

About But With Us

Or

What Do Sex Workers Think About
the Prostitution Regulation Proposal



It is about the proposal, which has been approved by the Municipal council of Prague in September 2010 and should be passed to the parliament. The full version of the proposal can be found at

http://magistrat.praha-mesto.cz/84761_Praha-pripravila-navrh-zakona-o-regulaci-prostituce.

We would like to start by answering of two main questions:

What were we supposed to find out through our research?

And how did we work it out?

We wanted to find out exactly what we have put into the title of the research, what are the sex workers' attitudes and opinions about the Prostitution regulation proposal. While specifying the problematic sphere, we concentrated on:

- The articles of the proposal, that concern directly sex workers; or better to say should have been concerning them after possible approval of the proposal by the parliament of the Czech republic;
- Monitoring of the subject of the research - analyzed group of sex workers, who could make really relevant influence on the attitude to the Prostitution regulation proposal;
- Finding out the media members' opinions, they certainly get the prostitution's problematic over to society. They were supposed to guess the sex workers' answers, how they usually reacted and their estimates had been compared with real figures.

Main features of the research subject

Sex workers kept in touch with workers of the Non-government civil association Bliss without Risk. Most of them took filling of the form as a good opportunity of expressing their opinion personally. It concerns the group of diverse personalities, it means in the way of education or intelligence level, etc.

We are aware of the fact, that neither the form nor its topic is easy. What came to happen while filling the form with some of the clients was (we wanted also the women from the club scene and the streets to take a part of the research), that the client was not able to keep an attention until the end of the form, foreigners (except for Slovak women) were mostly limited by the language barrier.

The extent of the requested group: 162 sex workers

The regional representation:

region:

Brno city	25	15,4
České Budějovice city	16	9,9
Region Liberecko	19	11,7
Ostrava city	13	8,0
Prague city	49	30,2
Region Teplicko	20	12,3
Region Vysočina	10	6,2
Region Ústecko	10	6,2
	162	100,0

Data collection period: September and October 2010

Collected data profile: **very diverse, both responsible attitude and very exact expression of their opinion, as well as not so clearly understood question.**

Data processing method:

„Data cannot be processed as the usual statistical analysis, the interpretation of single cases and answers needs special attention, so it helps us to reach the view at the complex situation. Attached frequency tables contain categories, that are artificially created by merging more than one similar answers. There is also the summary of some quotations from the forms attached, to draw it's remarkableness.“ Ing. Jiří Hustopecký, CSc.

The research results

Data, collected during this research, are being processed in several phases. At first, we created the frequency tables to show, how sex workers answered the questions of the form. For the second-degree classification were merged some of the similar answers and made correlation tables according to some of the features, that we found to be interesting and differentiating the sex workers' attitudes towards the Prostitution regulation proposal

Selected frequency tables

I. License to run the sex business

Full version of the question (open-ended question): All the people who offer the sex services will be asked to provide **the License to run the sex business**. Please write down what do you think about it.

Agreement	23	14,2
Neutral / not stated	31	19,1
Disagreement	77	47,5
Rough disagreement	31	19,1
	162	100,0

Closer specification of a disagreement		
I disagree, I need anonymity	26	16,0
I disagree, I don't want prostitution registration	6	3,7
I disagree, It can't be implemented	5	3,1

This question have marked the „first impression“ or the reaction of respondents at the idea of prostitution regulation in general. The Prostitution regulation law is usually being considered as a threat without giving the full information about what would it really mean for sex workers. Therefore we concentrate on particular articles in following questions.

II. Opinions on the particular articles of the Prostitution regulation proposal

Full version of the question: A place, where you are supposed to claim the License:
The municipal authority of a location where you work. That means for example, that you get the License under the Prague 1 city office, whenever you work in Darling club (Prague 1 location). Do you think this would be a problem for you?

Respondents answers:

No problem at all	53	32,7
Problem not specified	27	16,7
Problem with anonymity	46	28,4
Problem with redundant and extra paperwork	5	3,1
Problem with disgrace at the application office and clerk's attitude	5	3,1
Problem with prostitution registration, authorities are not obliged enough	6	3,7
Problem with limited migration among work locations	4	2,5
Other specified problem	9	5,6
Not stated	7	4,3
	162	100,0

This is the phase, where one third of requested do not feel the place of registration as a problem. It might get changed while they get in the situation of changing the location of work.

Full version of the question: **What** do you need to **provide** to **obtain** the License?
All of your **personal data**: Given name, family name, birth certificate number or the date of birth, home address and the address of the place of your business. Would that be a big problem for you?

Respondents answers:

No problem at all	45	27,8
Problem not specified	32	19,8
Problem with anonymity	57	35,2
Problem with misuse or blackmail	8	4,9
Problem with danger for own kids or own future	9	5,6

It comes closer to the problem of anonymity.

A copy of a criminal record wouldn't be a problem for 69,8 % of respondents, the medical check confirmation about the satisfying state of health wouldn't be a problem for even 79,4 % of them. For the rest of our respondents would the medical check mean losing of their anonymity. So their result for us - what we found as the most relevant thing - is, that the medical check, in itself, is not a problem for 90,2 % of requested sex workers. Very similar situation came with the **health insurance - it is not problem for 77,2 %** of our respondents. The rest of them (mostly foreigners) see the problem in **financing of the insurance**.

The problem of anonymity usually appears again whenever the needs to get the License **hit the personal life of our respondents or their intimacy. An administrative fee and the need of two colour ID photos**, where the sex worker could be clearly recognized, would be a problem for 63,6 % of our respondents.

What made them really angry about the License **according to my opinion** was that the License is

valid **just for one year and just for one city location**. That would mean in fact one thing, whenever the woman crosses Myslíkova street in Prague and offer her service also there, she would be charged the penalty of 50000 Czech crowns. This fact would stand just 4,3 % of our respondents. **Our respondents don't want to be separated from the general population of traders or employees**. The critical opinion about every year renewal of the License was expressed also by one of our longtime client Anna by the sentence: „Why should it be so, I don't really get a new vagina yearly!“

To allow the street prostitution or not, it is the question which divides women in sex business into two groups. **27, 8 % votes for, 50, 9 % votes against and the rest is for some reason without an attitude**.

Control and sanction or What nobody likes

Police of the Czech republic control and the City police control would be a problem for the half of our respondents (51,9 %), they fear bullying and corruption. The City police cause bigger fear than the Police of the Czech republic.

50000 Czech crowns penalty wouldn't mind to 13,6 % of our respondents. The rest thinks that the penalties are quite high. Let's say that a sex worker starts running her own private flat and is being caught, the penalty could reach up to 2000000 Czech crowns then.

The willingness to pay is very rare and is connected more with the fear of being revealed. Women usually enter sex business because of the urgent or chronic lack of money that means they are in extremis. They take the given penalty as a way, how to discourage them from their trying to get out of the crisis: „you can't know how does it feel to be a single mother and to spend all the money for monthly fees and have just 100 Czech crowns left for yourself.

The classification level when working in sex business - how big stigma does this work means.

Full version of the question: Does anybody of your close relatives know about the kind of work you are doing, that means that you work in sex business?

Respondents answers:

Nobody	83	51,2
Husband, partner	12	7,4
Father	3	1,9
Mother	9	5,6
Brother, sister, siblings	14	8,6
Kids	3	1,9
Friends	16	9,9
Entire family	4	2,5
Larger amount of people, everybody	28	17,3

Finally some short messages from the Regions:

Ostrava city

The situation here is influenced by the high level of an unemployment compared to other regions, or its results.

Specifics of the prostitution scene within this region:

- Ostrava is mainly the **source area**, there are no foreigners among our respondents;
- Women here are generally younger, 61,5 % fall into category of 21-30 years old (compared with 53,4 % of the whole group of respondents);
- They meet bigger financial stress, just 30,9 % of them are childless (compared with 48,2 % of the whole group of respondents);
- None of our respondents mentioned to be married;
- They receive much more often a support from their families, they don't need to hide their job in front of them, in 53,8 % is the family aware of it (compared with 17,4 % of the whole group of respondents);
- There is quite good level of so called **social control** - people do know each other and are afraid of being caught up revealed.

Prague city

Prague brings much **bigger anonymity** and stands as a **target destination** for plenty of migrant sex workers.

Also the prostitution scene is anonymous, more foreigners among customers, wider range of sex services decreases the chance to be uncovered.

Specifics of this area:

- Sex services are being run as much more professional and rational decision of the sex worker. But also, there is a numerous group of women in Prague touching the bottom of the prostitution scene - women on the street.
- This polarization, dividing women into groups of „professionals“ and „losers“ gives the way to the structure of further answers:
- 1. Prague respondents' job is either „totally hidden“ (59,3 %) or „totally known“ (33,3 %);
- 2. Beside childless women stand the ones with two or more children (10,2 %), but none of them is in their own custody;

Brno city and Region South Moravia

So called Golden ship has got its darker sides as well. It moves between an anonymous big city and the social control of the countryside and smaller municipalities.

Specifics of this region:

- Women in sex business are rather mature (36 % compared with 28 % in the group of 31- 40 years old), we can find them mostly in private flats (45,8 % compared with 18,1 %), but this might be caused by the fact, that our team of outreach workers in Brno was not so successful in getting closer and inside of the private flats;
- Women in Brno do care (36 %) for two and more children (compared with 24,1 % of the whole group of respondents), that means they are mostly influenced by their financial situation, to start providing a sexual service.

České Budějovice city

Secretive South Bohemians:

- Women in the requested group in South Bohemia were rather mature, there were no women under the age of 20,
- Requested clients consider the License more as necessary evil and are willing to agree with its implementation (31,3 % compared with 18,1 % of the whole group of respondents);
- They extremely often fear to be uncovered, **in 62,5 % they hide their work in front of everybody,**
- 93,3 % is angry about the need of a yearly renewal and whenever you change the work location registration renewal. They already have to learn how to live with the stigma of their work: „not all the women do this job because of it brings them fun, **most of them have to solve some financial problem through it; there is no stronger humiliation than to be a sex worker“.**

Region Liberecko

Specifics of this region:

- This region is quite young, 68,4 % of respondents is younger than the age of 30 (37,3 % of the whole group of respondents);
- Women in this region dislike local authorities (77,8 % rejects to go to apply for the License at the local authority - compared with 30,3 % of the whole group of respondents);
- But there is quite good communication with the local police in general, despite of this, they dislike the idea of penalties and find them too high.

Region Teplicko

This region is definitely the **most problematic region** from regions where we work. There is:

- The biggest amount of foreigners - 40 %, mostly Slovak women and most of them are mothers who came to earn some money here;
- 40 % of those mother do not have their children in own custody;
- 80 % of them are single mothers and just 35 % of them are childless;

- 50 % of them work on the street, compared with 10,6 % of the whole group of respondents;
- It brings us also the biggest amount of those who wish the repression is not being used against them (e.g. they are being expelled outside of the city border).

Region Ústecko

This region is one of the most secretive ones:

- Half of women stated to be married;
- 70 % of them hide their job;
- Women work mostly in private flats (60, 0 %) and they reach usually the age between 31 - 40 years;
- Women mainly dislike giving of the ID photo and their personal data.

Region Vysočina

This region is quite average by its features:

- There are mostly women of younger age - 70,0 % is up to the age of 30; nevertheless **30,0 % of them are married** so they need to stay awake;
- 70 % stated that nobody knows about their job.

Short summary

We can find the full version of the text mainly because of the fact, that each of you can find what is interesting for him. What we can see as the common feature of the whole research is the problem of our clients' anonymity, the fear of **stigma**: public, family, partnership, problems with authorities among the childcare, etc. (In 52,6 % of cases there is NOBODY who knows about our clients' job).

Other problems and how do our clients feel about them:

- They want the same conditions as the others - the permanent contract or the trade license;
- They criticize authorities and redundant formalities connected with the License holding, mainly just one locality work permit;
- The restriction of the License permit just for one year, there are no practical reasons at the moment but to make the accessibility of the License worse and to increase the administrative work.

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I would like to thank to all the teams of outreach workers of the Nongovernment civil association Bliss without Risk, who took a part of the data collection.

