

Dear Minister, Grapperhaus,

**We are group of men, cis and trans, who do various forms of sex work and regularly meet at the premises of P&G292.**

The Dutch government proposes a new sex work law, the Sex Work Regulation Act (WRS). We share your concern about human trafficking and violence against sex workers. We are on the same side! Still, we think this law is a bad idea. We are convinced that it will lead to more violence against sex workers. We would therefore ask you to **withdraw this law proposal**.

**We think the proposed law will lead to bad results, because, if enacted, it will lead to more sex workers working illegally than today.**

**Illegal sex workers are less likely to ask for support from official authorities when in physical danger, economic stress, or adverse health status, and thus more prone to become victims of violence and abuse. Where illegality prevails, sex work is pushed underground and away from the public eye, and this is where human trafficking thrives.**

We do not want our colleagues and us to be more likely to become victims! Neither do you.

We fear that more sex workers will work illegally because the proposed law makes demands that many of us cannot meet or are, reasonably, not willing to meet:

- All sex workers will have to register in a national sex worker registry
- Sex workers between 18 and 21 will have no choice but to work illegally
- Migrant sex workers who do not comply to the Aliens Act 2000 will only be able to work illegally; that includes many migrant sex workers who live legally in the Netherlands, and sex workers who legally visit the Netherlands to work
- Sex workers who are “found” not to be sufficiently “self-reliant” can only work illegally.

They will all be punishable by hefty fines. Criminalisation of sex workers and clients encourages violence against sex workers. We see this every time in those countries where clients have been criminalised.

**We are particularly concerned about the registration of sex workers.**

Personal information about us and our colleagues will be recorded in a national registry. Even though the law promises to provide security guarantees, we fear that our identities may still become public, either because of abuse/negligence from civil servants or because of inadequate security and potential hacking. Further, in the concept notes of the proposed law it is already mentioned that the registry information can be shared among relevant public authorities, which already weakens any promised security of this registry. In order to avoid the risk of our identities being exposed, more sex workers will choose to work illegally. And more sex workers will, then, risk abuse and violence.

We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that sex work is work. Like you, we earn our money by using our bodies to provide a service. Free choice of labour is a human right that is guaranteed by the Dutch Constitution. This Sex Work Regulation Act restricts the right to free choice of labour. This is a violation of a human right. That is unworthy of a country like the Netherlands.

You and us, we do not want violence and exploitation of sex workers to exist, and certainly not to increase. The Sex Work Regulation Act increases the risk of violence and exploitation of sex workers.

It also violates the privacy of sex workers. We therefore urgently ask you to retract the proposed Sex Work Regulation Act.

**The vast majority of men, cis and trans, sex workers in the Netherlands work independently doing in-calls (home-based work), out-calls (escorting), and producing erotic content (porn, webcamming).**

**Our suggestion is that you allow us, and sex workers of whatever gender and trade who work independently, to continue working with the only obligation that any other independent worker (freelancer) has; a registration to the Chamber of Commerce. Most of us, are already registered, under adjacent to what we do categories, and that should be enough.**

**Our colleagues who work in escort agencies and sex houses under the opt-in system are already sufficiently covered in terms of licencing, taxation, and personal safety, and we believe there is no need to enforce further regulations on these workers.**

**Overall, we would suggest to the Dutch government to abandon the legalization model it has adopted on sex work over the past 20 years, where the state on one hand legalizes sex work for some, while making it impossible to work legally for others. Instead, we would urge you to look into the successful 16-year long example of New Zealand where full decriminalization of every aspect of sex work has significantly increased the well-being of sex workers, improved their overall health status, and mitigated abuse and violence against them.**

Kind regards,

The men's, cis and trans, soundboard group at P&G292