



**Staying healthy
in the sex trade**

CALENDAR 2007

Contents

Preface	1
Sex work – the basics	1
Keep secret, or tell all?	2
What are my boundaries?	3
What is the best workplace?	5
What do I need to work professionally?	6
How do I protect myself against violence?	9
Sex work and health	11
Hygiene	11
Caution during menstruation	11
The fewer drugs the better	12
The necessary vaccinations	12
Safer sex - avoiding HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases	12
Recognising and treating STDs early on	17
Prostitution and the law	19
Professionalism pays	22
Prostitution in art and culture, political action	23
Booklets	25
Addresses	26

Preface

Working as a prostitute is sometimes easy, sometimes difficult, at times full of action and variety, and at other times dull and tedious. As with any other type of work, the job is first and foremost about making money to earn a living. Each sex worker will have their own reasons for being in this profession. Some may “just have got into it”, others may have been attracted to the “scandalous” or “erotic” image of the industry. Other workers may have wanted to gain sexual experience without being in a relationship, or just have been unable to find other work.

Whatever the reason you are working in the sex trade, whether you are a newcomer or an experienced professional: It is very important that you are able to deal with sex work as well as possible, and that you stay healthy. This calendar offers vital information, tips and suggestions on how you can do this. If you are new to the trade, however, the best thing you can do is to get more experienced colleagues to advise you and to tell you about the skills and information you need to do the job in a professional way.

Sex work – the basics

Although there is no official training program for sex work, in this profession as in others you can only become a real professional by educating yourself, and trying things out. More than anything else, you have to be alert, smart and careful, as in this type of work there is a very high risk of coercion, violence, unfair working conditions and all kinds of dependency. You cannot always count on assistance from authorities and from society at large, as there is a lot of discrimination against sex workers - in spite of the large numbers of clients who make use of their services, and in spite of the money that the state

makes from the industry. The best places to learn about sex work are the “backstage” areas in brothels – the kitchens, lounges and so on, where you can talk about your experiences with others and pick up tips by listening and asking questions. The best teachers will be your older colleagues: they know all the tricks of the trade, and will be familiar with the regular customers and so can tell you about their preferences. On the street, there are opportunities to learn wherever sex workers meet to wait for their clients: Here too you can find women who can explain everything you need to know about the sex trade on the street.

This chapter deals with a few of the most important aspects of sex work: what you need to think about and decide for yourself, what you need for sex work, and how you can avoid risks.

Keep secret, or tell all?

Although society is slowly coming to accept sex work, it is still far from being seen as a “normal” job. So anybody who offers sexual services for money is quite likely to have problems with their partner or with their family. For this reason, many sex workers keep their job largely a secret, telling only a few close confidants. Some even lead a real double life, for example leaving for the “office” in the morning, then taking on another role in a club, bar or on the street. In this second role, they often take on a new name (this “professional name” can sometimes indicate the type of woman that they are aiming to represent, e.g. “Linda” for the next-door-neighbour type, “Natasha” for the passionate type, “Eva” for the girly type, etc.). This double life may be exciting at first, as it stimulates the imagination and requires all kinds of stories to be made up. But the constant lying often becomes tiring, as more and more answers have to be found for more and more questions.

But being honest can have consequences too. Therefore it is important to ask yourself how your family, partner or friends are likely to react when they know your profession. Would they distance themselves or even break their ties? Or would they find a way to come to terms with the situation? If this is a possibility, would they also be a source of support when needed? In any case, you should think carefully about exactly who you want to take into your confidence, and when the best opportunity would be. Again, it may be useful to discuss this with colleagues.

What are my boundaries?

Not every woman can do sex work. Sex in the context of prostitution is quite different from what it is in a relationship: Here, sex is a service that is provided in return for money, where the customer’s demands have to be satisfied. Depending on where you work, you may have just one customer a day, or more than a dozen. Some may take up no more than ten minutes and require no more than a quick “in and out”. With others, however, you may spend three hours or more, in which case lots of imagination and a range of skills (e.g. massage, roleplay) are needed to keep the customer happy.



So sex work is much more than “just spreading your legs”, and the customers are not just men, as women sometimes also use the services of a prostitute, either on their own or with a partner.

It is essential that you decide what you are prepared to do, and what you will not do. This also applies to the “basic services” of sex work:

- French foreplay: Licking or sucking the penis or vulva
- Total French: Licking or sucking the penis to the point of ejaculation in the mouth
- Manual masturbation: Manipulating the penis to the point of ejaculation
- Spanish: Rubbing the penis between the breasts to the point of ejaculation
- Vaginal intercourse
- Greek: Anal intercourse
- Golden shower: Urinating in the mouth/on the body.

Many sex workers may for example refuse French kissing on the job, because they see it as too intimate and something to be kept for a private relationship (or because they are aware that infections can be transmitted that way – see page 14). Likewise, it is up to you to decide, for example, that you will not offer anal sex, or will not drink alcohol while working.

Rethink regularly what your boundaries are, as they may change with time and experience. On no account should you do something that is harmful to you, and always practise safer sex. Above all, this means: Use a condom in vaginal, anal and oral intercourse (for more info, see “Safer sex – avoiding HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases”, page 12).

What is the best workplace?

The type of customers you will have and what your job will be like will depend to a large extent on where you are working. You may need to try out various working environments before you find the one that is right for you.

- On the street and in an Eros-Center, most trade will be with “express” customers, who are looking for fast sexual relief for example during a break from their job, before going out for the evening, or before going home at night. This being a public workplace, there is a greater risk of being seen by neighbours, friends or acquaintances.
- In private houses, flats and clubs on the other hand, privacy and discretion are easier to ensure. From the outside, these places are often hard to recognise as brothel-type establishments, as attention is only drawn to them through advertisements. The atmosphere here may give the customer the feeling that they are visiting a lover.
- In table dancing bars, the emphasis is on entertainment. The time spent in bed with the customer tends to be short.
- Customers of massage parlours are mainly there for an erotic massage. Further sexual services may be provided there if requested.
- S&M studios have a very different working atmosphere. Here, special equipment is used, the appropriate clothing is usually leather, PVC or similar, and professionals employed there have to be able to fulfil customers’ often highly specialised demands.
- Swinger clubs, saunas and naturism clubs are grey areas for prostitution. It can be hard to tell if people there are paying for sex. Nudity and a certain atmosphere are at any rate major features.

What do I need to work professionally?

As in any other profession, for sex work you need certain specific equipment. This includes, for example...

... Condoms

Condoms are available in many colours and many different designs – with studded or ribbed textures, flavoured or neutral, lubricated or non-lubricated. However, not all products on the market are the same quality. You should only use brand-name condoms (with DIN EN ISO 4074: 2000 printed on the packaging) that are within their expiration date. Store condoms away from heat and direct sunlight, keep them away from sharp objects, and avoid crushing them.

Condoms are by far the most important item you need for your work: They offer protection not only from pregnancy but also from HIV infection. They also help reduce your risk of getting infected by sexually transmitted diseases.*

* The Femidom gives you the same degree of protection as a conventional condom. It is a condom for the woman, consisting of a polyurethane tube with a thin ring at each end. The smaller ring is inserted in the vagina, and the bigger sits outside the body. However, the Femidom is not very useful in sex work, as you have to hold it to ensure that it is not pressed into the vagina, outer ring and all, so that you do not have both hands free for, for example, petting or supporting the customer. Also, the Femidom is more expensive than the condom, and harder to find on sale.

Do not rely on the customer to put the condom on, do it yourself!

- Open the condom packaging with your fingers, not with your teeth or with scissors. Be careful if you have brittle nails, they can also damage the condom.
- Pinch the tip of the condom together in your fingers, to leave room for the semen. Put it on the end of the penis – with the rubber ring on the outside – and roll it to the base of the erect penis.
- Put oil-free lubricant (see below) on the condom and also in the vagina/anus, to ensure that the condom slides better and does not tear.
- Use your hand to check occasionally that the condom is still in place.
- Immediately after ejaculation, the customer should remove his penis with the condom still in place: The penis should still be hard, so that the condom does not slip off.
- If the customer wants to switch from the anus to the vagina, a new condom must be used, otherwise you run the risk of a vaginal infection.
- Each condom should only be used once!

Always put the condom on before penetration: this is essential to protect you from sexually transmitted diseases.

... Lubricant

Lubricant makes manual masturbation more enjoyable – and adds moisture to your anus or vagina, which helps prevent the condom from tearing during anal or vaginal sex. Always use only oil-free lubricant (water or silicone based). Oil-based lubricants such as Vaseline, Nivea or baby oil are harmful to condoms and make them porous.

... Dental dams

These small latex sheets are placed over the vulva or anus before oral sex, to protect the mouth from infections. If you don't have a dental dam to hand, cling film, or a condom cut open, can be used instead.

... Latex gloves, finger cots

These protect your hands and fingers from contact with bodily fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal fluids or faeces. For example, they are worn for manual penetration of the anus or vagina, also known as "fingering" or "fisting". If changing from anal to vaginal contact: New finger cots/gloves should be used, to avoid infecting the vagina.

... Sponge

Like tampons, a sponge absorbs menstrual blood, but is positioned deeper, right in front of the cervix. With a sponge you can have vaginal sex without the customer noticing that you have your period (it is better, however, if you don't have vaginal sex during your period – see page 11). The sponge can be worn in the vagina for up to eight hours, less if you have a heavy flow. Each sponge should only be used once – they should not be rinsed and reinserted!

... Dildos, vibrators and other sex toys

Dildos and vibrators – i.e. sex toys in the shape of a penis – are available in all sorts of designs and materials. Dildos used for anal sex should have a broad base to prevent them from "disappearing". Be careful if using dildos made from hard plastic or from wood, as any split joints, breaks or splinters could cause injuries! Silicone is a better material to use. For all sex toys the same rule applies: Wash with soap and water after every use, and use a condom over the toy to prevent infections.

All the equipment that you need for sex work can be bought from "brothel sellers" who sell their goods on the street as well as in brothels. Condoms, lubricants and dental dams can also be found in pharmacies, drugstores, sex shops, or are sold by the Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe (www.wetwildworld.de).

How do I protect myself against violence?

A golden rule of sex work is to always negotiate in advance with the customer what you will do and what you will not. If you say no to something, that means no. Sex workers are not fair game for anyone: Just like everybody else, you have the right to physical inviolability – your customers and your employers have to respect that. Being forced into sex by violence or threats is sexual duress – in prostitution too. Any and all kinds of physical and mental violence are offences against the law which are prosecuted and punished by the authorities when reported.

In brothels and similar establishments you are relatively safe from violence, because there you are not on your own. In addition, they often have extra safety precautions in place, such as doormen, alarm bells and video surveillance. But wherever you work, it is important to be aware of how you can protect yourself from (sexual) violence. A few general tips:

- Make sure that you are as mentally alert as possible. When you are on drugs or in withdrawal you are not fully able to keep control of the situation you are in.
- Do not wear anything that could be used to choke you (e.g. necklaces, scarves).
- For self-defence the best things to use are hairspray, insect spray, or lemon extract in a spray bottle. Tear gas or weapons (e.g. a knife) could be dangerous for you if they are

turned against you.

- Always tell your colleagues where you are going with a customer, and how long for.
- Be alert: If your instinct tells you that there is a risk, you are best advised not to take on a particular customer. If someone threatens you, and there are other people nearby, scream and shout as loud as you can.

If you are in danger, or have experienced violence, call the police (in Germany, the number is **110**). You can report the crime right away or later. If you are worried about reporting what happened (because you may for example be in the country illegally), there are places you can go to get advice, e.g. a sex worker centre (see addresses on page 26). The people who work there have a great deal of experience with such cases and can offer you support. These advice centres can also help women who have been forced into prostitution, and/or who have been the victim of human trafficking. If you know anyone who this applies to, you can call one of these centres anonymously (without having to say your name or address) and pass the information on. A case worker can then get in touch with this colleague, find out what has happened to them, and offer them any help they may need.

Sex work and health

Your body is your main capital, it's your body that earns you money. So its worth while to look after your health. The most important basics are a healthy diet, regular exercise and sport (ideally outdoors in the fresh air) and enough sleep. The tips below can also help you to stay healthy in your job:

Hygiene

A shower in the morning is all you need for general bodily hygiene. Excessive cleanness can even be harmful: If, after every customer, you take a shower using soap or shower gel, your skin may lose its protective acid layer. It is best to use only cold or lukewarm water for washing the genital area. Vaginal douches, disinfecting lotions and sprays for the genital area and wet wipes should not be used as they can damage the sensitive balance of your natural vaginal flora and make the vagina more vulnerable to infections. To maintain this balance you can occasionally use lactic acid capsules (available without a prescription at the chemist's) or yoghurt containing lactobacillus bacteria in the vagina.

Caution during menstruation

As your vagina is more sensitive than usual during your menstruation, you are more liable to get viral, bacterial or fungal infections from sex at this time. So it is best not to work at all during your period, or to limit your services to, for example, oral sex or manual masturbation. But if you do want to still have vaginal sex, you can wear a sponge (see page 8) in the vagina, so that your customer does not notice that you are menstruating.

The fewer drugs the better

Alcohol and other types of drugs may not only be harmful to your health, they can also limit your ability to think clearly and keep control of a situation. When you have taken drugs you are less able to assess risks, and to protect yourself in dangerous situations. In bars for instance, alcohol consumption is part of the job – but you should avoid drinking to excess at all costs. And last but not least, remember that nicotine and caffeine are also drugs, and can damage your health, especially when used heavily. So try to smoke as little as possible, and not to drink coffee “by the litre”.

The necessary vaccinations

As a sex worker you are at particularly high risk of catching hepatitis. Therefore, you need to get yourself vaccinated against hepatitis A and B (unfortunately there is no vaccine for hepatitis C). The vaccination usually protects you for ten years. The public health department (Gesundheitsamt, see page 18), among others, can advise you about hepatitis vaccination. It is also a good idea to get a flu vaccination every autumn.

Safer sex – avoiding HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases

Working professionally in the sex trade means above all using the necessary protective measures: Because you of course do not know who else your customers have had sex with. Unprotected sex can leave you with all kinds of problems – besides HIV and hepatitis there are other sexually transmitted diseases (= STDs) which can just as well seriously damage your health. STDs such as syphilis, gonorrhoea or herpes also increase your risk of HIV transmission. They cause ulcers or wounds that can function as a “gateway” for HIV. Practising safer sex – above

all the use of condoms – reduces the risk of infection but does not cut it out completely because these diseases are so highly infectious. That’s why it is important that STDs are recognised, and medically treated, as early as possible (see page 17).

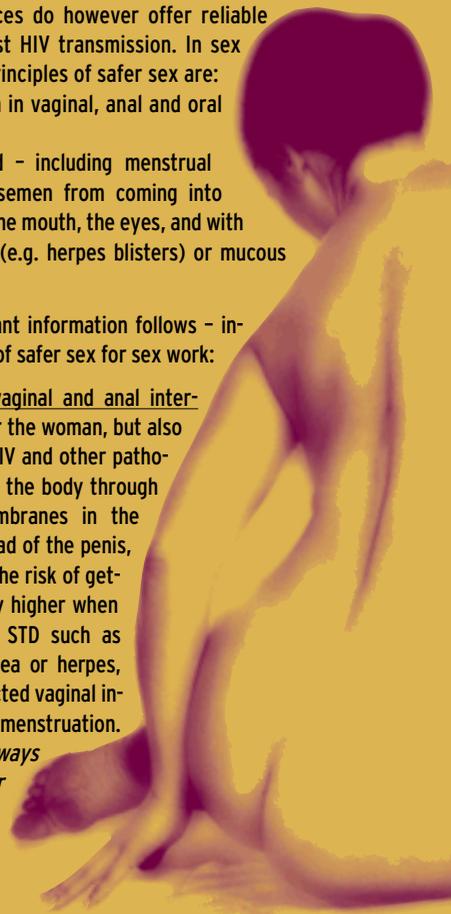
Safer sex practices do however offer reliable protection against HIV transmission. In sex work, the main principles of safer sex are:

- Use a condom in vaginal, anal and oral intercourse.
- Prevent blood – including menstrual blood – and semen from coming into contact with the mouth, the eyes, and with open wounds (e.g. herpes blisters) or mucous membranes.

The most important information follows – including the rules of safer sex for sex work:

- Unprotected vaginal and anal intercourse is risky for the woman, but also for the man, as HIV and other pathogens can get into the body through the mucous membranes in the vagina, on the head of the penis, and in the anus. The risk of getting HIV is usually higher when there is also an STD such as syphilis, gonorrhoea or herpes, and with unprotected vaginal intercourse during menstruation.

Professionals always use condoms for vaginal and anal intercourse to



protect themselves against HIV and other STDs.

■ Licking/sucking the penis is an unlikely cause of HIV infection, so long as the customer does not ejaculate in your mouth. Hepatitis and other STDs such as gonorrhoea however can be very easily transmitted. So professionals always use a condom for this as well.

■ Licking the vagina carries a low-risk of HIV infection. However, the risk is higher during menstruation, and when the mucous membrane in the mouth is damaged (e.g. through herpes or fungal infections). Besides, oral contact with the vagina can often lead to infection with other STDs. So professionals generally use a dental dam (see page 8), when licking a customer, or being licked by a customer.

■ With S&M (sado-masochism) practices there is no risk of HIV as long as no injuries result. You should make sure that no blood or bodily excretions such as faeces or urine come into contact with any wounds, as this presents a risk of hepatitis infection. "Torture equipment" (e.g. whips or ties) should always be disinfected after use (e.g. with alcohol), before being used on another person.

■ Practices involving urine or faeces are not dangerous in terms of HIV – as long as there is no blood in these excretions. Hepatitis viruses and intestinal parasites can however be easily transmitted.

■ Using dildos and other sex toys is not dangerous if they are only used by/on one person. If more than one person is involved, clean the toys thoroughly with soap and water before passing them on, or cover them with a new condom.

■ Kissing – even deep French kissing – is "HIV-safe", as long as there is no blood. Careful: Herpes, gonorrhoea and hepatitis can easily be transmitted by kissing!

The most important facts about HIV and AIDS

HIV is a virus that attacks the body's natural defences (immune system) and can cause AIDS. In a person with AIDS, the immune system is weakened to the point that it is scarcely able to fight off any illness. This can lead to serious infections, allergies and cancer.

In people infected, the virus is mostly found in blood (including menstrual blood) and semen, but also in vaginal fluids and breast milk. HIV is most often transmitted through vaginal and anal intercourse without a condom. There is also a very high risk of infection through drug use, if needles and other equipment (spoons, filters, water) are shared. Infected mothers can pass on the virus to their children during pregnancy, at birth or while breast-feeding.

There is not yet any vaccine for HIV, and the virus cannot be eliminated from the body. With antiretroviral medication, it is possible to keep HIV in check for a number of years, but still people with HIV will be chronically ill, have to take tablets every day that may cause serious side-effects, and will probably have to continue with treatment all their lives.

An HIV test can show if you have been infected with HIV. Before taking the test you should get specialist counselling, e.g. from the AIDS service organisations (Aidshilfen) (for addresses see page 28) or from your local public health department (Gesundheitsamt). The public health departments usually provide the test free-of-charge or for a small fee (10-15 €) and carry it out anonymously. At the doctor's or in health care centres patients must give their name when the test is carried out, and the result is entered in the patient file – which may have social as well as legal drawbacks (if you want to take out private health insurance, for example).

Help - accident at work!

It is always possible that a condom will tear during use. If this happens, keep a cool head and remember what to do, namely: First go to the toilet, and try to press as much semen as possible out of the vagina or rectum. On no account carry out a vaginal douche or inject liquid into the intestine via the anus (enema), as this could lead to an injury that would increase your risk of getting infected by HIV and other pathogens - and a vaginal douche washes the semen further up towards the cervix, leading to a higher risk of pregnancy. If you get semen in the eyes, rinse them with water as soon as possible. If semen gets in your mouth, spit it out fast and rinse out your mouth (the faster the better, and ideally using alcohol). After such an "accident at work", it may be a good idea to get further advice from the public health department (Gesundheitsamt), in a sex worker advice centre, or from an AIDS service organisation (Aidshilfe) (for addresses see page 28).

If you know that the customer you were with at the time is HIV-positive, it may also be useful to have a four-week treatment with anti-HIV medicines (this "HIV-PEP" should if possible be begun

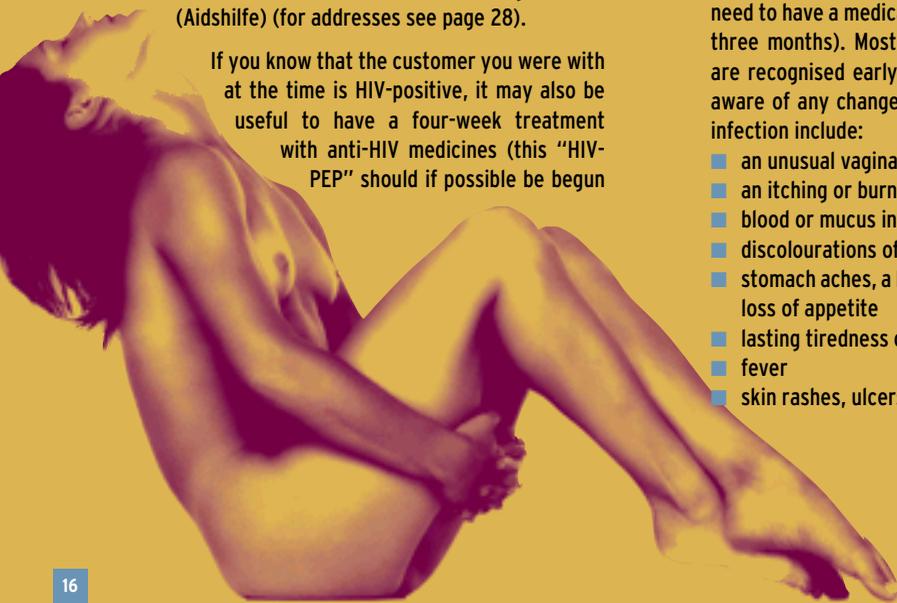
within 24 hours of the risk contact). This needs to be discussed with an experienced doctor. It is best to find out in advance where you can get HIV PEP treatment, in case you ever need it. Your local Aidshilfe will be able to help you (for addresses see page 28).

After an "accident at work", you can take the "morning after pill" to prevent a pregnancy. You should take this as soon as possible, preferably within 12 hours, at the latest within 72 hours (= 3 days). As a general rule, pregnancy can be reliably prevented when you use condoms along with a further method of contraception (e.g. a diaphragm or the Pill).

Recognising and treating STDs early on

Sexually transmitted diseases are a serious matter. You really need to have a medical STD check on a regular basis (say every three months). Most STDs can be effectively treated if they are recognised early enough. So it is important that you are aware of any changes in your body. Possible signs of an STD infection include:

- an unusual vaginal discharge
- an itching or burning feeling in the genital area
- blood or mucus in the faeces
- discolourations of the urine or faeces
- stomach aches, a lasting feeling of pressure in the stomach, loss of appetite
- lasting tiredness or exhaustion
- fever
- skin rashes, ulcers or warts.



If you notice any of these symptoms, go to a doctor as soon as you can – e.g. in the public health department (Gesundheitsamt). STDs that are treated too late or not at all can have serious consequences, such as chronic pelvic inflammations, infertility or cervical cancer. The doctor will carry out a smear test, or a blood or urine test, depending on what STD is suspected. Many STDs can be treated with antibiotics.

Most public health departments have an STD advice point where you can get tests and support anonymously (without having to give your name). If you do not have health insurance, and cannot afford to pay for the treatment yourself, you can be treated free of charge. The system is different with general practitioners, gynaecologists and dermatologists: With these doctors you have to have health insurance, or be able to pay for the service yourself.

- You should get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B.
- Have a cancer screening test once a year. This should include a PAP smear (in which a cell sample is taken from the cervix and cervical canal with a cotton bud) and a physical breast examination.
- If pregnant you should get yourself tested for STDs every two or three weeks. Most STDs can be transmitted from an infected mother to the child during pregnancy or at birth, and damage the child's health – sometimes very seriously. They can also cause premature birth or miscarriage. The above risks can be reduced significantly when the appropriate medical action is taken.

Prostitution and the law

In Germany, prostitution has been legal ever since the start of the 20th century, and is gaining acceptance in society as a whole. The „Act regulating the legal situation of prostitutes“ (Prostitutionsgesetz, ProstG), which came into effect on January 1, 2002, has created a basis for improving the legal situation of sex workers. Nowadays, for instance, sex workers can enter into legally enforceable contracts with customers and brothel operators and have access to the social security system (health, unemployment and pension insurance) when they have an employment contract. Brothels in turn can provide good job conditions with high hygiene standards, without becoming criminally liable; before the prostitution act, this was considered „promotion of prostitution“ and was forbidden. Sex work is, however, not by any means on the same legal footing as other professions, since special regulations continue to apply, such as restricted area regulations (see page 21) or advertising bans.

Various legal regulations apply to sex work as for other professions. As a sex worker you will therefore sometimes have to come into contact with the authorities. A brief overview:

- As a self-employed prostitute, you have to register your business at the finance office (Finanzamt); registration at the trade licensing office (Gewerbeamt) or the office for economic affairs (Wirtschaftsamt) is not necessary. You will then be given a tax number, and at the end of each business year (sometimes four times a year) you have to hand in details of your income, so that the tax amount can be determined. Non-payment of taxes is tax fraud and makes you liable for prosecution.
- If you are receiving unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld I or II), you have to disclose your income from sex

work to the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit). Any income above a small allowance amount will be subtracted from the amount of benefit you receive. If you are unemployed, and want to become a self-employed sex worker, you can apply for a subsidy from the Federal Employment Agency. This agency is also responsible for assisting you if you want to change your career and find work in another industry.

- If you are originally from one of the new EU countries, you have the same right to work in Germany as a self-employed sex worker as all other EU citizens. You have to register your address at a local registration office (Meldestelle), and fill in a form stating what job you intend to do. The registration office will then check if there are any financial claims against you (e.g. costs incurred if you were ever deported from Germany), and usually then issue you with an open-ended “residence permit for EU citizens” (EU-Freizügigkeitsbescheinigung).



Next you have to register at the finance office, and you should also take out a health insurance policy.

- The Foreign Nationals Authority (Ausländerbehörde) handles all information on migrants to Germany and their applications. This office only checks the residence and employment status of people who intend to work in the sex trade. This status determines whether a person is entitled to work in the sex trade (or in any other job) in Germany or not. Tourists are not allowed to work in Germany.
- Most towns and cities have restricted areas that are regulated by the municipal standards office (Ordnungsamt), the trade licensing office (Gewerbeamt) or by the police. These regulations define the places and times at which sex work is forbidden. You can be fined if you do not observe these regulations.
- The police are there for everyone, including sex workers. You can demand help from the police if you are in danger (phone 110). In order to build trust between the police and the prostitution industry, local brothels are usually visited regularly by one or two police officers: You can talk to the police and ask them what you need to know. To help avert danger, and if a crime is suspected, the police are also permitted to carry out checks of brothels and similar places of employment. You then have to show them your ID if they demand – or your passport and maybe also your work permit if you are not a German citizen.

For more information, see the booklet “Gute Geschäfte. Rechtliches ABC der Prostitution” from the Bundesverband Sexuelle Dienstleistungen e.V. (this can be downloaded from the internet at www.busd.de).

Professionalism pays

The problems and conflicts of everyday work, discrimination on the part of the authorities or other people, the unequal legal status of sex work: all of this can make the job more difficult. A professional attitude to your work in the sex trade can make it that much easier: As a professional, it is easier to achieve what you want, and to confidently use the skills and knowledge that you have gathered through your work - or maybe also from courses or seminars:

- You can advertise your services effectively, e.g. with the right image and clothing, using creative advertising, or an attractive internet home page.
- You are an expert in sex and sexuality, eroticism, massage, entertainment and acting.
- You know all about preventative health care and STD prevention.
- You have a basic knowledge of social law, tax law and accounting.
- You have a talent for organisation, good people skills, and a gift for persuasion.

In the sex industry, professionalism pays. Many of the skills you learn in the trade can also be very useful if you later want a change of career: You can then build on those skills, get further training and education, and so increase your chances on the job market. If you do want to switch to another job, the best place to start is a sex worker centre: The people there can give you expert advice and support.

Prostitution in art and culture, political action

Prostitution has always captured people's imagination. Artists in particular have often been attracted to the aura of the trade, and many have made prostitution a main subject of their art. European artists who have been inspired by the trade include writers such as Charles Baudelaire, Gustave Flaubert, Josefine Mutzenbacher, Emile Zola and Georg Büchner, and painters including Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Edgar Degas, Vincent van Gogh, Heinrich Zille, Otto Dix and George Grosz. The many and diverse aspects of sex work have also been looked at in films, such as "Irma la Douce", "The King of St Pauli", "Belle de Jour" or "Pretty Woman".

Today, it's the sex workers who are confidently putting themselves in the spotlight, telling the world about their life and work, and organising themselves to fight for their rights. A few examples:

In 2000, the Berlin-based artists agency AHOI organised the first "Kult-Hur-Festival" (Culture Whore Festival), that was attended by male and female sex workers from all over the world. In November 2005, the Museum of Work in Hamburg opened an exhibition entitled "Sexarbeit. Prostitution - Lebenswelten und Mythen" (Sex work. Prostitution - lifestyles and myths) which presents many and various documents and exhibits relating to the history of prostitution and economic migration, on the people who use sexual services, about the struggle for the social acceptance of sex work, and about the status of sex work in art and culture. The exhibition will be shown in other towns and cities around Germany in the future.

Every year on 2 June, sex-worker organisations all around the world mark their "International Prostitutes' Day" with a

series of actions and events. The day commemorates the start of the modern sex-workers' movement in Europe, dated to 2 June 1975, when 150 sex workers in France protested against state repression by organising a general strike, and occupying the Saint-Nizier church in Lyon for ten days. Their protest was soon backed up by colleagues in other French cities. The women's bravery attracted a great deal of attention and support from the public, but their situation is still no better today than it was thirty years ago.

In Germany, most prostitutes' organisations were set up in the late 1970s/early 1980s, often as part of feminist self-help projects. They work for the rights of both male and female sex workers, and offer advice on social law (e.g. for newcomers to the industry, or those who want to leave it). HYDRA e.V. in Berlin, the very first sex-workers' project in Germany, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2005 with an exhibition, a film festival and other events.

In 1985, prostitutes' organisations held the first German "Hurenkongress" which has since taken place twice a year, and is now called "Fachtag Prostitution" (Prostitution symposium). Other organisations now also take part - including church-based advice centres, public health departments and immigrants' organisations. At the symposium, sex workers share their experiences, discuss current developments relating to political, social and health matters, frame their demands for prostitution and the sex industry to be accorded the

same status as other sectors and present them to politicians and the public.

The "International Committee for Prostitutes Rights" (ICPR), founded at the World Prostitution Congresses in Amsterdam (1985) and Brussels (1986), co-ordinates the political activities of individuals and groups across the world, and is active in working for sex workers' (human) rights.

At the "European conference on sex work, human rights, work and migration" in October 2005 in Brussels, the 200-plus participants from 30 countries drew up a manifesto that was presented to the European Parliament for action. The manifesto demanded for sex workers the right to self-determination in their life and work, protection from violence and exploitation, and full human rights, employment rights, and civil liberties (more information is available in the internet at www.sexwerkeurope.org).

Booklets

The local AIDS service organisations (Aidshilfen), or the Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe e.V. (for addresses see p. 28) can provide the following booklets, and more, free of charge:

- *Safer Work* (in German)
- *Sexuelle Gewalt - Schutz und Hilfe. Tipps und Infos für Frauen, die Sex anbieten* (Sexual violence - protection and assistance. Tips and info for women who sell sex) (in German, Polish, Russian and Thai)
- *Safer Use - Risiken minimieren beim Drogengebrauch* (Safer Use - Minimising your risks when using drugs) (in German, Turkish and Russian)
- *HIV und Aids* (HIV and AIDS) (easy to understand basic information in German, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Russian and Turkish)

- *HIV/Aids: Heutiger Wissensstand* (HIV/AIDS: What we know now) (in German)

Free materials from other organisations:

- *Gute Geschäfte. Rechtliches ABC der Prostitution* (Good business. A legal ABC of prostitution) published by the Bundesverband Sexuelle Dienstleistungen e. V. (available for downloading from the internet at www.busd.de)
- *Gesundheitsmappe* (Health file) published by Hydra e.V.
- *Deutschlandreiseführer für Frauen. Informationsbroschüre für ausreisewillige Frauen aus der Ukraine* (A women's travel guide to Germany. Information for women who want to migrate from Ukraine) published by the Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit - GTZ (see in the internet at www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/05-0486.pdf).

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