



YOU  
HAVE  
RIGHTS

# I am a minor involved in prostitution

In France, the purchase of sexual acts is defined as follows:

**“The act of soliciting, accepting or obtaining sexual relations from a person who engages in prostitution, even on an occasional basis, in exchange for remuneration, a promise of remuneration, the provision of a benefit in kind or the promise of such a benefit.”**  
(art. 611-1 of the Criminal Code)

Since the **law of 4 March 2002** on parental authority, the **prostitution of minors has been banned** throughout France. This means that **no one has the right to buy a child's body** for the purposes of having sex. The **law of 21 April 2021, protecting minors from sexual offences and incest**, strengthened the mechanisms for protecting minors and increased the penalties for perpetrators.

Since that date, the **exploitation of a minor under the age of 15 in prostitution**, if the difference in age between the perpetrator and the victim is more than 5 years, is a **crime** of rape. In addition, this law introduces **a non-consent threshold at the age of 15 for sexual offences and 18 for prostitution and incest**.

The purchase of sexual acts involving minors is severely punished and constitutes a criminal offence. Penalties for customers of sexual acts can include fines, prison sentences, awareness-raising courses and even a criminal record.

## PENALTIES FOR CUSTOMERS

The customer of a prostituted minor is liable to:

- **5 years' imprisonment and a €75,000 fine** (art. 225-12-1) for soliciting or exploiting a minor in prostitution,
- **7 years' imprisonment and a €100,000 fine** where the perpetrator contacted the minor online or made contact with several minors, etc. (art. 225-12-2),
- **10 years' imprisonment and a €150,000 fine** where the minor is under the age of 15, for soliciting or exploiting a minor under the age of 15 in prostitution (art. 225-12-2),
- **20 years' imprisonment for rape of a minor under the age of 15** where the rape is recognised (art. 222-23-3).

## PENALTIES FOR PROCURERS

- Procuring a minor is punishable by **10 years' imprisonment and a €1.5 million fine** (art. 225-7),
- If the offence involves minors under the age of 15, the penalty is increased to **20 years' imprisonment and a €3 million fine** (art. 225-7-1),
- If procuring is committed in an organised gang against a minor or using torture or acts of barbarism, it is punishable by **20 years' imprisonment and a fine of €3 million** (art. 225-8).

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## HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT?

As a minor, I may file a complaint against procurers or clients:

- By **going to a police station or gendarmerie**
- Or by **contacting the Public Prosecutor directly by post**: the letter should be sent to my nearest Public Prosecutor. This letter must precisely recount all the facts I am reporting, in detail. I can include any important information: address, telephone number, screenshots, photos, etc.



**Note:** I may contact the Court for information on the follow-up to my complaint (by telephone, by post or in person with proof of identity). Also, during the investigation, the Public Prosecutor may contact me to give details of the facts reported.

- Or file a “**civil suit**” with the senior examining magistrate.

If I wish, I can do this on my own, without a parent or a guardian being present to file a complaint. It is then up to the Public Prosecutor to initiate legal proceedings after being informed of your complaint.

I will nevertheless **need to be accompanied by a legal guardian** (legal guardians or an ad hoc administrator appointed by the Public Prosecutor) **to file a civil suit** (see below).

I may file a complaint about something that has been done to me, against an individual, a legal entity or X, if the perpetrator is unknown.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I FILE A COMPLAINT?

- Once a complaint has been filed, the police or gendarmerie carry out an investigation and the complaint is forwarded to the Public Prosecutor.
- **My complaint may give rise to:**
  - > A **police investigation** (to identify the perpetrators, search for evidence and interview the affected people),
  - > This is followed by a further **investigation** ordered by the Public Prosecutor if there is sufficient evidence,
  - > Then to an **examination** (to investigate further),
  - > Once the investigation is complete, the people I have reported will be tried in court.

If the events took place too long ago, or if my statement has not made it possible to identify the perpetrators, **the complaint may be dropped**. If any new facts come to light, I may ask to make an **additional complaint** or file a new “**civil suit**” with the senior examining magistrate.

If the complaint leads to an investigation, I have the right to file a **civil suit for damages**. This should be done with the help of an association and/or a lawyer.

## FILING A CIVIL SUIT ALLOWS ME TO...

- Be **informed of the progress of the proceedings** (confrontation, hearing dates, detention of the accused, etc.),
- Be **assisted by a lawyer free of charge** through legal aid ([online application for legal aid \[online procedure\]](#) | Service-Public.fr),
- **Access to the criminal case** file via my lawyer (this file contains all the information from the investigation, including my complaint),
- Request **further investigations** and **appeal** if certain decisions go against my interests,
- **Claim damages**.