

Trafficking in women and girls (A/RES/73/146)

- *Measures to address trafficking in women and girls, as per resolution 73/146, including on the increased efforts to ensure prosecution of traffickers and improve protection of victims.*

The Government decided in February 2018 on a national action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings for all forms of exploitation. The actions are targeted at preventing and combating prostitution and trafficking in human beings for all purposes, as well as contributing to better protection and support for victims of human trafficking. Efforts to address the demand are crucial and the prohibition of purchase of sexual services is central in the work to prevent and combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes.

The Government has since a few years back appointed an ambassador to strengthen the work to combat trafficking in human beings. The ambassador also works to contribute towards international efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. The Government has further assigned the Swedish Institute to support Sweden's missions abroad in their work to provide information about the Swedish prohibition of purchase of sexual services.

In 2016, the Government appointed an inquiry to review the protection under criminal law against the purchase of sexual services and the purchase of sexual acts from children. A legislative change entered into force on 1 January 2020 through which the penalties for purchasing sexual acts from children were raised. The minimum penalty was raised from a fine to imprisonment and the maximum penalty was raised from two to four years imprisonment. The offence was also renamed "exploitation of a child through the purchase of a sexual act", see "Criminal actions against the exploitation of a child through the purchase of a sexual act", (Govt Bill 2018/19:157).

The national assignment to coordinate the work to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual and other purposes that was previously assigned to Stockholm County Administrative Board was made permanent with effect from 1 January 2018 when the assignment was transferred to the Swedish Gender Equality Agency. The assignment includes leading the National Task Force against Prostitution and Human Trafficking (NMT). The National Task Force is composed of relevant state and municipal actors such as the Police, Prosecutors, Migration Board and the social services and provides support for

municipalities, government agencies and non-profit organisations in matters relating to prostitution and all forms of trafficking in human beings. In autumn 2019, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency updated the National Referral Mechanism manual (NRM), which clarifies the roles and responsibilities in the NRM and is to be used as a support in the work to identify possible victims of trafficking in human beings.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency is developing training for professionals regarding trafficking in human beings for all purposes. The training will be offered during spring 2020, also online. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency currently offers online training on trafficking with children and young people. In order to specifically address sexual exploitation of children in relation to tourism, the Gender Equality Agency runs an information campaign, “Travel courage”, that encourages people to inform the Swedish police about suspected sexual exploitation of children that they see abroad. The issues of exploitation in relation to volunteer tourism to orphanages have also been addressed.

The National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings is based at the Swedish Police Authority. The Swedish Police Authority has further been assigned to identify and describe the actions taken by the police to strengthen the ability to combat trafficking in human beings throughout the country. Initiatives carried out by the police include for example training programmes and the introduction of an action plan to combat trafficking in human beings. Since 1 April 2018, all cases of trafficking in human beings are handled by the National Unit against Organized Crime within the Swedish Prosecution Authority which is composed of senior prosecutors with many years of experience.

The Swedish Police Authority further provides trainings on trafficking in human beings, such as interactive training that is accessible to all employees, and further education for investigators and specific training for the border police.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has developed guidance for social services that provides practical support when encountering cases of trafficking in human beings with a focus on children which has been disseminated nationally.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has further included information about vulnerability and the risk of trafficking in human beings and exploitation in the introduction programmes for staff working at homes for care or

residence for children and young people. The reason for this is that children in homes for care or residence might have experiences of trafficking in human beings and exploitation and may also be at risk of such practices.

The National Board of Health and Welfare also provides information about trafficking in human beings on the national website, where information about risk factors and signs, support and protection, and links to the Board's and other government agencies website and materials on trafficking in human beings can be found.

Since 2012, the National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned by the Government to allocate funding to municipalities and non-profit organisations in order to develop the quality of work relating to violence in intimate relationships, including honour-related violence and oppression. In 2016 the Government decided that the funding should also be made available to the regions and to include the target group of women and men with experience of prostitution and trafficking in human beings.

During 2018, the National Board of Health and Welfare was assigned to train social services workers on domestic violence directed particularly against vulnerable groups, including people with experience of prostitution and trafficking in human beings. The assignment was based on needs that had been expressed by people involved in prostitution, for instance during the #MeToo movement.

In 2018, the Government assigned the National Board of Health and Welfare to map what operations within social services and healthcare needed further competences and skills in order to better identify women and men in prostitution and their need for protection and support.

The Swedish Prosecution Authority provides online training and method support on trafficking in human beings primarily aimed for prosecutors working in the local prosecution offices who come in to contact with this type of crime. The Authority's manual on offences against children includes a specific chapter on crimes against children abroad.

The Swedish Migration Agency has developed manuals for early identification of potential victims in the migration process to support the handling of cases involving violence or trafficking in human beings, as well as online training on honour-related violence and oppression and on trafficking in human beings.

In Sweden the social services in the municipalities are responsible to assist victims of trafficking. However, civil society organisations play a crucial role for people who are victims of prostitution and trafficking in human beings who need support and assistance or who wish to escape their situation. These organisations can also be a link between individuals and government agencies. The Government therefore intends to continue to provide funding for civil society organisations that work to support people who are victims of prostitution and trafficking in human beings.

- *Impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak in regards to trafficking in women and girls, and measures undertaken to address those in the short, medium and long-term, particularly in the following areas:*

- *Impact on risks for trafficking in women and girls.*
- *Adaptation of service delivery to victims and survivors.*

The Swedish Government has highlighted the fact that the Covid-19 outbreak might increase the risk of vulnerable groups ending up in prostitution and other forms of exploitation. The government is closely monitoring the developments in order to address the coming needs in this field. In its role as National Coordinator, the Gender Equality Agency was in September 2019 tasked to specifically focus on prevention measures in order to prevent exploitation of children and young adults in prostitution and map the prevalence of prostitution in Sweden.