



France

- Population: 64.6 million
- GDP per capita (in US dollars): 42,732
- Bicameral presidential regime
- Human Development Index (HDI): 0, 888 (22nd rank among 187 countries)
- Gender Inequality Index (GII): 0,088 (13th rank among 147 countries)
- Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI): Score of 70 on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)
- Founding Member of the European Union since 1952.

- 37,000 prostituted persons (between 30,000 and 44,000) (*Mouvement du Nid, Psytel*, May 2015).
- Prostitution generates a net income estimated at 1.25 billion US\$ (1.15 billion €) of which 575 million US\$ (530 million €) go to criminal organizations (*La Revue du GRASCO*, January 2016). A study by ProstCost mentions a net income of 3.47 billion US\$ (3.2 billion €)
- Article 1 of the Resolution unanimously adopted by the deputies on December 6th, 2011 stipulates, “the National Assembly reaffirms the abolitionist position of France, where the objective is a society without prostitution”.
- Article 225-5 to 225-12 of the Penal Code prohibits all forms of procuring.
- In 2014, 590 people were questioned for procuring and 50 international networks were dismantled (*OCRTEH*, April 2015). Out of these 50 networks, only 19 were condemned for human trafficking. 384 victims of procuring were identified in 2014.
- Since the establishment of the International Security Act in March 2003, article 225-4-1 addresses specifically the infractions for human trafficking and punishes traffickers with 7 years in prison and a 162,870 US\$ (150,000 €) fine. This was reinforced by article 225-4-2 in 2013 which increases the penalty to 10 years imprisonment and a 1.63 million US\$ [1.5 million €] fine.
- The January 3rd 2013 ordinance created the Interministerial mission for the protection of women against violence and for combating human trafficking (MIPROF)
- France remains a transit and destination country for victims of sexual exploitation.

- Victims most often originate from Eastern Europe (Romania, Bulgaria, Albania), West Africa (Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Asia (China), Central and South America (Peru, Colombia, Brazil, as well as the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco).

While France has managed to limit the development of prostitution compared to its Spanish and German neighbors, sex trafficking and prostitution nevertheless remains a lucrative industry in France where networks continue to invest. Physical and psychological violence remains a way for prostituted persons to generate more profit. The proportion of foreign individuals working in prostitution as well as the increasing level of dismantled networks each year demonstrate that very few individuals prostitute themselves independently. Prostitution is the most brutal form of monetary domination. The expansion and normalization of prostitution is a result of an increase in supply and demand, where prostituted persons are instruments that are devoted to male satisfaction (99% of clients are male). This scourge endangers the wellbeing of prostituted persons and eats away at human dignity.

An Still Alarming Level of Prostitution

In a 2013 report of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), France was reprimanded by the European Council for insufficient protection of sex trafficking victims (*GRETA*, December 2nd 2015). France was asked to reinforce its social actions against trafficking by having more people dedicated to the protection of victims. At that time, several associations were mobilized and implemented operations to fight against the causes and consequences of prostitution. They worked tirelessly to prevent and help prostituted persons find alternative economic work. In 2015, the number of prostituted persons in France was estimated at 37,000 (*Mouvement du Nid, Psytel*, May 2015).

While French law does not prohibit prostitution, it nevertheless condemns exploitation by regulating its penalties in relation to the circumstances, with a series of laws pertaining to procuring (225-5 to 225-12). Article 225-4-1 of the Penal Code defines human trafficking and punishes the perpetrators with 7 years imprisonment and a fine of 162,465 US\$ (150,000 €). Prostitution of minors is prohibited and severely punished. That being said, according to the 2015 U.S. Department of State Report on Trafficking in Persons, France still remains a transit and destination country for victims of sex trafficking. More than one thousand individuals were arrested by the police for offering their services in public, which is three times less than in 2004.

This decreasing figure is not a reflection of a decrease in prostituted persons offering their services publicly, but is rather a reflection of a decrease in police arrests. Out of these arrested prostituted persons, 96% are women and 93% are non-French (*OCRTEH*, April 2015).

Prostitution remains above all a gender phenomenon, where the vast majority of prostituted persons are women and 99% of clients are men. 50 international prostitution networks were dismantled on French soil in 2014 (*DCPJ*, May 2015). Amongst them, 25 were originally from Eastern Europe, 9 were from China, 8 from Nigeria, and 5 from Latin American countries, which still represent the four main regions of origin for prostituted

persons in France. Out of these 50 networks, 19 investigations were pursued against procurers due to having violated laws prohibiting human trafficking; this was the first time a series of prosecutions had been executed since the law of 2003. While the majority of individuals accused of procuring are male (203 out of 294), the role of women in prostitution network organizations is growing. Of the 91 women arrested, 82 were accused of aggravated procuring (OCRTEH, April 2015).

Active Eastern Networks

A majority of dismantled networks come from countries in the East, such as Romania and Bulgaria. In March 2014, 7 people were put in a holding cell after having forced Romanians to prostitute themselves at Porte de la Villette in Paris. The head of this network was a 58-year-old Romanian woman who had been helped by her son and two grandsons. The 20 or so victims were recruited in Romania, and were threatened with retaliation by the Network once they would arrive in France (LeFigaro/AFP, March 22nd, 2014). In April 2014, a coordinated intervention of French and Romanian police forces led to the dismantling of a prostitution network in Caen that was based in Bucharest. 6 people were arrested at the same time in two countries, and among them, four were locked away. Out of these four, two were procurers and two were intermediaries (France 3 Normandie, June 11th 2014). The network’s structure resembled that of an enlarged family or clan rather than a veritable criminal international organization.

Ever-Adapting Chinese Prostitution Networks

In Paris, the “Marcheuse¹” of Dongbei and Jiangxi are no longer standing alone on their street corners. According to Médecins du Monde (MDM), the number of prostituted Chinese on the streets of Belleville and of Strasboug-St-Denis is rising. MDM has noted an increase in police pressure in these neighborhoods (Le Point/AFP, June 10th, 2015). These women are between 40 and 50 years of age and do not work for anyone or any networks. That being said, when considering the range of cases related to the dismantling of the Chinese prostitution networks in France over the past two years, it is clearly a case of exploitation where women remain the first victims.

<p>“Dismantling of a Network Operating in all of France” (Le Monde/AFP, April 23rd 2014)</p>	<p>3 people that were suspected of being the head of the network were arrested</p>	<p>452,000 US\$ (417,000 €) were taken from the head of the network in Paris</p>
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¹ “Marcheuse”, which translates to “walker” or “wanderer” makes reference to Chinese prostitutes that wander or walk the streets of Paris.

“Dismantling of the Chinese Prostitution Network in Paris” (<i>Le Parisien</i> , June 21 st 2014)	7 people were convicted, 4 people were put on trial, complaints of “torture” were lodged by a prostituted person	Network linked to a clandestine immigration sector where the profits are repatriated to China (in connection with an illegal immigration channel).
“Paris: A Chinese Procuring Network Dismantled” (<i>20 minutes</i> , February 18 th 2015)	One woman at the head of a network and three of her accomplices were arrested. She was managing 3 massage parlors in Paris and in les Hauts-de-Seine	The sales revenues are estimated to be 68,235 US\$ (63,000 €) each month with an average of 5 prostituted persons per salon
“Aggravated Procuring: A Dismantled Chinese Network since Angers” (<i>Ouest France</i> , December 2 nd 2015)	4 people presume procurers were convicted. The network used <i>Vivastreet</i> , control call centre, and apartments they rented for a month.	97,479 US\$ (90,000 €) taken.
“Lyon : a Dismantled Chinese Prostitution Network” (RTL/AFP, December 20 th 2015)	A Chinese restaurateur couple was questioned for aggravated procuring.	81,232 US\$ (75,000 €) per month, 7 to 8 young women in all of France, websites, ads.

While Chinese prostitution is clearly visible in some neighborhoods of Paris, the networks have also developed elsewhere in recent years. These networks seek out Chinese clients and the prostitution takes place in Karaoke/restaurant bars. The Chinese networks have spread to the suburbs and the cities in provinces. The entire territory is affected. As in at least 23 urban areas, prostitution was observed in streets, in apartments and in massage parlors. The Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire (DCPJ) mentions several cases of illegal confinement and violence towards prostituted persons by procurers, both men and women, as well as violence occurring during the settling of scores between competing networks (DCPJ, April 2015). The networks largely use advertisement websites and disguised prostituted persons, by sometimes even making them look Japanese.

Nigerian Prostitution: Reaping the Benefits

Nigerian prostitution, which is very present in the Paris region, has followed the same tendencies as other prostitution groups through spreading to the “province”, including small towns which up until now, had not been touched by this phenomenon. The *modus operandi* of these networks has not changed. Recruited by the Nigerian prostitution networks in their country of origins, these women are subject to a spell (the “juju”) that links them to a procurer, who takes the form of a mama, who is older and is often an ancient prostituted person. Bought from their families, these women must then reimburse a debt (travel, passport,...) that always increases once the women have arrived at the destination (interest, rent,...). The mamas are responsible for watching over and housing the prostituted persons

under their control. In April 2015, the police dismantled a Nigerian prostitution network in Nice. A clergyman, his accomplice, and three mamas were arrested and put in a holding cell (*Nice Matin*, April 24th 2015). The money made by the network was sent to Nigeria via the Hawala, which is an alternative form for transferring funds.

A Peri-Urban Prostitution, and the Edge of National Roads

In this never-ending battle between traffickers and police authorities, prostitution and prostitution networks, are constantly adapting to police techniques, to national legislations, and to social risks in order to achieve their one and only goal: to make money. Municipal anti-prostitution arrests, resident hostility, police pressure, and market saturation have pushed prostitution out of city streets and into peri-urban zones that are less occupied and therefore less likely to be surveyed. Residents frequently complain about prostituted persons. This results in a repressive response from the mayors who often choose to arrest prostituted persons in order to prohibit prostitution in commercial zones and/or in areas frequented by the public.

Mobility and “Sex-Tours”

That being said, prostitution has swarmed to smaller towns, whether that is on the streets, in massage parlors, or in hotels or apartments. The Internet and social networks play a big role in the emergence of these new forms of prostitution: advertisement websites, websites organizing “sex-tours”, as well as the organizing of meetings by pre-established methods allow for mobility and a reinforced discretion. Prostituted persons are more quickly moved from one town to another, or even from one country to another. For Yves Charpenel, the president of the Fondation Scelles, the “sex-tour” phenomenon has been developing for 4 to 5 years and is starting to be present throughout France” (*Nouvel Obs/AFP*, May 23rd, 2014). This extremely mobilized cyber prostitution takes place in hotels and apartments. In May 2015, the French and Romanian police arrested 30 people suspected of organizing “sex-tours” with young Romanian prostituted persons in many of the larger cities in France (*LeFigaro/AFP*, May 19th 2015). 27 suspects were arrested in Romania and 3 were arrested in France. The young women generated a profit averaging at 8,664 US\$ (8,000 €) per month for their procurers, many of whom were violent to the women. The point is for networks to occupy the territories where new prostitution markets still exist while limiting the risks of police surveillance. The more mobile networks are, the more difficult it is for the authorities to put in place a surveillance system.

The Development of a Precarious and Survival Prostitution

The OCRTEH maintains that the development of precarious or survival prostitution affects mainly students or single mothers with young children (*French National Assembly*, November 19th 2013). The increase in recent years of student prostitution is alarming. It is a concerning phenomenon as it affects all social groups and not only students who find themselves in vulnerable economic situations. Behind the legal façade of massage parlors or

bar hostess ads, we find students who are recruited via advertisements on websites. These advertisements hide prostitution. With the Internet, students prostitute themselves under the name of “escorts” without always being aware of the potential risks. The phenomenon of student prostitution reveals new forms of prostitution such as the exchange of sexual services for free or discounted housing (*L’Obs/Rue* 89, October 30th, 2013). In education establishments, an increasing number of young people exchange sex for gifts or objects (*French National Assembly*, September 17th, 2013). While this is a form of prostitution, these students sometimes do not recognize it as such. In 2014, police authorities arrested 29 minors, 27 of whom were French and 2 of whom were Romanian, for acts of soliciting in Lille (*OCRTEH*, April 2015). Another circumstance concerning the Lille municipality was the arrest of 2 young men aged 16 and 20 for procuring in November 2014. These boys had coerced 9 teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 to prostitute themselves: “they put pressure on them, hit them, threatened their families and kept them under the influence of alcohol or drugs” (*L’Indépendant*, November 28th, 2014). These examples show teenagers from unstable social circumstances who come from vulnerable familial and socio-economic situations.

The Growth of Massage Parlors

The Agence Parisienne d’Urbanisme (APUR) counted 579 massage parlors in 2014 compared to 100 in 2009. The Brigade de Répression du Proxénétisme (BRP) estimates that 300 of these parlors are likely to be conducting prostitution activities. Two petitions were launched regarding these practices. Residents and merchants of the ninth arrondissement in Paris who were unhappy about the rise of these parlors launched one of the petitions. Paris counselor, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, who believed it was necessary to fight against these new areas of “façade” prostitution, launched another petition. She asserted that it was as if brothels had never really left the capital. “Do not look away from these establishments who are no way more acceptable than the bois du Boulogne! They mainly exploit young women that no one can protect as they are wage-earning employees from enterprises that appear legal!” (*Fondation Scelles*, July 2nd, 2015).

The Exploitation of Young Victims by City Networks

The DCPJ mentions the rising phenomenon of the sexual exploitation of teenagers by delinquents from cities (*DCPJ*, December 2015). It affects young, dissocialized minors between the ages of 13 and 17 with little education and who lack a sense of direction. Local troublemakers already known for their delinquencies start procuring in the “city”, and this “diversification” of their activity is supposed to be a means of increasing their revenues at a lesser risk.

A Most Controversial Political Question

In 2011, the French deputies voted, ignoring sectarian quarrels, on a resolution that reinforces France abolitionist position following new information on prostitution brought forward by two French Deputies, Danielle Bousquet and Guy Geoffroy (*French National*

Assembly, April 13th 2011). This vote, which has not yet become a law, demonstrates the position of parliament members on this issue; they refuse to view prostitution as a job but rather as an exploitation that should be abolished. The National Assembly reaffirms France's commitment to the 1949 Convention on the trafficking of human beings and the prostitution of others. The report produced by this mission has without a doubt changed the way we view the prostitution phenomenon and has led to the parliamentary members' awareness. The recommendations made in its conclusion have been put into action through proposed legislation by French Deputy Maud Olivier in the name of the Delegation on Women's Rights in September 2013. Finally, the bill against the prostitution system was brought in on October 9th, 2013 and was based on 4 major pillars: the reinforcement in the fight against procuring, the implementation of programs to help victims get out of prostitution, the prevention and the development of policies that promote education about equality, as well as the penalization of the purchase of sexual acts. As a result, the parliamentary process was launched. On December 4th 2013, the deputies voted, with a large majority, in favor of the bill, and confirmed this vote in a second lecture on June 12th 2015. With an opposing viewpoint, on March 30th 2015, the Senate had, in the interim, removed the penalization of clients of prostitution and re-established laws penalizing prostituted persons for soliciting in the streets. Some senators believed that the penalization of prostituted persons for soliciting was the only effective way to dismantle the networks. As the two chambers are still opposed on the prohibiting the purchase of sexual services, they have not yet reached an agreement. That being said, the Senate finally revoked the bill penalizing prostituted persons, following its second assessment. All the members of the association recognized this abrogation.

The penalization of soliciting did not prove to be helpful in the fight against networks, but increased the risks for prostituted persons. The philosophy behind this bill was to protect the victims, not to criminalize them. Penalizing soliciting conferred on prostituted persons a "delinquent" status, which contradicted the accompanying measures.

The abolitionist movement defends the penalization of clients as they are fighting against the soliciting of sexual services. This abolitionist movement includes 60 associations who are regrouped under the collective Abolition 2012. According to Grégoire Théry, the general secretary of the Mouvement du Nid, this measure is envisioned to "reduce procuring and deter procurers from working in France." This measure also seeks to make clients accountable, as they participate and perpetuate this organized criminal activity. This penalization, however, is put in question by other organizations such as Strass (Syndicat du travail du sexuel), les Amis du Bus des Femmes, Médecins du Monde, and Act Up. These two conflicting visions remain a subject of debate in parliament. On one hand, prostitution is seen as violence committed against women and the result of an inequality between men and women. On the other hand, criminalizing prostitution is seen as a way of further endangering and isolating prostituted persons.

The legislative response to violence caused by the normalization of violence by the prostitution system must be to criminalize the purchase of sexual services and to develop the prevention system. Finally, the response must be to help prostituted persons find alternative economic work so what it allows them to successfully get out of prostitution. The pillars of the proposed bill are thus important as they represent advancement in protection and reinsertion into society. For the first time, the legislative approach envisions helping

individuals get out of prostitution by helping them find financial security and by penalizing clients. The adoption of this proposed bill would create obstacles for these networks and would improve the situation of victims. In 2016, the parliamentary process should result in the publication in the *Journal Officiel*, of a total bill with a philosophy that more or less corresponds with the original abolitionist project.

The Prostitution System: A Criminal Economy with Unthinkable Violence

The bill of August 5th, 2013 redefined domestic law and the definition of human trafficking (*U.S. Department of State*, June 2014). Thus, article 225-4-1 of the Penal Code defines human trafficking as being the act of “recruiting people, transporting them, transferring them, and lodging them with the purpose of exploitation” and provides for a prison sentence of 7 years and a fine of 162,465 US\$ (150,000 €) fine. A study from the Centre des Hautes Etudes du Ministère de l’Intérieur (CHEMI) reveals that, in 2012, prostitution made a net profit of around 1.24 billion US\$ (1.15 billion) with a profit of 530 million for the criminals (*OCRTEH*, April 2015). This activity allows networks well established in the territory to profit by exploiting vulnerable women under the influence of procurers and subject to violence from the clients. According to an OCRTEH report, few women and men prostitute themselves independently, even if the evolution of the phenomenon in France includes students choosing to prostitute themselves independently due to economic difficulties.

Claire Quidet, a spokesperson of the Mouvement du Nid, declared at the hearing of the Special Commission of the Senate, “the reality associated with prostitution is incompatible with the alleged liberty of using one’s body.” To affirm this idea, Quidet relied on associations who meet with prostituted persons. After these encounters, the senators Chantal Jouanno and Jean-Pierre Godefroy confirmed that prostitution is a destructive violence (*Sénat*, June 5th 2014) -- the damages are collateral. Violence cannot be disassociated from prostitution, as it exists under many different forms; psychological trauma, barbaric acts of torture, submissive training, drug dependence, physical violence, murder and rape. The report also mentions testimonies from survivors interviewed by the special commission. The survivors unanimously agreed that there is a link between prostitution and sexual abuse.

Prostituted persons are 12 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population (*Mouvement du Nid, Psytel*, May 2015). The social consequences of these suicides amount to 331.5 million US\$ (306 million €), among which 247 million US\$ (close to 228 million €) cover the cost of the deaths linked to prostitution. By providing testimony of the abuses she suffered when she was a prostituted person, Rosen Hicher, a 57-year-old survivor of prostitution declared that she wished to see the adoption of a bill that penalized clients (*Le Monde*, October 10th 2014). After a 800 km walk, Rosen Hicher testified that prostitution is inherently violent and client ought to be punished. The violent nature of prostitution was further demonstrated by the finding of the body of a female, Albanian prostitute in the waters of the Canal du Lunel in Montpellier (*Le Parisien*, September 6th 2014). After this incidence, an investigation was opened. These acts of violence, that are in part related to the low-cost practices because of the increasing number of prostituted persons, force them to accept the demands of their clients.

The former director of the International Monetary Fund (FMI) Dominique Strauss Kahn, was questioned along with his other accomplices on March 12th, 2012 in Lille for aggravated procuring. This brought to light testimonies from women who were involved in Strauss Kahn's parties (*Libération*, February 11th 2015). These testimonies demonstrate the violence of the ancient IMF director, who forced these women to do acts that went against their dignity and had nothing to do with the "bicontiousness" asserted by the defendants (*L'Express*, February 18th 2015).

In January 2013, the Inter ministerial mission for the protection of women against violence and for combating human trafficking (MIPROF) was created and had as its objective to implement a national action plan, which was adopted in June 2014 by the Cabinet (*OCRTEH*, April 2015). This action plan aims to fight against the prostitution system and sexual trafficking by making it a national priority. There are obstacles to overcome, such as online prostitution which has allowed networks to prosper and maintain their power via the Internet. The development of these networks online hinders action on the ground. France is cooperating with other countries, but it is crucial that partnerships are reinforced at the local and international level in order to effectively fight against this phenomenon. This cooperation must be in close collaboration with all relevant parties.

The Links Between Trivialization of Sexuality and Adolescent Prostitution

Dress codes, images of beauty, fashion, reality television, and the behaviors demonstrated in pornography and in cinema are increasingly present in the public sphere. This oversaturation of media images influences the perception of the most vulnerable audiences, among whom teenagers (*Réseaux*, 1999). Teenagers identify with certain practices that they feel are part of a model of society that they wish to take part in. The former escort-girl Zahia Dehar became famous after a prostitution affair in April 2009 that involved football players, Sidney Govou, Franck Ribéry and Karim Benzema (*Fondation Scelles*, 2012). The court acquitted these players in 2014, which put an end to "The Zahia Affair". Although she was a minor at the time of this incident, media sources largely made Zahia an "icon" through documentary films showing her social ascent. The apology of this young woman who is now 23 is worrisome, as it reflects a trivialization of sex culture, and of commoditized body. This is dangerous for younger generation, not only students, who turn to prostitution without being aware of the risks incurred within the industry.

The increasing awareness of the intrinsic violent nature of prostitution, of which women and girls remain the primary victims, has led to an undeniable abolitionist momentum in France. This movement has not only been brought forward by the political classes. It has also been supported by civil society who has mobilized people to fight against this exploitation. 2016 will likely see the adoption of laws that reinforce the fight against the view on the prostitution system and help prostituted persons. Penalizing clients of prostituted persons is a complete change in the accusation and should hamper money to force into a sexual act. The trafficking networks, that are aware of this decreasing market, will be forced to turn their attention to other countries. Victor Hugo once said, "we say that slavery has disappeared from our European civilization. This is an error. It still exists, but affects only women. It is called

prostitution.” This law will only be effective if it is applied fully, thanks to the necessary means, as otherwise, things will not change.

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