

ACTION PLAN AGAINST PROSTITUTION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES

On 10 July 2008, the Government adopted an action plan for combating prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes. The plan covers five priority areas: greater protection and support for people at risk, more emphasis on preventive work, higher standards and greater efficiency in the justice system, increased national and international cooperation, and a higher level of knowledge and awareness. Altogether, the Government will be investing SEK 213 million in 36 measures up to the year 2010.

Prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes represent a serious obstacle to social equality, gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights. Most of the victims are women and children, but men and boys are also being exploited. Studies show that the great majority of sexual services are purchased by men.

Efforts to combat prostitution and trafficking must proceed from a judicial, social and gender equality perspective and be based on the human rights principle. Sweden's commitments in the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN serve as a basis for government policy in this sphere.

The Action Plan focuses specifically on the protection and support needs of individuals at risk, and states that such a perspective is to be integrated in all government work. Special measures are to be taken on behalf of children and young people. A comprehensive follow-up of the Action Plan will be undertaken in 2011 and presented to the Riksdag (Swedish parliament).

GREATER PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE AT RISK

At present, measures targeting those exposed to prostitution or trafficking for sexual purposes are limited. The Action Plan aims to intensify outreach activities and give greater priority to sheltered housing, treatment centres and other forms of support and protection. Establishing contact with children and young people who are exposed to – or risk being exposed to – sexual exploitation is particularly difficult.

Professional groups working with people in prostitution and trafficking victims need more knowledge and training. This is particularly true where the rights and needs of children are involved. Here, special courses will be required.

ACTION PLAN MEASURES:

- Greater protection and support for children and young people at risk
- Training for staff working with health care, the social services, youth clinics and sheltered housing
- Inventory of sheltered housing
- Rehabilitation for the victims of trafficking for sexual purposes
- Intensified efforts in the substance abuse and addiction care service
- Additional support for the National Board of Institutional Care
- A safer return for the victims of trafficking for sexual purposes

MORE EMPHASIS ON PREVENTIVE WORK

An important part of preventive work is to heighten people's awareness and help them rethink their attitudes to those exposed to prostitution and trafficking. Here, education and information are vital ingredients. Among both official bodies and voluntary organisations, ethical guidelines and codes of conduct are an important aspect of preventive work. Measures to help victims find alternative means of support are also needed. Special priority is to be attached to information targeting children and young people.

ACTION PLAN MEASURES:

- Evaluation and enhancement of measures directed at purchasers of sexual services
- Greater focus on preventive work among young people
- Methodological material for activities targeting young people
- Further training for staff in compulsory and upper secondary schools
- Evaluation and enhancement of efforts on behalf of people in prostitution
- Training for staff working with young people
- Measures on behalf of women in penal care
- Ethical guidelines in public administration
- Support for the activities of NGOs

HIGHER STANDARDS AND GREATER EFFICIENCY IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Trafficking is a grave offence that usually involves people – often women or children – being recruited or transported for the purpose of exploitation of one kind or another. The fight against trafficking is a key component in the Government's long-term strategy for combating serious organised crime. In particular, the aims and objectives of this strategy must be reflected in the Swedish justice system.

In recent years, efforts have been made to equip police and prosecutors with more effective means for dealing with serious organised crime. Under a new law, for instance, secret eavesdropping (bugging) can now be used in connection with preliminary criminal investigations aimed at preventing particularly serious offences. The Government has also appointed an inquiry to determine the extent to which police may be allowed to use provocative measures in the fight against serious crime. As of 1 July 2008, new rules apply concerning the confiscation of the proceeds of criminal activity, which will make it easier for police to confiscate property or other unlawful gains. Another important tool for police fighting serious organised crime is the power to process personal data in an appropriate manner. A draft bill is being prepared in this respect.

To raise standards and increase efficiency in the justice system, training and education focusing on prostitution and trafficking will need to be augmented and improved. Young victims are to be a special focus of attention. Another important aspect is the need for effective and appropriate legislation for combating prostitution and trafficking.

ACTION PLAN MEASURES:

- Special funding for action against prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes
- National rapporteur for human trafficking
- Training for the judiciary, the police and public prosecutors, and for employees of the Swedish Migration Board
- Evaluation of the ban on the purchase of sexual services
- Guidelines for cooperation over investigations focusing on children
- Broadening of the penal provision on human trafficking
- Evaluation of the compensation for criminal injury
- Stronger preventive focus in connection with the processing of visa and residence applications

INCREASED NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Global and inter-regional cooperation is crucial to the task of combating trafficking for sexual purposes, as is a cross-sectoral approach uniting government agencies, NGOs, researchers and the general public. The structures for both cooperation and the coordination of efforts in this field need to be strengthened.

Steps must be taken to ensure that international cooperation continues to develop, both regionally in the Nordic area and the Baltic Sea region and in the EU and the broader international arena. In the international crime-fighting field, there are opportunities for cooperating with bodies such as Eurojust, Europol and Interpol.

ACTION PLAN MEASURES:

- Intensified regional cooperation
- Intensified national cooperation
- Intensified international cooperation over the situation of children
- Support for cooperation in the Baltic Sea region
- A more explicit focus on human trafficking in Sweden's development cooperation programme
- Further development of the Swedish Institute's information work

A HIGHER LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

Proper knowledge and expertise are essential if prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes are to be successfully combated. Research and other studies are required to ensure that official bodies and NGOs have a better, more in-depth grasp of the issues. Both quantitative and qualitative studies will be needed. Experience from other countries must also be put to good use, and may provide a basis for international cooperation.

ACTION PLAN MEASURES:

- Special funding for enhanced knowledge and awareness
- Research into the situation of homosexual, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons
- Study of young people's experience of and attitudes towards sexual exploitation and exposure
- Greater insight into the sexual exploitation of girls and boys
- Study of attitudes to the purchase of sexual services