STOP TRAFFICK! Tackling Demand for Sexual Services from Trafficked Women and Girls

Nusha Yonkova, Anti-trafficking Coordinator, 27 March 2014
Research objectives

1. Explore the international legal provisions and the national legal and policy context in the participating countries, taking into account the various obligations that exist in the area of combatting human trafficking, with a focus on discouraging the demand that fosters human trafficking

2. Explore the characteristics of the buyers and their attitudes towards the purchase of sex in general and from victims of trafficking in particular

3. Explore the awareness level of buyers of sex of the circumstances of the people they are buying, as well as their knowledge and considerations on the issue of human trafficking

4. Establish the most efficient measures to deter the purchasing of sex from trafficked individuals, as identified by the respondents in the study

5. Make recommendations on measures to discourage demand for the services of trafficked women and girls that would be relevant and efficient in the participating countries

6. Inform the production of an effective awareness-raising toolkit
Methods used

• Review of relevant international research
• Review of the legal and policy context in the partner countries
• Online survey
• Face-to-face interviews with buyers of sex
Research comprised of:

- Seventy-one in-depth interviews with male buyers in Bulgaria and Lithuania (37 in Bulgaria and 34 in Lithuania)

- Some 2,004 responses to an online survey carried out in Cyprus, Finland and Ireland, of which 1,050 were completed in Cyprus, 544 in Finland and 410 in Ireland. Of these, 426 respondents in Cyprus identified themselves as buyers of sex, 208 respondents in Finland identified themselves as buyers of sex and 58 respondents in Ireland identified themselves as buyers of sex

- In total, 763 buyers of sex participated in the in-depth interviews and online survey in the five project countries (692 in the online survey and 71 in the interviews)
Gender of the buyers

Ireland

Cyprus

Finland

Male

Female
## Age of buyers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of buyers</th>
<th>Cyprus</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44 years</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 45 years</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationship status

Cyprus: 70% No relationship, 30% Relationship
Bulgaria: 60% No relationship, 40% Relationship
Finland: 50% No relationship, 50% Relationship
Ireland: 40% No relationship, 60% Relationship
Lithuania: 30% No relationship, 70% Relationship
Income and Employment

• Income of buyers
  – Cyprus: 62% earn over €20,000
  – Ireland: 66% earn over €20,000
  – Finland: 80% earn over €20,000

• Employment
  – Bulgaria: 83% are in employment
  – Lithuania: 65% are in employment
Education level

• Cyprus
  – 77% third-level
  – 21% second-level

• Finland
  – 50% third-level
  – 42% second-level

• Ireland
  – 48% third-level
  – 30% second-level
Characteristics

• Male
• Age 25-40
• In a relationship
• Well-educated
• Employed
• Good level of income
• Residents of cities (towns)
Gender of sellers (Cyprus, Finland and Ireland)

- Female: 85%
- Male: 7%
- No answer: 8%
First time experience

- At a young age
- Spontaneous
- Unplanned
- In a group / with friends
- Alcohol / drug influence
- Contacted the seller in person or through a word of mouth
The role of alcohol

- loss of self control
- more willing to take risks
- increased my courage
- freed me from scruples
- put me in careless mood
- lowered my inhibitions
- provoked my need to assert my identity as member of the ‘stronger’ gender

Motivation

- Curiosity
- Sexual frustration
- Visibility/availability of paid sex
Contacting the seller (Finland)
Contacting the seller (Ireland)
Contacting the seller (Cyprus)
Changing patterns

“I am supplying myself, even these days, with different women twice a month. I realise my sexual fantasies – this is possible only with a prostitute. With every woman it is different and ever more exciting.”
Changing patterns

“Definitely, my habits changed and I attribute this to the change in sexual partners. With every new [one], I apply what I have learned from the previous encounter. As of today, I could consider I have tried it all, but I know this is not the case. There is always a surprise. For men this is important, especially for me. The more perverse the better. One cannot describe it. There are incredibly 'dirty' women who almost make you fly. For years already, my wife cannot sexually satisfy me. This is only possible with a 'dirty' woman. Only a dirty woman offers quality felacio (while my wife considers this a perversion and a humiliation for her). I would do with my wife '69' too, but this is also off limit. With a prostitute I would not do 69. I would not lick her.”
How buyers view the sellers (Lithuania)

- Business woman
- Sex object
- Don't think of them as person
- Victim
- Stranger
- Friend
- Product
- Acquaintance
- Sexual partner
- Less than human
- Liberated
- Partner for a moment
How buyers view the sellers (Bulgaria)

- Sexual object
- Sexually active
- Sexually empowered
- Business woman
- Friend
- Don't think of them as person
- Stranger
- Victim
- Used

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Motivation behind the purchase of sex

- To have control over the act arising from its purchase
- Variety in terms of the seller and the act
- Curiosity / Pleasure/satisfaction
- Availability
- Lack of commitment
- Efficiency:
  - ‘I want it fast, so I pay for it’
  - ‘I pay, instead of asking someone’
- Getting what is denied by one’s partner
  - ‘When you do not pay, they will not do anything you want’
Perception and experiences of exploitation (Cyprus, Finland and Ireland)
Witnessing and reacting to exploitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Encountered exploitation</th>
<th>Considered reporting to the authority</th>
<th>Never considering reporting</th>
<th>Avoided the question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Purchasing services from a trafficked victim

• Bulgaria
28 out of the 37 interviewed were aware of the offence
2 reported considering human trafficking when buying sex

• Lithuania
27 of the 34 interviewed were aware of the offence
3 reported considering human trafficking when buying sex

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Considering human trafficking when buying

‘I think about this, but you cannot know who is who’

‘No, you are just buying a service’

‘I will think about whether she is clean. I will not think about whether she has been trafficked. This is not my concern.’
Deterrents to purchasing sex (Finland)

- Bad experience or a disease: A lot
- Jail time: A lot
- Photo and/or name in local paper: A little
- Photo and/or name on internet: Not at all
- Car impounded: A lot
- Criminal record: A little
- Driver’s licence suspended: Not at all
- Large fine: A little
- Letter sent to your family: A little
- Letter sent to your employer: A little
- Having to do community service: A lot
- Required to attend education classes: A lot
Deterrents to purchasing sex (Bulgaria)
Chart 54: Deterrents to purchasing sex (Lithuania)
Some buyers (a minority) would not be deterred by anything

‘Nothing would stop me. I am a free man. There is nothing to hide or be ashamed of’

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‘There is nothing that would stop me except fear of infection’
Conclusions and recommendations

Targeting demand reduction on men

• Strategies to reduce demand should target the general population of men as the research indicates that buyers of sex are overwhelmingly male, with a diverse range of characteristics.
Conclusions and recommendations

Addressing demand by taking into account buyers’ age and other characteristics

- A number of factors that should inform the development of effective campaigns to deter demand, including the age profile, which is primarily among the middle range age group (25-44 years) and the older age group (over 45 years of age).
- It should also take into account the presence and absence of relationships, the relatively high social standing and the middle to high-income levels of buyers, and the high levels of education and employment amongst buyers.
- As part of the wider demand reduction strategies, awareness-raising and education initiatives, which specifically target younger men and potential future buyers, should be urgently developed as the data indicates that purchasing sex becomes more entrenched over time, with more frequent buyers exhibiting an increased sense of entitlement and desire for control of women.
- The Lithuanian study also shows that younger buyers may recognise the negative effect for sellers, both in terms of their physical and emotional wellbeing. This finding provides a useful starting point for campaigns aimed at younger people.
Conclusions and Recommendations

A focus on male buyers of female sellers

• Male buyers purchasing sex from female sellers should remain the primary focus of any demand reduction strategies, based on the statistics in this and other research in the past. Specific campaigns targeting the buying of male sellers could be developed to address the minority of buyers who purchase sex from males, provided this does not take away from the resources aimed at the reduction within the prevalent scenario (namely where male buyers purchase from female sellers).

• Gender considerations should be applied to the design of any intervention strategies, taking into account the defined gendered nature of the phenomenon.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Addressing demand in relation to the visibility and availability with first-time buyers

- Strategies addressing demand need to recognise that visibility and availability has a strong influence on the decision to purchase sex for the first time.

- Campaigns also need to address peer influence and the motivations of young men in first buying sex, including the demand for sexual variety, tests of bravery (willing to take risks) and curiosity.

- Demand strategies should address the role of alcohol and the group settings in which young men first purchase sex. The role of alcohol was not found to be a causal factor in the purchase of sex, but it is seen as boosting courage and lessening inhibitions. Therefore, information/awareness raising could effectively target venues selling alcohol.
Conclusions and recommendations

The need to focus demand reduction strategies in diverse locations and to take account of the shift into indoor prostitution and the use of the internet

• As the findings indicate a major shift into indoor prostitution and the increasing use of the internet, particularly in Finland and Ireland, demand reduction measures should place significant focus on the role of the internet in accessing paid sex. The prevalence of private apartments as a location suggests the need to target the use of private premises for prostitution.

• Despite the move indoors, the findings indicate the need to continue to address on-street buying and demand reduction strategies, as well as the need to target particular venues, such as cabarets and clubs, which are primary locations for accessing paid sex in several countries.
Conclusions and Recommendations

The need to address demand reduction as a transnational issue

• The extent to which buyers purchase sex abroad, where it is perceived as more private and anonymous for the buyer, confirms that demand is an international and transnational issue.

• Measures to address demand should involve cross-border cooperation and coordination at European and global levels.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Witnessing exploitation

• The research demonstrates that serious exploitation, including exploitation of minors, is witnessed by buyers within the sex industry. Demand reduction strategies need to highlight all forms of exploitation within the sex industry and how the purchase of sex is a causal factor in that exploitation.

• The perception of buyers that the majority of women are consenting, and by implication not exploited, needs to be addressed.

• The fact that many buyers exhibited reluctance to engage with the question in the survey about exploitation or to report exploitation to the authorities raises questions in relation to the efficacy of relying on buyers to report to the authorities. The research does suggest that some buyers will consider reporting, but further research is needed to identify the numbers of buyers who actually report to the authorities as well as strategies to encourage more reporting.
Conclusions and Recommendations

The role of laws criminalising the purchase of a victim of trafficking

• The research reveals that laws criminalising the purchase of a victim of trafficking are not having a deterrent effect on current buyers. The vast majority of buyers in Lithuania and Bulgaria said they did not consider human trafficking when purchasing sex, despite awareness of the law.

• EU Strategies need to consider and evaluate the effectiveness in reducing demand of laws solely addressing the purchase of sex from victims of trafficking, in particular those that involve knowledge on the part of the buyer.

The role of the media

• The media needs to be better utilised as this appears to be the most important source of information to buyers of sex in relation to human trafficking

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Conclusions and Recommendations

The implementation of effective deterents

• The findings provide strong evidence of the buyers’ assessments of what constitute effective deterents.

• Public exposure in the local media and/or internet, letters of disclosure sent to a buyer’s family and imprisonment are all identified by buyers as having a strong deterrent quality.

• Considering that having educational classes has been found to have no deterrent quality by almost all buyers, it is unlikely that an approach based on such classes will help deter demand.

• National strategies should also be informed by the specific deterents identified in national contexts.
THANK YOU!

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