules.

■ **Contacts via the internet** – For the last 2-3 years, HESED has been developing new strategies to make contact with more sex workers, offering them consultations via email and chat. In 2011 the team started customising and adapting the Social Intervention Tool (the software was made available to HESED by another project – <https://hesed.sittool.net>). This is a website providing all the relevant information given to sex workers during the usual face-to-face outreach work (HIV/AIDS/STIs, safer sex materials, free testing, pregnancy and abortion, legislation) but also giving them the option of real-time chat with HESED consultants. These online consultations started in April 2012 and the service is still in its initial phase.

¹⁵ This refers to roadside bars where truckers stop to rest.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

HESED's outreach already has seven years' experience of direct visits to indoor venues. This is the most workable method for the sex work scene in Sofia, accepted by the target group of sex workers and their managers/controllers.

Several other ways of making contact were also attempted over the years – phone calls, emails, blogs, messages on a specialist website offering sexual services, internet banners – but no interest was shown and no significant contact established with the groups. Actual face-to-face contact seems the most efficient for outreach work because sex workers can access different materials and all their questions can be answered without much effort required on their part. The most attractive aspect of all the services offered on outreach is the free testing and medical consultations.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

There is no difference in methodology used to contact nationals and migrants, as there are few migrants in Bulgaria (during the period of the mapping exercise, only one migrant sex worker was contacted).

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits, internet)	98	97
At the service provider's premises	2	2
Other	1	1
TOTAL	101	100

Other

Email

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	96	95
Email/internet	2	2
Accompaniment	1	1
Data not recorded	2	2
TOTAL	101	100

Contact methodology

Why the majority of sex workers showed interest

All the sex workers listed as having been contacted during this mapping exercise were interested in the services provided, but these do not comprise all the contacts made by the outreach team during this period. Only contacts for whom good quantitative information could be collected were entered in the INDOORS database. Usually, sex workers are willing to talk and have contact with the outreach team, but the problem lies more with certain managers – they presume HESED might be connected with the police and they are suspicious about the team's reasons for visiting their premises.

Conclusions on the efficiency of the methodology

The use of other methods of contact, such as phone calls, blogs, etc., was not particularly successful so far.

The methodology of direct visits is discussed regularly within the team and is adapted whenever and wherever required. New venues are often located with the help and referral of sex workers and managers. The use of the snowball effect is considered by the team to be the most efficient way of contacting new venues, because the team and services are accepted more easily with the recommendation of key informants, and the contact itself is deeper and more based on trust.

Identification of key people or intermediaries to facilitate contact

Other sex workers and managers play the role of intermediaries. Often sex workers give the team information about newly opened venues, or venues where they have previously worked. As most of the places are connected to one another, some of the managers refer the outreach services to other apartments or bars which are part of the same network.

Reasons for accepting or refusing contact

If the outreach services are rejected by one venue, usually the other venues in the same network will refuse contact with the team too. This is a decision made by managers at a higher level of the hierarchy, to which the HESED team has little or no access and can hardly intervene. The main reason for refusing contact is the fear of police. One of the biggest networks for sex work in Sofia is not very open and is trying to remain hidden, so it has limited access to its premises and admits only clients. According to the expert opinion of the team, this encompasses five or six venues where about 50-60 sex workers are working.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/outreach team	96	95
The sex worker	4	4
Data not recorded	1	1
TOTAL	101	100

When contact was initiated by sex workers, how had they learned of the organisation?

	No.
Through owners/managers	1
On the internet	3
TOTAL	4

2. Prostitution scene in Sofia

The sex industry is strongly controlled by exploitive third parties and most sex workers work in accordance with their rules. Few sex workers are able to make independent choices about their working conditions and safer sex practices. Stigma and discrimination against people offering sexual services is widespread, and all sex workers prefer to remain hidden and avoid going out in public. Often sexual services are disguised as strip shows, night bars (where two thirds of the contacted sex workers were located) and truck stops (accounting for about one quarter of all contacted sex workers).

■ **Gender** – The outreach work is strongly focused on female sex workers as they are the main group of people offering sexual services, especially indoors.

■ **Age** – The majority of contacted sex workers are aged 18-35. There are no minors and only a few mature women working indoors, according to this mapping exercise. This is because outreach work more frequently accesses bars and night clubs (where sexual services are offered by younger dancers), and not so many brothels or apartments (where managers do not conceal their activity).

■ **Migration** – Bulgaria is a country of origin for many sex workers working abroad, mainly in Western Europe. But very few sex workers in Bulgaria originated from other countries or hold other nationalities. During the mapping exercise only one migrant sex worker was contacted.

However, there are many sex workers in Bulgaria of Roma origin.

The internet is gaining more and more in popularity, enabling sex workers to offer and advertise sexual services. It provides a more secure and hidden space for them (and their managers/controllers), and is more attractive to clients. HESED considers the internet to be a sector of the sex industry which has been untouched up until now. Some sex workers on

the web were previously encountered by the outreach team, outdoors and/or indoors, while others are newcomers.

The prostitution scene in Sofia is quite diverse and constantly changing. The overview of the indoor scene given by the outreach workers is considered to be quite accurate in certain areas, such as the structure and sectors of the sex industry, mobility, and risky behaviours and tendencies, while other groups are not represented sufficiently – male prostitution, escort services, and casual sex workers working on an occasional basis.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	101	100
TOTAL	101	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	1	1
Nationals	100	99
TOTAL	101	100

Nationalities

1. Bulgaria
2. Russia

Impact of Bulgarian migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Sofia

Work in the sex industry

Sex work in Bulgaria is not regulated; it is neither legalised nor criminalised. Sex workers need no permission to offer sexual services, regardless of their origin and nationality.

As sex work is not on the list of official professional and trade activities, it is not possible for migrants to obtain a working visa or permission for sex work, even if they are

entering the country legally. In recent years the government and the police have implemented a restrictive policy with police raids of sex work venues and harassment of sex workers.

Health insurance

Every insured person (nationals and legal migrants with resident status) can use public health care services in exchange for payment of the appropriate monthly taxes (fixed by the state in a special law which is changed every year) and for a small fee paid when seeing a general practitioner (again fixed by the state). Anyone who is in need of medical care but does not have health insurance can access any kind of medical service but must pay a higher fee. All emergency cases are treated free of charge for everyone, regardless of nationality, citizenship or insurance status.

A labour contract is necessary in order to get access to health insurance. Sex workers cannot access this as sex workers because their profession is not officially registered. Indoor sex workers often have fictitious contracts with the venues they work for, stating that they have an officially registered profession such as waitress, dancer, bartender, etc. Having signed these contracts, the managers are complying with police and tax regulations. This explains the high level of health insurance among respondents.

Two thirds of the sex workers surveyed have access to health insurance. This is because many of the sex work venues contacted by the outreach team are strip bars and night clubs which are public and visible to all state control. For this reason, they try to comply as closely as possible with the current legislation.

In brothels and apartments which are not so public or visible there are sex workers who do not have labour contracts (even stating that they practise other professions) and have no insurance, so they remain excluded from the health insurance system – this is also very typical for outdoor-based sex workers.



Why and how do so many Bulgarian sex workers travel to work abroad?

Following police raids during the summer of 2010, more than half of the indoor sex work venues in Sofia have been closed. Some of the sex workers moved to other venues (mainly strip bars), others went to work outdoors, and a third chose to advertise only through the internet. Many sex workers hid and/or decided to travel and work abroad. Hence, when the INDOORS project began in 2011, this issue was of great interest to HESED.

During outreach work the topic was investigated further. A small mapping exercise was conducted, covering 81 female sex workers encountered by HESED's outreach team in Sofia and the nearby ski resort of Borovets, between April 2011 and March 2012.

The analysis shows that one third of the sex workers questioned have travelled to another country at least once (mainly to Western Europe). Most of them were accompanied by somebody else (colleague, partner, etc.). The motivation for departure is quite clearly to make more money – a predictable response given the great poverty and economic crisis in Bulgaria.

Most of the sex workers said they had made their own decision to travel abroad, but often all the details were organised for them. On their return, they share their experience abroad with colleagues, and this 'imitation effect' may be considered to provide additional motivation.

Travelling and working abroad gives sex workers advantages such as:

- earning more money and being able to better support their families;
- seeing the world, living in and experiencing other cultures;
- improving their working and living conditions.

Travelling and working abroad also has disadvantages for them, such as:

- being in a more vulnerable position, not knowing the language, the norms, the culture;
- increased risk of getting into a situation of trafficking;
- hypermobility when changing places, which very often deprives sex workers of a stable environment and lessens the quality of their social lives.

The current situation of a reduced number of indoor sex work venues in Sofia is the result of governmental policy for the last two years. The Minister of Interior declared to the media in April 2012 that they had succeeded in exporting prostitution out of Bulgaria¹⁶. Moreover, prostitution is considered to be one of the top 12 threats from serious organised criminal networks in Bulgarian society¹⁷.

This 'success' of the Bulgarian government has and will have a great impact on sex workers' lives, but also on service providers abroad who encounter more and more Bulgarian migrants (almost half of the travelling sex workers contacted by HESED to investigate this trend had met local organisations providing services to sex workers). According to this survey, factors such as mobility, level of education, language barrier and lack of understanding of the local culture have a strong impact on the vulnerability of Bulgarian migrants.

¹⁶ http://news.ibox.bg/news/id_2064014347 (Bulgarian)

¹⁷ <http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=15991> - Bezlov, T.: *Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2010-2011*, Report from the Center for the Study of Democracy, 2012

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

Most of the indoor venues visited by the outreach team in Sofia and its surroundings at the present time are clubs and bars where sexual services are often disguised as other activities.

A particular feature of the sex industry in Bulgaria is that indoor venues offering sexual services are owned and managed by illegal networks and most sex workers have to comply with their rules governing how they work. Several types of indoor venues currently exist:

- **Strip clubs and bars** – Operating in networks of 2-3 venues, these have a strict internal hierarchy. Usually there are 35-40 women working in two shifts as dancers and strippers – every night there are 15-20 women available. They state that they are not obliged by the manager(s) to offer sexual services, and that they are free to choose or refuse clients. Sometimes they also work as escorts. Bars and clubs are the most typical sex work venues in Sofia.

- **Brothels and apartments** – Operating within illegal networks, it is clear that their only activity is sex work. They often rotate sex workers in order to give clients more choice. Every night between 4 and 12 female sex workers are in each venue, offering different types of sexual services. Their autonomy and freedom depend on house rules and the managers' decisions.

The brothels are now more hidden than before and more difficult to locate, as a result of the present governmental policy of 'cleaning up' the city and country with regard to prostitution. This does not make contact easy; the managers are cautious and do not grant access to outreach services. In Sofia 5-6 such venues are known to the team, where access is possible only when the managers happen to be out and solely sex workers are present.

Indoor sex workers in Sofia receive clients in the venues where they work, but also on outcalls. In this case, they go out to provide the sexual service at the client's place after the client calls them or their manager.

Only one apartment was contacted by the team in which sex workers are relatively independent and have control of their own working conditions. 4-5 sex workers work there together and share expenses.

- **Truck stops** – These are roadside bars and motels where trucks stop for rest. The clients are usually truck drivers, often foreigners. It is worth noting that sex workers here work both indoors and outdoors depending on the time of day and their opportunities to get more clients. These sex workers are often of Roma origin, with low levels of education and literacy, which puts them in a vulnerable position and, for example, gives them less ability to negotiate the use of condoms.

Common characteristics of indoor settings

Some indoor-based sex workers also offer sexual services outdoors, abroad, or through the internet, in order to see more clients and earn more money.

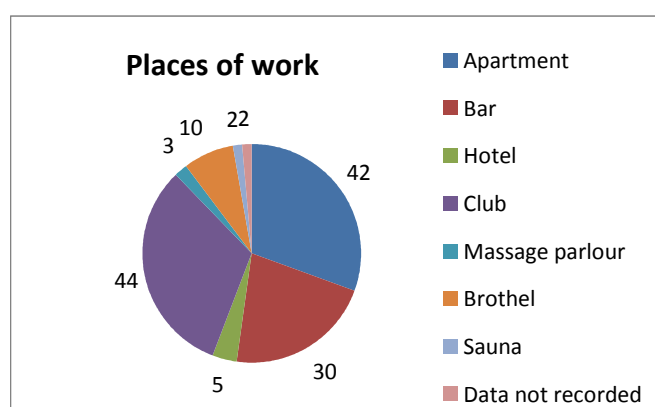
Almost all indoor sex work venues in Bulgaria have male bodyguards or managers present on the premises in order to ensure the safety of the female sex workers.

Male and transgender sex workers are rarely found indoors.

This mapping exercise may be considered as representative of HESED's outreach work, but does not fully represent the indoor sex work scene in Sofia.

Places of work

	No.	%
Apartment	42	30.4
Bar	30	21.7
Hotel	5	3.6
Club	44	31.9
Massage parlour	3	2.2
Brothel	10	7.2
Sauna	2	1.4
Data not recorded	2	1.4
TOTAL	138	100



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Sofia, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

The sex industry is defined by supply and demand of services. In principle most sex workers are well informed that they should always use condoms, but money remains their key motivation. A client might receive additional services, including sex without a condom, if he offers more money. The economic crisis strongly influences business and results in more and more sex workers agreeing to clients' demands, especially providing unprotected fellatio, in order to keep them as clients. For this service

sex workers often downplay the risk of contracting an STI.

The Roma origin of some sex workers should not be considered as a risk factor in itself, but as a precondition for risky behaviour. Traditionally Roma people have low levels of education and literacy, and may lack skills for negotiating condoms, for example. The Roma community in Bulgaria is an insular group whose members frequently communicate risky and unsafe practices to one another, and folk beliefs are often used for STI protection (for example inserting aspirin into the vagina for contraception).



Autonomy at work

How autonomous are the contacted sex workers?

Many of the respondents stated that they could negotiate their working hours and conditions, which shows good relationships with their managers/employers. They assess their level of autonomy at work as having remained stable over the last two years.

These results represent the reality in principle – there is relative autonomy, such as for example the freedom to negotiate rental conditions.

It depends considerably on the rules of the sex work venue or the individual managers, but nonetheless, when a sex worker starts to work in a venue, she is agreeing to these rules at the very beginning and it is her own choice to start working there.

Evolution of autonomy

In recent years the team has observed a tendency for sex work to be run more and more like a business, with relationships between the sex workers and the venue owners becoming like those between employees and employers. This is a positive trend for sex workers' autonomy, and as a result, their working

conditions are improving. The pimps/managers are trying to take more and more care of their girls in order to earn more money for longer periods of time. This is giving sex workers better relationships with their managers, better conditions and less violence from the side of the employers/managers.

5. Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

About half of the respondents did not discuss this topic. This is mainly due to HESED's outreach remit: the team's work focuses primarily on health issues, and social themes sometimes remain unaddressed. Among the other half of sex workers contacted, training and literacy emerged as a principal social need. Many sex workers expressed a desire to improve their general levels of education and/or to receive professional training.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

Health promotion is the main theme tackled by the outreach team when contacting sex workers. HIV/STI testing is always a significant need, but gynaecology also came up as an important need related to sex work.

The public health system in Bulgaria has been in a constant process of reform for the last ten years, and the general population is not sufficiently aware of the available services. Sex workers are even less informed, and encounter more difficulties in gaining access because of stigma and bad treatment.

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to sex workers' needs?

One of the most popular services provided by HESED to sex workers (outdoors and indoors) is the mobile medical unit with its free and anonymous testing for HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B and C, directly at the locations where sex workers work or where they prefer to be visited by it. The minibus and medical staff visit every indoor venue about 3-4 times a year. An arrangement can be made in advance with a phone call to the manager of the venue or with some of the sex workers, in order to ensure a higher number of sex workers will be present who are keen to have blood tests and/or consult the medical staff. Sometimes the sex workers call the team to ask about this service, in which case their workplace is incorporated into the team's schedule as soon as possible. The minibus is usually parked close to the sex work venue. One or two outreach workers go into the club, bar or apartment and talk with the people present inside; then the sex workers exit their workplace accompanied by an outreach worker, and enter the minibus where the testing and consulting take place. Usually the sex workers are offered rapid HIV testing to enable them to know their status right away, but they are also offered standard testing for HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B and C. The blood is tested in a laboratory and results take 10-14 days, after which HESED's team revisits the sex workers to deliver their results.

The team is qualified to respond to sex workers' health and social needs directly on the field. For all issues raised that fall outside the team members' expertise, sex workers are referred to relevant services available in the city/country.

The outreach team also follows the needs of sex workers and is broadening its expertise in areas other than health promotion, for example providing short training workshops on self-defence directly in the sex work venues with the help of external experts.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

International mobility

Less than one third of the contacted sex workers have travelled to work abroad, mainly to EU countries. The main reason for this is to earn more money. Germany and the Netherlands are traditional destinations because sex work is legal there and Bulgarian sex workers tend to think that it will be easier to work there. Misinformation about the actual conditions causes additional vulnerability.

Greece is a well known and nearby destination, and sex workers travel there for short tours.

Bulgaria is the country of origin of many sex workers working in Western Europe.

National mobility

In-country mobility is also typical for Bulgarian sex workers: indoor-based sex workers travel a lot between the big cities and between the winter and summer resorts, and they are often moved from one club to another in the same city.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

The HESED outreach team tried to discuss this topic as much as possible with all sex workers contacted. Most of them were asked about it when visiting the mobile medical unit or the office, ensuring them a safer space outside of their workplace and without the presence of other people (managers, pimps, boyfriends, colleagues, etc.). Almost all sex workers felt free to share their experience in such an environment. One third of the respondents say

they have experienced violence in their work, and they spoke about themselves rather than hiding behind tales of their colleagues. The opinion of the outreach team is that the percentage is even higher. Half of the sex workers stated that they had never experienced violence.

Forms of violence

Generally in Bulgaria, in comparison with Western culture, violence is widely accepted as a normal aspect of any relationship.

Sex workers report experiencing physical and verbal violence. Other forms of violence are not recognised as such. The team noticed a new trend of mentioning insults as verbal violence.

Perpetrators of violence

Clients are clearly referenced as the main perpetrators of violence. Often the attitude of clients is that if they pay, they have the right to do anything.

Overall there are not so many cases of violence because the organisers and controllers of the networks of brothels and bars provide safety measures for the sex workers.

Indicators of violence

Current government policy is focused very strongly on 'cleaning' the country of prostitution. Police raids are conducted against the organised exploitive structures which manage the sex work venues, but in reality sex workers are the ones who are mainly affected. They are denied the opportunity to earn money and often need to emigrate abroad. As a strong form of institutional violence from the side of the police, the present policy is heaping additional stigma upon sex work. Furthermore, the police raids are announced in public as defending society from prostitution, and sex work is presented as a criminal act. It is not illegal to be a sex worker in Bulgaria; acts such as pimping, trafficking etc. are illegal. But sex

workers are frequently portrayed to the general public as criminals.

The general public's attitude towards sex work in Bulgaria could be considered as another indicator of violence. Prostitution is still considered as a deviant act committed by people without morals. Many clients still treat sex workers as second-class citizens who are paid to put up with anything they want to do. Clients are the 'normal' ones and sex workers are outside the society of these normal people.

Frequency of violence

	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	34	33.7
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	55	54.5
Violence was not a discussed topic	6	5.9
Sex worker reported a colleague's experience of violence	3	3
Violence was observed by the outreach team	2	2
Data not recorded	1	1
TOTAL	101	100

Perpetrators of violence

	No.
Client	28
Relative, friend, acquaintance	1
Colleague	2
Owner/manager of venue	5
Trafficking network	2
Police	3
TOTAL	41



VIENNA

Austria

1. Methodology of contact with sex workers

Outreach context

- **Mapping period:** 14 months, from April 2011 to June 2012
- **Outreach location:** Vienna, Austria
- **Outreach coverage:** The mapping covered a number of the following types of indoor sex work venues: apartments/clubs, hotels, bars/brothels, massage parlours, saunas and *Laufhäuser*¹⁸ in Vienna.
- **TOTAL contacts:** 187
- **TOTAL sex workers contacted:** 170

¹⁸ A *Laufhaus* is a multi-level building with several apartments dedicated exclusively to sex work. *Laufhaus* means 'walk house', because men walk around the corridors until they choose a sex worker.

Outreach methodology

Outreach is conducted once or twice a week, always by two cultural mediators together for safety reasons, and lasts approximately four hours. The cultural mediators make sure that conversations are conducted discreetly in order to avoid eavesdropping or disturbing the work of other sex workers in the venues.

An outreach day starts with preparing the day's route. On average 6-10 addresses are chosen from LEFÖ's address list. This list was established at the very beginning of LEFÖ's outreach work and is regularly checked and updated. Most of the addresses are in areas that are well known for sex work. A general update is regularly made using the internet, and new contacts made during outreach are added immediately after they have been encountered by the outreach team or referred to them by other sex workers. In brothels and other parlours, cultural mediators introduce themselves, the organisation and LEFÖ's work to the bartender. To help make a case for access, informational materials are offered. If access is granted, the cultural mediators talk to the women present and give them small plastic bags, which contain gifts like condoms, lubricants, information brochures and more. The topics of conversation with sex workers are not forced, but are cautiously guided towards issues like health and violence. Workshops can be offered. If sex workers are interested in a workshop or need individual counselling, an appointment is arranged.

Special documentation sheets are filled in after each visit, and other remarks, comments or observations are noted too. These are then compiled into one detailed report. Documenting outreach work is a regular activity by LEFÖ.

Sex workers also contact and visit LEFÖ for counselling sessions. Since the beginning of 2012 LEFÖ has also been able to offer accompaniment for police registration, as well as preliminary counselling for women who would like to start working as sex workers. More and more women make use of this service.

Reason for choosing this method of contacting sex workers

Sex workers are a marginalised social group, and as such, a low-threshold approach is necessary. Accordingly, the best methodology for making direct contact with them is to visit them at their places of work. This gives the outreach team the opportunity to introduce its services and to invite them to attend for counselling at LEFÖ's office.

Difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants

There is no difference in contact methodology between nationals and migrants. LEFÖ specialises however in supporting migrant sex workers, who make up the majority of sex workers in Vienna.

Where did contact take place?

	No.	%
During outreach (visits, calls, internet)	156	83.4
At the service provider's premises	21	11.2
Other	10	5.3
TOTAL	187	100

Other

Accompaniment to other locations, hospital visit

How was contact with sex workers made?

	No.	%
Visits	174	93
Direct contact over the phone	5	2.7
Email/internet	1	0.5
Accompaniment	7	3.7
TOTAL	187	100

Contact methodology

Why the majority of sex workers showed interest

At the beginning of the mapping, the team noticed that a lot of women willingly took the organisation's informational materials as well as the condoms they were offered, but avoided more personal conversations. The reason for this is the high mobility of sex workers and that a lot of women are met just once, as they constantly change their places of work. It is therefore difficult to establish a trusted relationship with them. LEFÖ's goal has been to gather more information on sex workers' lives and working conditions, so that the team can better adapt its services for them. This is why the choice was made to record only the contacts that provided the organisation with this information.

As a result the majority of sex workers are recorded as being interested, as the decision was made not to register all the refusals, because they are of no use to LEFÖ's primary goal. The main reasons for refusals, though, concern lack of interest in the services provided, lack of a common language, or no time for a conversation. In the last-named case, sex workers were aware that they could contact LEFÖ's office if they needed to.

Conclusions on the efficiency of the methodology

A lot of sex workers are interested in the services offered. One particular reason is the concept of cultural mediation, which has proved to be very efficient. Cultural mediators are familiar with the legal and social situation that migrant sex workers face both in the host country and in their countries of origin. They also speak the native language of the sex workers, which proved to be indispensable for communication with the target group.

The more cultural mediators work for LEFÖ and the more often outreach can be carried out weekly, the better the coverage of support for sex workers. Due to the constant mobility of sex workers and their frequent changes of

workplace, the same venues should be visited between shorter intervals.

Identification of key people or intermediaries to facilitate contact

LEFÖ has always used peer educators in its work. During this mapping it was also possible to identify new key people who facilitated contact with other sex workers and were integrated into the preparation and implementation of different workshops.

Gender, age or origin as reasons for accepting or refusing contact

Lack of common language has been the primary reason for sex workers not speaking with the outreach team. Currently LEFÖ has cultural mediators for Romanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Polish, English and Spanish-speaking sex workers. The Hungarian colleague was recruited during the INDOORS project, as it became obvious that there was no other way for LEFÖ to reach the huge group of Hungarian sex workers. Cultural mediators who speak Czech and/or Slovak are also needed, but LEFÖ's resources prevent the organisation from employing so many staff.

Younger sex workers, as well as sex workers who are new to the industry, are usually more shy and afraid or unwilling to talk to the team.

Who initiated contact?

	No.	%
The service provider/outreach team	157	80.5
The sex worker	29	15.5
TOTAL	186	100

Other

No common language; anger

Reasons for refusal

	No.
No need for services offered	1
Will contact organisation later if needed	6
Other	6
TOTAL	13

Other

No common language; anger

When contact was initiated by sex workers, how had they learned of the organisation?

	No.
Outreach	9
Word of mouth (through other sex workers)	9
Referral by another organisation/institution	9
Cards/flyers distributed by the organisation	4
Other	2
TOTAL	33

2. Prostitution scene in Vienna

■ **Gender** – The majority of sex workers in Vienna are women. There are male sex workers too, but as LEFÖ is focused on working with female and transgender sex workers only, there is no data on male sex workers.

■ **Age** – The age range is very broad, LEFÖ's contacts being mostly between 18 and 35 years old. Generally the organisation doesn't work with minors, as they usually work in places to which the outreach team has no access. If they do work in venues accessed by the team, they don't stay with the other sex workers in the bars or studios, but in hidden back rooms, to which the team has no access either. Furthermore, the majority of the minors in sex work in Vienna are

nationals who often have drug-related issues, and LEFÖ does not specialise in working with this target group.

■ **Migration** – The majority of people contacted were migrants. This is on one hand representative of the sex work scene in Vienna and on the other hand due to the fact that LEFÖ is an organisation working for migrants.

■ **Origin and nationalities** – Most contacts were from the new EU countries (Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary), constituting the majority of sex workers in Vienna in general. One explanation for this is geographical proximity. There are also a lot of contacts from Latin America, as LEFÖ was founded by Latin Americans in the 1980s and is well known in the Latin American community in Vienna. The first sex workers LEFÖ worked with were Latin Americans. There are not a lot of Latin American sex workers who actively work in Vienna at the moment, but those who do are in constant contact with the organisation.

Currently there are not a lot of third-country nationals working as sex workers in Vienna, as the introduction of a new immigration law in January 2006 made it very difficult for them to come to Austria and engage in sex work. Third-country nationals who work as sex workers in Vienna mostly have resident status in another EU country, or are asylum seekers. There is also a small group of non-EU citizens working in prostitution in Vienna who have permanent residence permits in Austria, gained mostly through marriage to Austrian citizens.

Gender

	No.	%
Female (non-transgender)	162	95.3
Transgender	8	4.7
TOTAL	170	100

Migration

	No.	%
Migrants	164	96.5
Nationals	6	3.5
TOTAL	170	100

Origin of migrant sex workers

	No.	%
European Union	125	76.2
Eastern Europe and Central Asia (non-EU countries)	8	4.9
Balkan countries	2	1.2
Latin America and Caribbean	18	11
Asia-Pacific	2	1.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	7	4.3
Data not recorded	2	1.2
TOTAL	164	100

Nationalities

1. Hungary	6. Russia
2. Bulgaria, Romania	7. Austria
3. Slovakia	8. Brazil, Colombia, Poland
4. Dominican Republic	9. Czech Republic
5. Nigeria	10. Serbia, Thailand, Ukraine

Impact of Austrian migration and labour policy on working and living conditions of sex workers in Vienna

Work in the sex industry

Concerning their legal situation in sex work, the majority of sex workers (72.9% of the contacts in the mapping exercise) have regular status. One reason for this is that sex workers in Vienna must register with the police and undergo regular mandatory health checks in order to work legally in sex work. This is controlled very strictly and failure to comply means high fines, imprisonment or even deportation and a ban on

residence. This makes motivation to register very high. However, data on this is not available for a relatively high number of contacts (19%), because the team never asks directly if the sex worker has permission to work in the sex industry. Sex workers decide for themselves which kinds of information to disclose to the team, and of course LEFÖ does not enforce checks.

Recently the regulations concerning third-country nationals with a residence permit from another EU state have become very restrictive. Different legal interpretations exist, but according to the police, third-country nationals with a residence permit from another EU country are no longer allowed to work as self-employed in Austria. Those who do so are subject to high fines and risk deportation and ineligibility for admission to Austria for a long period of time. Although lawyers from NGOs interpret the existing labour and migrant laws differently, the official course of action is the restrictive one taken by the police.

Residence permits

Citizens from the new EU countries don't need a permit to travel and stay in Austria if their stay does not exceed three months. If they intend to live and work in the country for more than three months, they need to apply for a special permit, called *Anmeldebescheinigung* (notification statement). This is issued only to people who have a regular income and a place to stay as well as Austrian or pan-European health insurance. Due to their high mobility, the majority of sex workers have no *Anmeldebescheinigung*, but it is very difficult to check how long they have been in the country, as they constantly travel around. It has therefore been difficult for the team to tell whether they need a permit or are in a regular or irregular situation. Almost all contacted sex workers from non-EU countries were in a regular legal situation, as they were either asylum seekers or had been living in Vienna for a very long time and had achieved a status of permanent residency in Austria.

Health insurance

Both migrant and national sex workers are registered within the legal framework of the 'new self-employed' regulation. Above a certain income level they are obliged to have health and social insurance in Austria. Those who earn below the insurance limit have the possibility of opting in for health self-insurance. The majority of the sex workers coming from EU countries see no need for Austrian health insurance, as they prefer to go to a doctor in their own country, where the insurance is much cheaper and where there is no language barrier.

Sex workers from non-EU countries who have a regular legal situation usually have Austrian insurance as this is one of the prerequisites for having a residence permit. All national sex workers contacted during the mapping exercise had insurance. As only six national sex workers were contacted, however, no generalisations can be made about their situation.

The legal situation of newly arrived non-EU migrant sex workers is much more complicated. The already mentioned admission and residence restrictions for third-country nationals negatively impact on their living and working conditions. If they have no residence permit for Austria, they have no chance to legally work and live in the country. They are therefore completely excluded from the health and social system and have no access to public health and social services. This results in their greater vulnerability and dependence on third parties.

FOCUS



The new Prostitution Law in Vienna and its impact on people engaged in sex work

Preconditions

A new Prostitution Law¹⁹ came into effect in Vienna on 1 November 2011. It was the result of extensive protests by a small citizens' initiative which demanded a ban on street prostitution in their neighbourhood. The official aims of the new law were to fight human trafficking and encourage the shift of sex work to indoor venues. The real aim is to make sex work invisible to the general public. And this aim, as opposed to the officially proclaimed aims, has thus far been successful.

Content of the law

The main thrust of the new Prostitution Law is the ban on outdoor sex work in the residential areas of Vienna. New allowance zones within the city have been promised by the policy-makers, but have not yet been established. These can be determined by decree, but only upon approval by the district boards, which have withheld their consent. At the moment two zones fulfill the legal terms; however, they offer no good or safe working conditions. New to the law is the penalisation of clients²⁰ if they are caught negotiating sexual services outside the allowed zones. With regard to indoor sex work, a new registration system for sex work venues has been introduced²¹. Venues need to meet certain labour law and structural requirements in order to get a licence. The registration of the venues is carried out by the police. A certificate signed by a civil engineer is necessary and the venue owner needs to have a clean criminal record. All sex workers are still required to register with the

police²² and with the drop-in STI clinic²³ where they are obliged to undergo weekly health checks.

Impact of the law

The new Vienna Prostitution Law corresponds to the regulatory stance of the state legislature against sex work. A liberal approach, as seen in other countries (e.g. in Germany or New Zealand), is still missing in Vienna. The concrete impact of the law can be observed as follows:

During the preparatory phase of the law, as well as in the first month after its implementation, outdoor sex workers were often on the receiving end of unusually high media interest and an intensive police presence, both of which resulted in scaring clients away from the traditional locations where outdoor sex work used to take place. A lot of venues, especially transient hotels, where outdoor sex workers used to perform their services, went bankrupt and closed down.

Some of the sex workers who used to work outdoors started working indoors. LEFÖ assumes however that a great number was driven into illegality, and started working in private apartments, disappearing underground. All this caused a loss of contacts and made it more difficult for LEFÖ to reach sex workers with information and support. This has resulted in increased isolation of sex workers and their increased vulnerability to violence and abuse.

Very few venues have applied for a licence as yet, which is why the police have just launched an information campaign on the subject. However, certain problems are to be expected. The technical and structural changes which need to be made in order to get a licence could mean efforts and expenses that are beyond the capability of smaller venues, especially those run autonomously by sex workers themselves. This constitutes a risk of greater dependency on big venue owners who have already monopolised the field and benefit greatly from sex workers' lack of rights. Besides, the authorities have

¹⁹ Wiener Prostitutionsgesetz 2011 – WPG 2011

²⁰ §16 WPG 2011

²¹ §7, §8 WPG 2011

²² §5 WPG 2011

²³ §4c WPG 2011

considerable arbitrary powers in giving or refusing licences, as many of the criteria are quite vague. Other interests can be weighed against a licence at any time (§10 WPG 2011). A positive impact of the law should also be mentioned here, namely that it also foresees the implementation of better working conditions for sex workers in all venues, such as fire protection, water facilities and emergency equipment.

The still-existing system of obligatory health checks propagates the notion that sex workers present a risk of infecting other society members with STIs. Yet no concrete measures have been proposed to improve sex workers' access to health prevention and health care.

Registration with the police implies that sex work has a close relationship to the realm of crime, which makes it difficult for sex workers to turn to the police for help in cases of offences against them. Sex workers' vulnerability to abuse, violence and isolation has therefore been additionally increased.

3. Sex work venues and working conditions

Structure and organisation of indoor venues

■ The majority of contacted sex workers work in venues called *Laufhäuser*. A *Laufhaus* is a multi-storey building with several apartments dedicated exclusively to sex work, where no consumption of alcohol or other sort of entertainment takes place. It is a place of work, but most of the sex workers also use it as a place to live. They pay rent, ranging from 250 to 450 euros per week. Costs like electricity, water heating, advertising and security are included in this price.

The sex workers decide which services to offer as well as their prices. Usually there is an internal agreement on the baseline prices that can be offered. There is only one sex worker per apartment; in some cases two apartments can

share a bathroom which is located between the two. It is difficult to get an apartment in a good *Laufhaus*. Sex workers who travel a lot usually find a colleague to rent their apartment for a certain period, so that they don't lose it. The *Laufhäuser* are dispersed throughout the city and usually have a manager and/or security staff present at all times.

In most of the *Laufhäuser*, the outreach team has no problems in gaining entry and speaking to the sex workers. There is usually no need to ask for permission to talk to the women there either. Some *Laufhäuser* are more accessible as the women have their apartment doors open; others keep them closed and visitors need to ring the doorbell. In this case, sex workers may or may not choose to open the door to the team. In general, *Laufhäuser* give the team the biggest opportunity for long and more personal conversations with sex workers.

■ There is no differentiation between **bars** and **brothels** in Vienna. These are places to meet and have a drink, which also have private rooms for sexual services. In some of these venues sex workers get paid a fixed salary (between 25–50 euros per day/night) to be present during working hours. If they have a customer, they do not get the fixed salary, but receive a percentage of the costs of the alcohol consumed as well as the money for their sexual services.

The prices for the sexual services are determined by the owner and are on an hourly basis. The sex workers have to give a percentage of this price to the owner, but if a client gives them extra money they can keep it as a tip. The sex workers decide which services they offer and can choose or refuse clients. But very often the managers and the owners apply pressure on the sex workers to drink alcohol or offer unsafe sex, in order to attract more clients to the venue and make more money.

Compared to their colleagues, sex workers who work in bars/brothels usually have the least autonomy at work. Furthermore, these venues are also very expensive for the clients and they prefer to go to others where they can pay less for alcohol and where the prices of the sexual services are also usually lower than in bars.

■ Due to the fact that sexual services in private apartments are forbidden by law, another category of workplaces for sex workers is seeing a rise – the so-called **studios**. This is a generic term for clubs and apartments; they need to be registered as sex work venues. They are ground-level apartments in residential buildings, and have a separate entrance from the other apartments in the building. Usually two to five sex workers work together in a studio, and some also live there.

A studio may be set up by sex workers themselves or organised by a third party. In the self-organised studios, the sex workers just pay the rent to the owner of the place and determine all working conditions. If someone else is in charge of the business, sex workers give a percentage of their earnings to this person, who also determines the prices in the same way as in the bars and brothels. Studios are usually more discreet-looking than *Laufhäuser*, and more difficult to access for outreach workers.

■ There are also a lot of Asian women working in **massage parlours**. These are not registered as sex work venues and the women who work there are usually not registered as sex workers either. Officially they offer erotic massages, but additional sexual services are not excluded. As their situation is not regular, most of them don't open the door to strangers and this makes contact with them very difficult. As they don't speak German either, it is almost impossible to reach them with the services provided.

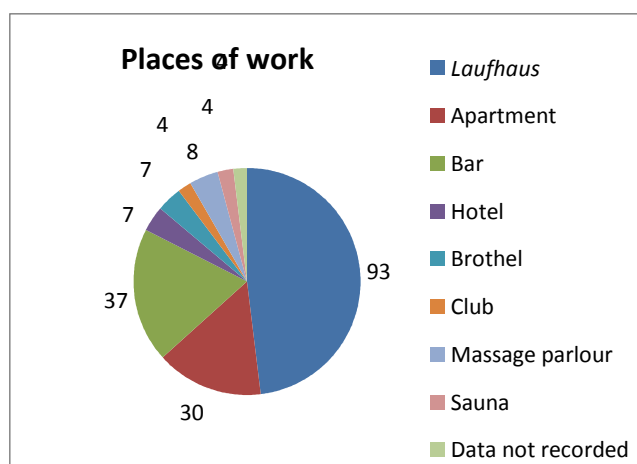
■ **Saunas** are another type of sex work venue, although there are not so many of them in Vienna. They are organised as big wellness centres, where both clients and sex workers pay an entrance fee. Sex workers usually pay 50–60 euros a day. LEFÖ does not have much experience in saunas as yet, as most of them haven't granted access to outreach workers so far.

■ Where **hotels** have been listed as a place of work, this has referred to specific transient hotels. They used to be places where outdoor sex workers took their clients, but following the ban on outdoor sex work in residential areas,

they now have sex workers sitting in their 'lobbies', waiting for potential clients. Usually the clients pay for the room; sex workers pay nothing and don't have to hand over a portion of their earnings either. Where alcoholic beverages are sold, sex workers might earn a percentage if they drink with their clients.

Places of work

	No.	%
<i>Laufhaus</i>	93	47.9
Apartment	30	15.5
Bar	37	19.1
Hotel	7	3.6
Brothel	7	3.6
Club	4	2.1
Massage parlour	8	4
Sauna	4	2.1
Data not recorded	4	2.1
TOTAL	194	100



The figures shown in this pie chart represent the different indoor sex work venues in Vienna, but reflect their accessibility to the outreach team rather than their actual prevalence or distribution.

Vulnerability and risky behaviours related to HIV/STIs

A relationship of trust between the cultural mediators and the sex workers needs to be established before intimate topics, such as sexual services offered and the relative safety of sexual practices, can be openly discussed. The majority of the contacts who answered the team's questions on this topic stated that they practise safer sex in most cases. They admitted however that sometimes they offer certain services without condoms, especially fellatio. They always pointed out that almost all their colleagues offered fellatio without condoms and that it is very difficult to stay in business and earn money if one doesn't do likewise.

Most of them are aware that there are risks of infection, but see no other choice than to ignore the danger. In addition, sex workers complained that the majority of clients asked for fellatio without condoms and were ready to pay more to get it. All these factors (demands of clients, pressure at the workplace, competition among sex workers, higher profits) apply simultaneously even though sex workers usually mention only one or two of them during a conversation. LEFÖ's estimation is that unsafe oral sex is practised more often than admitted, as it is also very broadly advertised and offered in both magazines and on the internet.

Rent in *Laufhäuser* and studios is very high, and managers and venue owners often apply a lot of pressure and even determine the services to be offered by them. The majority of sex workers have to give a very high percentage of their earnings either to the owner of the venue or to third parties who organise the migration process, registration procedures and business in general in the new country. Sex workers mostly do not recognise this as a form of exploitation, and accept it as normal. This is mostly due to a lack of information (or false information) on the situation in the host country, minimal language skills and low self-esteem. Last but not least, the fact that sex work is not recognised as work and sex workers are deprived of any labour rights makes it very difficult for them to negotiate better working conditions and to fight exploitation and other injustices. All of the abovementioned factors make sex workers dependent on third parties and increase their vulnerability.

A reason for the high percentage of positive responses to the question of autonomy at work is that the majority of sex workers who talked to the team during the mapping are usually in a better situation than most of their colleagues, who are more difficult for social institutions to reach. It is to be assumed that the latter live and work under much worse conditions than those who have the opportunity to talk to LEFÖ.

4. Autonomy at work

How autonomous are the contacted sex workers?

101 out of 106 contacts who gave a response to this question said that they have autonomy at work. Only in five cases did this not apply. For 21 out of 47 contacts, autonomy at work has increased during the last two years, and for 23 it has stayed stable. None of the contacted sex workers reported a decrease in their autonomy.

According to LEFÖ's knowledge, sex workers work under very difficult working conditions.

5. Principal needs of sex workers: social and medical

Principal SOCIAL needs of indoor sex workers contacted

Only the needs of the migrant sex workers in Vienna are analysed in this report, as a sample of only six national sex workers does not allow for generalisations about their situation.

Migrant sex workers face a double burden: they are discriminated against for being sex workers as well as for being migrants, and they are faced

with a repressive legal framework. This group of sex workers, which forms the majority of sex workers in Vienna, is most in danger of discrimination and stigmatisation. Due to their general marginalisation, sex workers have limited access to information and support. During contact with the outreach team they often seek information on their rights and on the framework of their profession. Because of their high mobility rate, sex workers are confronted with different regulations in the different countries they visit. In each host country they need updated information on this topic. Support is also frequently requested on social and legal issues such as housing, taxes, insurance, problems in daily life, etc. Leaving the sex industry is often expressed as a desire, which is difficult to fulfil for a wide range of reasons (bad economic situation and high unemployment rate in the country of origin, lack of sufficient language skills to work in another profession in the host country, no working permit for the host country, debts, etc.)

The expressed needs of transgender sex workers correspond with those of their non-transgender colleagues. They face a great deal of additional discrimination because of their gender identity and often seek information on topics related to transgender issues as well.

Principal HEALTH needs of indoor sex workers contacted

The needs most often expressed in this section are connected with general health problems and access to public health services. This is due to the fact that a lot of sex workers have no health insurance in Austria, due to lack of information, language barriers and fear of stigma. Gynaecological questions have also been frequently asked. This can be explained by the fact that although registered sex workers are obliged to undergo weekly health checks, these do not include all gynaecological examinations (e.g. cervical cancer prevention), nor do they offer any treatment. Furthermore, sex workers often complain about the bad conditions and disrespectful attitude towards them during the

mandatory health checks at the drop-in STI clinic. LEFÖ is therefore a very important contact organisation for health issues, especially as one of the cultural mediators is a professional gynaecologist. Because of the enormous psychological pressure in this profession (due to constant fear, leading a double life, isolation, etc.), a lot of sex workers express a need for psychological support too.

Are the interventions/services offered appropriate to sex workers' needs?

Due to the lack of labour rights and recognition of sex work as work, sex workers often work under bad working conditions and are vulnerable to exploitation by managers and venue owners. This is why the topic of working conditions is an important issue for the organisation. The cultural mediators use it as a conversation starter, as it is a subject which is easier to broach than other topics, but which can serve to give a sense of a potential situation of violence and/or exploitation. The same applies to the topic of security, which is a very important subject both for the team and for the sex workers as, due to frequent violent acts against them, a great amount of uncertainty can be observed among the target group.

Because of the general marginalisation of sex workers, there is a need for continuous social and legal support as well as for empowerment, which the team sees itself as providing during its outreach activities. Outreach also comprises the distribution of informational materials, condoms and lubricants and the delivery of STI prevention work, which is always welcomed by the sex workers. The team tries to start each conversation by giving input on the topics mentioned, which is often taken up by the sex workers as an opportunity to express their own needs.

LEFÖ is aware of the fact that a very deep trust-based relationship is necessary for sex workers to share more intimate and personal problems. This is only possible after several contacts and in

the secure environment of an individual consultation, which can hardly be achieved during outreach. Besides, an organisation with scarce financial resources and a small staff base cannot cover all the needs of a target group as marginalised as sex workers.

6. Mobility of sex workers

Indoor sex work and national and international mobility

The majority of sex workers who answered questions related to their mobility stated that they do not travel much, whether within Austria or abroad.

National mobility

20.9% of contacts said that they work or have worked in other Austrian cities, 42.8% have not, and a very high percentage (36.4%) of sex workers did not discuss this topic.

International mobility

Regarding sex workers' mobility in other countries, 20.9% have worked abroad, 39.6% have worked only in Austria, and with another 30.9% the subject was not discussed.

According to LEFÖ's experience, however, sex workers, especially migrant sex workers, are very mobile. The high number of non-responses is due to the fact that the majority of contacts with sex workers were first contacts, so the topic didn't always come up. The results of the mapping are therefore not representative. One possible reason for the high percentage of negative answers may be that a lot of the contacted sex workers are very young women, who have recently started in sex work and have not travelled around much yet. However, the fact that after twenty years of outreach activities most of the contacts made were new ones also indicates a high rate of mobility.

Reasons for mobility

As the sample of national sex workers in this mapping exercise is too small and LEFÖ generally works with migrants, the results focus again only on the situation of the migrant sex workers. Most of them prefer the more anonymous status and larger market afforded by bigger cities. This explains why the in-country mobility in Austria is lower compared to that in other European countries.

The mobility of sex workers to other countries is caused by client demand (the search for better business), legal problems (often produced by underhanded police strategies), marginalisation, cultural discrimination and racism, as well as by aspirations for better and safer working and living conditions. Sex workers usually hear from colleagues and friends that the work situation at a certain moment is better in another country or city, and they decide to try it out, especially when the informant is a close friend and offers them support at the beginning. Depending on the actual situation in the new state, sex workers may decide to stay there longer, move on to another place or go back to a country they have already worked and lived in.

In border regions (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia) sex workers often commute between states. On the one hand, life in their countries of origin is still relatively cheaper, they have their families and friends there, they speak the language and are basically at home. On the other hand, many prefer not to work as sex workers in their home countries, where they could be recognised. Besides, their earnings are usually higher in Austria.

7. Violence

Violence and sex work

Out of 187 contacts, a total of 69 cases of violence was reported. Only in 44 outreach contacts did sex workers explicitly say that they had never experienced violence. In 87 contacts, violence was not a topic discussed. This is because speaking about violent experiences requires a high level of confidence and trust which is often not possible during a first contact.

Many sex workers, due to a lack of self-esteem, live with violence as a reality and do not recognise some forms of violence as such. Therefore it can be assumed that the dark figure of cases of violence against sex workers is also very high. Often shame is observed, which is revealed when sex workers prefer to tell violent experiences of others rather than their own. This happened 28 times during the mapping. Nevertheless a high number of violent experiences is still reported by those who directly experienced them.

A positive development in working conditions can be observed. Most of the sex work venues have recently implemented security measures such as alarm buttons and security staff. Besides, the majority of sex workers work together with others, which enhances their safety. So, in comparison with the outdoor sex work scene, a lower number of violent abuses can be observed indoors. This, however, relates only to violence perpetrated by clients or strangers, and does not cover other forms of violence, i.e. economic violence by owners/managers of venues or pimps, as well as domestic violence. LEFÖ's experience shows that the latter still occurs very frequently.

Forms of violence

All forms of violence were reported by the contacted sex workers. The three most frequently reported forms of violence were assault (21 cases), humiliation during work (21 cases), and forced sex work (13 cases), directly

followed by working in a risky environment (11 cases) and robbery at work (9 cases). Other forms of violence, mentioned during the mapping and corresponding with the team's experience, were 'economic deception by a trusted figure' and 'pressure exerted on sex workers by venue managers', especially regarding the consumption of alcohol in bars and brothels. The figures also reflect that the working conditions are directly linked with certain forms of violence. For example, sex workers working in bars and brothels are more often confronted with humiliation or insults during work, compared to sex workers who work in venues where no alcohol is served.

Perpetrators of violence

Clients constitute the biggest group of perpetrators. Violence coming from relatives, friends and acquaintances is more often tolerated or, due to feelings of shame, less often reported by sex workers. Sex workers' reports of violence experienced by colleagues frequently concern perpetrators from trafficking networks. In the cases of economic and psychological violence, managers and owners of sex work venues are the most often named perpetrators. Verbal violence is usually perpetrated by clients and takes the form of insults and humiliation. Additionally a lot of sex workers report economic, psychological and verbal violence perpetrated by passers-by or strangers (robbery, insults, name calling, damaging the outside of the venue by throwing dirt or breaking windows, etc.).

Indicators of violence

The general stigmatisation of sex workers, racism towards migrants and last but not least the lack of protection from police and other public authorities are the most frequent reasons why sex workers become victims of different forms of violence. A lot of sex workers who reported violence said that it happened in their past, when they were still new to the business with little experience. Later they developed different strategies to recognise potential

perpetrators of violence in time, learned German and became acquainted with the scene, making it possible for them to negotiate for better working conditions. The majority of them had been dependent on third parties at the beginning of their career, but due to the abovementioned factors were able to gain more autonomy over the years.

Frequency of violence

	No.	%
Sex worker reported own experience of violence	40	20
Sex worker reported a colleague's experience of violence	28	14
Sex worker reported never having experienced violence	44	22
Violence was not a discussed topic	55	27.5
Violence was observed by the outreach team	1	0.5
Data not recorded	32	16
TOTAL	200	100

Perpetrators of violence

	No.
Client	28
Relative, friend, acquaintance	11
Colleague	2
Owner/manager of venue	8
Trafficking network	10
Public authorities/officials	2
Other	5
TOTAL	66

Other

Strangers

Thematic focus

STIGMA

Talking about stigma

There was a consistently very low rate of discussions about stigma across the results collected by all partners, which makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. There are several reasons why stigma is such a difficult issue to tackle.

The first reason is that stigma is a form of human rights violation which is difficult for sex workers to define and recognise as such. This can partly explain why sex workers don't always realise when they are exposed to a stigmatising situation, or at least they don't experience it as such.

When culturally accepted as a matter of fact, it is even more difficult to distinguish and talk about stigmatisation. This is the case in Bulgaria, for example, where the team noted: "in our culture, being insulted for being a sex worker is often accepted as a 'normal' part of the job."

Even without going so far, most of the partners made the observation that sex workers do not recognise the stigma they suffer. They think it is a normal occurrence that comes with the job, and perhaps with being a woman. Much more visible is the stigma linked to national origin and migrant status.

Stigma is not an easy subject to approach, especially during a first contact. For sex workers to talk freely about their exposure to stigma, a relationship of trust first has to be established. Most of the contacts were first contacts, which also explains the frequent avoidance of the topic.

Only TAMPEP in Amsterdam found that many sex workers reported stigmatisation during this mapping. Some of the situations reported refer to concrete cases, but some also refer to senses and feelings.

A generally common remark is that many sex workers sense the bad attitudes from the general public and rarely come out as sex workers in society, in order to avoid stigmatisation and discrimination. This hidden condition reveals how the stigma against sex workers is intense and internalised.

While stigmatisation increases isolation, it tends at the same time to create community-based togetherness; but social exclusion remains.

Forms of stigma are not seen as forms of violence, just like theft and verbal abuse are seen as consequences of sex work. Even those who talk about feeling the pressure of the stigma still underestimate its range and see it as an inevitable part of being a sex worker.

CDCP | Italy

Forms of stigma

Only 11.9% of the individuals contacted answered this question. The results above should thus be treated with caution and not be considered representative of the situation in general.

- The most frequent form of stigma reported is insults for being a sex worker,
- followed by insults for being a migrant.
- The third most common encountered form is "difficulties in seeing one's rights respected in accessing health/social services" which is a concrete situation of discrimination in which stigma becomes operational.

There were many accounts of stigma and social exclusion, which brings us to the conclusion that there are interrelated forms of stigma which impact sex workers' lives.

TAMPEP | the Netherlands

Perpetrators of stigma

	No.
Client	195
Public authorities/officials	122
Police	110
Relative/friend/acquaintance	65
Owner/manager of venue	36
Colleague	27
Service provider staff	16
Trafficking network	10
Other	80
Data not recorded	2860
TOTAL	3521

Although these results are moderated by the high numbers who did not discuss the topic at all, clients appear to be the main perpetrators of stigma, followed by the police and by public authorities/institution officials.

In the case of stigma from the police, this often took place when the sex worker was not taken seriously and was not given support as a victim of violence. These results reveal that sex workers often have no one to turn to over cases of stigmatisation as it is precisely this that is perpetrated by the bodies which should protect them against this form of abuse. Clients, being well aware of this disrespect of basic rights, don't fear any repercussions.

Because sex work is not recognised as a profession in the majority of the countries, it is generally the case that sex workers have no legal possibilities to respond to such situations.

Sex workers tend to be stigmatised by the general public, which includes strangers, passers-by, neighbours and national citizens. It is generally accepted in society, including by clients of sex workers, that sex workers are a lower class of people and one can do basically anything to them without fearing any consequences.

Legalisation of sex work does not necessarily lead to respect for sex workers. In Vienna, sex workers generally feel stigmatised and

discriminated against by public authorities and institution officials, for example when they need to declare the source of their income to the tax office and health insurance company, to apply for a visa or residence permit, to rent a flat, etc. There are also complaints about the disrespectful treatment of migrant sex workers at the drop-in STI clinic, where they must undergo mandatory health checks.

Mandatory health checks are a problem for a very large group of sex workers. On one hand the mandatory weekly health check is seen as a form of discrimination, as no other professional group must undergo similar health checks at such short intervals. On the other hand the catastrophic conditions in the drop-in STI clinic and the disrespectful treatment by the employees there towards sex workers (especially towards those who do not speak German) are additionally perceived as harassment.

LEFÖ | Austria

Violent and stigmatising situations appeared to occur mostly in the workplace. However this kind of abuse is not absent from the private sphere. Sex workers are exposed to stigma and violent situations at work, at home, in public places and also in service provision and juridical processes.

Stigma is perceived, basically, in all sectors of society: family, labour, etc. For this reason, this analysis reaffirms that stigma is a social factor, which must be understood in a comprehensive form with different perpetrators.

TAMPEP | the Netherlands

As for violence, clients and relatives, friends and acquaintances are the most frequent perpetrators of stigma, followed by the police and staff at service providers. With this we can conclude that people who have closer contact with sex workers and who are (probably) aware of their professional activity are the ones who perpetrate most of the situations of violence and stigma.

APDES, Portugal

Indicators and the reasons behind stigmatisation of sex workers

Stigmatisation processes are deeply rooted in many factors and stigmatisation is often the product of a combination of factors.

All partner organisations note from their field experience that **GENDER** and **MIGRATION STATUS** play a big role when it comes to stigmatisation.

The results indicate the intersection of stigmatisation: migrant origin, gender and profession (sex work) form different axes of repression and discrimination and intersect with each other. For example, sex workers are socially stigmatised for being sex workers and discriminated against on a societal level for being women. Transgender sex workers are additionally stigmatised because of their gender identity.

LEFÖ | Austria

Regarding the specific form of stigma and our perceptions and experience we can link stigma with country of origin and gender. A large amount of the sex workers we contact are Brazilian women. Within the Portuguese community, the association between Brazilian girls and prostitution is deep-rooted.

APDES | Portugal

The **POLITICAL** and **LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT** has a direct impact on stigmatisation.

This is the case in some countries which have an abolitionist position, such as France or Spain, but a legalised context is not a guarantee of better treatment or more consideration.

Sex work in France is neither prohibited nor regulated and there is no legislation that clearly targets 'sex work' or uses that term. Political bodies and some NGOs mainly consider sex work as violence against women and don't approach the issue in terms of rights. The public is not aware enough of sex workers' conditions, rights and needs, and still stigmatises them.

Autres Regards | France

Abolitionists add considerably to the stigma of sex work. They believe that women never choose prostitution, and because of this, they do not recognise their autonomy, refusing sex workers their voice. In their opinion sex workers are not valid stakeholders. The power and the support of this lobby is also reflected in governing bodies where officials state that 90% of sex workers in Spain are victims of trafficking, even though they can't produce any data to support it.

Hetaira | Spain

The increasingly repressive context which prevails in most of the countries of this report contributes to the increase of stigmatisation.

Legislation does not help relieve any of the stigma when the tendency is swaying more and more towards criminalising sex work. Increasingly across Spain many communities are opting for more and more restrictive by-laws concerning outdoor sex work. Catalonia is the most restrictive where outdoor sex workers and clients will now be fined because they obstruct traffic. All of these factors contribute to the heavy stigmatisation of sex work.

Hetaira | Spain

The atmosphere in Finland has been characterised by tightened police controls on the streets and in bars in Helsinki city centre. The police have been active in checking documents and giving fines to (mainly) migrant women who have been suspected of selling sexual services in public places (also including sex bars). According to the people working in the streets and bars, there seems to have been a change in attitudes, towards a greater hostility against migrant sex workers. This is a totally new phenomenon. Before, women used to report violence and risky situations to the police, even minor incidents. Now they said that violent clients know the police's negative attitude and they are not afraid anymore that women will report the violence against them.

Pro-tukipiste | **Finland**

TAMPEP in Amsterdam note that it "is curious that the legalisation of sex work in the Netherlands was not able to deal with processes of stigmatisation of sex workers."

Although direct forms of discrimination are strictly banned, especially in relation to gender and sexual orientation, indirect forms of discrimination occur more often. The new prostitution law proposal, for example, is an excellent example of indirect discrimination of migrant sex workers and is based on the false myth that all migrant sex workers are helpless victims of trafficking.

In relation to sex work, there is no legislation protecting sex workers from discrimination (direct or indirect). Trend reports in the country highlight that because of their profession, sex workers are often denied the right to rent a house, open a bank account, or receive health insurance, which are not denied to other workers.

The reality is that – even in the Netherlands – sex workers face stigma in all aspects of their social and private lives, and little has been done recently to deal with the diverse forms in which stigma appears in society, be it direct or indirect discrimination against sex workers.

Sex workers today have more obligations, are obliged to pay tax, but the state offers few opportunities for them to live without fear of discrimination.

Sex workers in the Netherlands are entitled to labour rights, for example, but the way the businesses are structured and operate does not permit them to enjoy the same social benefits as other workers. This gap in the law makes them socially vulnerable to unemployment, retirement, and other social vulnerabilities.

TAMPEP | **the Netherlands**

The same assessment has been made in Vienna, where legalisation has even contributed to stigmatisation.

Sex workers in Vienna are from the beginning stigmatised and criminalised by the Prostitution Law. They must register with the police, which immediately creates a link between sex work and criminality. The mandatory health checks for sex workers imply that they are a danger to the general public in terms of sexually transmitted infections. Sex workers from Romania and Bulgaria, especially those of Roma origin, are most frequently confronted with racial and cultural discrimination. The same is true for African sex workers. Migrant sex workers who are third-country nationals additionally face repressive immigration laws. An important factor behind discrimination against migrant sex workers is also their lack of German language skills.

LEFÖ | **Austria**

The way the **MEDIA** portray sex workers influences public opinion.

The media further contribute to the stigma by portraying sex workers as outsiders of society: either as delinquents or as victims. They also push the invented figure of '90% are victims of trafficking' when they want to. Victimisation takes away the power of choice and dignity of sex workers. This popular approach by the media of portraying sex workers negatively has repercussions on how they are treated or let themselves be treated. It foments scorn and increases even more the stigma attached to sex work.

Hetaira | Spain

Stigmatisation of sex workers is also closely linked to **MORALITY**.

Sex work in Bulgaria still takes place in the context of a society with patriarchal roots and morals, where to earn money using your body is considered a big sin. Sex workers are often seen as second-class citizens by other people, but also by themselves. Plus, if the sex worker is of Roma origin or comes from a small village to the big city – this makes him or her doubly stigmatised."

HESED | Bulgaria

Sex work has been stigmatised for a very long time as it is seen as an immoral, dangerous and degrading economic activity. This is obvious when you consider that the insult women fear is to be called a whore or a slut. In terms of gender, sex work is seen as especially degrading if you are a woman. There is the social concept that divides women into good or bad. Good women follow sexual norms and are protected by society. Bad women defy sexual norms and therefore do not deserve protection. This can be particularly internalised by sex workers and leave them feeling that they deserve the negative impacts of their clandestine job. The lack of recognised workers' rights further proves the point.

Hetaira | Spain

From our experience, a significant number of sex workers do not respond to the topic of stigmatisation because they take it for granted that it's the way things are. They have deeply internalised the social prejudice and stereotype that still exists in various sectors of the population. One of the effects of a chauvinistic and patriarchal culture that divides 'well-to-do' women from 'bad' women is limiting sex workers' self-esteem.

CDCP | Italy

Legal protection in cases of violence and stigma

In all the cities in this report, sex workers can press charges through the police like any other person in cases of violence or stigma. But the results show that very often, sex workers do not trust the police and cases of violence and stigma are seldom reported.

The most frequently given reasons why the majority of sex workers don't press charges are the following:

- The police are often not perceived as having a protective role and sex workers don't rely on the police force, fearing that they will not be taken seriously. A general mistrust of the authorities or the judicial system can be observed. Sometimes police services are even considered one of the most significant perpetrators of stigma and violence against sex workers.

As a result, sex workers tend to solve the problem by themselves or with help from colleagues. Once the danger has passed, they see no need to report cases to the police, as they do not expect further support or that the perpetrators would be punished.

Many sex workers share the fear that reporting a violent experience could bring problems upon the sex workers themselves instead of helping them out of them. They fear retaliation against themselves or their families if they were to press charges regarding violence perpetrated by a friend, relative or acquaintance, or by a trafficking network.

In the countries in which sex work is neither a criminalised nor a regulated activity, there is a gap in terms of legislation and protection. Sex workers are afraid to be registered as such in police files and are afraid of penalties. This is all the more true for migrants who often fear deportation.

- Other reasons for not pressing charges are that sex workers are ashamed of their activity and/or want to preserve their anonymity. Low self-esteem is also a barrier for victims to take legal action.

- Another difficulty in pressing charges is that stigma and violence are not the sole realm of one specific perpetrator and stigma is not quantifiable.

Sex workers in Bulgaria rarely press charges or complain to the police because nobody pays attention to their problems and they will be ridiculed or even subjected to violence by this institution.

HESED | Bulgaria

Sex workers are not really aware of their rights. They have the opportunity to contact an organisation working with sex workers in order to fight for them, but in reality, few of them undergo this step, except in Hamburg where organisations working with migrants often act as intermediaries.

Access to counselling and legal protection is mostly gained through organisations for migrant women, or for victims of trafficking, which have contact with specialised lawyers and a police protection programme for victims of trafficking. The public health service, in these cases, also refers to the abovementioned organisations.

Ragazza | Germany

All sex workers in the Netherlands are entitled to legal protection, including those who are working illegally. In spite of this legal protection which is granted to all, few sex workers working in the unlicensed sector would ever dare to report abuse. The overall number is high: 72.5% of the sex workers do not press charges, whether working in the licensed or unlicensed sector.

TAMPEP | the Netherlands

Sex workers frequently avoid pressing charges in order to avoid public exposure or any possible disrespect. Because of the significant prejudice against sex workers, from the general public and also from service providers in the social, legal and security fields, sex workers' rights are often neglected.

ISOLATION AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Isolation among sex workers: knowledge of services available and connections with other sex workers

Isolation is both a fact and a perception which makes it a reality difficult to translate into figures.

Additionally it is a subject difficult to tackle during a first contact, during which more urgent and less personal questions often take priority, which is why it was not addressed during many encounters.

Despite this qualifier, it has been observed in all the cities included in this report that social isolation is a general tendency.

Because of the stigmatisation already described, many sex workers do not have contact with people who are not working in the sex industry.

Those who do have contacts remain isolated because they don't speak about their work with their friends and family. Moreover their double life makes them vulnerable to blackmail.

In Marseille, the team has noted that occasional sex workers are much more isolated than regular sex workers. On one hand, they don't want to have contact with 'colleagues', not identifying themselves as sex workers; on the other hand, they can't talk about their activity with their friends and family.

Social exclusion puts sex workers in a vulnerable position, because they often don't know how to cope with services and how to get access to their rights.

However, a lot of sex workers are not isolated within their community. 51.3% of those contacted have connections to more than one other sex worker. In 64.8% of the cases, sex workers who have contact with colleagues exchange information, codes and practices amongst themselves.

Sex workers in Sofia are not generally isolated. Newcomers might need time to adapt when starting work at a new place but there is almost no isolation of sex workers from each other and/or from the other key players on the scene.

HESED | Bulgaria

Links with local social/medical networks

The sex worker:	No.	%
knows the service provider	1374	24.3
knows medical services for sex workers	709	14.8
knows informal services for the community	311	6.5
knows organisations for migrants	309	6.4
knows another service	694	14.5
knows nobody	233	4.9
Data not recorded	1164	24.3
TOTAL	4794	100

The knowledge of available services is linked to the relationships that sex workers have with each other. It is interesting to see that 24.3% of the contacted persons knew of the service provider, even though most of the contacts were first contacts. The snowball effect produced by word of mouth helps to spread information far and wide.

The degree of isolation is not as high in Hamburg as expected, taking into consideration the high mobility among sex workers (75% new contacts). One reason could be the networking among sex workers, which is quite developed. About 70% of them said that they have contact with one or more sex workers, and of this group 55% said that this contact was regular, aimed at exchange of information. This sort of networking, which enables information to be passed on via word- of mouth, could be one of the reasons why the local health service is so well known, and some of the counselling centres as well.

Ragazza | Germany

Mutual support and solidarity is common, but at the same time, mutual disagreements and fights carry a threat of exclusion from the sex worker community.

In the indoor scene there are different ethnic subgroups. If somebody is excluded from his or her community, all the risks, combined with the isolation, grow remarkably high. Isolation at work means lack of peer support, lack of information on where to turn to in risky situations and where to get support and protection when needed.

Pro-tukipiste | Finland

Occasional sex workers tend to be more isolated and less informed about available services.

A high number [of individuals] turn to indoor sex work because they need money quickly to pay their rent, their debts, etc. This may explain why they don't need to know other sex workers or service providers. They have their own lives and don't want to mix them with sex workers. This is why some sex workers don't know our organisation or other services. Few know how to access free and anonymous HIV/STI testing, and they don't use public health services.

Autres Regards | France

Factors behind isolation

The factors behind isolation are numerous and often interlinked and/or cumulative.

As already mentioned, the fear of being stigmatised for engaging in sex work deters sex workers from speaking freely about their activity. Sex workers do not want it to be publicly known that they work in prostitution. The desire for anonymity makes them lead double lives, which is very hard psychologically. The context of stigmatisation and discrimination is therefore one factor behind isolation.

In this sense, the lack of recognition of sex work as work contributes to isolation as it contributes to ongoing stigmatisation.

In society, isolation is combined with stigma. Very few want to talk openly about their sex work because of the heavy stigma. Disclosure of sex work can lead to serious consequences in different life spheres (in job seeking, in parental issues, housing, etc.). One of the biggest psychological burdens is that people in sex work have to lie and hide a big part of their life.

Pro-tukipiste | Finland

The working environment also has a significant impact. Sex workers who work alone and through the internet have less contact with their colleagues than those who work in public places (bars, massage parlours, brothels, etc.). In Amsterdam, working unlicensed factors into isolation as some venues in the unlicensed sector belong to a clandestine sphere and thus sex workers working unlicensed are more hidden.

Together with the working environment, the working conditions of the majority of sex workers play a role in their isolation. Their working habits do not allow contact with other people as sex workers often work at night and sleep during the day. Worse, some of them live in their workplace and are therefore available nonstop. In Hamburg, the fear of losing clients if

they leave the workplace for a few hours leads many sex workers to seldom leave their flat.

Firstly, the hours of work for sex workers are around 12 hours per day. Most of these hours are spent inside the apartments. And many sex workers work 24 hours a day. Only a few of them take one day per week to rest. There are very few known cases of sex workers who take holidays or rest periods. This situation generates a lot of fatigue and isolation from the general community, besides the repercussions for their health.

APDES | Portugal

Another reason is that the majority of the sex worker population is composed of migrants (from elsewhere in the same country, or from other countries). Those in the position of migrants have reduced social/family networks and face barriers to the establishment of lasting relationships. Language barrier increases their isolation from nationals.

The high turnover of sex workers also tends to increase their isolation.

It is important to stress in this context the role of mobility, which can have two clearly opposite consequences. On one hand, mobility leads to isolation because new sex workers do not know the city and therefore do not know, for instance, what sort of services are available to them and have no access to information; but on the other hand, existing networks of sex workers, mainly those with a shared nationality, often facilitate the exchange of information and the change of workplaces, which diminishes the isolation factor.

Ragazza | Germany

The impact of additional occupations on sex workers' work, autonomy or vulnerability

Most of the sex workers contacted do not have another occupation besides sex work.

In sex work the main/exclusive occupation?

	No.	%
Yes	1488	45.8
No	377	11.6
Data not recorded	1383	42.6
TOTAL	3248	100

Having an additional occupation has both advantages and drawbacks.

Some people think that it is better not to have another job because then they can focus on sex work and organise their work and their life more easily. Some people say that it is good to have another job, because then their living is not based only on the income they get from sex work. This makes them less vulnerable whatever happens in the sex work scene.

Pro-tukipiste | Finland

In some cities like Madrid, the fact that sex workers have another occupation does not have an impact on their vulnerability. And in Hamburg, having another occupation is a sign of autonomy and has no negative impact on sex workers' living or working conditions.

In Marseille, the majority of indoor sex workers work exclusively in sex work. But some of them are hairdressers, work in fast food or are students. This has an impact on isolation and in terms of sexual risks. Sometimes, sex workers who have another occupation don't identify as sex workers. That's why they overlook sexual risks and don't want to keep in touch with an organisation that may offer help and/or counselling. They want to preserve their anonymity, and we can say that they are more vulnerable because they are isolated from service providers and other sex workers.

Autres Regards | France

The team in Helsinki notes that having another job increases integration into society and decreases marginalisation at an individual level, while in Amsterdam, having a second occupation is frequently related to the fact that sex workers must have a 'double life' not only for the sake of their private lives but also in order to collect social insurance.

Having another activity gives sex workers the possibility to meet other people as well as have an alibi when asked what they do for a living. Yet, it does not help them out of the double lives they need to lead. Sex workers who have a second job usually live in constant fear that their colleagues and friends might find out about their engagement in sex work.

LEFÖ | Austria

In Porto, the additional occupation is often linked with the sex industry, such as being the owner or receptionist of an apartment or other sex work venue. This simply reinforces sex workers' links to the sex work community and their isolation from wider society. The same trend has been observed in Sofia.

At this historical moment in which sex work does not guarantee an adequate income due to the high number of workers in the area lowering the bargaining power, the women met by the outreach team would like to have another activity in addition to sex work. Given the socio-economic conditions and the difficulty of finding another job, there is a feeling of acceptance and resignation. The few women who managed to have another job feel more financially secure and less vulnerable to possible abuse from clients. They perceive less stigmatisation because often they have more self-esteem.

CDCP | Italy

CONCLUSION

The results of this report reflect the situation of those indoor sex workers contacted by the different partner organisations rather than the general local context of indoor sex work in each city. The sex workers who provided information for this mapping are generally those who expressed needs for help and support.

It is impossible for the outreach programmes across the nine cities to cover all settings and all sex workers, in part due to the financial limitation of resources. Other factors such as high mobility, clandestine sex work settings and a wide range of circumstances of sex workers (from full autonomy and self-determination to very restricted autonomy) reduce the possibility of reaching all sex workers.

In spite of the results being only partly representative, they offer a picture of the local realities in nine European cities. The mapping highlights the specificities of each city and provides an insight into a patchwork of indoor venues.

Even if the contexts differ from one city to another, some common themes emerge. A general observation underlined by this mapping is that indoor sex workers are in a vulnerable situation, both in their private and professional lives.

They are often exposed to violations of their basic human rights. This exposure increases for those who are migrants, as migration status is an additional factor of vulnerability in all the cities covered by the INDOORS project.

Stigmatisation and discrimination are still part of the everyday lives of sex workers in 2012, regardless of whether sex work is legalised or not. Most indoor sex workers are socially excluded. They expressed the need for social and medical support, as they often avoid seeking help because of their general environment being viewed as hostile and non-protective.

More than one third of the sex workers encountered during this mapping considered that they have control over their working conditions, referring to their ability to negotiate their working hours and the sexual practices on offer.

Nevertheless, this mapping highlights the vulnerability of indoor sex workers when it comes to negotiating safer sexual practices. This is particularly true for oral sex without condoms. Pressures due to increasing competition and the difficult economic situation, together with an underestimation of STI risks, are the main reasons why sex workers agree to have unprotected oral sex.

According to the mapping, the support provided by the INDOORS partners working in collaboration with other local organisations meets the specific needs of indoor sex workers. The results outline the importance of continuing regular outreach work, as a way to contribute to better working and living conditions and to enable their empowerment.

The need for regular outreach is all the more justified given that the indoor settings are constantly evolving and adapting (to new technologies, to new legal contexts, etc.). It is thus important to keep on doing outreach while constantly reviewing and/or adapting the outreach methodology.

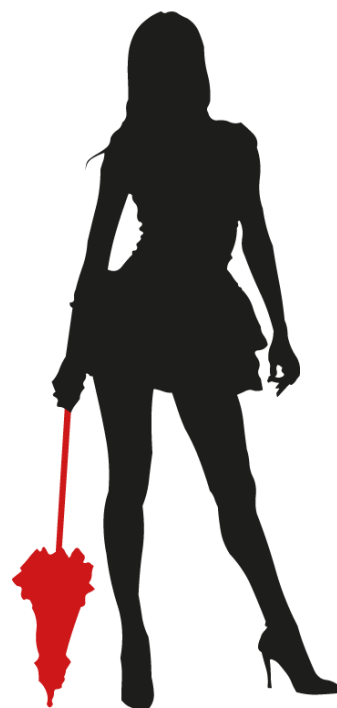
The high mobility and turnover, the difficulty in establishing a trusted relationship (partly because of this turnover), and a legal context which often represents a threat rather than protection, hamper this support and empowerment work.

To better face the trend of internal and external mobility, the INDOORS project recommends that organisations working with and for sex workers build and maintain a strong network at a national and European level, and develop more comprehensive human-rights-based approaches at these levels.

The INDOORS project also recommends raising clients' awareness of the risks of unsafe sexual practices, and educating both clients and service providers about sex workers' rights to dignity and respect.

Along with the support provided, community-based mechanisms should be encouraged, either by supporting sex workers' voices and sex workers' self-organisation, or by working in partnership with sex workers' organisations for advocacy and social mobilisation.

These are key points for tackling stigmatisation and discrimination, and ensure a human rights framework in all programmes and services aimed at sex workers.



NOTES



Outreach in indoor sex work settings