

## **Anna Kontula: Prostitution in Finland (2005)**

(Anna Kontula's report "Prostituutio Suomessa" in Finnish language published by Sexpo Säätiö in 2005 is available on [www.sexpo.fi](http://www.sexpo.fi) and on [www.salli.org](http://www.salli.org))

### **Abstract**

Currently, there are some 8000 prostitutes working in Finland annually, half of them Finns and the majority working part-time. On a daily basis, about a quarter and during the year one third of them work with or under the control of the pander (pimp?). Reasons why people end up as prostitutes are various.

The field of prostitution is divided ethnically: the Finns offer traditional sex services (incalls/outcalls) and special services, the Thais offer erotic massage and the Russians and Estonians visiting Finland usually offer only traditional sex services.

A part of prostitution is associated with serious social problems, such as crime, poverty, social marginalisation and drug abuse. The situation of the illegal immigrants is especially bad: they cannot enter the official labour market or turn to public services (such as police or health care) even in acute situations.

Besides the international organized criminal procurement, there are other forms of organizations in the field, too. The prostitutes maintain online discussion forums and organize meetings. Informal networks arise around studios, massage parlors and assistance organizations. Sex workers also have national and international unions. Still, the majority of the prostitutes don't know anyone else working in the business.

Even though prostitution is found in every society, the social, cultural and economic characteristics of each society have an effect on the volume and forms of it. The Finnish prostitution legislation has been greatly revised during the last few years. The phenomenon of prostitution has reflected the slow rise in income level in Russia and Estonia, the growing income disparities in Finland, the Estonian EU membership and the discussion about prostitution in the Finnish media.

The most significant changes that have taken place in the field of prostitution in Finland during the last few years have been the decrease in temporary prostitution by the Russians and Estonians, the Estonian prostitutes becoming independent, and the possible increase in the number of Finnish prostitutes. The "precision prostitution", where the client invites the seller to his home for a few days to do for example household chores in addition to sex services, has replaced the "girl buses" from Murmansk. The beginning of substitution treatment in Finland has cut down the proportion of injecting drug users in prostitution. As the new communication technology is becoming more and more common and changes are being made in legislation, the internet is gradually replacing streets, restaurants and newspapers as a way to find customers.