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Counterstatement on the article in the Human Rights Without Frontiers International newsletter "Legalization of prostitution brought more exploitation than emancipation to women – report", (26.05.10/HRWF 02.06.10)

The article refers to the launch of the annual statistics of the Federal Criminal Office (Bundeskriminalamt/BKA) on trafficking in human beings. The annual statistic includes numbers, nationalities, age of victims - in cases where investigations were conducted -, numbers and nationalities of perpetrators and other information. All reports from the last 11 years are available on www.bka.de (only in German). The statistic quoted in the article, like *"the chief officer also said that sex trafficking has increased 11 percent from last year and 70% over five year period"* does not reflect nor confirm the elevated data of the annual statistic report of the Federal Criminal Office, on the contrary:

2000 – 926 victims
2001 – 987 victims
2002 - 811 victims
2003 - 1235 victims
2004 - 972 victims
2005 - 642 victims
2006 - 775 victims
2007 - 689 victims
2008 - 676 victims
2009 – 710 victims

The 2009 report itself concludes that there is no big change towards the previous years in trafficking to the sex sector in Germany. The only change is -according to the report - that the majority of the victims are EU citizens.

Who we are

KOK- the German nationwide activist coordination group combating trafficking in women and violence against women in the process of migration is an NGO which is made up of womens' organisations and counselling centres for women in Germany with the following aims:

- to combat trafficking in women on a worldwide basis
- to have trafficking in women recognised as a human right's offence
- to achieve the realisation of human rights for female migrants and strengthen the rights of trafficking victims
- to combat the racist and sexist discrimination of female migrants

- to achieve realistic social equality for prostitutes

What we stand for

Legalization of prostitution with the focus on the improvement of the social position and rights of persons working in the sex industry

Prostitution in Germany is neither illegal, nor considered 'immoral' under the law; this national policy is unlike those in many other countries of the world. The KOK e.V. completely supports this German policy because condemning prostitution and stigmatizing prostitutes negatively impacts women (in particular), who willingly engage in this line of work.

But even in Germany it took a long time for legislators to take a tolerant approach toward prostitution.

It was only in 2002 that prostitution was completely legalized in Germany. In that year, legal reforms were introduced, which stipulated that voluntary (not forced) prostitution is no longer 'lawfully immoral'. Therefore, it isn't against the law.

The KOK e.V. is always careful to highlight the differences between prostitution and trafficking in women. We greatly respect prostitutes, who engage in their profession of their own free will. We do not stigmatize them and it is the KOK e.V.'s view that voluntary prostitution should be recognized as a personal decision that has to be made individually. Making prostitution illegal would deny prostitutes their right to work and would prohibit them from freely choosing this profession. It would assume that they are not able to take responsibility for themselves.