[SE] New rules on the purchase of sexual acts making acts performed remotely illegal

IRIS 2025-7:1/10

Erik Ullberg & Amanda Jonsson
Wistrand Advokatbyrå, Gothenburg

On 1 July 2025, amendments to Chapter 6, Sections 11 and 12 of the Swedish Penal Code entered into force. These legislative changes expand the scope of criminal liability for the offences of purchase of sexual services and procuring to also encompass acts performed remotely, i.e., without physical contact, for example via webcam or other digital means. Although the revised statutory provisions do not explicitly refer to acts performed remotely, the legislative intent is that such conduct, through modifications to other constituent elements of the offences, shall be included.

The reasons behind the amendments included a degree of legal uncertainty as to whether the previous wording of the provisions covered remotely performed acts. As guiding case law is lacking in this area, the legal ambiguity suggested that, under the previous framework, courts were likely to be precluded from applying the provisions to remote sexual transactions due to the principle of legality. However, as sexual offences committed remotely are considered just as serious as physical offences, and due to the development of internet-based platforms, the previous wording was deemed inappropriate. The amendments criminalising the aforementioned offences thus constitute a step towards adapting the legislation to today's digital reality. As of 1 July 2025, it is illegal to pay someone to perform sexual acts remotely, for example via video, livestream or on-demand clips. Expanding the scope of criminal liability for procuring also makes it illegal to promote or profit from such acts. However, for such conduct to be deemed illegal, the person paying for the acts must be able to influence the content. If the paying party is not able to influence the content, for example if the material is pre-recorded, the provisions remain inapplicable.

Brottsbalk (1962:70)

https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/brottsbalk-1962700_sfs-1962-700/#K6

Criminal Code (1962:70)

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026