

# Big increase in prostitution reports

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The number of people reported to the police for buying sex has risen five-fold in Sweden in the past year, according to new figures. During the first half of 2009 a total of 148 people were reported for paying prostitutes for sex. The number for the same period this year was 770.

A large part of the rise - 430 cases - was due to the discovery of a major prostitution ring in Jämtland county, north-western Sweden. But even when these cases are discounted, the figures had more than doubled.

But police said the dramatic increase was probably not due to a sudden rise in the number of men visiting prostitutes. Rather, they credit increased measures to tackle prostitution and human trafficking. An extra 40 million kronor has been allocated this year to pay for training and strengthening of the police's operations against the sex trade.

"The figures are absolutely a result of the fact that the police have been given the means to dive deep into this," said Chief Inspector Kajsa Wahlberg, who advises the government on human trafficking issues.

The national pattern was reflected in Sweden's major cities. In Skåne, which includes Malmö, some 20 cases of paying for sex were reported during the whole of 2009. So far this year, 50 cases have been reported. There, the extra money has been used to increase internet monitoring of the sex trade, which has resulted both in more reports of people paying for sex and in a fall in street prostitution.

Västra Götaland, which includes Gothenburg, also saw a big increase in reports:

"I wouldn't say that everything is hunky-dory. But it's a big increase and it's clear that we can be pleased with the good results," said Mats Palmgren, deputy head of the police in greater Gothenburg.

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## Swedish law pares street prostitution

### *Purchase, not sale, of sex is punished*

By Igor Gedilaghine, AFP July 3, 2010

A Swedish law punishing the purchase - not the sale - of sex, has been so effective it has reduced street prostitution in half, but the Scandinavian country is still facing a growing problem of sex sold over the Internet, a report published yesterday said.

"The evaluation shows that the ban on the purchase of sexual services has had the intended effect and is an important instrument in preventing and combating prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes," the report said.

The report, handed to Justice Minister Beatrice Ask yesterday, maintained "that prostitution in Sweden, unlike in comparable countries, has not in any case increased since the introduction of the ban" on buying sexual services went into effect in 1999.

While the law punishing the client rather than the prostitute may not have caused a dramatic drop in prostitution as a whole, its true triumph, according to the report, is that "street prostitution in Sweden has been halved."

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