

PUBLICATION DATE HERE



Disrupt Demand

Welcome to the second EZINE for the Disrupt Demand project. Here you can find out about the new project, our activities so far and what to expect in the coming months.

What is the Disrupt Demand project?

Disrupt Demand is a project designed to support efforts to prevent human trafficking for sexual exploitation by reducing demand for sex, through researching successful strategies involving legal changes, and fostering cooperation among key stakeholders.



Co-funded by the Internal Security Fund of the European Union

Who are we?



[The Immigrant Council of Ireland \(ICI\)](#) is an organisation where migrant and Irish people work together to provide information, support and legal advice to immigrants and their families. The ICI is very active in lobbying for legislative and policy reforms and has contributed to some very significant changes and improved the understanding of issues facing migrants in Ireland.



[The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Cyprus \(MIGS\)](#) is a non-profit organisation which promotes and contributes to projects of social, political, and economic themes relating to gender, focusing on the Mediterranean region. It is committed to the elimination of gender discrimination using a combination of research, advocacy and lobbying, as well as trainings, conferences, and other activities.



[Klaipėda Social and Psychological Services Center \(Lithuania\)](#) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation. Its main goal is to provide psychosocial help for victims of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, economical and institutional), including trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation for the purposes of prostitution.



[Mouvement du Nid \(MdN\)](#) is a grassroots organisation and a social movement in France which acts in support of prostituted persons and is in opposition to the prostitution system that exploits their precarious conditions and vulnerability. MdN concentrates on the causes and consequences of prostitution.



[Institute for Feminism and Human Rights \(IFHR\)](#) brings valuable expertise and knowledge from Sweden, a country that has implemented legal change to effectively reduce demand and prevent human trafficking. The implemented reforms have also been evaluated. The lessons from Sweden in effecting demand reduction through legal change are core to the work programme.



[Exit - off prostitution](#) (Exit - pois prostituutiosta ry) is a Finnish NGO working to diminish prostitution and sexual maltreatment by focusing on preventive and advocacy work and participating in the public debate. Youth Exit (Nuorten Exit) works on the domain of primary and secondary prevention of sexual maltreatment and paid sex with a focus on adolescents and young adults. The Exit Prostitution Association also works with substance abusers aged 18-25, providing counselling regarding sexual violence, different forms of maltreatment and prostitution.

What have we accomplished so far?

Second coordination meeting– Paris, 1st and 2nd June 2017

The second coordination meeting, held over the course of two days, was hosted by **Mouvement du Nid (MdN)** in Paris. The first day was dedicated to discussing the status quo in each partner country concerning legal measures targeting demand for sex, as well as brief presentations of the main findings across national reports on the issue. On the second day, the partners discussed the importance of communication and political strategies, as well as coalition-building and networking when promoting awareness of the issue.

Partner national updates – Paris, 1st June 2017

The meeting commenced with an overview of each partner country's current situation *vis-à-vis* legal measures targeting demand for sex. **Ireland** recently introduced the Sexual Offences Act 2017, which contains measures targeting demand by criminalising the purchase of sexual services and introducing new provisions regarding victim evidence-giving in sexual offence trials.

Next, it was highlighted that the **French** law targeting the purchase of sex is in its first year of implementation. As of May 2017, 1,053 buyers have been fined under the law by ordinary and military police. Critically, however, the implementation of the new law is still somewhat contingent on the stance taken by the relevant prosecutor, which is currently having an uneven effect on the law's implementation. Nevertheless, the decrees associated with the law have now successfully been issued, specifically those linked to social assistance for those exiting prostitution, which are to be implemented by county agencies throughout France.

In **Lithuania**, the new Ministry of Interior position - National Coordinator - has now been filled. However, prostitution is still seen as a crime committed by women, rather than being considered as exploitation. As a result, the debate remains centred on whether prostitution should be legalised or not.

In **Finland**, the debate around exploitation was recently fuelled by a visit of the Finnish National Rapporteur to Italy to investigate the cases of asylum seekers who have been sent back under the Dublin Regulation. Consequently, an article on sexual exploitation of asylum seekers was published. This allowed EXIT to respond and publish an article that highlighted the need to also discuss exploitation in the context of prostitution, a discussion also supported by the social workers' union.

In **Sweden**, the law continues to be enforced while a dispute between Amnesty Sweden and Amnesty International concerning the latter's approach to prostitution is ongoing.

Finally, in **Cyprus**, the main ongoing legislative debate is focused on the removal of the requirement for buyers to have a reasonable assumption that a person has been trafficked. This, according to the relevant legislation criminalising the purchase of sex from a trafficking victim. The matter has been discussed in Parliament and the Attorney General's Office has been tasked with studying a possible revision of the provision.

Meeting with Catherine Coutelle, former MP of the National Assembly Women's Rights Delegation – Paris, 1st June 2017

On our first afternoon, there was a presentation from Catherine Coutelle on the efforts of Parliamentarians to bring about changes to the law in France regarding the criminalisation of sex buyers. She covered the crucial cross-party support which ensured that the law would pass, as well as the process through which the proposed changes became law. In 2012, Ms Coutelle



became head of the Commission on Rights of Women and immediately started working on the law. Women's commissions in political parties played a crucial role in supporting the realisation of the law; women MPs brought the issue to the fore, framing it in terms of violence against women. As a result, a report denouncing the consequences of prostitution was produced. Important findings include the fact that it is mostly women involved in prostitution, many of which are trafficked, while the sex buyers are mostly men. This served as crucial evidence to reinforce why targeting demand and sex buyers is important when engaging in lobbying activities with MPs and the Minister of Interior.

Roundtable on Coalition-building and Networking - Salle Rene Cassin, Paris, 2nd June 2017

This roundtable discussion highlighted the importance of building and managing coalitions, which can be effective in propagating interest in a campaign. A short overview of the project's aims and objectives and the rationale behind it was followed by a discussion around the importance of creating a network in the legislative process of changing the law.

Representatives of **Mouvement Du Nid** highlighted that establishing a network and a coalition enabled France to adopt its current law on demand for sex. This process took several years, commencing in 2009 with the set up of six large symposiums throughout France on the issue of prostitution, which led to a detailed report that was submitted to the

National Assembly. In 2010, the efforts intensified with the French government launching a plan on violence against women, which allowed women's groups to work together, resulting in prostitution being recognised as a form of violence against women. During the 2012 elections, an appeal was launched targeting MPs, asking them to support a demand reduction framework, which in turn led to the creation of a coalition of 60 diverse organisations, which came together to work on the issue of demand reduction. The **High Council for Gender Equality** was also directly involved in the campaign by adopting a twofold strategy: they created expertise to feed the debate on legal change and ensured readiness to spread the message on a grassroots level. The High Council used its position to influence political stakeholders and was also responsible for a media campaign which looked to create forward momentum. Currently, the Council is responsible for the implementation of the law through its involvement in awareness-raising campaigns regarding the new law. As a result, the issue has gained visibility, which was particularly effective when survivors of trafficking came on board as well.

Another network that challenged the dominant narratives around prostitution and focused on raising awareness on demand for sex was the **Zero Macho** group. Zero Macho is now an international network of men, established in 2011 and directly involved in the coalition as of 2012 in France. The manifesto of the group is one of men saying no to prostitution, based on a vision of an equal society in which they want to live. Therefore, one of the most important aspects of their work is raising awareness on why prostitution should be challenged, their main target group being other men.

Next, in Ireland, the **Turn off the Red Light** campaign greatly contributed to the adoption of the new Sexual Offences Act 2017. The campaign achieved success through empirical research, national advertising campaigns, artistic means such as film screenings as well as a successful campaign on Tinder, engagement with local media, and meetings between international experts and key stakeholders. In addition, the campaign engaged with political stakeholders and state agencies and relied on positive milestones and short-term wins to maintain forward momentum in its messaging. Finally, the involvement of women from political parties, as well as men who viewed prostitution as violence against women, were also crucial to the adoption of the Sexual Offences Act.

Roundtable on Communication and Political Strategies - Salle Rene Cassin, 2nd June 2017

The last roundtable focused on communication and political strategies as good practices. The main conversation was around the factors and strategies as well as the lessons learned from seven years of advocacy campaigning in France that successfully led to the criminalisation of sex buyers. Representatives from **Mouvement Du Nid** and **CAP International** shared tips on conducting a successful national advocacy campaign. These

include having a clear vision, followed by specific strategy and actions in order to create the synergy and coalition to reach the specific aim.

Another important element of successful campaigns is the impact of survivor voices on public and political debates. The focus of the roundtable was a talk given by Rosen Hicher. **Rosen Hicher** is one of the co-founders of a survivors' group based in Paris. Her advocacy work, including the march to the French Senate to highlight awareness of the then proposed law and pressure on Senators, was one of the highlights of the roundtable discussion. Rosen's march was a way of ensuring that the voices of survivors could be heard. Through the march, Rosen gave voice to other survivors, while shifting the discussion in the media to focus on the role of the client in the prostitution system. It also helped raise awareness of the issue among public and elected representatives.

Finally, during the roundtable we discussed the [Girls of Paradise](#), a successful media campaign, which was developed by the communication agency **McCann Paris** on a pro bono basis for **Mouvement Du Nid**. The agency created a website that featured women in prostitution who were victims of violence and eventually murdered by clients. When buyers attempted to contact these women, they reached a call centre where volunteers informed these would-be clients of the women's death and how they had died. The campaign received wide coverage and was reported on by outlets such as the BBC, National Public Radio (NPR) and the New York Times. It received over 57.8 million impressions (an impression is counted every time an ad is fetched from its source).

Upcoming

The partners have been finalising their respective national reports and a comparative report based on these will be produced by the end of September. The project website is also on the way, and will be up and running by the end of August. It will include each partner's updates as well as related research reports and news of the project. Finally, the next thematic roundtable discussion featuring all partners is to be held in the coming months in Sweden.

****For more news and updates, follow the [Disrupt Demand](#) project on Facebook****
Twitter hashtag: #DisruptDemand