

STATEMENT

UPR Pre-session on Norway

Geneva, 30. August 2024

Delivered by: Sex og Politikk/IPPF Norway

1. Presentation of the Organisation

This statement is delivered on behalf of IPPF Norway, a non-governmental organization working to advance and protect sexual and reproductive health and rights in Norway and globally.

2. National consultations for the drafting of the national report

IPPF Norway have been part of the national consultative process, as well as submitting a stakeholder report together with the NGO forum for human rights, consisting of 13 Norwegian NGOs.

3. Plan of the Statement

This statement addresses the following issues within sexual and reproductive rights:

- 1) Comprehensive sexuality education
- 2) discrimination, stigmatization, and ill-treatment of sex-workers and
- 3) Third legal gender.

4. Statement

Issue 1.

Preventing discrimination, gender-based violence and sexual violence by providing comprehensive sexuality education, also known as CSE

A. Follow-up to the first review

Several recommendations to Norway have addressed gender-based violence and sexual violence. However, none explicitly mentioned comprehensive sexuality education/CSE, although this education is proven to be an important preventative measure to sexual and gender-based violence.

Access to CSE in school is stated as a priority by the Norwegian government. Despite this, efforts are lacking for improved implementation.

New developments since the first review

In 2020 the national curriculum was reviewed, resulting in more learning targets on sexuality and health. However, there is still a gap on including sexuality education in teacher training curriculums and for in-service training.

The 2023 national data collection scheme on youth, Ungdata¹, revealed that all forms of sexual violence among youth have doubled since 2015.

And 45% of young girls reported having experienced sexual violations.

The 2024 Official Norwegian Report on rape and sexual violence² documents that too little has been done by the Norwegian government to prevent sexual violence. The report concludes with a strong recommendation to increase access to CSE in schools as a main preventative measure.

B. Recommendations

We therefore ask states to recommend that the Government of Norway:

- Enhance access to comprehensive sexuality education by providing teacher training, quality-assured resources, and ensuring non-discriminatory access in all official languages and for all pupils, including those with disabilities.

Issue 2.

Discrimination, stigmatization, and ill treatment against persons selling sexual services

A. Follow-up to the first review

The purchase of sexual services from consenting adults is currently prohibited under § 316 of the Criminal Code. This model of criminalising the buyer but not the seller, is commonly referred to as the Nordic model. There have been no explicit recommendations to Norway on this topic previously.

The UN working group on discrimination against women and girls, key international human rights organizations as well as sex-workers organisations, in Norway and globally, have

¹ <https://uni.oslomet.no/voldsprogrammet/ungvold/om-ungvold/>

² [Voldtekt – et samfunnsproblem](#), NOU 2024:4

advocated the full decriminalization of all aspects of sex work.³ to prevent violence and discrimination, and ensuring the fulfillment of human rights of all persons.

Due to the practice of the law in Norway, sex workers face⁴:

- Higher risk of violence and abuse, due to their isolation and marginalised status
- High risk of eviction, police surveillance, loss of livelihood and/or deportation
- Less ability to screen clients, work organized or otherwise take measures to ensure their safety.⁵

B. New developments since the last review

In January 2023, the Criminal Code Council of independent experts set down by the government, delivered their report (NOU 2022:21⁶) as part of a review of the Criminal Code.

The Council's report highlights that less human trafficking for prostitution purposes has been uncovered and prosecuted since the introduction of § 316.

The Council further recommends that § 316 be repealed, and that the purchase of sexual services is decriminalized, on the basis of the right to sexual self-determination and the harm principle.

C. Recommendations

We therefore ask States to make the following recommendations to the Government of Norway:

- To decriminalize the purchase of sexual services and Repeal § 316 of the Criminal Code, in accordance with the recommendation of the Criminal Code Council

Issue 3. Discrimination, stigmatization, and ill treatment against non-binary persons

A. Follow-up to the first review

In the previous cycle, several recommendations to Norway addressed sexual orientation and gender identity, although none specifically addressed the issue of a third legal gender.

³ UNAids, WHO, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and International Commission of Jurists).

⁴ [The Human Cost of 'Crushing' the Market](#), 2016, Amnesty International

⁵ Ibid

⁶ [Strafferettslig vern av den seksuelle selvbestemmelsesretten](#), NOU 2022:21

In Norway non-binary persons lack legal recognition.

B. New developments since the last review

In 2023 the then Minister of Culture and Gender Equality initiated an investigation with the purpose of improving the living conditions and legal protection for non-binary persons.

Non-binary persons in Norway experience:

- Worse living conditions and quality of life than others
- Are more exposed to exclusion, discrimination, and violence than others, including others queer people.
- Experience barriers to using public services, including healthcare.

Research shows that legal recognition can improve living conditions and quality of life for non-binary persons.

The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Families (Bufdir), investigated the issue and concluded with a recommendation of including a third legal gender.

Recommendations

We ask States to make the following recommendations to the Government of Norway:

- Legalize a third legal gender in order to ensure the health and rights of non-binary people

In our stakeholder report we also have recommendations on access to safe and legal abortion. This can be found in our factsheet.

Thank you for your attention.