

Press release on International Sex Worker's Day on 02.06.2021

On the occasion of this year's International Sex Worker's Day, the sex workers' self-organisations sexworker.at and Red Edition, as well as the counselling centres maiz (Linz), PiA (Salzburg), iBUS (Innsbruck), SXA-Info (Graz) and LEFÖ (Vienna) draw attention to the following grievances:

- Lack of information and legal uncertainty regarding sex work
- arbitrariness of the authorities and discriminatory unequal treatment with regard to compulsory examinations
- Prohibitions, illegalisation and restriction of the freedom of sex workers to work.

The existing problems have been exacerbated by the Corona situation.

In this pandemic, which was and still is characterised by occupational bans and discrimination for sex workers, the problem of lack of information and clarity as well as the inconsistency of information became particularly noticeable. Both sex workers and counselling centres had great difficulty in obtaining information about the legal situation and how to proceed. This problem was noticeable nationwide. Thus, sex workers had to live in great legal uncertainty, which not infrequently led to unjustified charges and thus to a displacement into an even more precarious and vulnerable situation.

We denounce the arbitrariness of the authorities!

The law imposes many obligations on sex workers, such as the legally required check-ups: Very often during this pandemic, however, the sex workers had no possibility to get an appointment, which made it impossible to work legally in Austria. These abuses make it even clearer that these compulsory examinations are control instruments that open the floodgates to discrimination.

The occupational bans and the further illegalisation of sex work led to loss of income, homelessness and isolation.

We therefore demand:

- competent and transparent regulations and communication with the relevant offices.
- multilingual, easily accessible information on ordinances and regulations
- situation-independent, low-threshold access to the legally prescribed compulsory examinations
- equality of sex work with other professions
- an end to the criminalisation and illegalisation of sex work