

Austrian state to pay million-euro compensation to prostitutes

October 13 2014

The Austrian state of Salzburg on Monday admitted it will have to pay up to a total one million euros (\$1.3 million) to local prostitutes to compensate for illegally charging them fees for medical checks.

Authorities in the picturesque western region had in 2010 slapped a 35-euro medical contribution on about 600 local prostitutes who have to undergo weekly tests.

"These charges were introduced without any legal basis and we consequently must reimburse them as they are demanding," said provincial finance officer Christian Stoeckl of the conservative Austrian People's Party.

The fee-charging measure, launched by the region's former Social-Democrat government, had been challenged by a local brothel owner.

Prostitution is legal in Austria but subject to strict laws including regular medical examinations.

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Citation: Austrian state to pay million-euro compensation to prostitutes (2014, October 13) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-10-austrian-state-million-euro-compensation-prostitutes.html>

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