

# Sex Work and HIV in Europe

International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe

EU CSF HIV  
03/06/2021

## SEX WORK AND HIV IN EUROPE

*WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP?*

- \* OPENING WORDS BY DR TLALENG MOFOKENG, UN SPECIAL RAPPOREUR ON HEALTH
- \* EMILY CHRISTIE, SENIOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND LAW ADVISER, UNAIDS
- \* PRESENTATION OF ICRSE REPORT 'SEX WORK AND HIV IN EUROPE: ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK.'
- \* LILA MILIKJ, STAR-STAR, NORTH MACEDONIA
- \* LYA JAWAD, TRANS UNITED EUROPE, THE NETHERLANDS
- \* KATE MCGREW, FROM SEX WORKERS ALLIANCE IRELAND
- \* STEPHEN O'HARE, HIV IRELAND
- \* GIOVANNA RINCON, ACCEPTESS-T, FRANCE
- \* AGATA DZIUBAN, SEX WORK POLSKA, POLAND

FRIDAY 30 APRIL  
17:00-18:30 CET

*Co-hosted by International Committee on Rights of Sex Workers in Europe and EU Civil Society Forum HIV/Aids*



Why this resource?

European Red Umbrella Academy: Sex  
Work and HIV Training Programme  
Collaboration EATG

Current context in Europe



Part 1 :

- Data and evidence
- Impact of criminalization and other legal oppression
- Stigma, discrimination and violence
- Impact of precarity

**RESOURCE 1:  
BRIEFING PAPER**

## **One Step Forward, Two Steps Back**

Critical overview of the European context  
and the impact of repressive laws and  
policies on sex workers' vulnerabilities to HIV

# Migrant sex workers' vulnerabilities

- Between 3.9 and 4.9 million undocumented migrants live in the European Union and the European Economic Area.
- An estimated 44 percent of all new HIV infections is recorded among migrants, many of whom contracted HIV after arriving in their respective destination countries.
- The proportion of migrants among all newly-recorded HIV cases vary greatly between countries, with Sweden, for instance, recording 75 percent of new cases among migrants.
- Very limited data exists regarding HIV prevalence among migrant sex workers. In countries where such statistics exist, migrant sex workers face higher levels of HIV prevalence. Portugal, for instance, had an HIV prevalence rate among undocumented female migrant sex workers of 13.6 percent, compared to 8 percent among domestic sex workers.

# Impact of criminalisation of clients (France)

- The figures for new infections are unequivocal and worrisome. In the entire Île-de-France Nord COREVIH (Regional Coordinating Committee Combating HIV infection) area, where the organisation Acceptess-T is based, HIV tests have revealed a significant increase in the number of trans people testing positive.
- Newly tested trans people represented 0.1 percent of cases in 2015, 0.3 percent in 2016, and 7.4 percent in 2017. Thanks to Acceptess-T's work in the field, we know that most of these people are also engaged in sex work. Data from the annual report of the French non-profit organisation AIDES also show this high prevalence.

Sex workers who face repressive policing are more likely to experience violence, poorer health and well-being



3x

Three times more likely to experience sexual and/or physical violence



2x

Twice as likely to have HIV and/or another STI



1.5x

1.5 times more likely to engage in sex without a condom with clients

Examples of repressive policing includes arrest & imprisonment



- Evidence from public health research also highlight critical need for decriminalisation and community empowerment
- **LSHTM, 2018:**
  - > 40 quantitative and 94 qualitative studies
  - > 1990 and 9 May 2018
  - > 33 countries.

# Part 2 and 3: Community leadership

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*RESOURCE 2:  
TECHNICAL PAPER*

Community-led  
services and  
meaningful  
participation

*RESOURCE 3*

Case Study of  
Community-led  
Services

*Umbrella Lane (Scotland),  
STAR-STAR (Macedonia),  
and Sex Work Polska (Poland)*

STAR STAR, North Macedonia  
SexWorkPolska, Poland  
Umbrella Lane, Scotland

# Part 4:

- Governments and legislators:
- **Decriminalise sex work.** Sex workers, clients and non-exploitative third parties must be decriminalised.
- **Eliminate the unjust application of laws** and regulations used against sex workers.
- **Implement a firewall between immigration authorities and health services**
- **Address and combat violence** against sex workers in partnership with sex worker-led organisations.
- **Recognise sex work as work** and support the self-organisation and unionisation of sex workers.
- **Meaningfully involve sex workers** and their organisations in the development of laws and policies that impact them.
- **Include sex workers and their organisations in the development of HIV/AIDS national action plans.**
- **Financially support sex worker-led organisations and community-led services.**
- **Support implementation of UNAIDS strategy**

## RESOURCE 4

### Sex Work & HIV in Europe – Community Recommendations



**Sex worker lives under the law:**  
A community engaged study of access to health and justice in Ireland.

**SEX  
WORKER  
LIVES**

Commissioned by HIV Ireland and funded through Open Society Foundations (OSF).

Kathryn McGarry  
Paul Ryan

**AIDES**  
Membre de la Coalition Internationale SIDA

SIDA HÉPATITES PRÉVENTION BIEN VIVRE AIDES EN ACTION **AGIR**

ACCUEIL COMMUNIQUÉ **LOI PROSTITUTION DE 2016 : LA COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME EXAMINERA 261 REQUÊTES ÉMANANT DE TRAVAILLEUSES-EURS DU SEXE**

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