



# SAFER WORK



english

The logo for 'indoors' features the word in a lowercase, sans-serif font. Each letter is contained within a rectangular frame of varying heights, creating a bar chart-like effect.

## **INDOORS**

Support and empowerment of female sex workers  
and trafficked women working in hidden places

This leaflet was written by the six partner organisations  
of the INDOORS project, under the coordination of:

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## This leaflet was made for sex workers by sex workers

and organisations from five European countries:  
Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal.



It is aimed at sex workers working in hotels, apartments, brothels, clubs, bars, massage parlours, saunas, sex shops, and other indoor venues.



In this leaflet you will find issues related to your safety at work. It will also be useful if you travel to work in one of these countries, because it provides information on working conditions you might encounter.



Some tips are general and may already be familiar with them; others are relevant to specific workplaces and situations.



At the end of the leaflet, you will find some information on sex work legislation, and organisations supporting sex workers in the five countries.





# YOUR WORK

## Before work

### Develop negotiating skills with your clients

- Negotiation and agreement with the client should always take place before the sexual service is provided. Be clear about the sexual practices and prices you offer. If you say **no** to something, it really has to mean **no**.
- Always negotiate with the client, and/or your manager, what you will do and what you will NOT do.
- Every additional service has to be paid for.



## During work

### Trust your intuition

- Work where you feel safest, as far as possible.
- Be aware of the client's behaviour. Always keep an eye on him.
- Avoid clients who are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs; if you can't avoid them, be especially vigilant with them.

### Be alert

- Try not to use alcohol or other drugs before or during work, so you can stay in control of the situation and be mentally alert.
- Avoid taking drugs with a client, especially when they're his.
- Be wary of accepting more than one client at a time.

## Be calm and strong

- If the client is aggressive try not to respond in the same way. Try to speak calmly and do not show any signs of fear.
- Try to show the client that you are not afraid and that you know how to protect yourself. For instance, say that you will call your bodyguard or someone else close by in the event of an emergency.
- If you feel you are in danger, be calm and strong and invite the client to leave. Speak with the owner of the place or the manager, if you have one, or sound your alarm if you have one.

## What can be used against you

- If you do not want to be filmed or photographed, ask the client to leave his mobile phone stored in a bag, a box or a drawer.
- Do not use large earrings and necklaces while you are working. They can be used to hurt you or as a 'weapon' against you.
- If you use handcuffs, use only fake ones, so that you can remove them without a key.
- If you use something to defend yourself, be careful that it cannot be used against you.
- If you have the opportunity to attend a self-defence course, take it.

**!** *Choose the best way to protect yourself without putting yourself in danger !*



## **Look after your personal belongings and money**

- At your workplace, be careful not to leave any valuable objects on display.
- When a client pays you, do not store the money together with your other money. Put it in a different place each time.

## **If you work alone**

- Always be alert!
- Develop multiple techniques to keep yourself safe.



**If you think that it will benefit you, give the client the impression that you are not alone.**

### **Here are some examples that might give you ideas:**

- Keep one of the rooms closed with a television or radio on inside.
- Tell him that your co-worker and/or your bodyguard is resting or working in the room next door.
- When the client pays you, tell him that you will hand the money to the owner of the apartment who is in the room next door.

## **If you work with other sex workers**

- Arrange with your colleagues to call or knock on the door when a meeting with a client is taking too long.
- Agree with your colleagues on a signal in case of emergency.



## If the client visits your apartment

- When you are making an appointment, avoid giving your full address. You can ask the client to call you when he reaches the street. This will allow you to get a first impression of him.
- At your apartment, do not give the entry code if you have one on your door: go and meet him at the entrance of your building.
- If you want to keep some privacy, limit your working space: do not let the clients walk around the entire apartment.
- Do not leave keys from cabinets and doors visible to the clients. This will reduce the risk of being locked in.

## If you go to the client's home or a hotel

- Always keep your mobile phone close to you and fully charged.
- Always plan an escape route.
- If you are not sure about an object in the room, you can put your clothes over it.
- If you are going to a hotel, try to choose the hotel yourself.
- If you are going to the client's home, make a phone call to tell somebody where you are. Try to make sure the client knows that you have spoken to someone.

**!** *Think about what your personal boundaries are, because they may change with time and experience. Do not do something that is harmful to you. Always practise safer sex **!***



## Talk to your colleagues, when possible

- If you are new to the job, discuss working methods, negotiating strategies and other tips and tricks with more experienced colleagues.  
These are important for learning to work professionally.
- Do not hesitate to talk to them about your experiences and to ask questions.
- Discussing with your colleagues will help you to decide the number of hours you want to work, the number of clients you want to see, how much time to spend with each client, the prices you ask for your services, and the kinds of services you offer.
- Remember that solidarity with your colleagues has advantages: you can share information about clients that you consider dangerous, about police raids and about other important issues to protect yourselves.
- Share your working experience by, for instance, developing a list of 'dangerous clients'.
- If you want to talk to colleagues but you don't have any, ask the organisation that gave you this leaflet if they can put you in contact with other sex workers.







## **Don't forget: sex work is work**

When you work as a sex worker, you develop several skills regarding sexuality, communication with people, health care, prevention of STIs and HIV/AIDS.

You have a basic knowledge of legal matters, a talent for organisation, and a gift for persuasion.

Many of these skills are transferable if you want to change your job later.





# YOUR HEALTH



## With your clients

- Take care. A client who looks clean is not necessarily healthy.
- Always practise safer sex.
- It is better if you put the condom on the client's penis yourself, rather than rely on him to do it. This way you can guarantee that it is being used correctly and is not damaged.
- Be careful that he does not tear the condom during sex.

## About HIV and STI prevention

- Use a different condom each time you switch to a different sexual practice (even for fellatio). There are different brands and kinds of condoms and lubricants. Try several of them and find the most suitable: small, large, lubricated, flavoured, etc...
- Use lubricants to reduce the risk of condom bursts, but **ONLY** use water-based lubricants. Never use baby oil, Vaseline, cream, or any other oily product.
- Different barriers can be used for different sexual practices: male condoms, female condoms, dental dams... Ask around you: consult colleagues and/or organisations.
- It is advisable to take regular blood tests to check your HIV/STI status. A blood test detects an infection only 3 months after you may have been at risk. Remember that a blood test shows your HIV/STI status but doesn't protect you in the future.

- Try to avoid working during menstruation because that's when the risk of infection and transmission is higher. If you have to work, you can suggest different sexual practices.

## If the condom breaks

- Do not wash internally.
- Wash yourself only on the outside with water.
- Between 4 hours and 2 days (48 hours) after the condom burst, visit hospital or health services for a medical check-up. Tell them that you had a condom burst or had unsafe sex. The doctors may give you emergency treatment.
- Take an emergency contraceptive, if you weren't already using contraception.

**!** *Make sure you're informed about the options for HIV treatment and emergency treatment in your country* **!**

**!** *It is important to be healthy, in good shape and to feel good about yourself* **!**

## Take care of your body

- Have regular medical check-ups. Consult your doctor on methods of contraception.
- Try to avoid overworking.
- Do not forget to take moments of rest.



# YOUR RIGHTS



## You have rights!

- Be aware of your rights. Remember that physical and/or sexual aggression and sexual violence is a crime! It is not part of your job.
- If you experience any kind of aggression or abuse, exploitation or discrimination, contact the organisation which gave you this leaflet, or an organisation listed on the back (pages 18 – 19). They will inform you about your rights and support you in the prosecution process or refer you to another organisation (for instance, if you want to go to the police).
- If you work abroad or if you are alone and suffer violence or aggression, call the organisation which gave you the leaflet.
- You can also get support from other institutions, such as human rights associations, hotlines and public institutions.
- Keep in mind that sex workers and migrants may experience discrimination and that you cannot always count on the support of authorities and society.

**!** *ATTENTION! If you experience violence, do not wash.*

*Often a medical examination is necessary to collect evidence of violence (in case of rape, for example) **!***



## You have rights in your work environment!

- If possible, do not accept a job if the working conditions are not adequate for you.
- If you are not comfortable at your workplace, try to change places or to talk with your manager about better working conditions or working elsewhere.
- If you have a manager, negotiate with him/her the working conditions and the services you are going to offer before starting to work. Try to negotiate the way you prefer to be paid: on a daily or a weekly basis.
- If you are faced with abuse, discrimination or mistreatment, find out who you can talk to about the situation.



**!** *If you are in a situation where your rights are not respected or if you feel you are in danger, contact an association supporting sex workers* **!**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

! *Forced prostitution, human trafficking and prostitution of minors are forbidden in all of the following countries, and are defined as criminal acts* !

### Sex work legislation

#### **Sex work in BULGARIA is neither criminalised nor legalised**

The legal framework in Bulgaria does not directly address sex workers – their activity is neither legalised nor criminalised.

The Penal Code addresses issues regarding regulations placed on sex business entrepreneurs and human trafficking.

The following are defined as criminal acts: pimping/persuasion into prostitution; forced prostitution and the prostitution of minors; and human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution.

Organising and offering venues for prostitution (indoor sex work) is also criminalised, and not only managers but also sex workers may be punished by the law for pimping if they rent an apartment or other venue.



## **Sex work in FRANCE is neither prohibited nor regulated, but soliciting is criminalised**

Since 2003, active and passive soliciting are criminalised.

Active soliciting means that a person acts (with words or gestures) with the aim to propose a remunerated sexual service and advertises it in a public place. Passive soliciting concerns any person who has the intention to propose a remunerated sexual service.

There is no specific legislation on indoor sex work. According to recent practices by police forces, sex workers advertising on the Internet may be charged with the offence of soliciting. It is advisable to avoid displaying prices or nude/semi-nude pictures.


Pimping – the assistance or protection of prostitution, sharing or receiving money earned through prostitution, or living with a sex worker without having any proper resources oneself – is forbidden.

Organising indoor sex work is also forbidden. It is advisable that all sex workers working together in an apartment provide their name on the lease in order to avoid punishment for pimping.

## **Sex work in GERMANY is legalised**

Germany's prostitution law of January 2002 recognises sex work as a legitimate activity, giving both employed and self-employed sex workers the usual labour rights and social security benefits.

However, migrant sex workers without a regulated residence permit do not benefit from this law whatsoever.



As the law has no link to German immigration law, it does not grant foreigners the legal right to enter the country and establish residency for the purpose of working in the sex industry.

If you come from one of the EU member states, you can easily work as a self-employed sex worker in Germany.

There is no specific regulation on indoor sex work.

### **Sex work in ITALY is neither prohibited nor regulated, but soliciting is criminalised**

Soliciting in the street is forbidden and fined; moreover, several mayors have issued decrees that prohibit indecent dressing, improper behaviour and stopping near churches, public buildings and residential areas. Anyone who commits one of the above offences will be fined between € 80 and € 500.

By law, police can visit flats and ask migrant non-EU citizens to present their residence permits and house rental contracts.

If you do not present your residence permit the law enforcement order can oblige you to accompany them to their office.

You may be forced to stay in the police station for identification, fingerprints and photo-taking for a maximum of 24 hours.

Recent legislation makes entering or staying in Italy without permission a crime punishable by a fine of € 5,000 to € 10,000.

If you are stopped or arrested you have the right to ask for a lawyer.

If you are fined you have the right to request the cancellation of the fine with the aid of a lawyer within 60 days.

Abetting, pimping and exploiting are criminalised.

Organising indoor sex work is also forbidden.





## Sex work in PORTUGAL is neither criminalised nor legalised

Since 1983, prostitution is not criminalised in Portugal. This means that although sex work is not recognised legally, it is not considered a crime. So, sex workers cannot be arrested for providing these services. On the other hand, pimping - the encouragement or facilitation of prostitution professionally or for profit - is considered a crime punishable by imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years. In addition, a person who delivers, entices, accepts or transports someone for the purposes of sexual exploitation is liable to be punished with a prison sentence of between 3 to 10 years.

Portuguese law protects people inside their homes. This means that the police cannot enter any home without a prior written authorisation by the court. Portuguese law does not specifically recognise indoor sex work.

**!** *For more information on these laws, ask the organisation who gave you this leaflet **!***

## Support for sex workers

In this list, you will find the addresses of our organisations, which offer voluntary, anonymous, free of charge and confidential social and legal counselling to both national and migrant sex workers. We can assure you of a non-discriminatory attitude and will respect your human rights.

Through these organisations you can also receive information and support in other areas of Europe and get in contact with other organisations.

You can also find more addresses under [www.services4sexworkers.eu](http://www.services4sexworkers.eu)

## Bulgaria

**"Health and social development"**

**Foundation, Sofia**

17 Macedonia blvd., fl. 4

Sofia

Tel: (0035) 09 884 519842

prohealth@hesed.bg

[www.hesed.bg](http://www.hesed.bg)

**Public health services** offer testing for HIV (anonymous and free of charge), testing for other STIs (fee payable) and treatment for a number of diseases.

**NGOs offer** free and anonymous services for sex workers in 9 big regions of Bulgaria. These services include health promotion and regular testing for HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B and C and treatment for some STIs. Treatment for HIV/AIDS is free for the general population, including sex workers, regardless of their health insurance status; the only requirement is a valid ID card.

## France

**Autres Regards, Marseille**

3, rue de Bone

13005 Marseille

Tel: (0033) 04 91 42 42 90

[contact@autresregards.org](mailto:contact@autresregards.org)

[www.autresregards.org](http://www.autresregards.org),

[www.indoors13.blogspot.com](http://www.indoors13.blogspot.com)

**Médecins du Monde, Nantes**

33 rue Fouré

44000 Nantes

Tel: (0033) 06 63 52 56 63

[mdm44@free.fr](mailto:mdm44@free.fr)

[www.medecinsdumonde.org/fr/](http://www.medecinsdumonde.org/fr/)

En-France/Nantes

**Public Health Services (CDAG)**

offer voluntary, anonymous, free of charge and confidential testing for HIV and STIs, and treatment for some STIs. These services are available in every city. Treatment for HIV/AIDS is free for the general population, including sex workers, regardless of their health insurance status.

## Germany

**Amnesty for Women, Hamburg**

Grosse Bergstr. 231

22767 Hamburg (Altona)

Tel: (0049) 040 384 753

[info@amnestyforwomen.de](mailto:info@amnestyforwomen.de)

[www.amnestyforwomen.de](http://www.amnestyforwomen.de)

**Ragazza, Hamburg**


Brennerstr. 19

20099 Hamburg (St. Georg)

Tel: (0049) 040 244 631

[ragazza@w4w.net](mailto:ragazza@w4w.net)

[www.ragazza-hamburg.de](http://www.ragazza-hamburg.de)



**Public Health Services** (*Gesundheitsämter*) offer voluntary, anonymous, free of charge and confidential testing for HIV and STIs, and treatment for some STIs, such as syphilis and gonorrhoea. Treatment for HIV/AIDS as well as other STIs has to be paid for if the patient does not have health insurance. General health care and treatment is only available free to those with valid health insurance; otherwise, the patient has to pay for services.

## Italy

### **CDCP Onlus**

[www.lucciole.org](http://www.lucciole.org)

Helpline: 848800017

### **Pordenone – Central office**

Casella Postale 67, 33170 Pordenone

Tel: (0039) 0434551868

[lucciole.pordenone@gmail.com](mailto:lucciole.pordenone@gmail.com)

### **Trieste – Stella Polare**

Via Androna degli Orti 4/b

Tel: (0039) 0403481366

[stellapolare.trieste@gmail.com](mailto:stellapolare.trieste@gmail.com)

### **Genova – Le graziose**

Via San Luca 12/19

Tel: (0039) 3331558473

[legraziosedigenova@hotmail.it](mailto:legraziosedigenova@hotmail.it)

**Public health services** offer voluntary, anonymous, free of charge and confidential testing for HIV and STIs. Treatment for HIV/AIDS is free to both Italians and migrants, including sex workers. Other health services, including treatment for STIs, are offered for a fee (calculated with regard to the financial circumstances of the patient).

## Portugal

### **Porto G – APDES, Porto**

Alameda Jean Piaget, nº 100

Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel: (00351) 227 531 106/7

[info@apdes.pt](mailto:info@apdes.pt)

[www.apdes.pt](http://www.apdes.pt)

**Public health services** are available to both nationals and migrants, on payment of a fee, which is reduced for those who make Social Security contributions. Testing for HIV is voluntary, anonymous and free of charge. Treatment for HIV/AIDS and other STIs is available free of charge. Health professionals are subject to professional secrecy and all the information you provide is confidential.





#### Partners

Health and Social Development, Sofia, Bulgaria

Autres Regards, Marseille, France

Médecins du Monde, Nantes, France

Amnesty for Women, Hamburg, Germany

Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute Onlus, Pordenone, Italy

Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento, Porto, Portugal

#### Associated partners

TAMPEP International Foundation, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

TAMPEP Onlus, Turin, Italy