

**Comments on  
TAMPEP 8  
Mapping of National Prostitution Scene  
NATIONAL COORDINATORS REPORT 2008/9  
DENMARK**

from  
**SIO, sex workers organization in Denmark**  
October 15, 2010

The information about Denmark in Tampep 8 are not quite reliable. And the figures presented are not in accordance with the official statistics and research concerning sex work in Denmark.

**On : 1. Estimation of the number of sex workers**

The number of sex workers in Denmark are set to 5.560 persons. But it is not clear what the figure includes. It is said to be persons "in prostitution in Denmark", but that is misleading. The figure is taken from the official annual statistic on sex work (from Servicestyrelsen), and therefore it includes people who has been engaged in sex work for shorter or longer during the year. Talking about people IN prostitution it would be more correct to operate with a figure for the average number of people in the profession at any given time during the year.

This is particularly important in an international comparison, as a migrant worker who works 3 months in one country and then 3 months in another country otherwise will come to count as two persons in the total figures for all of Europe.

According to calculations made by SIO, the 5.560 sex workers might be at least twice as many sex workers as are actually in the profession at a random time.

One can calculate the volume of the profession

- as the number of sex workers actually working at a given day (as Norway does it in Tampep 8 – i.e. 635 sex workers)
- as the number of sex workers who ARE affiliated the profession for the time being / at a random point of time (this is what we would prefere)
- as the number of sex workers that HAS BEEN in the profession during ONE year (as the official statistics in Denmark – i.e. 5.560 sex workers)
- or – since Tampep Mapping are published every third year – as the number of sex workers that HAS BEEN in the profession during THREE years.

There are no special reasons to choose the number of sex workers during ONE year. Therefore we wonder, if Tampep has made sure that all contries

are using the same volume? Do Tampep want the volume to state the average number of sex workers that ARE in the profession - or how many persons that HAS BEEN in the profession?

### **On : 1.b. Gender/migration status of sex workers**

That 65% of the workforce in Denmark should be migrant workers is a guess out of the blue, which do not reflect reality. An estimate as high as 65% have never before been seen in the Danish debate. The authoritative sources in Denmark (eg. Police) estimates migrants to constitute 45-50%. That is a guess, since there has never been conducted surveys or censuses. SIO are convinced that migrants constitutes less than 45-50% of the workforce.

### **On : 1.c. + 1.d. Sex work sectors**

That 21% of the workforce (25% domestic and 18% migrants) should be working outdoors in Denmark is wildly exaggerated. YMCA in Denmark – they are the only source to the number of sex workers outdoors in the official statistics – has for several years reported way too many sex workers outdoors. This was revealed in the danish Parliament in autumn 2009 and was therefore public knowledge at the time Tampep 8 was written. If one extracts the non existing sex workers from the official statistics, there will only be approx. 10% sex workers working outdoors left. But according to calculations made by SIO this is too many as well.

There are no public available data or studies in Denmark about migrants' distribution to work sectors. The figures 18% outdoor / 70% brothel / 4% private / 8% escort are pure speculation.

### **On : 2.a. The 5 main vulnerability factors for national sex workers**

There exists detailed evidence that the largest and overwhelming vulnerability factors for domestic sex workers in Denmark are stigma and social isolation and exclusion. Servicestyrelsen in Denmark agrees. It is therefore incomprehensible and unacceptable that these factors are not listed as No. 1 and 2.

There are no evidence that alcohol should be a big problem among domestic sex workers in Denmark. There are no significant problems with drugs among sex workers working indoors. Women with drug problems who sell sex outdoors has almost disappeared from the streets of Copenhagen.

There are no evidence that sex work in Denmark should be considered a poverty problem. Nor are there evidence that the domestic sex workers in Denmark are significantly less well educated than other women.

The scope of physical & psychological violence against sex workers in Denmark are subject to public debate, and the supporting evidence has been under criticism. SIO are convinced that the the scope of the problem is exaggerated.

According to Servicestyrelsen STD among danish sex workers is not a serious problem. On the contrary, STD are less common among sex workers than in the rest of the population.

Vulnerability factors 1, 2, 3 and 5 among danish sex workers in Tampep 8 represents an extremely problematic pleading and they are not in accordance with existing (but rare) research or Servicestyrelsens publications.

SIO is disappointed with the image of sex workers that is outlined in the text. That we should be alcoholics or drug addicts. That we have economic problems, a shattered childhood, no education, are abused in our work (and private life). That we have no control over our lives - which provides mental health problems and a tendency to agree to sex without a condom. It looks like a denigration coming from politically motivated, foreign literature and we are disappointed that Tampep will canonize such generalizing and stigmatizing assessments.

Concerning vulnerability factors among migrants this is pure speculation, since no knowledge exists about these in Denmark. We would probably mention migration legislation and xenophobia in Denmark as migrants' biggest problem. Then, stigma and ignorance of rights.

### **On : 2.b ...control of their working conditions**

We do not like the characterization of our customers that are outlined in the text – that they should be "violent and nasty" and so on. There is no justification for such an assertion of danish customers and it is not our impression of our customers.

It seems like a denigration coming from politically motivated, foreign literature that we are not used to in Denmark, and we are disappointed that Tampep will canonize such generalizing and stigmatizing assessments.

### **On : 2.c ...third persons in the sex industry**

This point makes no sense. Since the sharing income with third parties is defined as rent, receptionist and ads, it's only sex workers who work outdoors, that has no such expenses. The figure should therefore be much higher than the stated 40%. Almost all danish sex workers must advertise, otherwise they have no customers.

## **On : 2.g drug and alcohol dependency**

As already mentioned (2.a) there are no evidence that alcohol and drug should be more prevalent among danish sex workers than in the rest of the population.

## **On : 2.h ...changes in the vulnerability**

As mentioned, the extent of violence against sex workers is subject to debate in Denmark and research is under criticism. Here Tampep 8 goes one step even further and consider that the violence is an increasing problem. That is an assessment that the writer of the danish section may have all by herself. Anyway it is not our experience at SIO.

## **On : CONCLUSIONS**

Tampep 8 asserts that there has been an increase in the number of sex workers in Denmark since 2006. It is true, according to the official statistics (Servicestyrelsen), but the credibility of the official statistics has been properly challenged in the public debate in Denmark. To such a degree that a scientific institute (SFI) has been asked to evaluate the official statistics from scratch. As far as SIO is concerned we are convinced there has been no increase. On the contrary there has probably been a decrease due to declining demand during the financial crisis.

With regards  
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