

**Doras Luimní welcomes new legislation that aims to reduce demand for prostitution by criminalising the purchase of sex.**

**20<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

New legislation to criminalise the purchase of sex, as opposed to the seller, has passed through both Houses of the Oireachtas and will soon become Irish law.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill includes provisions to decriminalise the sale of sex, to criminalise the purchase of sex, while ensuring that people in prostitution can access support. The law also strengthens provisions to combat child pornography and prevent the sexual grooming of children.

Doras Luimní have been advocating for legislative change and the adoption of the “Nordic model” since 2011, along with our partners in the Turn Off the Red Light campaign, to give stronger protection to vulnerable people who are being sexually exploited and ultimately to help combat trafficking in human beings in Ireland. This law is the culmination of many years advocacy, in conjunction with a diverse range of NGOs, survivor activists and civil society organisations who have been members of the Turn off the Red Light Campaign.

Leonie Kerins, Director of Doras said: “Doras Luimní strongly believe that this law will help reduce demand for prostitution and will best protect many vulnerable women, men and children trapped in sexual exploitation. We acknowledge that this legislation alone will not deter an entire industry; however, it will send a clear message that paying for sex is a crime that is punishable by the law.

Kerins continued “Doras have been working with victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution since 2011, which has directly informed our advocacy efforts with regard to campaigning for this legislation. Through our direct support services we know that migrant women are disproportionately involved in prostitution and many of the women we have worked with have displayed many of the indicators of human trafficking and coercion.”

Vania Alexandrova, Anti-Trafficking Officer with Doras Luimní, added “The introduction of this legislation will help to ensure that people in prostitution will be protected and supported. Similar legislation has been in force in Sweden since 1999 and since then they have seen a significant reduction in the numbers of people trafficked for sexual exploitation. Ireland now joins the fight against this very lucrative trade and puts an impediment to the highly profitable business of pimps and traffickers.”

Doras Luimní would also like to commend the work of the Tánaiste Frances Fitzgerald for her leadership on this crucial legislation. We look forward to working with the Department of Justice and our Turn Off the Red Light campaign partners to ensure that victims of forced prostitution and sex trafficking in Ireland are protected and supported.

**ENDS**

## Notes

- Doras Luimní is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Limerick. Our mission is to promote and uphold the human rights and wellbeing of migrants through personal advocacy, integration development and collaborative advocacy campaigns at the local and national level.
- Our dedicated anti-trafficking unit provides specialised support and assistance to suspected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour. For more information on our anti-trafficking support services, visit [www.dorasluimni.org/services/victims-of-trafficking/](http://www.dorasluimni.org/services/victims-of-trafficking/)
- For more information on the Turn Off the Red Light campaign, visit [www.turnofftheredlight.ie](http://www.turnofftheredlight.ie)

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