

Stockholm, June 18th 2003

Secretariat for the Committee on the Rights of the Child
United Nations
Centre for Human Rights
Palais de Nation
CH 1211 Geneva
Switzerland

Comments to the third Swedish governmental report from ECPAT Sweden (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for sexual purposes)

Dear Sirs,

We are pleased to submit the enclosed document for consideration. It represents ECPAT Sweden's standpoint on the third Swedish governmental report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the questions relating to commercial sexual exploitation of children.

We hope that this information will be useful in the coming discussions with the representatives of the Swedish government.

We give our consent regarding putting this alternative report on the electronic database runned by the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rigts of the Child. We also give the Committee on the Rights of the Child our consent in naming our organisation at the hearing with represenatives from the Swedish government.

Finally, it is ECPAT Sweden's intention to participate at the hearing of the Swedish government.

Yours faithfully
ECPAT Sweden

Helena Karlén
Secretary General

Stockholm, June 18th 2003

NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
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P.O Box 88
CH 1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

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Summary of ECPAT Sweden's alternative report to the third Swedish governmental report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Here follows a short summary of ECPAT Sweden's comments on the third Swedish governmental report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The summary includes the most important issues that ECPAT Sweden discusses in its comments.

General Principles/Special Protective Measures

Last year's media brought attention to the situation for unaccompanied refugee children in Sweden. ECPAT Sweden acted upon reports saying that children at the special refugee units were used as prostitutes and that children disappeared from these units, and then were in the risk zone of being sexually exploited. ECPAT Sweden organised meetings with the staff at a special unit outside Stockholm (employed by the Swedish Board of Migration), the police and social services in that municipality. We found that the different authorities do not communicate when children disappear. The missing children were reported to the police, but first after a couple of days or up to weeks had passed since the child disappeared. The social services has not once been informed that a child in their municipality has disappeared. This has to do with discrimination of the unaccompanied children at the police. When a native Swedish child disappears, a report is immediately made to the social services. This is not done when an unaccompanied refugee child disappears. The police considers that a report to the social services should be made by the staff at the special unit the child lived in. The staff at the special unit takes for granted that the report to the social service is made by the police, since they do so when native Swedish children disappear.

In the spring 2002 the Swedish Board of Migration, the Board of Integration, the National Board on Health and Services and the Children's Ombudsman published a report on how the reception of unaccompanied refugee children could improve. After this, the Swedish Board of Migration calculated the extent on the extra financial contribution from the Swedish government for the reports suggestions to be carried out. The financial report was delivered to the government in November 2002, but the government has still not made a decision if these suggestions are going to be carried out or not.

Children's Political and Civil Rights

ECPAT Sweden has since 1998 worked with safety on the Internet for children and youth. In 1999 ECPAT Sweden carried out a pilot project in 17 schools for children between the ages of 10 and 12. The project, called InternetAction, consisted of a booklet, a poster, a screensaver and a mouse pad with Net Smart Rules printed on them. The project's aim was to build awareness among the children of dangers on the Internet and how you can protect yourself against them. 91 % of the pupils involved in the project were positive and considered that they had learned to be more careful on the Internet. The project was presented to the National Agency for Education in September 1999. Despite numerous reminders from ECPAT Sweden, and a numerous cases of sexually abused minors as a result of contacts via the Internet, the National Agency for Education has still not responded in how they plan to use InternetAction in the education.

Special Protective Measures

In the Swedish government's first national plan against commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), which was published in 1998, the government claimed that "Commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs on a very small scale in Sweden. In the last few years there have only been a few confiscations of child pornography and very few cases of teenage prostitution". ECPAT Sweden had information that this was not the case. ECPAT Sweden conducted a study on the existence of CSEC in Sweden and found at least 400 children that had been or were involved in CSEC in Sweden. The study was qualitative, not quantitative.

The aim with this study was to make the government undertake a complete inventory of the existence of CSEC in Sweden. A governmental working group was established soon after the publication of ECPAT Sweden's study. Unfortunately, the working group is not conducting an inventory of the existence of CSEC in Sweden, but an inventory of the knowledge of CSEC. ECPAT Sweden finds this not satisfactory.

Since January 1st, 1999 possession of child pornography is illegal in Sweden. This legislation has proved to work really well and the conviction rate on child pornography crimes increases every year. ECPAT Sweden has now discovered one loop hole in the legislation against possession of child pornography. To commit a criminal possession of child pornography, you have to download the pictures or movies from the Internet to your hard drive, CD-ROM or floppy disc. If you just watch child pornography on the Internet, you do not commit a criminal offence, even if you pay to get access to web sites, save links under "favorites" or save the pictures/movies as Temporary Internet Files. This is well known among users of child pornography in Sweden, so more and more do not download, but subscribe to web sites and have links saved. Both Interpol and the Swedish National Criminal Investigation Department have raised this issue as a concern.

ECPAT Sweden has worked against child sex tourism since 1998, when we together with tour operators developed a Code of Conduct against child sex tourism. This Code of Conduct is now being implemented by tour operators covering 95 % of the Swedish market and five other ECPAT groups in Europe are also working with the Code of Conduct.

Despite these efforts from ECPAT Sweden and the travel industry to combat child sex tourism, the Swedish government does not contribute enough. Sweden has had its extra territorial legislation since 1962. In that time only one person has been convicted for sexual exploitation of a minor abroad. That was in 1995. Since then there has been several cases where Swedish citizens have been caught sexually exploiting children in other countries, but none has gone to trial in Sweden.

The prosecution rate of sexual exploitation in Sweden is very low. Only 15 % of all the reports of sexual abuse of children go to trial (5 % *in the larger cities*). This is mostly due to lack of knowledge. Lack of knowledge regarding interrogations of children who are victims of sexual abuse. Lack of knowledge in how children who are victims of sexual abuse tell their stories. The judges are the ones who have the least knowledge on how children speak and act after being victims of sexual abuse.

The Swedish government's work against trafficking does not have a specific child perspective. The Nordic-Baltic campaign against trafficking in women which was launched during 2002, had a clear women perspective, children were mentioned in some speeches and texts, but there were no special focus on children as victims of trafficking. Most trafficking victims are below the age of 18 and therefore require special attention. The new legislation against trafficking in Sweden does have a child perspective, which ECPAT Sweden finds satisfactory.

Another problem in combating trafficking of children for sexual purposes is the lack of resources at the police. The Swedish National Criminal Investigation Department has 2 full time employees working against trafficking. The special group within the Stockholm Police Department which should work against trafficking, was discontinued in the end of 2002. Furthermore, in the north of Sweden there is a huge problem with Russian women who cross the border from Finland selling sexual services to Swedish citizens. The police is forced to drop investigations because of lack of resources.

NGO Monitoring

From:

ECPAT Sweden – End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography And Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes

ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes) was founded in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand in 1990 by a group of social workers from various countries in Southeast Asia. It started as a campaign where the acronym ECPAT stood for End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism. Together they determined that sexual exploitation and trade with children both within and outside the tourist trade in their countries was not a matter of single cases but instead is a fast-growing child sex industry. Soon ECPAT realized that this was not only a phenomenon in Asia, but a big problem all over the world. In 1994 ECPAT decided to hold a world congress on commercial sexual exploitation of children. The Swedish government was asked to host the congress and accepted. In August 1996 the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was held in Stockholm. At the same time ECPAT changed from being a campaign into a regular NGO and also changed its name and broadened its mandate. It was decided that ECPAT now should focus not only on child prostitution but also on child pornography and trafficking in children for sexual purposes. There are now 71 ECPAT groups in over 50 countries worldwide.

ECPAT Sweden was established in 1996, with 23 NGO member organizations as well as individual members. Its Advisory Committee represents various sectors of society including media, youth, child psychologists, police, Parliament, tourism, and the Stockholm University. ECPAT Sweden works for maximum realisation in Sweden of the Agenda for Action adopted by the Stockholm World Congress. In addition it works for Swedish and international conformity with Articles 34 and 35 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. ECPAT Sweden has developed a Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, with the cooperation of all major Scandinavian tour operators. InternetAction, a project aimed to raise awareness of the risks involved when minors use the Internet, has been implemented in a number of public schools and evaluated for the Swedish Board of Education. ECPAT Sweden has conducted training on commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) for police, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, teachers, as well as students of law, tourism and journalism; wide-ranging awareness campaigns; and youth activities such as chat-conferences on child pornography and paedophile activities on the Internet. It has worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to distribute a report on extra-territorial legislation, to inform diplomatic missions abroad on measures to tackle child sex tourism. ECPAT Sweden has also started collaborating with credit card companies to combat child pornography on the Internet and is working to make Swedish enterprises accept an ethical policy against CSEC.

Comments from ECPAT Sweden to the third Swedish government report on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

ECPAT Sweden has a mandate that only covers commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). We will therefore only give our comments on the governmental report where this issue is a topic. Regarding articles of the Convention, the ones that are of interest are art. 2, 17, 22, 34 and 35.

ECPAT Sweden is of the opinion that the Swedish governmental report from 2002 gives a reasonably good description of how the Swedish government works to put an end to the

phenomenon of CSEC. ECPAT Sweden has, however some remarks to what the government states in its report.

ECPAT Sweden was invited to a hearing on June 27th 2002 at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to express our views on what topics the government should incorporate in its report. The report was available on the Internet at the government's site the same day it was official, and a couple of weeks later we received two copies of the printed version. ECPAT Sweden has not been able to find the English version on the Internet, but has now received two copies of the printed English report.

Part II: Information concerning articles of the Convention

2. General Measures

4. General Principles

(1) Non-discrimination (article 2)

In the report, the government does not consider the discrimination of unaccompanied migrant children. In the work on the situation of these children that ECPAT Sweden has conducted (please see below under Special Protective Measures), we have observed that the unaccompanied children who disappear are being discriminated, specially by the police. When the police gets a report on a missing "Swedish" child, the police publishes a notice on a missing child and contacts the social services at once. When an unaccompanied refugee child disappears, the notice on missing child is published, but the social services are not contacted by the police. The police considers that task to be the responsibility of the staff at the special unit (directed by the Swedish Board of Migration) the child was listed at. The staff at the special units thinks that the police should contact the social services, since they do so when a "Swedish" child is missing. The conclusion is that the child "falls between chairs" because of the lack of communication between authorities and no report of the missing child is made to the social services.

Another kind of discrimination at the police handling missing unaccompanied refugee children, is that the police investigates the disappearances of "Swedish" and unaccompanied refugee children in different divisions at the police. The "Swedish" children are handled at the local police station, while the unaccompanied children that disappear are handled at the on call-department at the criminal police.

5. Children's political and civil rights

(7) Access to information (art. 17)

In 1998 the Swedish government launched a major project called Internet in the School (*Internet i skolan – ITIS*). The aim of the project was that every child should be equipped with its own computer and e-mail address in the school. There are a lot of possibilities on the Internet, but there are also some dangers. To make the children in the schools and their teachers aware of these dangers, especially the ones concerning chatting and child pornography, ECPAT Sweden launched, together with the National Agency for Education, a project called InternetAction. The project was carried out in 17 schools for pupils between the age of 10 and 12. The project consisted of a booklet, a poster, a screen saver and a mouse pad with Net Smart Rules printed on them. The Net Smart Rules that ECPAT has produced are:

- Never tell anyone you meet on the Internet your home address, your telephone number or your school's name, unless your parent or carer specifically gives you permission.
- Never send anyone your picture, credit card or bank details, or anything else, without first checking with your parent or carer.
- Never give your password to anyone, not even your best friend.

- Never arrange to meet anyone in person without first clearing it with your parent or carer, and get them to come along to the first meeting, which should always be in a public place.
- Never hang around in a chat room or in a conference if someone says or writes something which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, and always report it to your parent or carer.
- Never respond to nasty, suggestive or rude e-mails or postings in Usenet Groups.
- Always tell your parent or carer if you see bad language or distasteful pictures while you are online.
- Always be yourself and do not pretend to be anyone or anything you are not.
- Always remember if someone makes you an offer which seems too good to be true, it probably is.

ECPAT Sweden evaluated the InternetAction project after 4 months of implementation. 91 % of the pupils who had participated in the project were positive and considered that they had learned to be more careful while on the Internet. ECPAT Sweden presented its report to the National Agency for Education in September 1999, and requested that they should conduct this project in every school in Sweden. Despite numerous contacts over the years, the National Agency for Education has yet not done anything to spread the Net Smart Rules around the country. Meanwhile a number of Swedish children have fallen victims of sexual exploitation following contacts via the Internet. To further promote the InternetAction project, ECPAT Sweden held a seminar for the Committee of Education in the Swedish Parliament. In the year 2000 the InternetAction project was mentioned as good practice in a government bill regarding safety on the Internet (*prop. 1999/2000: 96 Ett informationssamhälle för alla*).

During 2002 ECPAT Sweden translated a book produced by ECPAT International into Swedish. The book is titled "Protecting Children Online" and is mostly meant for parents and teachers, how they can get control over the child's use of the Internet. The book is the first of its kind in Sweden. As a result of considerable pressure by ECPAT Sweden the National Agency for Education has put this book on its web site, and ECPAT Sweden is now lobbying for them to send copies of the book to every school in Sweden.

9. Special Protective Measures

(1.1) Refugee Children (article 22)

In the beginning of 2002 the media reported of unaccompanied refugee children's critical situation at Swedish special units for unaccompanied children. The situation has been the same since the beginning of the 1990's, but it was now the media brought it to the public's attention. Most of the children were not in good psychological health, some had tried to commit suicide, some were engaged in prostitution and others vanished from the special units without a trace. In the year 2001 69 children disappeared, 48 of them were still missing in May 2002 (*See statistics appendix 1*). Reports also came on how easy it is for a stranger to pick up a child from the special unit. The staff working at the special units, in care of the children, are employed by the Swedish Board of Migration, and are to follow the aliens act. They have no right to stop a child from leaving the premises. If a relative to a child wants to take the child from the special unit, for a visit, he or she has to ID themselves and then leave an address where they are taking the child. There is no check up if the person claiming to be a relative of the child really is so. This system gives strangers a chance to pick up children from the special units and then vanish with them.

The authorities involved, The Swedish Board of Migration (The Board) and the social services, both put the blame on each other. The Board sees it as their task to make the decision if the children has reasons to stay in Sweden or not, and that it should be the social services who should have the guardian power of the children. The social services considers

these children to stand under the guardianship of The Board. Since the authorities cannot agree, the children “fall between chairs”, and are consequently neglected.

After considerable attention in the media, the government requested The Swedish Board of Migration, the National Board on Health and Services, the Board of Integration and the Children’s Ombudsman to elaborate a proposal on how the reception of unaccompanied refugee children could improve, including their situation at the special units. The report from these authorities was published in the beginning of June 2002, and has several good suggestions. The problem is that the changes are going to take considerable time to carry out. Another problem is that the report does not cover the facts that children can be taken away from the units by strangers or the fact that they disappear from these units.

Most children that disappear do so after their application for asylum has been turned down. Many of them go back to their home country or to a third country. Some hide in Sweden, hoping for a better result next time they apply for asylum. Some disappear when they are visiting relatives. Some disappear even after they have gotten a decision for a permanent residency in Sweden. These children are in the risk zone of being exploited sexually or otherwise, if they get in contact with the wrong people. Some might turn to prostitution as a last possibility to support him or her self. This is why ECPAT Sweden could act, since there is a risk of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

ECPAT Sweden held a manifestation in the end of May 2002, trying to make the government act immediately and not wait for the report from The Board and others.

Following the manifestation we had discussions with staff from a special unit outside of Stockholm, called Carlslund, as well as the police and social services in that municipality. The staff is supposed to report to the police and the social services when a child disappears. The police receives reports on missing refugee children, but often days or even weeks has passed since the child disappeared. The social services have not once been informed that a child has vanished from the special unit.

The police claims that, since they receive the report on a missing child so late, they have no leads and cannot do anything to find the child. They write off these cases on a regular basis on the ground that “crime can not be proved”. The police assumes that every child that is reported as missing has gone to its home country or a third country. At the one meeting that the social services attended, they were quite agitated over the fact that they were not informed about children disappearing in their municipality, and pointed out that they can’t do anything to protect these children, if they are not made aware of the fact that they disappear. It now looks as it is going to be a little bit more collaboration, however not satisfactory, between the staff at Carlslund and the social services.

In its report to the government, The Swedish Board of Migration, the National Board on Health and Services, the Board of Integration and the Children’s Ombudsman among other things suggested that 15 municipalities around the country should have the main responsibility of the unaccompanied refugee children. In this way, the children would be able to live more like in a family than the big special units with a lot of children where they are currently accommodated. The municipalities that were to take on this responsibility would receive extra financial contribution from the government to be able to fulfill this responsibility. The Swedish Board of Migration investigated during the fall 2002 the extent of the extra financial contribution from the government to the municipalities. The Board presented its final proposal to the government in November 2002. The government has yet not presented an official response to this proposal. Although in the beginning of April 2003 the Swedish Minister for Development Cooperation, Migration and Asylum Policy, Mr Jan O. Karlsson, was interviewed on Swedish radio and was asked about the unaccompanied refugee

children and their situation. The Minister made a statement saying that he had looked at the proposal from the Swedish Board of Migration, but only at the total amount of the extra costs for the government. According to the Minister, this amount was too high and the proposal on municipalities taking on the responsibility for the unaccompanied refugee children is not going to be carried out. Instead the Minister wants NGOs to take on the responsibility in providing care for these children. Among others, the Minister mentioned ECPAT Sweden as one of the NGOs that could carry this out. This suggestion from the Minister had not been discussed with the NGOs in question beforehand and we were all taken by surprise. It is not the responsibility of an NGO to provide care for unaccompanied refugee children, it can not be anyone else's responsibility than the government's. We find it remarkable that a Minister publicly announces collaboration with NGOs without first asking the NGOs in question. ECPAT Sweden sees this as an example that proves that the Minister in charge does not take the unaccompanied refugee children's situation seriously. Children's welfare has to be a top priority for every government and can never cost too much.

In Sweden, there were also reports during the year 2002, that paedophiles and other sex offenders, tend to seek victims that have another nationality than Swedish. During the fall, there has been a criminal case, where six men had exploited at least four refugee children for several years. One of the men charged with the exploitation had come in contact with the boys when he worked at a special unit for refugees. He then procured the boys to the other men. After the head of this group was arrested, ECPAT Sweden received information on the other men and made a report to the police. The head of the group was sentenced to five years imprisonment, the other five men were convicted to between 2 months and four years imprisonment. This was the verdict of the court of appeal. The men convicted appealed the verdict to the Supreme Court, which decided not to try the case on April 25th, 2003.

(3.3) Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (article 34)

At the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, which was held in Stockholm, Sweden, August 27-31, 1996, the participating 122 governments agreed that every country should develop a national plan of action on commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). One part in the Agenda for Action that the governments adopted, emphasizes the importance of youth involvement in the fight against CSEC. During 1998 the Swedish government started its process to produce a national plan of action against CSEC in Sweden. On April 4th and 5th the same year ECPAT Sweden conducted a two day training session on CSEC at the Swedish Red Cross' folk high school in Mariefred. The participants were between the ages of 20 and 25. A major part of the training session was spent on the Declaration and Agenda for Action from the World Congress in Stockholm 1996. The participants were divided into 5 groups and developed a number of proposals on measures they considered should be part of the Swedish national plan of action (*See appendix 2*). On April 6th 1998 ECPAT Sweden mailed these proposals together with a covering letter to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs with a request for their reactions regarding the proposals from the youth. Despite numerous written and oral requests from ECPAT Sweden for an answer from the government, neither ECPAT Sweden nor the Swedish Red Cross have received any response. Neither were the young people's views taken into consideration in the government's national plan of action that was made official on July 2nd, 1998.

When the Swedish government published its first national plan of action against CSEC in 1998, NGO's in Sweden, especially ECPAT Sweden, were not, as the government mentions in its report to the Committee, satisfied with the content of the national plan. The criticism of the national plan, which also was expressed by the Children's Ombudsman, eventually made the government produce a second national plan of action, that was made official on November 29th, 2001. In the first national plan of action, the Swedish government wrote that

“Commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs on a very small scale in Sweden. In the last few years there have only been a few confiscations of child pornography and very few cases of teenage prostitution”. In ECPAT Sweden’s day-to-day work we had however seen signs that this was not the case. We therefore conducted a study on the existence of CSEC in Sweden. The study had to be of a qualitative nature more than of a quantitative nature, since ECPAT Sweden is a very small organisation and did not have the resources to make an inventory of CSEC in Sweden. The study was conducted over 18 months between April 2000 and September 2001. The result of the study came from 307 questionnaires, sent to different authorities, organisations, schools and others involved, 14 deep interviews with persons who are, or has been, involved in CSEC and 7 interviews with contact persons who have a special knowledge of the phenomenon. In this study, ECPAT Sweden could identify at least 400 persons who were, or had been, involved in CSEC in Sweden. (*An English summary of the study is enclosed with this report, see appendix 3*) One of the reasons ECPAT Sweden conducted this study, was to show the government that CSEC does exist in Sweden and that the government should carry out a national mapping in this area. The result of these efforts by ECPAT Sweden is the working group that the government has appointed to collect facts and information about the sexual exploitation of children in Sweden. The working group submitted its first report to the government on March 12th, 2003. After this first report we have understood that the working group’s only mission is to gather what *knowledge* there is in Sweden regarding CSEC. This was not the purpose when ECPAT Sweden conducted its study. The purpose was that the government should conduct a complete inventory of the *existence* of CSEC in Sweden. No one in Sweden has that information. Almost everyone working with this topic, knows where to go to find information about CSEC. It would be much more effective to conduct a mapping of the existence of CSEC in Sweden. If you know the existence of a problem, it is much easier to define and execute the best solutions. This will not be done in the way the working group now works.

The Swedish penal code regarding CSEC is satisfactory, with the exception that the sanctions are too low. The percentage of relapses are highest among sexual offenders. To stop sexual offenders from committing new crimes, they have to be rehabilitated. For the rehabilitation to be effective, it has to go on for a long period of time and therefore it is crucial for the offenders rehabilitation that they are sentenced to one or more years in prison, where they are more or less forced to go to therapy and their chances of being rehabilitated increases. ECPAT Sweden was part of a consultative group to the parliamentary committee investigating sex offences that was appointed by the Government in 1998. After the committee presented its report *Sex offences: Greater protection of sexual privacy and related issues* in 2001, ECPAT Sweden also gave its considerations regarding the suggestions given in the report. The report suggests several changes in current legislation and new penal provisions. It also suggests that the sanctions shall be higher for several existing penal provisions, especially when the victim is a child. The Ministry of Justice detached the suggestion regarding a special trafficking law from the committee’s report and presented a government bill proposing a penal provision on human trafficking for sexual purposes to the Parliament in March 2002. As the Government mentioned in its third report to the Committee for the Rights of the Child, this new penal provision entered into force on July 1st, 2002. This suggestion was only one of many in the report from the committee that investigated the sex offences. The Government received all the considerations on the report during the first half of 2001. Since then the Ministry of Justice has investigated the report. In May 2003 the Ministry of Justice still has no timetable for when the suggestions from the report will be presented to the Parliament as a government bill.

Since 1999 possession of child pornography is criminalized in Sweden. ECPAT Sweden and other organisations worked hard for six years to make this happen. ECPAT Sweden has now

discovered three major loop holes in the child pornography act. These are mainly effects of the rapid technical development of the Internet.

The first one is regarding child pornography on the Internet. Possession is only illegal if you download movies or pictures with child pornography and save them on your hard drive, floppy disk or CD-ROM. If you look at child pornography on the Internet and save the link under “favorites” or if you save the child pornography on so called “cyber hard drives”, it is not considered illegal. Nowadays it is possible to subscribe to websites containing ten thousands of child pornography files. This means that you can have access to child pornography 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without downloading anything. And without committing a crime under Swedish law. This is well-known in Sweden, and we have had several cases where people have not been prosecuted, since they had not downloaded anything (one of these persons was a police officer. He couldn’t either be discharged from his work, since he had not committed a criminal offence. Links to child pornography sites has also been discovered on computers belonging to staff at a upper secondary school and at a special unit for unaccompanied refugee children). This is a serious problem and ECPAT Sweden has drafted a parliamentary bill regarding this issue. A legislation that prohibits watching child pornography on the Internet already exists in several countries, such as Great Britain, Norway and Denmark.

The second loop hole is the distinction between child pornography and artistic freedom. During the year 2000 the Museum of Modern Arts in Stockholm had an exhibition by the Norwegian artist Björn Melgaard. In the exhibition a video sequence shows an adult man sucking on a baby child’s arm. The sequence is clearly sexual. ECPAT Sweden reported the exhibition to the police, since we considered it to be child pornography. The prosecutor decided not to press charges, with the justification that the exhibition falls under the artistic freedom. ECPAT Sweden appealed against the prosecutor’s decision, since we considered it to be a decision to be made by a criminal court and not the prosecutor himself. Both the Director of the Stockholm public prosecution authority and the Prosecutor General made the same decision as the first prosecutor, and referred to the artistic freedom. In 2001 ECPAT Sweden drafted a parliamentary bill on the artistic freedom and child pornography, which unfortunately was turned down.

The third loop hole is the criterion of age. In the Swedish penal code, regarding child pornography crimes, a child is defined as “a person whose pubertal development is not complete or, if it is apparent from the picture and its attendant circumstances, who is less than 18 years of age” (*The Swedish penal code, chapter 16 paragraph 10 a*). ECPAT Sweden considers this to be a pretty clear regulation that is in agreement with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 34. Though, in late December 2002 the district court in Stockholm made its verdict in a case that attracted massive attention in the media. A 42-year old man had made pornographic movies with girls in the age of 16-17 years. He was aware of the girls’ real age, and the court had identified these girls, and they testified in court about their age. Despite this, the court decided to acquit the man on the charges of child pornography crimes. The court only took into consideration the way the girls looked in the movies, and by those pictures one could not definitely tell that the girls were under the age of 18. On these grounds the court acquitted the suspect of child pornography crimes, but he was convicted of sexual molestation of the girls. The district court’s decision is appealed by the prosecutor to the court of criminal appeal, who will try the case after the summer of 2003. If this verdict stands in that court as well, the legislation in Sweden has to be changed, so it is more clear that if you know that the victim of child pornography is under the age of 18, there should not be any question whether the act is illegal or not.

Since January 1st 1999, when possession of child pornography became criminalized, Sweden has had several convictions regarding this particular crime. A conviction on child pornography crime should, regarding to the penal code, lead to imprisonment up to two years. If the crime is considered to be gross, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for four years. If the crime is petty, the penalty is a fine or at most six months imprisonment. ECPAT Sweden has noticed that the criminal courts do not use the entire scale of penalties on child pornography crimes. The common penalty for child pornography crime is 2-3 months imprisonment. In some cases, the offenders are not even sentenced to imprisonment, but a probational sentence and a fine, even if the crime is of the normal kind. The Supreme Court in Sweden made a ruling regarding gross child pornography crime in May 2002. The man accused had spread over 2000 child pornographic pictures and movies to several people over the Internet. The Supreme Court came to the conclusion, that since it was to be regarded as a gross child pornographic crime, the sentence had to be imprisonment. But the Court sentenced him to the minimum penalty for gross child pornography crime, i.e. six months imprisonment. One of the reasons for the low sentences, is that police in Sweden lack the special competence that is needed in the fight against child pornography. To determine whether a picture or movie is child pornographic, the police involved have to send the material to the Child Pornography Unit at the Swedish National Police Board. They (*two full time employees and two trainees*) have to review all the data from every child pornography case in Sweden (*in 2002 alone there were 392 reports to the police on child pornography crimes*) and decide picture by picture if it could be classified as child pornography or not. This work is very time consuming, and leads to that it usually takes between 1 and 2 years from the confiscation to the case reaches the court. The court can use the fact that the crime is committed a long time ago, to decide on a milder sentence.

ECPAT Sweden has worked against child sex tourism for several years. A Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism project was elaborated by ECPAT Sweden in 1998 in collaboration with the World Tourism Organisation. It received some initial financial contribution from the industry, with whom agreements were signed regarding the adoption and implementation of the Code of Conduct. As from December 1999 the project enjoys financial support from the European Commission. During the past few years other European tourist sending countries have joined the project. The present partners are therefore Sweden, Germany, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In addition, tour operators in Denmark, Finland and Norway are now also implementing the Code. The Code of Conduct is currently being implemented in some 20 countries in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe.

The Code of Conduct, which primarily addresses the demand factor, has six criteria to be implemented by the tour operator companies:

1. Establish an ethical company policy regarding child sex tourism.
2. Train personnel in the country of origin and the travel destinations.
3. Introduce of a clause in all contracts with hotels and other suppliers that proclaims a common repudiation of child sex abuse. The tour operator has the right to cancel the contract should the clause not be respected by the supplier.
4. Provide information to travellers by means of catalogues, in-flight videos, ticket slips, web sites, etc.
5. Provide information to local "key persons" at the destinations, i.e. restaurants, excursion companies, local police and others with whom the tour operators collaborate more informally.
6. Annual reporting on the implementation of the above five criteria to the international Code of Conduct Secretariat, located in Madrid.

Despite all the efforts from ECPAT Sweden and the industry to put an end to child sex tourism, the Swedish government has not done enough to contribute to this work. Sweden has an extra territorial legislation since 1962. In this 40-year period, *one* individual has been convicted in Sweden for a sexual offence against a child committed abroad. This was a case that received massive attention in the Swedish media. A 66-year old man had been caught with a 14-year old boy in his hotel room in Thailand. The man was arrested by the Thai police, and later released on bail. He was given a new passport by the Swedish Embassy in Thailand, and went back to Sweden. It took massive efforts from ECPAT International and Swedish Save the Children to bring the 66-year old to court in Sweden. The 14-year old Thai boy was brought to Sweden to testify before the court and the man was sentenced to three months imprisonment. This was in 1995. Since then there has been several cases like this, but none has gone to trial, mostly because of the lack of resources for investigations at the Swedish police and difficulties in collaborating with the local police in the countries where the crimes were committed. There has been one case where a Swedish paedophile had sexually abused at least three Philipino girls and a number of Thai minors. The Swedish police tried to investigate the case, they had evidence in the form of child pornography, but had to identify the children involved. Despite a personal visit by the investigating officer from the Swedish National Police Board in the Philippines, they were unsuccessful in identifying the victims and the man was not prosecuted. During the years Sweden has had at least four more cases like this where the offender sexually abusing a child has been identified as a Swedish citizen, but the Swedish prosecutors have dropped the charges without going to trial. In comparison we can look at Australia, that has had their extra territorial legislation on child sex tourism since 1994. In that time they have had 16 prosecutions and of them 9 convictions.

In Sweden there are not many convictions in cases of sexual abuse against minors. Of all reports to the police of sexual abuse against minors, approximately 15 % goes to trial (5 % *in the larger cities*). One of the problems in this area is the lack of training of the police officers on how to question a child victim of sexual abuse. It is not unusual that the child is questioned about the abuse a number of times and by several different police officers. The training of the police is improving, and in several police stations around Sweden they now have specially trained police officers that question children who are victims of sexual abuse. This is though not the case all over Sweden. Another serious problem in this area is the lack of knowledge of children's way of talking about sexual abuse at the criminal courts in Sweden. The judges in the criminal courts refuse to attend seminars held by NGO's or even by the Children's Ombudsman (*ECPAT Sweden arranged a seminar on CSEC in 1999, where Her Majesty Queen Silvia and the Prosecutor General were among the speakers. 104 judges from all of Sweden were invited, one participated*). The judges consider children's testimonies in the court in the same way they consider an adults testimony. The child's testimony is because of this often seen as less reliable, since they have another way of talking about what has happened to them than an adult does (the child often tells the story in a non chronological order, and seldom tells everything that has happened the first time it is being questioned by the police). Usually there is no other evidence than the child's story, so most offenders get acquitted by the courts. ECPAT Sweden considers that judges in cases where children are victims should have special training. The preferred situation would be to have special courts for cases involving children, where a child can get support from social workers, therapists and others during the trial and where the judges, prosecutors and defence attorneys have special training on how children act when they have been exploited.

(3.4) Trafficking and abduction (article 35)

ECPAT Sweden participated in a consultative group for the Nordic-Baltic campaign against trafficking in women that the Swedish government launched in the spring of 2002. The

campaign was in the beginning called “The Nordic-Baltic campaign against trafficking in women and children”, but early on in the campaign, the “and children” part fell out, and it became a campaign against trafficking in women. Children were mentioned in some speeches and paperwork around the campaign, but no special notice were put on why it is more traumatic for children to be involved in trafficking, and the special treatment and attention children must have. We tried to bring this issue up at the meetings we attended, but we were not listened to.

In the end of August 2002 the Swedish film *Lilya 4-ever* was launched on cinemas all over the country. *Lilya 4-ever* is made by the Swedish director Lukas Moodysson. The main character, Lilya, is a 16 year old girl who lives somewhere in the former Soviet Union. She is abandoned by her mother, and have no adults that care for her. She meets a man who promises her a job picking vegetables in Sweden, and since she is so desperate to get away from the misery she is in, she accepts to go to Sweden. Upon arrival, she is locked up in a apartment and sold as a sex slave to men. Finally she cannot handle it any more, and comits suicide. The film is based on a true story about a Lithuanian girl who was trafficked to Sweden. This film has recieved a lot of attention in the media and also by the government. It is going to be used in schools as an educational tool, and is also used by the government on various occasions, among others at the last meeting of the Nordic-Baltic campaign against trafficking in Women, which was held in Riga, Latvia.

ECPAT Sweden used this film to launch a campaign during Christmas 2002. We sent 800 tickets to the film to all parlamentarians, the boarder police, customs, coast guards and staff at the Swedish Board of Migration. These are all people who can contribute to put an end to trafficking in various ways and some of them also come in contact with the victims and/or perpetrators. It is very important that these people have knowledge about trafficking, and the film shows the phenomenon in an excellent way. The campaign also involved massive advertising in the subway in Stockholm, bus stops around the country, newspapers, magazines and free postcards.

Following the campaign we have received a lot of positive remarks, but also some that are frightening. For example, one police officer who received a ticket, has called us to enquire how she could get tickets for her entire working group of 40 persons. She had asked her supervisors to pay for the film tickets, but was told they could not afford it. Even though the government speaks highly on how important it is to work against trafficking, and also recommends everyone to see *Lilya 4-ever*, they do not give police and other relevant authorities the resources to make its good intentions come to life. At the Swedish National Police Board there are two police officers working against trafficking. One of them is also working on child pornography crimes. This is one reason why the lack of knowledge keeps on existing and an increasing number of victims are being trafficked to Sweden. In its report to the Committee, the Swedish government mentions as an example of its work against trafficking, the special group within the Stockholm Police Department. This group was only a project, which ended in the end of 2002. Currently, the Stockholm Police Department does not have a special group working against trafficking. The project is now being evaluated, and it has still not been decided if there’s going to be a permanent trafficking group in Stockholm. There is one trafficking group within the Police Force still existing, and that is situated in Gothenburg and is working really hard to put an end to trafficking.

Final Remarks

In the end of 2002 ECPAT Sweden conducted a survey on the general public’s knowledge of and opinion on issues regarding CSEC. This is the first survey of its kind ever made in Sweden. The survey had a qualitative part and a quantitative part. In the qualitative part 5 group discussions and 20 personal interviews were held. The quantitative part was carried out through telephone interviews with 1000 randomly selected persons in Sweden.

In the survey we could see, among other things, that the awareness of the existens of CSEC is high and seems to have increased in the past few years. CSEC is believed to be most frequent in developing countries, but the respondents believe that CSEC exists in Sweden as well. The level of knowledge is varied, there are both relevant end controversial explanations concerning CSEC. There also seems to be a disagreement on how to define a child (i.e. under 18 years of age, or 15, which is the legal limit for sexual consent), which indicates that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its definition of a child is not well-known in Sweden. A summary of the survey is enclosed (*see appendix 4*).

Furthermore, ECPAT Sweden would like to point out that Sweden has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Sweden signed this Protocol on September 8th, 2000. According to the government a government bill on ratifying the optional protocol will be submitted to the parliament during 2003. ECPAT Sweden considers this to have taken far to long and according to what we can see, there is nothing that keeps the government from ratifying the Optional Protocol. We find it quite disturbing that the government has not yet done so. Neither has Sweden ratified the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime or its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

1988-04-06

Statsrådet Maj-Inger Klingvall
Socialdepartementet
103 33 STOCKHOLM

Bästa Maj-Inger Klingvall,

Inledningsvis vill jag framföra ECPAT International's generalsekreterare Hervé Berger's och min uppskattning över att Du tog emot oss förra veckan för samtal kring uppföljningen av Världskongressen mot kommersiell sexuell exploatering av barn.

ECPAT Sverige genomförde 4-5 april, på inbjudan av Röda korsets folkhögskola i Mariefred, en tvådagars utbildning om Världskongressen och dess åtaganden (kursprogrammet bifogas). Deltagarna i utbildningen är elever vid folkhögskolans tvåterminskurs "Världens Barn". En betydande del av helgprogrammet ägnades åt Världskongressens deklaration och handlingsplan, liksom åt den svenska situationen kring dessa frågor. I fem grupper utarbetade eleverna bifogade förslag till åtgärder, som de upplever bör ingå i den svenska handlingsplanen.

Såväl ECPAT Sverige som eleverna vid folkhögskolan hoppas att förslagen kommer att beaktas i samband med regeringskansliets slutliga utarbetning av handlingsplanen. Vi ser därmed också fram emot departementets reaktion på innehållet i förslaget.

Högaktningsfullt,

Helena Karlén
Verkställande ledamot i ECPAT Sverige
och vice ordförande i ECPAT International

cc. Röda korsets folkhögskola, Mariefred

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Sweden

**A study on acquaintance with exploitation of minors
in prostitution, pornography and trafficking**

Summary in English from the Swedish original



**Author Josephine Appelqvist
ECPAT Sweden, September 2001**

Background

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is an international phenomenon. The greater part of available information today regarding the nature of the problem and its extent is focused on developing countries in Asia. So far there has not been any Swedish report, which exclusively examines this problem. The intention is that this study will be a first step towards filling the information gap in this field. What is presented in this report thus gives an insight into child sex trade in Sweden of today.

This report is the result of a study on minors in prostitution, pornography and trafficking in Sweden conducted by ECPAT Sweden between April 2000 and February 2001.

The questions we tried to find answers to are to what extent commercial sexual exploitation of children exists in Sweden, how it manifests itself and what measures need to be taken to combat the problem. The aim has consequently been to provide an image of child sex trade in Sweden.

The widespread opinion on the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children has so far been that this is an extraordinarily unusual phenomenon in our country. In our day-to-day work we have however seen signs that this is not the case. This, in combination with the fact that studies in other countries show that the situation in Europe and other Western countries are more serious than expected, has led to the study. The study is intended to form a basis for further countrywide surveys.

We have chosen to seek information in three ways. We have sent a questionnaire to 307 national, regional and local government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Child and adolescent psychiatric care clinics, women shelters, schools, youth counselling centres, and individual experts. We have through this been able to provide an image of their knowledge about the problem. In addition we have conducted in-depth interviews with 14 persons who themselves are or have been exposed to commercial sexual exploitation as children. Finally, we have met and interviewed seven *contact persons* with special knowledge about the phenomenon in Sweden.

Results

On the basis of the information received in the responses to the questionnaire and in the interviews, we assert that commercial sexual exploitation of children is a serious problem in our country. Our assessment mainly rests on the facts gathered about the *forms* of child sex trade that exists in the country, but also on the information we have gathered about the *number* of victims. Of the 135 responses to the questionnaire, 37 contain information about commercially, sexually exploited children, i.e. a quarter of the respondents. The total number of children exposed according to these responses is 314. In addition to that, there are the 14 persons interviewed who themselves are or have been exploited plus the approximately 70 children that the contact persons have knowledge about. The total number of minors affected encountered in this study is thus approximately 400.

As several of those responding to the questionnaire, as well as the contact persons, have responded to the question regarding how many exposed children they have knowledge of with expressions such as: “several”, “many” or equivalent, we estimate the number of unrecorded cases to be very high. In all of these cases we have for practical methodological reasons recorded this as representing only two children. In addition, earlier studies and reports show that minors exploited in prostitution and pornography probably are to a larger extent than others (adults) to be found among the unrecorded cases. The fact that nine of the eleven exposed persons that we have talked to – and who have come away from the commercial sexual exploitation – have never reported the crimes against them, further strengthens the

assumption that the number of unrecorded cases could be very large.

Politicians have repeatedly pointed out how extremely limited the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children is in Sweden. In the memo from the Ministry of Social Affairs, which is the foundation for the existing Swedish Plan of Action against commercial sexual exploitation of children, the Ministry of Social Affairs purports that it probably is "... exceptionally unusual that children in Sweden are commercially exploited for sexual purposes, possibly with exception of distribution of child pornography". When it on the other hand comes to other forms of sexual abuse their view that there is no reason to believe that Sweden is different to other parts of Europe.

The study that ECPAT Sweden now presents shows a different reality. Commercial sexual exploitation of children is a problem, which manifests itself in different ways in the country. The main results of the study are the following.

Children are sold and offer themselves for sale at young age. The study shows that for instance parents sell their children, i.e. offer other adults to have sex with the children for payment. Children also offer themselves for sale and unknown adults exploit them.

According to the results of the questionnaire, the most common form of commercial sexual exploitation of children is sexual acts for compensation. The assertion, as in the departmental memo referred to above, that child sex trade hardly exist and then in the form of child pornography is consequently not correct. The respondents to the questionnaire –who have had contact with many exposed minors - mainly speak about children being sold by adults and that they offer themselves for sale for sexual purposes. Posing in porno clubs and taking part in pornography is also found. This information is substantiated by the responses we have received from the persons who themselves are exploited. The majority of these cases concern activities that are similar to or resemble prostitution. In addition, in four of the fourteen cases the children have been sold by parents or a relative for sexual purposes.

A conclusion which can be drawn from the results of the questionnaire and the interviews with the persons exposed, which is also corroborated by the information from the contact persons, is that minors in street prostitution is not the main problem. It is in the concealed sex trade that minors appear and it continues fairly undisturbed. This confirms what has been assumed earlier, but not previously verified. Very few social workers, police officers and other affected government agency representatives have any knowledge about or acquaintance with the concealed sex trade. This has also led to the consequence that few resources are devoted to fighting this activity and seeking out minors who are to be found there.

One example of concealed child prostitution, which is difficult for the authorities to discover, is the phenomenon of "protectors" of minors and "sugar daddies", i.e. adults who more or less support minors in exchange for sexual services. These kinds of situations can be found according to some of the contact persons, and both girls and boys are found among the victims. According to several contact persons minors, exploited through posing in porno clubs is a problem, not least because it in some cases acts as a gateway to prostitution.

Trafficking is another form of commercial sexual exploitation that involves younger and younger girls in recent years. According to one of the contact persons, a person who has a great deal of knowledge of the problem, the market in the rest of Europe will soon have reached its saturation point. This demands preventive measures and preparedness in order to impede a continued negative development in Sweden. It is on the other hand positive that politicians in several countries have now realised that something has to be done and are taking measures to fight this transnational, organised crime.

The study shows that children of all ages are exposed to commercial sexual exploitation. The children we have been informed about have been between the ages of 4 months and 17 years when the exploitation started. In the results of the questionnaire almost all ages are represented, but the ages of 13 and

18 years are most common. In the cases where children have been sold or forced to take part in production of child pornography it has on the other hand generally been younger children than in the cases where children have sold themselves for sexual purposes. The information received in the interviews with exploited individuals confirms this. Another conclusion that can be drawn from both the results of the questionnaire as well as the interviews with those exposed is that child sex trade in the event that it occurs, then often continues for many years.

According to the results of the questionnaire the venues where the sex trade take place vary. At home, hotels and clubs are some venues that are frequent. Several of the contact persons also confirm that it is frequently in ordinary restaurants, clubs and discotheques that contacts between perpetrators and victims are made. Venues mentioned in the interviews with the exposed individuals are “in cars”, “in parks”, “in the wood”, “in public lavatories”, and in “public baths”. When children have been sold for sexual purpose by, adults this has in most cases taken place in the home but also in other places such as hotels.

Internet is becoming a more common forum for prostitution of minors. This is a conclusion that can be drawn both from the responses to the questionnaire as well as from the interviews with the contact persons and the exposed individuals. Another mode to make contact that is frequently used, or used to be before the widespread use of Internet, is the form of “chatting” via telephone (Heta Linjen).

At the Swedish National Police Board of police in Sweden there is an expert group combating child pornography on the Internet, but prostitution with minors involved is ongoing as there are no resources available to actively combat this.

Child sex trade is not only a city problem, 22 Swedish cities, towns and municipalities from the far north to the south are mentioned in this study. The results of the questionnaire show that the scene is both local and regional as well as international. This means that in approximately half of the

cases children have been exploited for commercial sexual purposes at a certain place while in almost as many cases the children, at their own or someone else’s initiative, have been exploited in activities similar to prostitution in several places in the country and in a few cases also abroad.

An unpleasant fact, which is confirmed by this study, is that it is the already exposed and abused children that are exposed to commercial sexual exploitation. The children affected have generally had a broken childhood, lack contact with adults and have often experienced sexual abuse. Self-destructiveness, experienced harassment in school and physical abuse are other examples of background. One NGO with many contacts among those exploited describes the process in the following way. The children “...are victims of abuse (sexual), duped into being paid, are sold to other adults and gradually take their own initiatives.” In the interviews with the contact persons the following backgrounds among others are mentioned: early sexual traumatization in combination with other problems e.g. ignorance of the dangers of Internet; confusion around the differences between love and sex as well as consumerism.

Approximately half of the children we have information about through the questionnaire have had links to some kind of network. In a small number of cases it involves more organised networks, but in the majority of the cases there are loosely connected groups of adults behind the commercial sexual exploitation. If “pimping” is added to what is defined as organised sex trade, then the information from the exposed individuals indicates that this is not an unusual phenomenon among minors in prostitution. Accordingly it is not unusual that the minors who offer themselves for sale in Sweden have a pimp. Of the exposed individuals who have been interviewed half of them have as minors had one or several pimps.

As was mentioned earlier, the results showing that parents and relatives are involved in the child sex trade are alarming. The adults whom the children need most commit the most serious crimes. According to the results of the questionnaire and the

interviews with the exposed minors, there are in our country mothers, fathers and grandparents who make money out of the bodies of children by offering other adults to abuse them sexually. According to information from organisations/NGOs, government agencies and individuals that have had direct contact with exploited children in, 33 % of the cases the contact between the young person and the perpetrators is mediated by a close relative. In two-thirds of these cases the mother is mentioned as the mediator in charge. The interviews with exposed individuals give a slightly different picture. When mediation has been discussed with them it has usually been a father or grandfather acting as pimp.

Regarding the most common forms of commercial sexual exploitation, i.e. sexual activities for payment (child prostitution), the customer (perpetrator) is “an ordinary man” or a “john” according to the results of the questionnaire. On the other hand according to the interviews with the exposed individuals, the perpetrator in half of the cases is a close relative of the child.

Concerning compensation for sexual activities and sexual exploitation, all of the respondents to the questionnaire mention money among the forms of payment used. The sum 1000 – 2000 Swedish kronor (approx. US\$ 100 – 200, Sept. 2001) is the most common figure. Of the 14 exposed individuals interviewed, nine mention money as form of payment. Apart from money, expensive things, trips, food, clothes, alcohol and drugs are mentioned. The information drawn from the questionnaire is similar to that of the interviews. However, drugs and alcohol play a bigger role than we had expected beforehand.

That crimes, such as described above, exist can be difficult to understand, but it is at the same time important to take this in. If children who have been abused and exploited are going to be able to reveal the crimes against them, it demands that the adults around them are ready to listen. This is revealed by the interviews with the persons who have been exposed to commercial sexual exploitation as children. Children are abused, but children do not tell. Most of the persons interviewed have grown up before they break the silence.

Some of them have disclosed the sexual abuse earlier, but have said nothing about the part of payment. The exposed young people think that there is very little knowledge about their problems. One girl who was interviewed describes it in the following words: “*Nobody had the courage to see and to put a stop to it. As long as people are ignorant and frightened this can carry on.*”

Some of the persons we spoke to have expected health care staff, school social workers or psychologists, who can see that they are in bad shape, would ask them if they have been exposed to commercial sexual exploitation. But adults never ask. 18 out of 19 respondents, who according to the questionnaire responses have never come across the phenomenon, have never asked any children seeking help if they have been exposed to commercial sexual exploitation.

The consequences for the children who have been exploited for commercial sexual purposes are devastating. In the interviews with the contact persons consequences such as lost confidence in adults, ruined self-esteem and the feeling of being destroyed. For the children who have been exposed to sexual abuse and who have been photographed or filmed in connection with this, the fact that the photos exist and are distributed is yet another dimension, which causes distress and makes healing more difficult. According to one of the exposed individuals the mere thought that the photos might be published on the Internet is terrifying. “*I was asked once if I wanted to know, because the police have like an image bank. But I prefer to live with the hope that they are not there.*” The exposed persons furthermore run the risk of physical injury and illnesses. The victims of trafficking are very seriously traumatised. Some of them have even received death threats after having returned to their native country. Some of the victims in the Swedish trafficking webs later became pregnant and have had complications with their pregnancy. One contact person claims that there must be a connection between the complications during pregnancy and how they were treated while they were in Sweden as both women had complications with their pregnancies.

Comparisons with Swiss and Australian studies

A comparison with the results of this study and corresponding studies carried out in Australia and Switzerland points to interesting similarities. The aim was in general the same and the same definition of the concept commercial sexual exploitation has been used. The three countries are comparable as regards to level of welfare and social services, but not as regards the number of inhabitants.

The Swiss study comprises information about 60 cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children. The results are based on interviews with 40 (out of 150 contacted) government authorities, psychotherapists and institutions for residential care, etc. and in-depth interviews with eight individuals exposed. The Australian survey comprises information about 3,733 children abused for commercial sexual purposes. The information in this study comes from 299 sources with knowledge about specific cases. Apart from this, interviews with 20 contact persons have been carried out.

Similar to the results of this study, the Australian study shows that sex for some kind of payment is most common form of commercial sexual exploitation of children. The Swiss study focused on the problem of child prostitution, which makes it difficult to compare the studies regarding different types of commercial sexual exploitation in Australia. Child sex trade seems to be to a greater extent than in Sweden, related to poverty among the young people (unemployment and homelessness).

Dysfunctional families, low self-esteem and feelings of isolation and marginalisation are other frequent causes. Another parallel is the age of the children. According to both studies, commercial sexual exploitation is most common among teenagers, but even children under the age of 10 are found to a greater extent than earlier expected.

The results of the Swiss study indicate that the persons behind the child sex trade are generally persons familiar to the child. It is

often a close relative of the child. The phenomenon of parents, who first abuse the child and then offer the child for sale, sometimes to a large number of people, is also found in Switzerland. Another parallel between the Swedish and the Swiss studies is the observation that the Internet is used to a growing extent to market so-called "youth sex workers". When it comes to the underlying causes for children to be drawn into child sex trade the results are very concordant. Responsible authorities in all three countries seem to have similar problems in dealing with the problem of child sex trade.

Proposals for measures

Commercial sexual exploitation of children must be taken very seriously.
Children in danger must be protected and be given support and help.

ECPAT Sweden requests:

- that a thorough survey of commercial sexual exploitation of children is carried out throughout Sweden,
- that the government Plan of Action against commercial sexual exploitation of children embodies vigorous measures, indicating use of resources, time frames, actors, etc. against child prostitution, child pornography and trafficking of children for sexual purposes,
- that methods for identifying and seeking out minors in prostitution and pornography are developed and that resources are allocated for development of the activities of the social services in this field,
- that resources are allocated for police to combat prostitution of minors via the Internet,
- that children exposed to commercial sexual exploitation, irrespective of where they live, are informed about where they can turn to get help. Today there is only one centre (in Stockholm) with specialised competence on prostitution,
- that effective treatment methods are developed for exposed children and that therapeutic treatment can be guaranteed all children exposed to commercial sexual exploitation,
- that training of relevant professional groups, including customs and immigration staff, is carried out,
- that the penalties for all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children are increased.