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Media Coverage 2013

Press Release: Monday 11th February 2013

One in Four sex buyers believe prostitutes trafficked, controlled or underage

Criminal conviction and publicity major deterrent for buyers

Survey on Irish sex buyers published by Immigrant Council of Ireland

One in four sex buyers in Ireland (24%) have come across women and girls who appeared trafficked, controlled or underage according to a major survey on prostitution published by the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

In addition the findings show that fear of a criminal record, jail time or name in a local newspaper have been selected as effective deterrents by the sex buyers and are only surpassed by fear of contracting disease.

The profile of those who use prostitutes has shown they are most likely to be middle aged men (36% aged 25 and 44, with 48% aged over 45) who have completed third level education (41%) and are earning more than €20,000 (75%) with just over a fifth topping the €60,000 wage bracket (21%). In addition just under half said they were in a relationship.

The majority of buyers had paid for sex when abroad, mostly in Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and Thailand showing that buyers are attracted to destinations where prostitution has been legalised or is tolerated.

The online survey is part of a Europe wide project, 'Stop Traffick!' supported by the EU, and which over a 3-month period used social media, websites and chatrooms to invite responses from both Irish sex buyers and those who do not use prostitutes.

Of 411 responses, 58 were buyers of sex (14%) in line with international studies in this area.

Denise Charlton, Chief Executive of the Immigrant Council of Ireland said:

"These findings are an important contribution to the current debate on whether to curb exploitation, abuse and trafficking by targeting the buyers of sex. We have now heard from the buyers themselves that such laws would be a deterrent.

After fear of disease(32%) the fear of a criminal conviction (19%), jail time (17%) and name in a local paper (17%) is what the users of prostitutes fear most.

We know too that the image of the happy independent hooker which is being portrayed by those opposed to new laws is not the reality. 24% of buyers reconsidered a transaction because they believed the women and girls involved were controlled, unhappy, too young, unwilling or intimidated.

It is particularly alarming that under 25 year olds who buy sex normally do so in brothels, again underlining the organised nature of the crimes being carried out in our communities.

The fact that buyers generally have a higher income, are better educated and in a relationship dispels the myth of prostitution being used by people who are lonely, isolated or insecure.

We look forward to sharing our findings with the Oireachtas Justice Committee and hope it will form part of their deliberations as they continue the review of the laws on prostitution.

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EDITORS NOTE

Stop Traffick! is an EU Project funded under the programme "Prevention of and Fight against Crime", which aims to explore efficient strategies to discourage demand for services from victims of sex trafficking in the EU. The ICI leads the project, working with partners from Finland, Cyprus, Lithuania and Bulgaria.

Coverage:

<http://www.thejournal.ie/prostitutes-trafficking-immigrant-council-ireland-790813-Feb2013/>

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/fear-for-prostitutes-prevents-buying-sex-222272.html>

<http://www.limerickpost.ie/2013/02/12/sex-buyers-are-rich-educated-and-not-single-survey-claims/>

<http://www.thestar.ie/star/sex-slave-fear-puts-off-clients-16363/>

<http://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/fear-of-jail-time-or-name-in-papers-major-deterrents-to-buying-sex-584356.html>

Press Release: Monday 4th November 2013

Anti-Human Trafficking Training to be Piloted with Irish Air Crews

European 'Stop Traffick' training project to start in Ireland

Statement by Immigrant Council of Ireland

Irish airline crews, airport ground staff, port staff and other transport workers are to be offered training to spot victims of trafficking and offer them an escape from pimps and traffickers under a pilot project being developed by the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

The 'Stop Traffick' project will see air crews being offered a half day training course in an effort to identify women and girls being brought here to be sexually exploited.

The Immigrant Council, with the support of the European Commission, have developed this project as recent figures confirm that children now account for almost half of all trafficking victims in Ireland.

Nusha Yonkova, Anti Trafficking Coordinator of the Immigrant Council said:

“As a frontline organisation the Immigrant Council has assisted 50 victims of sex-trafficking, all tell a similar story of being tricked into coming to Ireland with promises of a new life only for reality to dawn when they meet their pimp in the arrivals hall at our airports.

Immediately passports, travel documents and money are taken and often within hours victims are working in a brothel.

Observant cabin crew, ground staff or customs officer may offer the only chance of escape. This is particularly important as international reports have found that Ireland is weak when it comes to identifying victims.

We will pass on experience we have already achieved through training initiatives with the Gardaí and with trade unions which are partners with us on the Turn Off the Red Light campaign to end demand for trafficking by targeting demand, or the buyers of sex.”

Denise Charlton, Chief Executive of the Immigrant Council of Ireland added:

“Our airports are the main points of access through which traffickers bring their victims to Ireland.

The image of people arriving in containers or as stowaways simply does not always apply, trafficking victims are more likely to be sitting on our flights and go through our airports like any other passengers.

This is an opportunity to train crews and staff to be alert to human trafficking, and to encourage them to look for signs of nervousness, uncertainty or of someone being controlled either on a flight, a ferry or in a terminal.

We look forward to the roll out of the ‘Stop Traffick’ project and spearheading its introduction in Europe. In the coming weeks we will be in contact with airlines, ferry companies and our airport and port authorities with a view to organising the first of the training days.”

Latest Government figures confirm that 48 people were identified as trafficked in Ireland in 2012, of which 23 were children and most were sexually exploited.

ENDS

Press Coverage

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/training-against-sex-trafficking-offered-to-for-airline-airport-crews-1.1583197>

<http://www.thejournal.ie/human-trafficking-ireland-airport-staff-training-1159710-Nov2013/>

<http://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/new-scheme-to-train-airport-staff-to-spot-human-trafficking-612055.html>

<http://castroller.com/podcasts/RtMorning/3803376>- Interview with Nusha Yonkova on Morning Ireland