

RENATE

Prostitution in Germany

May 2018

You are welcome everybody, we are pleased to see you. I hope you had a good journey.

I regret that my english is not so good. I hope you can understand me and excuse any mistakes I might make!

Welcome also to my colleagues Mrs. Johanna Weimer from the Augsburg police and Charlotte Becker

Our profile in Augsburg:

In Augsburg we are 5 colleagues: 4 in the council work Goernert and Lutz and Rodica Knab, a Psychotherapist with roots in Romenia, who does street work. Unfortunately she wasn't able to join us today.

I founded this counseling centre SOLWODI in Augsburg. nearly 20 years ago. I have known SOLWODI from the very beginning, because I studied together with Sr. Lea and have been always in contact with her. I know about the beginning in Africa and then its beginning in Germany and all the problems encountered over the time.

We rented these room from WW, an organisation for women who are victims of violence and girls who are victims of sexual abuse. We are thankful for this partnerspip and glad to have our rooms today

For the past two years we are visiting the places where women are engaged in prostitution. We try to get in contact with them. Mrs. Knab is getting more and more confident and women are now waiting for her to visit with them. Later on, I'll tell more about this.

Light in the night

Twice a year we make an action in the evening in the middle of the city of Augsburg to reach young people and discuss prostitution with them.

In Augsburg, a town with 300 thousand citizens there are about 500 women working in prostitution. We light a candle for each of them. It is a light of solidarity. People enquire about this and we are glad to inform them. The German opinion about prostitution is that more than 50 % think it is acceptable.

During the action in the evening we ask people what they think about Prostitution and the persons who engage in prostitution.

People think they are very tolerant. Some of the coments we receive are as follows: "we do not morally or ethically denounce." "These are adults, they can make that deal together. If people decide to do it voluntarily then it is ok." "It is the oldest form of business between people." "It's better with prostitution, otherwise there will be more danger for women because of violence." "It has ever been done, it belongs to humankind, human history."

Most people think that they know enough, they do not need any information.

But they do not know anything about the last 16 years; about the high numbers of foreign women; the legalization of prostitution in 2002 and the ensuing results.

We think a lot of clearing up is necessary.

When we look at the definition of Human trafficking, we find women must have been forced - therefore they are victims.

- BUT What is force ?

Must there be violence and people locked-in?

Forced prostitution, in our mind is, if anybody has no alternatives.

- If you have no chance to earn your own money,
- if you have to do something – only to survive.
- If you were sent by your own family,
- if you got enmeshed with the loverboy

- Who is a **victim**?

Is a woman a victim even if she thinks she is not?

We think so!

When she has been forced to do things, which are not good for her, her health, her identity as a person and which harm her physically and psychologically .

But our experience is that even if the police get all the necessary proof by undercover investigation, that there is human trafficking, most women do not not feel that this is so. They say, I did this voluntarily and independently. Because of this, there is no possibility to punish the pimp for human trafficking.

You will get examples from Mrs. Weimer later.

Thanks to legalization of prostitution the women are widely defenseless.

When the law says, it is a legal job, the judge and the police have difficulties in punishing the persons who profit from the legalization.

Since the boundaries inside of Europe had opened, an increasing number of women came to Germany and most of them ended up on prostitution.

The prices for their services got lower and lower, which now means that 10 to 15 men need to be served every day if the woman is to secure the necessary income.

The experiences of the women are: they have to offer more for less money

* For example if a punter wants girl-friend-sex, she has to do this. And this is dangerous for her personal identity. A woman loses her feeling who am I?.

* And often she is forced to do (sex) practices, which cause them pain and harm. The punter pays for a special practice, and the woman has to do this.

One woman told Mrs. Knab: “The man pays for the sex practice but he wants to get my whole person.”

Foreign women are almost only found in the low-price segments of prostitution. These are ordinary brothels, walk-in houses and Nuddist-Clubs, live-in prostitution or street walkers' patch.

On doing streetwork.

In 2017, we met 238 Prostitutes in Augsburg. Only one German woman was found in a 'normal' brothel. All the others came mostly from eastern or south-eastern Europe. In Augsburg 75 % of the women in prostitution are from Romania. The knowledge of the German language is next to nothing. They only know a few expressions or know the terms of the sexual practices they have to offer and the prices for it.

On the whole, only 10% are Germans. You find them in the more expensive segments. For example in sado-maso studios, in escort services, or dominatrix studios or massage-salons.

One of the reasons women work in prostitution is the hope for a better life. Of course a less educated and less informed woman can't advertise herself in the German prostitution market. Below are an overview of the profiles of the women:

- * They are recruited with false promises about the job, their income or operating conditions. Often they become victims of the so-called "loverboy's-ploy;"
- * Their own family can send them to Germany to work in prostitution;
- * They have been encouraged by a friend;
- * They fall victim to human trafficking with sexual slavery;
- * Only a few women can work independently;
- * Almost all have pimps, who exploit them as much as they can;
- * Often they come from the poor houses in Europe, mostly from socially marginalized groups, like Sinti or Roma, who are excluded in their own countries;
- * They come from collective societies where the individual doesn't count, only the well-being and survival of the person's own family;
- * Girls are brought up as worthless human beings in a patriarchal society;
- * Their experiences are violence, abuse, exploitation but also desperation, depression, alcohol and drug abuse. They are accustomed to doing what they're told - and to being used for the benefit of the man or the clan;
- * They have little to no self-confidence and hardly any idea about their own future – easy victims for the German prostitution market.

Since the legalization of prostitution we have new and very profitable establishments such as the Laufhaus: I called it 'walk-in-houses.' There are also the FKK Clubs or nudist clubs.

Walk-in-house,

It is a building comprising mostly of several flats. On entering, you come into a corridor, with a lot of rooms on each side.

The women have to wear high-heels and have to wait at their respective opened door. They have to look for the punter and try to lure him in. In other houses women sit in front of their doors or there are only a lot of photos of women in provocative and sexy positions.

The prostitute has to rent that room for one week. And the price per day is about €100. A woman cannot afford to be ill. And even if she has her period or feels sick, she has to work.

Several years ago we had a client from Hungary. During one year of being in forced prostitution, she was pregnant for three times. Three times she was brought to Hungary and forced to have an abortion. After which, she was given alcohol and drugs and then had to work the same day.

Nudist-clubs called FKK-Clubs are very lucrative and profitable businesses. They operate on the model that they do not have anything to do with prostitution. They only have a luxurious ambiance where you can meet other people.

For example, in Augsburg there is a huge hall with a Grecian Temple and a water fountain in the middle. Around this, there are red cushions where 40 (!) naked woman present themselves most sexily. A man can watch them, sit with them in a whirl-pool, get a massage or have sex upstairs.

In the house there is a pricelist for the diferent sexual practices. The man has to pay the woman seperately. The shift work for the women is 13 hours per day. It is forbidden to telephone or talk in groups. The women always have to present themselves sexily.

Customers and women are both visitors and have to pay €60 admittance fee. The daily takings from one shift alone, with 40 women are €2,400 admission fees - and if every woman has 5 visitors a day it's a daily income of € 20.000 and that's just the admission fees alone..... The fees for sexual services are additional! A very profitable affair with an income of several million Euros per year. And in germany we have houses with 100 women per day!

FKK Tours

You can google it.

www.FKKTOURS.de is an internet portal for international customers.

They provide a service for men from across the globe. They pick up the men at the airport and bring them to nudist Clubs in Germany. Every day one can go to another city. In the internet you can read the enthusiastic reports from the punters, 'This is like a journey through paradise.'

Today SOLWODI does not see a big differnence between human trafficking with forced prostitution and 'normal' prostitution.

We do not believe it is chosen by the independence and free will.of the women. We think it is human trafficking, when women are brought into prostitution by their family, or by a loverboy or when she has no other chance to survive. For us, most of them are victims.

(Protection – Shelter Law for prostitutes from 2017)

The bad situation for the prostitutes should be improved by the new Shelter-law of 2017.

The law has two sides: on the one hand instructions for the women and, on the other hand, regulations for the operator to get the licence. These are standards mentioned, for example, the hygiene; the rooms where the women live and work; a person, who leads the club must be free from criminal conviction of human trafficking and much more regulations like these.

Now women have to be registered as a ,prostitute.' They have to get a document that records they have had a counselling interview in the local health authority. With this document, the woman has to go to the regulatory agency. The Regulatory Agency clears up about regulations in Germany like financial registration, what is allowed and what is forbidden and places where the woman can get help.

BUT the health centre only has to counsel the woman. Therefore: EVERY woman gets the paper, even if she is ill or has an infectious disease.

The registration at the agency is not cross-referenced nationally. If a member of an agency thinks it is too dangerous for a young woman or believes the young woman might be forced by her family and does not do the job voluntarily, and the member of the agency refuses the identity card, the young woman can go to another town, where it is easy to get the document.

It is already known where these possibilities are. Bavaria is known as quite a strong area. In the north of the republic it is much easier. Pimps go with their women to the Registration Agency, where it is most comfortable- such is the lack of restrictions and regulation.

The women caught in the middle are isolated, disoriented and without external relations.

Prostitutes live in anxiety every day.

*They fear that they cannot earn enough money to pay for the debts,

*They are afraid of the pimps who violate them; for the punters or the loverboys who are not satisfied,

*They are in fear for their own health and are frightened of getting sick.

*They are in fear of the German police and law..

Therefore they are very distrustful and sceptical. Their confidence often has been destroyed.

We all know that prostitution is a harmful and dangerous activity.

Every third prostitute thinks about suicide. The suicide rate is twelve times higher than with women who are not in prostitution.

Examples/stories from streetwork.

1. A punter – we think he may be a paedophile -fell in love with *Mia*, a small woman from Bulgaria. She looked like a twelve year old girl.

He phoned us because the young woman was very sick with bad back aches and headaches. She was afraid, that she would die. Mrs. Knab accompanied her to a doctor. He diagnosed her as being anorexic, and he gave her some medication to bring back her strength. Soon everything was ok and she was not longer afraid that she might die.

The punter wanted to marry her. She says: “if you pay €1,000 per month to my family, I will marry you“. Now she is back in prostitution.

2. A woman from Bulgaria was forced into prostitution in Germany by her family. Three times she returned home but she was brought back to Germany to earn money.

The last time she was so mentally ill that the pimp abandoned her in the city. She was brought into a psychiatric hospital and has been there for the last six months. Sadly, no-one knows where to bring her home.

3. *Adina*¹ a 19-year old woman from Romania and has been promised a job in a hotel.

When she came to Germany, the pimp told her the job has gone. Meanwhile she should make money with prostitution. In the beginning, she was forced to do this, and twice she was forced to have an abortion. But now she has fallen in love with the pimp. Now, she told Mrs. Knab, she wanted to get pregnant once more, for she thinks the pimp also loves her too. And then he would marry her and they will start a family. However, the next time Mrs. Knab came to visit *Adina*, she had disappeared as the pimp had brought *Adina* away to another town.

4. One Saturday evening *Livia*, a young lady from Romania needed help. She suffered with pain and had lost a lot of blood. Mrs. Knab accompanied her by telephone and translation for the doctor. The doctor found a big myoma and operated on it immediately. Then he wrote a medical certificate advising that she may not work for one week. Back at the brothel, immediately *Livia* rang up Mrs. Knab, saying ‘OK, I may not work but this cannot mean that I cannot serve punters“. Mrs. Knab was quite alarmed and advised *Livia* not to work as the scar might open and if that happened then *Livia* would require additional surgery and she would take more time to recover from the operation. *Livia* was desperate, asking ‘What shall I do, how can I pay for my room?’ On Monday Mrs. Knab couldn’t find *Livia* in the brothel, she had disappeared completely.

5. *Selina*, from Romania had been left as a baby by her one mother, who earned money in Germany. She grew up with her uncle, who looked after her and sent her to school. Unfortunately he died, and *Selina* had to return to her mother. When the mother saw the beautiful 16 year old daughter, she sold her to a Greek man. The wife of this Greek man was infertile, so he was looking for a surrogate mother. *Selina* had to give birth to a child, which was then taken away from her. After that, her mother forced the daughter to go with a cousin to Germany. Twice she flew home, but twice she was sent back to prostitution.

¹With the help of Mrs Knab they informed the German man.

In autumn last year a German punter fell in love with *Selina*. He took her to live in his house. His own mother telephoned us as she was worried about the connection between her son and a Romanian prostitute. *Selina* had not known, that the customer was already married and couldn't marry her. When she heard this, she was shocked and wanted help from SOLWODI to return to Romania.

Mrs. Knab found a possibility far away from her mothers home.

A few weeks later, *Selina* rang Mrs. Knab and told her that she is pregnant by the German lover and that she is looking forward to the child. With the help of Mrs Knab they informed the German man.

But *Selina* does not want a paternity-test. She is afraid that the man could take her baby away, and take it for his own. Mrs. Knab informs her about German laws, and that she mustn't be afraid. We await the outcome....

Another result regarding *Selina* is that she decided she wants to bring her mother to court to stand trial for human trafficking. *Selina* has two younger sisters and wants a better life for them.

6. I will conclude with a final story. I will only tell one half of it and Mrs. Weimer will tell the remainder. It is a story about a process, which ended in Augsburg last year with three Hungarian women.

I only speak about our own experiences. It was our turn to locate the women in a safe house. They were needed for the process. The women had no idea what they could do with their time. They have been sitting on the floor, leaning against the radiators, warming their hands. Every now and than, they smoked, had a cup of coffee, a cola or ate some chips. They have been used to waiting. When we told them to do something, they immediately did as they were told. They had been used to doing when they were told so. We asked them about their ideas on what they could do in life to earn money; about their dreams; their hopes; their experiences. But they couldn't see any future.

Than they said: 'we are 19 years old! It is too late for everything!'

In the end, two of the women went back into prostitution to earn their own money and the third accepted our suport to get back into an Hungarian organisation.

Women should be better protected! We from SOLWODI and other help organisations are shocked, about the outcome of the new Shelter Law of 2017

We say: women are hardly more protected than before, as a result of this new legislation.

The city of Augsburg will give us a flat with two rooms where women who want to leave prostitution can live and be supported to get a possibility for a better life.

SOLWODI also works politically. We go to the politicians. We fight for the rights of women. Still we have to do a lot.

Thanks for your atttention.

STREICHEN?

For years the police of Augsburg campaigns for the rights and the protection of the affected women and inspired a bundle of law-improvements called "Augsburger Weg".

It was provided and supported by SOLWODI Bavaria, the women-union in the CSU (Christ-social union party), and the city council of Augsburg and brought in as recommendation to the legislative process. However, it wasn't real considered.

As a result the city council came to the conclusion: if the women can't come to us to get help and support - we have to go to the women. The city of Augsburg funds two half-positions (hier: Frage nach Stunden/Woche. Klingt im englischen besser.) for visiting social work in the local sex industry.

One position is located with the public health department and the other position is located with SOLWODI. Therefor we have Mrs. Knab, who does streetwork, and visits the prostitute every week.

In Germany there is a very powerful lobby of the few German prostitutes, brothel chefs and other persons who profit from less regulation. They tried to disturb a good law and to prohibit everything, which could disturb the good profit for their own or for the brothel-chefs.

The costs of prostitution are huge.

Only the registration is very expensive. The estimation is several 100 thousand € every year.

The juristic costs for the police or for the judges, and for the prisons are immense. If we would have this money to support the women we could reach a lot.

Rumänienreise

In November, Mrs. Knab travelled to Romania and visited Sr. Adina in the bureau and the shelter-house in the periphery of Bukarest.

Two days later she met Iana Matei who founded the organisation „Reaching out Rom“ in Pitesti and visited the minor girls in the shelter house.