

# Action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious forms of organised crime and involves the ruthless exploitation of other human beings. Trafficking in human beings violates the victim's right to decide over their own life and body. This is why, in February 2018, the Government adopted a national action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings. The aim of the action plan is to combat and prevent prostitution and trafficking in human beings for all purposes and to contribute to better protection and support for people vulnerable to human trafficking. The Government has previously adopted an action plan for protecting children from human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse.

Every year, a large number of people around the world, primarily women and children, fall victim to human trafficking, and most of them are exploited sexually. In addition to prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, many victims of human trafficking are also subjected to forced labour, slavery, trade in human organs and other forms of exploitation. Multiple exploitation also occurs, for example when people exploited as labour are also sexually exploited.

The action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings can be seen as part of broader efforts to prevent and combat men's violence against women. In November 2016, the

Government presented a ten-year national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women (Govt Communication 2016/17:10). In its communication, the Government outlined its intention to continue to develop measures during this electoral period to achieve the gender equality policy goal of 'Men's violence against women must end', which includes prostitution and trafficking in human beings. The strategy also addresses the vulnerability of LGBTIQI people to prostitution and human trafficking.

## Action plan focus areas

The measures presented in the action plan fall into eight different focus areas:

1. Enhanced coordination between agencies and other stakeholders
2. Strengthened prevention
3. Improved detection of prostitution and human trafficking
4. Legislative measures
5. Stronger protection and support
6. More effective law enforcement
7. Greater knowledge and methodological development
8. Increased international cooperation

## Long-term efforts

Cases involving trafficking in human beings are complex and require close collaboration between the relevant agencies and other actors. Several agencies are, in accordance with their mandate and remit, responsible for combating trafficking in human beings and

meeting the needs of victims. A number of non-governmental organisations are also involved in combating trafficking in human beings. On 1 January 2018, the national assignment on prostitution and human trafficking for sexual and other purposes was transferred from the Stockholm County Administrative Board to the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and thus made permanent (Govt Communication 2016/17:10, ToR 2016:108).

## Preventive action

Action to combat trafficking in human beings for whatever purpose must focus on prevention, including on discouraging demand. Reducing demand is key to eradicating prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes. In this respect, the prohibition of the purchase of sexual services is central. The Swedish Gender Equality Agency is responsible for coordinating efforts to combat trafficking in human beings and in this context must focus in particular on promoting the development of preventive action against prostitution and human trafficking. Coordinating action to combat prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes at the county level is the responsibility of the county administrative boards.

The full action plan is available on the Government website.

