



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Sweden\*



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## Introduction

Despite the global economic recession that started in 2008, Sweden is now bouncing back as one of the strongest economies in Europe. Throughout, the government has maintained its extensive social welfare system that includes many programmes designed for children, and as of today, the country ranks tenth out of the 187 countries in the Human Development Index.<sup>1</sup> Despite this high level of development however, the commercial sexual exploitation of children remains a problem.

### Child prostitution

In 2007, the National Board of Health and Welfare reported that children under the age of 18 engaged in sexual services in approximately 34 per cent of Swedish municipalities. The Internet is a major venue for facilitating child prostitution of boys and girls.<sup>2</sup> In 2010, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs conducted a study ('See me') among children and young people aged 13 to 25 years old.<sup>3</sup> The study showed that the average age at which the youth report having sold sex for the first time is 14.4 years.<sup>4</sup> The report pointed out that young people who have been involved in exchanging sex for money or other kinds of compensation often have problems in various areas of their lives. Meanwhile, another report conducted by the National Board of Institutional Care (SiS) in 2011 stated that children and young people in institutional care are more likely as a group to be exploited in prostitution and trafficking.

### Child trafficking

Sweden is considered as a destination country for child trafficking. Girls are mostly trafficked for sexual purposes and often come directly from nearby countries in Eastern Europe.<sup>5</sup> There exist no reliable estimates of the number of child victims of trafficking in Sweden. However, according to the National Criminal Investigation Department, most children trafficked to Sweden are girls between 15 and 17 years of age, though the National Police believe that women recruited for prostitution in Sweden are mostly in their twenties.<sup>6</sup> Victims of trafficking for prostitution usually originate from eastern Europe, Africa and Asia.<sup>7</sup> Traffickers are men as well as women, with women mostly being former victims of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking.

### Child pornography

The total number of reported offences regarding child pornography in 2010 was 390, of which 299 were Internet related and only 114 actually resulted in convictions.<sup>8</sup> Owing to the fast expansion of the use of online technology, the Internet has proved to be the easiest way for perpetrators to access child pornography. Another concern raised by Internet misuse is online grooming, as young people can easily be approached for sexual contact via the Internet.

## Child sex tourism

Sweden is considered a sending country of child sex tourists. Swedish citizens travel abroad seeking sex with children to countries such as Brasil, Cambodia, Thailand and

neighboring countries like Estonia, Finland, Norway and Russia. According to ECPAT Sweden's report in 2008, it was estimated that approximately 4,000 to 5,000 purchases of sexual services from minors by Swedes occur every year abroad.<sup>9</sup>

## National Plan of Action (NPA)

The National Action Plan for Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation<sup>10</sup> is being implemented for the timeframe of 2007 – 2012. The Plan broadly includes actions to address child sex tourism, measures for dealing with offenders, as well as reviewing of legislation and enhancing cooperation at national and international levels. The main objective of this plan is to ensure that no child in Sweden is subjected to sexual exploitation and no children in other countries shall be subjected to sexual exploitation by Swedes. The Plan also aims to guarantee support for child victims of sexual exploitation. However, as sexual exploitation in children is not considered as a prioritised

crime in Sweden, the Government still lacks a fundamental strategy essential to protection and prevention. The Plan will be updated in 2012 in connection with the submission of the fifth periodic report of Sweden. With regard to trafficking, in July 2008, the Government adopted the Action Plan against Prostitution and Human Trafficking for Sexual Purposes, with the allocation of SEK 203 million for the implementation of 36 measures by 2010.<sup>11</sup> The Plan aimed for greater protection for people at risk through preventive work as well as to increase the effectiveness of the justice system and national/international cooperation. The Plan targeted both children and adults.

## Coordination and Cooperation

Various meetings have been organised to foster cooperation among many stakeholders to combat CSEC. One of very few meetings that have reached some level of outcome is a series of dialogues between ECPAT, relevant NGOs, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and various departments for the follow up and update of the National Action Plan for Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation. Moreover, the government and NGOs have strengthened cooperation through the establishment of a Child Rights Forum since 2005. Nevertheless, it has been observed that the cooperation and coordination on behalf of children remains insufficient.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, as a result of the Action Plan against Prostitution and Human

Trafficking for Sexual Purposes, the National Methodology Support Team was created to coordinate among key actors, such as the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Police Authority, the Swedish Prosecution Authority and the Swedish Migration Board. With regard to child pornography, through an ECPAT Sweden initiative, all national banks have formed a financial coalition to block and stop transactions relating to child pornography websites since 2008.<sup>13</sup> Sweden still lacks a reliable data collection system specifically for commercial sexual exploitation of children.

At the regional level, Sweden plays a key role in offering assistance and coordination

regarding CSEC matters. The Swedish Police is a member of various regional cooperation bodies, including Comprehensive Operational Strategic Planning for the Police (COSPOL), the Internet Related Child Abusive Material Project (CIRCAMP) network, as well as the Innocent Images International Task Force. These arrangements are made at the European level, with support from EUROPOL in order to enhance cooperation between law enforcement agencies in the region, with the latter extending its information sharing system to the United States FBI. Eurojust, the EU's Judicial Cooperation Unit was established in 2007 in order to deal with transnational

crimes including child sexual abuse, child trafficking and other forms of child abuse on the Internet. The Contact Point at Eurojust for Child Protection Issues works closely with other stakeholders in the field of child protection and with Europol, Interpol and UNODC.<sup>14</sup> Sweden is also part of the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (EGCC) which is comprised of responsible ministries from countries of the Council of Baltic Sea States and the European Commission.<sup>15</sup> International financial support from the government of Sweden has been granted to NGOs working in promotion of children's rights as well as to UNODC and UNICEF.

## Prevention

The Action Plan against Prostitution and Human Trafficking for Sexual Purposes of 2008 includes awareness raising campaigns as a preventive measure addressing both children and adults. The Swedish National Criminal Police Unit also has a campaign to encourage the public to report suspected offences abroad. However, in relation to the prevention of child sex tourism, ECPAT has been playing a major role in the preventive activities. ECPAT Sweden partnered with the Board of TRAC (a Travel Academy that includes, for example, the Association of Swedish Travel Agents, Scandinavian Airlines, etc.) organising training courses on

sustainable tourism and campaigns against child sex tourism. Additionally, the hotel group the Radisson Blue also announced that it will implement NetClean Child Abuse Free Zone technology on the guest computer network in its chain of 235 hotels across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in order to prevent abusive use of Internet, the Media Council has been participating in the EU's Safety Awareness, Facts and Tools (SAFT) to promote more secure use of the Internet among children and young people, by providing brochures and manuals about safe use of Internet to young people.

## Protection

Sweden is party to a number of international legal instruments combating sexual exploitation of children. The government has ratified both the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC), as well as the UN Trafficking Protocol, ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, and the Council of Europe

Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

### Prostitution of Children

The age of sexual consent in Sweden is fifteen; therefore any sexual acts with a child below fifteen are automatically considered a crime. Swedish law complies with the OPSC regarding the protection of children

from prostitution. The Swedish Penal Code criminalises any person who induces a child under eighteen years of age to undertake or endure a sexual act in return for payment.<sup>17</sup> The act of pimping and procurement are also penalised under the Swedish Penal Code.<sup>18</sup>

### Trafficking in children for sexual purposes

Legislation regarding child trafficking complies with international minimum standards. However, there is no specific provision for trafficking in children and no harsher penalty applied to such acts. The Penal Code's definition of trafficking in human beings covers all necessary acts regarding trafficking, which includes recruiting, transporting, harbouring, receiving or taking other similar actions, for the purpose of exploitation, including sexual exploitation.<sup>19</sup> The attempt or conspiracy to engage in human trafficking is punishable, as well as incitement and complicity.<sup>20</sup>

### Child Pornography

Sweden registered one reservation to the OPSC, limiting child pornography only to visual representations. The Penal Code criminalises anyone who disseminates, transfers, grants use, exhibits, makes such a picture of a child available to another person, possesses or knowingly obtains access to such picture. The offence will be considered "gross" when the offender commits such an act for the purpose of business or gaining profits. However, there is no penalty when the production of child pornography is intended only for personal use.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Swedish law criminalises exploitation of a child for sexual posing, such as sexual posing in front of one or more people (e.g. in a sex club) or in front of a camera.<sup>22</sup>

In 2009, Sweden adopted a new offence for contact with children for sexual purposes, which includes online grooming. However,

the implementation of this law is criticised as weak and ineffective, and protects only children under 15 years of age.

### Extradition and Extraterritorial legislation

According to the Extradition for Criminal Offences Act (1957:668), Swedish authorities cannot extradite their nationals. Furthermore, crimes committed outside Swedish territory can be prosecuted in Sweden only if the crime is criminalised in the jurisdiction where it takes place (double criminality requirement) and (1) is committed by a Swedish national or (2) an alien who resides in Sweden or (3) an alien present within Sweden and accused of a crime subject to more than six months imprisonment, which applies to all major CSEC offences. Additionally, after 2005, the requirement for double criminality was removed for certain serious sexual crimes committed against children under the age of 18, including rape of a child and gross exploitation of a child for sexual posing. Grooming and a large number of other CSEC-related offences are still subject to the double criminality requirement.

### Child Protection Units

The Swedish National Investigation Department has included a Child Abuse Team within its Special Objects Unit. With the team's accumulating expertise, the Child Abuse Team acts as a centralised focal point for domestic and international cooperative efforts, including Interpol.<sup>23</sup> The National Criminal Investigation Department has also issued an Action Plan for International Police Work on Child Sex Offences and Child Pornography. Additionally, the criminal investigation department's child pornography group partly consists of police dedicated to combat child sex tourism.

## Support Services for Children

No specific helpline dedicated to commercial sexual exploitation of children currently exist. However, helplines for children facing violence and victims of trafficking are operated both by NGOs and the state. With regard to shelter care, the “Barnahus” serves a reception and advocacy centre for child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. The centre offers shelter, legal and other support services specifically for children. Nevertheless, there are no shelters in Sweden specifically dedicated to child victims of trafficking so as a consequence, they are often sent to care centres for adult women.<sup>24</sup> Since 2011 the municipality of Stockholm offers protection for children victims of trafficking at shelters for children with staff trained on trafficking with children.

The County Administrative Board in Stockholm is in charge of developing national level cooperation in the work against human trafficking and prostitution, as well

as the safe return of trafficking victims and support for their reintegration. Concern has been raised for foreign children in relation to unequal protection compared to Swedish children. A foreign child victim of trafficking has the right to a reflection period during which they have access to medical services. Additionally, Sweden is currently developing specialised assistance to victims of child abuse images.<sup>25</sup>

## Training law enforcement personnel

Training programmes relating to prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes are provided to the police, prosecutor, the Swedish Courts Administration and the Swedish Migration Board. Besides, child abuse and child pornography, trainings are offered to prosecutors as optional courses. At the regional level, annual training courses on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children on the Internet, for law enforcement officers and the judiciary from EU member states, are organised to exchange good practices and experiences. However, there exists no compulsory training with a special focus on children.

## Child and Youth Participation

Several NGOs have been active in organising child and youth participation activities. A number of child and youth participation

initiatives receive financial support from the government, showing that there is some level of commitment to this issue.

## Priority Actions Required

### National plan of action

Sweden should urgently update all National Plans of Action in order to be in accordance with commitments that have been made in World Congresses. Also, the plan should be designed to tackle the demand side of the problem of CSEC.

### Cooperation and Coordination

At national level, Sweden should improve cooperation among different entities with a long term approach to combating CSEC. Some functions that should be improved are, for example, the Ombudsman’s power to investigate individual cases and the data collection system for crimes relating

to CSEC. At the international level, as child sex tourism is a growing concern, the government should improve its coordination at ministerial level and establish an action plan at the foreign affairs administration.

### Prevention

Preventive measures that focus more on the demand side should be implemented. Moreover, Sweden should enact a law to prohibit CSEC offenders from working with children. Awareness raising campaigns and trainings about CSEC related issues should be conducted and targeted at all the public in general and not specifically limited to a few groups of people.

### Protection

The government should sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on

the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Moreover, Sweden should impose a strict definition of age of children and remove the double criminality requirement from all offences regarding CSEC. Specialized police units should be set up, including outside of Stockholm, to deal with cases relating to trafficking in children. As for the victims, the government should establish a helpline to address specific needs of child victims of CSEC, as well as setting up shelters specifically for CSEC victims.

### Child and Youth Participation

Sweden should enhance youth participation in combating all forms of CSEC. The government should also institutionalise the entitlement to participation and establish participatory policies for children and youth.



## Endnotes

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- <sup>3</sup> The report is based on a number of separate quantitative and qualitative studies that have been conducted by the Board itself, by qualified academics working at Swedish universities and by RFSL Ungdom (Sweden's national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth organisation).
- <sup>4</sup> The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, Report "See me". Accessed on 18 November 2011 on: [http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/order\\_item/0,2568,,00.html?itemId=ff8080812568bac501270973ec3b0027](http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/order_item/0,2568,,00.html?itemId=ff8080812568bac501270973ec3b0027)
- <sup>5</sup> Global Monitoring Report on the status of action against commercial sexual exploitation of children: Sweden. ECPAT International. Bangkok. 2006. Accessed on 20 October 2010 from: [http://www.ecpat.net/A4A\\_2005/europe.html](http://www.ecpat.net/A4A_2005/europe.html).
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- <sup>7</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report 2010. US Department of State. June 2010. Accessed on 26 September 2010 from: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/>.
- <sup>8</sup> CRC/C/OPSC/SWE/Q1/Add.2 (Written replies from the Swedish Government to the committee (2011)
- <sup>9</sup> Diesen, Christian and Diesen, Eva. Child sex tourism – the sexual exploitation of children committed by Swedes abroad. ECPAT Sweden. Stockholm. 2008. Accessed on 22 August 2011 from: <http://www.ecpat.se/images/filer/temaomrade/child%20sex%20tourism%20-%20the%20sexual%20exploitation%20of%20children%20committed%20by%20swedes%20abroad.pdf>.
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- <sup>18</sup> Chapter 6. Section 12. The Swedish Penal Code.
- <sup>19</sup> Chapter 4. Section 1a. The Swedish Penal Code.
- <sup>20</sup> Chapter 23. Section 4. The Swedish Penal Code.
- <sup>21</sup> Chapter 16. Section 10a. The Swedish Penal Code.
- <sup>22</sup> Chapter 6. Section 8. The Swedish Penal Code.
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