



**DESIRE**  
Demand  
for Sexual  
Exploitation  
In Europe

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## Deliverable No. 6.3: Summary of Final Conference

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## Change Records

Issue	Author	Date	Reason for change
0.1	Carlotta Rigotti (VUB)	6.1.19	First draft
0.2	Amy Weatherburn (VUB)	30.1.19	Second draft
0.3	Amy Weatherburn (VUB)	13.2.19	Final public version

## Acronyms

A-Z	Acronym	Meaning
D	DESIRE DoA	DEmand for Sexual Exploitation In Europe Description of Action
E	ERG	Expert Reflection Group
F	FLIGHT	FLIGHT, NGO
T	THB TiU	Trafficking in human beings Tilburg University
U	UU UW	University of Uppsala University of Warsaw
V	VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussels
W	WP	Work Package

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## Executive summary

On 13 December 2018, the DESIrE project hosted the Demand in the Context of Human Trafficking: Final Conference in Brussels, Belgium (see Annex 1 for programme). The conference was attended by project partners and external stakeholders with the purpose of presenting the research conducted throughout the project and to provide insight into the preliminary conclusions and recommendations (see Annex 2 for List of Participants). The partners presentations and the input provided by the participants facilitated the finalisation of the report outlining the conclusions and recommendations and the Handbook on Demand in the context of Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation.

### 1. Understanding the concept of demand in the context of human trafficking for sexual exploitation

The first session was chaired by Prof. Zbigniew Lasocik, University of Warsaw (UW).

The first part of the session was jointly presented by Prof. Conny Rijken & Maria Shaidrova, Tilburg University (TiU) with the focus on ***Understanding the concept of demand in the context of human trafficking for sexual exploitation***. The presentation introduced demand in the context of human trafficking prevention (Article 9(5) Palermo Protocol, Article 18 (4) EU Directive 2011/36 and Article 19, Warsaw Convention) and distinguished between different types of demand and placing the understanding of demand in the context of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. An overview of the supply and demand factors in the sex industry were then presented, as well as the impact of these factors on different actors and markets and their interrelations and decision-making processes. Finally, the presentation discussed the point at which exploitative and coercive tactics might be used by actors to seek a benefit from involvement in the sex industry. The presentation concluded with the following observations: i) consider demand and supply holistically; ii) consider the interplay of individual choices of actors in sex industry; iii) utilize demand/supply terminology with respect to its economic origin; iv) understand that markets are transforming rapidly in our globalized world, and v) coercion and exploitation should be addressed as tactics/strategies used by facilitators.

The second presentation was delivered by Dr. Wanjiku Kaime-Atterhög, Uppsala University (UU), whose intervention provided with an overview of the process of ***Defining Sexual Exploitation***. The presentation provided an overview of the distinction between commercial and non-commercial exploitation; the situation of sexual exploitation in the context of human trafficking; vulnerability (and the extent to which it increases) in the context of sex work and human trafficking; and defining sexual exploitation taking into account exploitation theory. The presentation concluded with a presentation of the two operational definitions that had emerged in initial stages of the project that were applied to the empirical research.

The presentations were followed by critical reflections from the conference participants moderated by Prof. Lasocik. Participants reiterated the importance of clarifying the concept of exploitation and asked about the implementation of the definitions in the data collection. Issues such as the vulnerability, violence, coercion and other contributing factors that could lead to a situation of sexual exploitation were discussed as well as elements that continue to be problematic such as agency of the exploited individual, the intent of the exploiter and the overlap between sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation in the trafficking context.

## **2. National laws and policies and their implementation on sex industry and human trafficking**

The second session was chaired by Amy Weatherburn (VUB).

The purpose of this session was for all partners to provide an overview of the different regulatory frameworks of the provision, purchase and facilitation of sexual services in Croatia (Iva Jovovic, FLIGHT), the Netherlands (Prof. Conny Rijken), Poland (Prof. Zbigniew Lasocik) and Sweden (Dr. Wanjiku Kaime-Atterhög). As well as outlining the legal and policy framework in each country each panellist offered insights into the scope and scale of the sex industry as well as the prevalence of human trafficking nationally. Partners also gave examples of the impact of public discourse on the topic in terms of the impact that such societal input can have on a shift in regulatory approach either towards, decriminalisation, legalisation and/or regulation or further criminalisation.

The presentations were followed by critical reflections from the conference participants moderated by Amy Weatherburn. Participants asked about exactly the data can provide in terms of considering the prevalence of the issues, and the extent to which demand reduction impacts on human trafficking. The project partners reiterated that the purpose of the project was to get an understanding of the implementation of the different regulatory frameworks based on the experiences of the people involved. Indeed, future research should well employ methodology that can measure the prevalence of the issue. Further discussion focused upon the Swedish model, its implementation and effect on individuals involved e.g. sex workers and buyers. Further clarification was provided on the active implementation of the Swedish law which is seen to set the tone for policies. Policy implementation is considered to be focusing on different societal issues, as well as harm reduction, such as poverty and vulnerability with the ultimate aim of empowering vulnerable groups. Such implementation is further bolstered by engagement at all levels of society e.g. police, civil society, social services and members of the general public.

## **3. Multi-stakeholders' approach to fighting sexual exploitation**

In the third session, the DESIRE consortium was delighted to invite external speakers to provide insight into the role of stakeholders in fighting sexual exploitation and providing assistance and support to sex workers and others involved in the sex industry. The session was chaired by the civil society project partner, FLIGHT, who provide outreach work to sex workers in Croatia, offering health and social assistance. Iva Jovovic (FLIGHT) outlined the types of interventions and how such social policies can assist those who are in sex work. Her intervention was followed by contributions from representatives of the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) Irena Ferčíková Konečná and Maxime Maes.

The panellists as well as conference participants provided insight into their personal and organisational experiences of involvement in the sex industry, moderated by Iva Jovovic. The discussion included the involvement of sex workers in the design and implementation of policies concerning sex workers and the problems that they face currently taking into account the existing policy frameworks. An emphasis was placed on ensuring that policies are designed to reduce vulnerability of individuals, including sex workers and victims of human trafficking rather than exacerbating potential vulnerabilities – as existing frameworks are currently

perceived. In addition, it is important that laws and policies do not restrict access to justice for those who have been victims of exploitation.

#### **4. Alternatives to legislation to curb human trafficking**

In the fourth session, Sibel Top (VUB) provided an overview of the non-legal tools that could be used to curb human trafficking besides the legal frameworks on sex work. They can be used at different stages of the trafficking process, such as for the prevention, the identification, or the reporting/the outreach. The most important prevention tool presented is information, that can be presented through awareness-raising campaigns aimed at reaching the general public, or via campaigns that target specific groups of recipients, such as sex workers e.g. information booklets and telephone lines. In this regard, the importance of prevention campaigns targeting people selling sex to inform them on their rights has emerged as one of the major findings of the DESIrE project. Other prevention tools aim at providing information to specific groups working to stop the traffic, such as the law enforcement, border guards or NGO workers such as blockchain and smart phone applications.

Some of the tools used for prevention can also be used for identification purposes such as learning about the signs of trafficking and exploitation and consequently help to (self-)identify (as) trafficking victims. Other tools include crime stopper platforms, “involving the public in the identification and reporting of persons in situation of exploitation or experiencing violence” and videos such as the one developed in DESIrE to inform and involve buyers of sex services in fighting sexual exploitation.

Similarly, some identification specifically targeting specific groups who, because of their occupation, are more likely to come across victims of exploitation and of trafficking have been developed such as toolkits and sensitization workshops that seek to inform practitioners on how to recognise the signs, but also on how to react and how to behave around sex workers and/or victims of trafficking so that they feel safe has been spotted as of being of utmost importance.

Finally, some of the tools presented here can also be used by the public to report a situation of exploitation or trafficking and also victims of trafficking who would like to reach out for help themselves. e.g. the STOP APP and crime stopper

The presentation was followed by critical reflections from the conference participants moderated by Prof. Paul de Hert. Participants provided further examples of practical implementation and dissemination of information leaflets etc and the need for an emphasis on awareness raising.

#### **5. Conclusions and recommendations of the DESIrE project**

Following a brief introduction by Prof. Zbigniew Lasocik, the preliminary conclusions were presented by Kamila Rejmer-Jobczyk (UW). The conclusions presented focused on 1) demand for sexual services and the role of law ; 2) the role of the state in preventing exploitation in the sex industry ; 3) the different regulation models ; 4) the perceptions of the impact of the regulatory approach on the sex industry and the risk of sexual exploitation in the sex industry ; 5) additional measures needed to ensure effective regulation of sex industry to minimise exploitation and risk of trafficking and 6) conclusions on social practices. These conclusions were then also further discussed taking into account specific national contexts.

The session closed with a presentation of preliminary recommendations presented by Dr *Łukasz Wieczorek* (UW). Following a brief overview of the methodological development of the recommendations, three main groups of recommendations were presented:

- 1) The **general recommendations** focused on the public discourse and the language used when discussing sex work and the impact of this debate on the perception of sex work. Other recommendations focused upon the empowerment of sex workers, demand and sexual exploitation. The role of the law in regulation of sex industry and alternative non-legal solutions.
- 2) **Alternative measures and social practice recommendations** considered the role of awareness raising campaigns on the legal framework, aimed at providing information for both buyers and sex workers. In addition, there was a particular emphasis on sensitisation initiatives for law enforcement. A second recommendation pertained to the technological facilitation of monitoring and identifying exploitation and those who may be at risk of exploitation, including online activities and reporting mechanisms. The third recommendation looked to social practices that could assist and support sex workers with social and health care, providing employment opportunities, sexual education and safe spaces.
- 3) The recommendations on how to improve the preventative measures that seek to tackle human trafficking for sexual exploitation including, among others: increased legal protection for sex workers including accessibility to authorities and law enforcement, effective and well targeted judicial action against exploiters and traffickers; implementation of alternative measures to law such as anonymous reporting for buyers and sensitisation training for law enforcement and social services so as to ensure real and effective support for victims.

The presentations were followed by a plenary discussion with further input from all partners and the conference participants, moderated by Prof. Paul De Hert. Participants and project partners reiterated the need for involvement of all levels, including grassroots, as represented by the project's engagement with the target groups such as sex workers, buyers, victims of trafficking and buyers. Such engagement then needs to be fed into the policy level, so that policy-makers are well-informed about the evidence based that is available for making decisions in this sector.

## 6. Next steps

Following the close of the conference, the project partners further refined and finalised the conclusions and recommendations in light of the discussion and engagement of conference stakeholders. The final conclusions and recommendations are available in the final reports and handbook of the DESIRE project, available on our website: <https://project-desire.eu/learn/>.



## Annex 1– Programme

<b>9:30– 9:45</b>	<b>Welcome coffee &amp; Registration</b>
9:45 - 10:00	Introduction to the DESIRE Project <i>Amy Weatherburn, Vrije Universiteit Brussel</i>
10:00 – 10:45	Understanding the concept of demand in the context of human trafficking for sexual exploitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prof. Conny Rijken &amp; Maria Shaidrova, Tilburg University</i></li> <li>• <i>Dr. Wanjiku Kaime-Atterhög, Uppsala University</i></li> </ul>
10:45 – 11:15	Critical reflections from participants moderated by <i>Prof. Zbigniew Lasocik, Warsaw University</i>
11:15 – 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:30 -12:30	National laws and policies and their implementation on sex industry and human trafficking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prof. Conny Rijken, Tilburg University</i></li> <li>• <i>Dr. Wanjiku Kaime-Atterhög, Uppsala University</i></li> <li>• <i>Iva Jovovic, FLIGHT</i></li> <li>• <i>Prof. Zbigniew Lasocik, Warsaw University</i></li> </ul> Including reflections from participants moderated by <i>Amy Weatherburn, Vrije Universiteit Brussel</i>
12:30 - 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Multi-stakeholders' approach to fighting sexual exploitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Iva Jovovic, FLIGHT</i></li> <li>• <i>Irena Ferčíková Konečná and Maxime Maes, ICRSE</i></li> </ul> Including Q & A moderated by <i>Iva Jovovic, FLIGHT</i>
14:30 - 14.45	<i>Coffee break</i>
14:45 – 15:30	Alternatives to legislation to curb human trafficking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sibel Top, Vrije Universiteit Brussel</i></li> </ul> Including Q & A moderated by <i>Prof. Paul de Hert, Vrije Universiteit Brussel</i>
15:30 – 16:00	Summary and recommendations of the DESIRE Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction by <i>Prof. Zbigniew Lasocik, Warsaw University</i></li> <li>• <i>Łukasz Wieczorek, Warsaw University</i></li> <li>• <i>Kamila Rejmer-Jobczyk, Warsaw University</i></li> </ul>
16:00 – 16:30	Critical reflections from participants moderated by <i>Prof. Paul de Hert, Vrije Universiteit Brussel</i>
16:30 - 17:00	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Prof. Paul de Hert, Vrije Universiteit Brussel</i></li> </ul>



## Annex 2 - List of Participants

First Name	Last Name	Organisation
Isabelle	Johansson	UNODC
Carrie	Pemberton ford	Ccarht
Abida	Pehlic	Novi put
Elisabeth	Palmero	IOM
Olivia	Caeymaex	Quaker Council for European Affairs
Victoria	Smith	PAG-ASA
Chloé	Brière	Université Libre de Bruxelles
Emilia	Pankiewicz	Université Libre de Bruxelles
Jean-François	Minet	Ministry of Justice - General Directorate Legislation, Civil Liberties and Fundamental Rights
Anna	Linmans	Ministry of Justice and Security
Ruxandra	Gheorghe	University of Kent
Eliza	Halling	KU Leuven
Lucie	Laffont	European Commission
Zoi	Sakellidou	European Commission
Irene	Wintermayr	ILO
Colin	Ward	Modern slavery police transformation unit
Dunja	Bonacci Skenderovic	Bonacci Ltd.
Irena	Ferčíková Konečná	ICRSE
Maxime	Maes	ICRSE

Bob	Van Oerle	National Rapporteur on Tracking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children
Mensura	Juranovic	CESI
Letonde	Gbedo	Comitato per i Diritti Civili delle Prostitute onlus
Rik	Viergever	Comensha
Anne-Sophie	Dutrieux	PAG-ASA
Peter	Bogaert	PAG-ASA
Saint Harlot		
Claire	Gheerbrant	Red Umbrella Fund
Margot	Nahan	Utsopi
Daan	Bauwens	Utsopi
Ivonne	Van de Kar	Sisterworks / RENATE
Patricia	Le Cocq	Myria, Federal Migration Centre
Esther	Nungari	Rumbling Watersound International
Mwangi	Axelsson	Rumbling Watersound International
Mischa		Swexpertise / Wild Thing
Malin	Roux Johansson	Realstars
Annika	Svensson	Swedish Police Authority
Eva	Moberg	Uppsala EU-nightshelter
Frédéric	Oszczak	Vice Media
Júlia	Zomignani Barboza	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Paul	De Hert	Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Amy	Weatherburn	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Sibel	Top	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Carlotta	Rigotti	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Zbigniew	Lasocik	Warsaw University
Łukasz	Wieczorek	Warsaw University
Kamila	Rejmer	Warsaw University
Wanjiku	Kaime Atterhoeg	Uppsala University
Naa	Adukwei Allotey	Uppsala University
Beth	Maina Ahlberg	Uppsala University
Anne	Kubai	Uppsala University
Conny	Rijken	Tilburg University
Floris	De meijer	Tilburg University
Mariia	Shaidrova	Tilburg University
Iva	Jovovic	FLIGHT
Marko	Miklin	FLIGHT