



Speech by Dr. Ingeborg Kraus on the Sexual Exploitation of Ukrainian Women, 29.04.2025,
on the invitation of the Democracy Development Center in Ukraine, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine,
Higher School of Public Governance Ukraine and UN Women Ukraine.

Expert Meeting Schedule:

14:00–14:10 | Opening remarks

- Maria Dmytrieva (Democracy Development Center, Ukraine)
- Oksana Pustova (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine)
- Yulia Lykhach (Higher School of Public Governance)
- Yulia Honchar (UN Women Ukraine)

14:10–14:15

- Oleksandra Novikova, European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW):
Brief overview of the situation of Ukrainian migrant women in Europe

14:15–14:30

- Héma Sibi, Executive Director, Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution (CAP), France
Prostitution and trafficking in women: why we need to tackle demand at national and international level

14:30–14:45

- Tetiana Rudenko, Senior Project Officer, OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
Combating Demand: OSCE Commitments and Positive Practices of Participating States

14:45–15:00

- Viviane Teitelbaum, Senator in the Belgian Senate; President of the European Centre of the International Council of Women
Trafficking and Prostitution: the Missing Link

15:00–15:15

- Dina Dominitz, National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator, Ministry of Justice, Israel
Spotlight on Israel's approach to reducing demand – new law criminalizing consumption of prostitution and government-funded exit programs and aid for persons in prostitution

15:15–15:30

- Dr. Ingeborg Kraus, psychotherapist, psychotraumatologist and supervisor. Germany
Prostitution, Trauma and Human Rights. The role of trauma in the prostitution system and the importance of support for survivors.

15:30–15:35

- Yulia Dorokhova, Head, All-Ukrainian League "Legalife", Ukraine
Current situation and perspectives for women with experience of prostitution in Ukraine

15:35–15:55 | Q&A and discussion

15:55–16:00 | Closing remarks

We have two completely different laws on prostitution that were introduced in Europe more than 20 years ago: the Nordic model in Sweden and the legalization model in Germany. We know the results. No country needs to experiment anymore. With the legalization model, Germany has become the brothel of Europe, and it has turned our country into an El Dorado for human traffickers, pimps, brothel owners and sexbuyers. If you choose the German model, you will increase violence against women in prostitution, but also in society as a whole. You will normalize prostitution, increase prostitution and turn your country into a magnet and breeding ground for sexbuyers. We have a law against human trafficking, but it gets useless with a law that legalizes prostitution. Listen to our experience!

Far from protecting women, the "German model" has become "hell on earth" for them.¹ Sexual exploitation has been industrialized overnight. Mega-brothels with a capacity of up to 1,000 sex buyers have sprung up, offering "flat-rate" brothels: for €70, you could get a beer, a sausage, and unlimited women. Even after the legal reform in 2017 that banned flat-rate brothels, things haven't improved.

Prostitution has increased by up to 30% since 2002. The profit from this business amounts to €15 billion per year.² This calculation dates back to 2003.

Thirty years ago, it was estimated that 1.2 million men bought sex every day in Germany.³ As prostitution has been normalized and sex buyers have been completely decriminalized, demand has exploded. A recent study on sex buyers found that one in four men in Germany is a sexbuyer.⁴ But I wonder if there aren't more, given that 93% of German men watch porn.⁵

Many studies on sex buyers⁶ have shown that they are aware of the women's situation. But a law that guarantees them impunity separates them from their capacity for empathy. This is also reflected in the 2021 OSCE Report⁷ on Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation. The

¹ Kraus, Ingeborg: The "German Model", 17 years after the liberalization of prostitution. Speech by Dr. Ingeborg Kraus at the Italian parliament in Rom. 28.05.2018. <https://www.trauma-and-prostitution.eu/en/2018/06/19/the-german-model-17-years-after-the-legalization-of-prostitution/>

² Reichel: Prostitution: der verkannte Wirtschaftsfaktor. In: Aufklärung und Kritik. 2/2003. https://www.yumpu.com/de/document/view/5269931/prostitution-der-verkannte-wirtschaftsfaktor-gesellschaft-fur-#google_vignette
(Prostitution: the unrecognized economic factor).

³ Udo Gerheim: Die Produktion des Freiers, 2012, S. 7.
(The production of sexbuyers).

⁴ Döring, Walter, Mercer, Wiessner, Matthiesen, Briken: Männer, die für Sex bezahlen – Prävalenz und sexuelle Gesundheit. 2022. https://www.nicola-doering.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Doering-et-al.-2022_Manner_Bezahlsex_Praevalenz_Gesundheit.pdf

⁵ Hehli Simon: Pornhub, Youporn und Co.– warum sich Pornosüchtige so sehr schämen. 31.05.2022, NZZ. <https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/pornosucht-die-grosse-schande-ld.1686457>

⁶ Farley, M., 2009. Men who buy Sex, London.
Farley, M., 2022. Men who pay for sex in Germany & what they teach us about the failure of legal prostitution. <https://prostitutionresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Sex-buyersEnglish-11-8-2022.pdf>

⁷ OSCE – Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings: DICSOURAGING THE DEMAND that fosters trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, 2021. https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/f/489388_1.pdf

driving force behind this form of trafficking is money. The fuel is the demand. Therefore, the OSCE strongly encourages its participating states to shape their prostitution laws to reduce demand.

Since 2017, we have included in the law the punishment of sexbuyers who knowingly exploit a trafficked person. We had only one conviction so far. So it is a useless law. Sex buying must be banned completely.

The composition of women in prostitution has changed since the legalization. Today, around 95% of prostitute women come from the poorest regions of Europe.⁸

These women have special vulnerabilities:

- They are often alone, have left their families behind,
- They don't speak the language, don't know their rights, and don't have a job,
- They are young, poor, may be in debt, or belong to an ethnic minority,
- They may have illegal status and fear the police,
- Or they are pre-traumatized,...

The Palermo Protocol from 2011, which serves as a guideline for all European countries in the fight against human trafficking, also defines human trafficking as follows: "Scam, Fraud, abuse of power or exploitation of special vulnerability..."

Physical violence is not necessary to commit human trafficking. Abuse of power can occur when a person feels forced to accept their own exploitation.

In a context where prostitution is viewed as a job like any other, these particular vulnerabilities are not taken into account and are even considered as qualifications for entering prostitution.

With this law, we not only turn a blind eye to the crimes listed in the Palermo Protocol, we even see prostitution as a solution to these particular vulnerabilities. Women in prostitution told me that they were often told that they should be happy to be working here in Germany. Prostitution is seen as an option against poverty.

Almost on the same day the war broke out in Ukraine in February 2022, many sex buyers commented on online platforms that they were looking forward to the Ukrainian women now fleeing to Germany.⁹ When many Ukrainian women arrived in Germany by train, human traffickers were already waiting for them at the train stations.¹⁰ This led many to be drawn into prostitution. When this became apparent,

⁸ Kraus, Ingeborg: The Nordic Model of Prostitution: A change in perspective in protection of human dignity, 18.09.2021. In: Nordic Model Now! <https://nordicmodelnow.org/2021/09/18/the-nordic-model-of-prostitution-a-change-in-perspective-in-protection-of-human-dignity/>

⁹ Stokowski, M.: Flüchtende aus der Ukraine. Finger weg von den Frauen! 08.03.2022, Spiegel. (Refugees from Ukraine. Hands off the women!) <https://www.spiegel.de/kultur/fluechtende-aus-der-ukraine-finger-weg-von-den-frauen-kolumne-a-210cb3cd-b0c2-45c3-94f1-50c4863b7a89>

¹⁰ Abé, N.: Menschenhandel an den Grenzen zur Ukraine. „Die Nachfrage nach Frauen und Kindern aus der Ukraine ist enorm angestiegen“, 09.04.2022, Spiegel. <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/menschenhandel-nachfrage-nach-frauen-und-kindern-aus-der-ukraine-ist-enorm-angestiegen-a-5d8276c5-ac0a-47b9-83e9-ad0ac8059f8b> (Human trafficking at the borders with Ukraine. "The demand for women and children from Ukraine has increased enormously.")

some aid organizations developed flyers for the arrivals to warn them. I was involved in the production of one such flyer.¹¹

For 2.5 years, I have been working as a supervisor for Ukrainian therapists. The sessions take place every two weeks and are simultaneously translated. These therapists do an outstanding job under very difficult conditions. Although they themselves suffer from the war, they tirelessly help others. I have heard and supervised hundreds of cases and got an insight into the distress of Ukrainian women.

As in every war, women's bodies become a battlefield. Rape is the weapon used for this purpose. Ukrainian women experience sexual violence in this war in different ways. Their distress caused by the war is sexually abused by exploiters and sexbuyers also from the West. Due to financial insecurity, some turn to pornography with OnlyFans or prostitution.

We have counseling centers for prostituted women in every major city. But they mainly help women to endure better prostitution. They even offer introductory counseling for prostitution or brothel tours.

Some official counseling centers even offered sex work as an option to Ukrainian war refugees in April 22. This is a quote from the website of one of these centers in Berlin:

"It is very common for people to do sex work in times of need and financial insecurity. Fleeing war is one of those. Sex work is a way to make money anonymously, without a work permit, without education and without speaking German or English."¹²

I reported this to the police in Berlin. The response was: This is a state-funded institution and sex work is legal in Germany.

Today, three years after the outbreak of war, every second woman in prostitution in Berlin is a Ukrainian war refugee.¹³ When I found out, I wrote a letter to the Parliamentary Committee for Women, quoting this. This letter was even signed by over 100 Ukrainian therapists.¹⁴ The response from the left-wing parties was: We make a distinction between voluntary prostitution and human trafficking. Even for war refugees, they see prostitution as a voluntary decision!

And how looks the fight against human trafficking in Germany?

¹¹ Kraus, Ingeborg: Wir müssen die Frauen und Kinder aus der Ukraine vor Menschenhändler in Deutschland warnen! 20.03.2022. (We must warn women and children from Ukraine about human traffickers in Germany!) <https://www.change.org/p/sexkauf-bestrafen-prostitution-abbauen/u/30352482>

¹² Hughes, Donna, Ukrainian women: Victims of Putin's War and Sex Industry Predators. (4/2022). In: Dignity: A Journal of Analysis of Exploitation and Violence. <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1333&context=dignity>

¹³ BK/k.m.: Ukrainische Flüchtlinge schuften in Berliner Bordellen. 8.09.2024, Berliner Kurier. (Ukrainian refugees work in Berlin brothels.)

¹⁴ Kraus, Ingeborg: 100 Ukrainische Therapeutinnen fordern die Regierung auf, das Nordische Modell einzuführen, 14.10.2024. (100 Ukrainian therapists call on the government to introduce the Nordic model). <https://www.change.org/p/sexkauf-bestrafen-prostitution-abbauen/u/32962492>

This law hasn't helped combat human trafficking at all: Every year, less and less victims are identified.¹⁵ Not because there are fewer victims, but because the police has little power to identify them and to intervene. They say that this law is pro-trafficker and leaves women defenseless.¹⁶

It's an illusion to believe that "a bright field" keeps human trafficking in check. The largest underground sector is located in legal brothels!¹⁷

Just one example: For years, brothel owner Jürgen Rudloff advertised for "clean prostitution" without human trafficking and exploitation. After years of undercover investigations, women finally came forward: They reported feeling trapped in a never-ending hell. Humiliation and violence were part of everyday life and were willingly tolerated by the brothel keepers.¹⁸

Curiously, his brothel never closed, even after Rudloff's conviction. Why? Because the local economy was involved in it. A closure would have put many local businesses in financial distress. This example shows how deeply the German industry is now entangled in the sexual exploitation of women, and now increasingly of Ukrainian women.

Today, over 90% of women in prostitution in Germany are victims of human trafficking and forced prostitution¹⁹! We have at least 100,000 women in Germany who are victims of human trafficking,

¹⁵ Bundeskriminalamt. Bundeslagebild 2011 bis 2024 – Menschenhandel und Ausbeutung. (Federal Criminal Police Office. Federal Situation Report 2011 to 2024 – Human Trafficking and Exploitation.)

¹⁶ Manfred Paulus, Erster Kriminalkommissar a.D.: „Die Polizei hat geringe Chancen, inmitten der legalen Situation von Sexkauf, Zuhälterei und Prostitution Ausbeutung und Frauenhandel nachzuweisen. Der regulierte Prostitutionsmarkt bietet somit die perfekte Einbettung für Zwang und Druck jeder Art und gerade keinen Schutz davor.“ Vortrag Weltkongress in Mainz, 2019. <https://www.solwodi.de/seite/396262/weltkongress-reden.html> (Manfred Paulus, retired Chief Criminal Inspector: "The police has little chance of proving exploitation and trafficking in women amidst the legal situation of sex purchase, pimping, and prostitution. The regulated prostitution market thus offers the perfect environment for coercion and pressure of all kinds and offers no protection against them." Lecture at the World Congress in Mainz, 2019).

¹⁷ Stellungnahme von Helmut Sporer, Kriminaloberrat a.D. in Augsburg, zur Anhörung des Ausschusses für Gleichstellung und Frauen des Landtags Nordrhein-Westfalen am 14.01.2021. <https://www.landtag.nrw.de/portal/WWW/dokumentenarchiv/Dokument/MMST17-3443.pdf> (Statement by Helmut Sporer, retired senior criminal inspector in Augsburg, on the hearing of the Committee for Equal Opportunities and Women of the State Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia).

¹⁸ Häussermann, P.: Tätowierungen erinnern an die Peiniger. Paradise-Prozess am Stuttgarter Landgericht, 13.02.2019, Stuttgarter Zeitung. <https://www.stuttgarter-nachrichten.de/inhalt.paradise-prozess-am-stuttgarter-landgericht-taetowierungen-erinnern-an-die-peiniger.7d843368-6e1f-465e-b6d9-378900ec5ab8.html>

¹⁹ Lünstroth, M.: Die bittere Bilanz eines Kripobeamten: „Deutschland ist der Puff Europas“. 14.03.20216, Südkurier. Interview mit Manfred Paulus. Mehr als 15 Jahre lang hat der Kriminalhauptkommissar Manfred Paulus im Rotlichtmilieu ermittelt. Er sagt: „Tatsächlich sind 98 Prozent der Prostituierten fremdbestimmt.“ <https://www.suedkurier.de/region/kreis-konstanz/konstanz/Die-bittere-Bilanz-eines-Kripobeamten-8222-Deutschland-ist-der-Puff-Europas-8220;art372448,8588288> (A criminal investigator's bitter assessment: "Germany is the brothel of Europe." Interview with Manfred Paulus. Chief Inspector Manfred Paulus has investigated the red-light district for more than 15 years. He says: "In fact, 98 percent of prostitutes are controlled by others.")

1000 times more than are identified by the police. The German government tolerates a situation in which most victims are never identified and will never receive justice.²⁰

That is why we are rightly called the brothel of Europe. This is well known in Europe, and Germany has been called upon internationally for years to take action against it. Worldwide warnings and admonitions against Germany are mounting, without Germany responding. Even now, the new government still does not consider the Nordic Model as an option.

Scientific evidence has proven countless times, regardless of the country, the form of prostitution, or how it is practiced: prostitution is highly traumatizing!²¹ The incidence of developing a PTSD in prostitution is more than twice as high as for war victims.

Finally, I would like to present a case study: My client came to Germany as a young woman. She comes from a Jewish academic family from Ukraine. Her entry into prostitution was through the loverboy method of a German human trafficker at a time in her life when she was very vulnerable. She barely spoke German and felt alone. She entered prostitution to help him financially. She was only supposed to stay for two weeks; she remained in prostitution for ten years and was financially totally exploited by him and the brothel keepers. She exited 9 years ago prostitution and still suffers from severe post-traumatic stress disorder.

My client's grandmother survived the Holocaust. She, the only granddaughter of this Holocaust survivor, sought a better life in Germany and experienced sexual exploitation in legal German brothels. The question of guilt is also repeatedly addressed in therapy. She feels guilty for not having said "no." But what repeated guilt does Germany bear in her family history?

I'd like to end my speech with her words:

"Prostitution is the opposite of freedom. It's not voluntary. If you choose this path because you're in need, then it's not voluntary. There's nothing voluntary about it. It's a last chance. It's rape every time."

²⁰ Interview mit Helmut Sporer: „Es kann nur besser werden“, 27.02.2020, EMMA. <https://www.emma.de/artikel/der-ermittler-337507> - 17 Jahren leitete der Augsburger Oberkriminalrat Helmut Sporer das K1, das wichtigste Kommissariat, u. a. zuständig für „organisierte Kriminalität“, zu dem die unlösbar mit dem Menschenhandel verknüpfte Prostitution gehört.

(For 17 years, Augsburg Senior Criminal Inspector Helmut Sporer headed K1, the most important police station, responsible, among other things, for "organized crime," which includes prostitution, which is inextricably linked to human trafficking.)

²¹ Kraus, Ingeborg: Menschenhandel und Prostitution aus psychotraumatologischer Sicht. 06.06.2022. <https://www.trauma-and-prostitution.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Prostitution-aus-psychotraumatologischer-Sicht-1-pdf.pdf> (Human trafficking and prostitution from the perspective of psychotraumatologie.)

About the Author:

Dr. Ingeborg Kraus, PhD in psychology and internationally renowned psychotraumatologist. She has written and published a variety of works on the connection between trauma and prostitution. For years, she has been giving lectures and training courses on the subject worldwide. She has been invited to speak before parliaments including e.g., the Assemblée Nationale in Paris, l' ENA in Strasbourg, the Italian Senate and the parliament in Rome and Madrid, the European parliament and before the German Bundestag.

She spent 7 years providing humanitarian aid in Bosnia and Kosovo during and after the war and founded the first women's shelter in Prizren/Kosovo. Subsequently, she worked for 9 years as a psychotherapist, as well as head of therapeutics at psychosomatic clinics in Germany. Since 2012 she has been working in her own practice in Karlsruhe, Germany. She has worked with many trauma victims, including many women who were victims of prostitution and human trafficking. Since October 2022 she has been working as a supervisor for Ukrainian therapists with simultaneous translation, particularly on the topic of sexual violence.

Dr Kraus is co-founder of [Green Prostitution Critics](#) (since 2007), the initiator of the Public Appeal of Trauma Therapists Against Prostitution and runs the website "[Trauma and Prostitution](#)", a network of health experts (in the fields of medicine, psychology, and psychotraumatology) that offers medical and therapeutic assistance to women in prostitution and educates the public on the realities of prostitution, the damage done to women's health and the consequences for society. She is co-founder of the Alliance "Stop Sexkauf" ("Stop Sex Buying") and jointly launched the petition "[Dismantle Prostitution in Germany](#)". In 2019 she founded the initiative "[Karlsruhe gegen Sexkauf](#)" in the town she lives ("Karlsruhe Against Sex Buying").

Praxis Dr. Ingeborg Kraus
Amalienstr. 47 - 76133 Karlsruhe
Tel. 0721 - 47 00 95 58
dr.ingeborg.kraus@me.com
<https://www.trauma-and-prostitution.eu>