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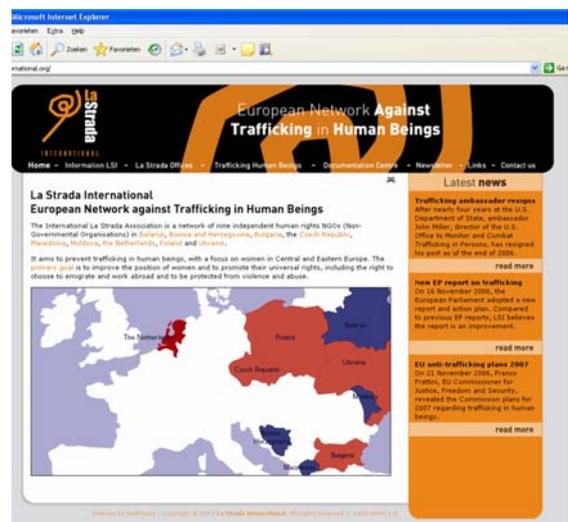
With this quarterly newsletter, La Strada International wants to inform and update about developments in the field of trafficking in human beings and on the activities of La Strada International and the La Strada member organisations. We welcome reactions to this initiative and contributions for next issues.

The next deadline is Monday, 2 April 2007. If you have news, information about your organisation, a new report or documentary or an outspoken opinion on (inter)national developments, please contact us at info@lastradainternational.org

LA STRADA NEWS

New Website launched

La Strada International has redesigned and updated its website www.lastradainternational.org, which now contains comprehensive information on LSI and its nine member organisations, but also background information on the international debate on trafficking and the views and opinions of La Strada International. The site also contains several latest news sections: Latest national developments in La Strada countries can be found in the 'La Strada Offices' submenu, policy developments are monitored in the submenu 'Trafficking in Human Beings', the 'Information LSI' submenu informs about current projects of La Strada International and in the Home page and remaining submenu sections, the 'Latest news' column provides general news on trafficking.



The website will soon offer an online documentation centre with a search function and downloadable pdf documents. The site will be regularly updated with the latest national, international and LSI news.

La Strada NGO Platform report & statement

A summary report of the La Strada International NGO platform is being finalised and - together with a participant's list and recommendations - will soon be available on the [La Strada International website](http://www.lastradainternational.org). The pictures of the NGO platform meeting can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#).

4th Anniversary of the La Strada Macedonia/Open Gate hotline

On 31 October 2006, at the fourth anniversary of the Open Gate (La Strada Macedonia) Hotline, a special event was organised at the museum "Mala Stanica" in Skopje, Macedonia. With the help of the Rubico theatre group, children of the orphanage home "11 October" from Skopje prepared an interactive theatre performance on the topic 'Prevention of trafficking in human beings', which was the central event of the anniversary.

New staff member at La Strada Belarus

In December 2006, Ms Lyudmila Shimelevich was appointed the new manager of Social Assistance, after Taisiya Zmachinskaya left La Strada to work for IOM Belarus. Lyudmila's background includes degrees in psychology and family counselling. She has professional experience as a psychologist and social services coordinator and also worked as reintegration assistant for a "Combating Trafficking in Human Beings" project in Belarus.



La Ukraine staff awarded

In March 2006, Kateryna Levchenko, national coordinator of La Strada Ukraine, was elected Member of the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada). She is involved in the work of the Committee Legislative Provisions for Law Enforcement Activities. In November 2006, she was awarded with the prestigious Princess Olga Order for her human rights work. In January 2006, Tetyana Doroshok, children's rights programme coordinator of La Strada Ukraine, received the Gratitude Award of the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers for her outstanding work on children's rights.

Bosnian Regional Conference

In November 2006, La Strada Bosnia organised a conference on the topic "Harmonisation of the work of the governmental and NGO sector in the field of anti-trafficking - Lessons learnt". For more information, the report or list of participants, please contact La Strada Bosnia at lastrada@cob.net.ba

New La Strada Publications

- In early 2007, seven Russian language publications will be launched by La Strada Belarus, among which information packages for specialists; a manual for journalists and a guide on innovative prevention methods in the anti-trafficking field. These and other publications can be ordered at the La Strada Belarus office: lastrada@infonet.by
- La Strada Bulgaria (Animus) is currently compiling a Directory of Manuals as part of the activities within the Danish program against human trafficking. They are collecting manuals that different organisations have published in the field of combating trafficking. Animus is therefore interested in receiving any new manuals, copies of which can be sent to: animus@animusassociation.org
- La Strada Ukraine published a compilation book entitled 'Person, Freedom, Democracy' containing articles on human rights, prevention of trafficking in people, women's rights and gender policies, written by the national coordinator Kateryna Levchenko. For more information, contact La Strada Ukraine: lastrada@ukrpack.org
- On the occasion of 5th anniversary of La Strada activities in Moldova, La Strada Moldova developed a special publication entitled '55+1 questions for La Strada'. The publication answers the main questions that have been raised over the last years on trafficking in human beings, as well on the organisations and activities of La Strada Moldova. For more information, contact La Strada Moldova: office@lastrada.md

La Strada Poland contributes to CEDAW shadow report

La Strada Poland contributed to the Polish CEDAW shadow report by writing the chapter on trafficking in women. This chapter concentrates on the new National Action Plan, which is seen as a step forward, but La Strada also detects a huge gap between theory and practice and a lack of implementation on several levels. *'Problems arise in the legal justice system where law enforcement agencies are poorly informed about the special guidelines on identification of victims, prosecutors about the special instructions on how to use and implement the Palermo Protocol and judges are reluctant to participate in special trainings and are therefore not updated about the current development of the phenomenon of trafficking in Poland, its new trends and forms'*, La Strada comments.

The programme of victim protection and support is another point for concern. It has serious limits in not treating all victims of trafficking that are identified equally. All services described in the action plan are available only for the limited number of migrant victims trafficked into Poland and only for those who are willing to cooperate with the law enforcement. These limitations decrease the number of beneficiaries in the programme in a significant way and a situation is created whereby trafficked persons are divided into two categories: those who receive assistance from state institutions (under the condition of cooperation) and those who are identified and assisted by NGOs and receive support from non-governmental sources. NGOs see this situation as a serious obstacle in the process of developing effective victim protection measures in Poland. The recommendations made by La Strada Poland to the CEDAW committee therefore focus strongly on the improvement and implementation of the National Action Plan and on awareness raising on all forms of trafficking.

I also care....

In 2005, the *International Women Rights Protection and Promotion Centre La Strada Moldova*, supported by ICCO, IOM, OSCE and the European Commission, launched the programme "I also care...". This social campaign targeted a tradition of hostility, ignorance and marginalisation of trafficked persons by the general public and communities they originate from or return to, as well as the still limited access of all the categories of victims to different types of assistance.



The following facts were confirmed by a poll that preceded the campaign: 80 % of the trafficked persons were rejected by their families, 70% were rejected by society and did not benefit from adequate assistance. During the campaign, information packets entitled "What can you do?" were distributed and volunteers discussed with citizens about their attitude towards this phenomenon and asking them what each of them could do in order to help trafficked persons to socially reintegrate into a normal life environment.

A research study by the Center for Community Sociology and Gender Studies (CCSGS) shows that in comparison with the 2005 poll, the attitude of the population towards victims of trafficking is a more tolerable one; victims of trafficking now receive more sympathy and understanding. Another peculiarity revealed by the research is the fact that women accept trafficked persons more easily back into the family or friendship circle than men; the same can be said about the urban population in comparison to the rural one.

La Strada Moldova considers the Social Campaign "I also care" as one of their most relevant best practices. The campaign has made clear that the involvement of as many population layers as possible highly benefits the efficiency of the efforts to fight against the discriminatory social situation trafficked persons face. For more information about the campaign, contact: office@lastrada.md

What's going on ?

2007: EU Year of equal opportunities

The European Union has announced 2007 'The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All' in an attempt to draw the attention of European citizens to the problems created by discrimination. The year will promote equal opportunities and raise awareness about the rights of everyone to equal treatment and inform about the benefits of diversity. The year will be marked by hundreds of different activities staged throughout the European Union with all 27 EU Member States taking part. The main aim is to reach out to the general public and therefore most of the Year's activities will be held at the local, regional or national level. This will be supported and complemented by several pan-European activities such as a campaign on European anti-discrimination policies and legislation and the presentation of the results of a survey on European citizens' attitudes towards and knowledge of discrimination and inequality issues. The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All will be formally launched with a big opening conference in Berlin on 30-31 January 2007, chaired by the German Presidency Council of Europe campaign.

Applying the CEDAW Assessment Tool

In 2002, Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (CEELI), a public service project of the American Bar Association (ABA), developed the [CEDAW Assessment Tool](#) as a resource to measure the status of women against the background of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). As of 28 February 2006, 181 countries have ratified CEDAW, making it the second most ratified United Nations convention. The CEDAW Assessment Tool examines a nation's laws and measures the degree to which these laws protect the rights of women as mandated by CEDAW.

Designed to uncover the legal obstacles that frustrate the achievement of greater gender equality, the tool separately measures the degree to which women are accorded the rights and status guaranteed to them

under CEDAW in practice. For this reason, a major focus of this assessment tool is on “real life” impediments to equality, many of which are not necessarily the product of poor or non-existent legislation. The assessment tool generates a wealth of information that is essential for a comprehensive analysis of the status of women’s rights in a country. To date, CEELI has applied the CEDAW Assessment Tool in Armenia, Georgia, Russia, and Serbia. An assessment is also currently being conducted in Moldova. La Strada strongly supports assessment of the legal and social position of women in countries of origin and destination as the violation of women’s rights is seen by La Strada as one of the main root causes of trafficking.

Council of Europe Campaign

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe (CoE), Terry Davis, has accused the Member States and the European Union of letting down victims of slavery. In a speech given on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, he expressed CoE’s disappointment about the fact that until now, only three countries have ratified the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Davis encouraged the European Community to set an example and take the lead by ratifying the Convention. Seven more Member States have to ratify in order for the Convention to enter into force. In January 2007, UK Prime Minister Blair announced that the UK will sign the Council of Europe Convention, which will make the total amount of signatories 35. The Council of Europe still expects that the Convention can enter into force in 2008. In order to speed up the ratification process, the Coe had launched the [Campaign to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings](#) in 2006, under the slogan *Human being – not for sale*. The Campaign aims to raise awareness among governments, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities, NGOs and civil society, about the extent of the problem of trafficking in human beings in Europe today.



European Parliament adopts new report on trafficking

On 16 November 2006, the European Parliament adopted the [Report with a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on fighting trafficking in human beings - an integrated approach and proposals for an action plan](#) from The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), drafted by Edit Bauer, MEP from the Alde Group. Compared to previous EP reports on the issue of trafficking, La Strada International believes the report is an improvement, particularly with the regard to the language it uses to describe and analyse trafficking.

The report clearly denotes trafficking as a human rights issue, it emphasises the need for an integrated approach, mentions trafficking for different forms of exploitation (and not only commercial sexual exploitation), refers to trafficking within and across borders and it differentiates between trafficking of adults and children by using specific wording on child trafficking. The EP report further promotes gender-based approaches. LSI believes that the fact that trafficking of men is also included in the report marks an important step in raising the issue at the political level in the European Parliament. However, despite references to different forms of exploitation in the draft report, the draft version that was presented to Parliament still prioritised the issue of prostitution. The NGO working group on trafficking in human beings, which is a sub-group of the Brussels-based Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) and consists of Amnesty International, La Strada International, ISCOS-CISL, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes and Plan International, made use of the opportunity given by Mrs Bauer to comment on the draft. These comments urged for a human rights approach to trafficking, for the protection of the rights of trafficked persons as well as for the protection of (un)documented migrant workers. It also recommended



deleting those paragraphs from the draft which conflated trafficking with prostitution. The Working Group reiterated its concern that attention was given to the issue of prostitution as such and on models to combat it, rather than to tackle trafficking from a comprehensive human rights perspective. When the report was discussed in Parliament, Mrs Bauer herself suggested amendments to her own report. These amendments included the removal of the paragraphs that concerned prostitution and were accepted by the majority of the Members of the European Parliament. The final version of the report will be available soon.

Protection for domestic workers!

In December 2006, a two day International Seminar on protection for domestic workers was held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The conference was organised by [IRENE](#) (International Restructuring Education Network Europe), FNV Mondial (Netherlands), the Committee for Asian Women (CAW) and the Asian Domestic Workers' Network, and WIEGO (Women in the Informal Economy Globalising and Organising). It was attended by about 60 representatives of domestic/household workers' trade unions, Global Unions and national trade unions, as well as support NGOs from around the world.

In the [Declaration](#) the conference that participants drafted, a call is made for *Decent Work for Domestic Workers* and common outrage is expressed about the exploitation of many domestic/household workers across the globe, the lack of recognition of the economic and social contribution that domestic workers make and the continuing failure to recognise domestic work as "work" in many countries, denying these workers the rights and respect they deserve. To work further on the rights of domestic workers, an interim working group will be set up to investigate the possibilities for greater international activity for the rights of domestic workers worldwide, such as the possibility for an ILO Convention on the rights of national or migrant domestic workers, and the potential for further funding for domestic workers' self-organisations.

New Dutch National Rapporteur

On 1 October 2006, Mrs Anna Korvinus, Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, resigned after six years in office. Mrs Korvinus was the first National Rapporteur appointed. Together with her office, she set up a functional and comprehensive registration system of facts and figures on trafficking into and within the Netherlands and she successfully influenced the Dutch trafficking policies on the Bureau's research. Moreover, she made important contributions to the national and international trafficking debate. The new Dutch Rapporteur is Mrs Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen, who has held the position of a family judge and judge in aliens' matters at the District Court in The Hague.

What's new ?



ECPAT Global Monitoring Report

In November 2006, ECPAT launched the Global Monitoring Report on the Status of Action against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). The [country reports](#) that make up ECPAT's global monitoring provide information and analysis on specific country situations and an assessment of the efforts that are made, and the ones still needed, to protect children from sexual exploitation in each

country. The information is gathered with the input from a large number of grassroots organisations, government and other agencies that work directly to counteract these grave violations against children. These reports aim to stimulate the exchange of experience and knowledge among countries and different actors to create a dialogue that can further the work against CSEC. While much has been achieved over the years, gaps remain and ECPAT hopes that this information can support more global action to protect children from violations of their rights. For more information, contact: info@ecpat.net

Research group: SexWorkMigration

An international multi-lingual mailing list entitled 'Research-SexWorkMigration' has been established by academic researchers in January 2007. The group aims to be a place for exchange – not an opinion forum – for researchers working on issues of prostitution, trafficking in persons, forms of extreme dependency and migration. All geographic areas are covered. Communication can be in French, English, or Spanish.

The information exchanged will comprise articles, papers, reviews of lectures and events, announcements seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. The mailing list will also announce calls for papers, research groups and projects, funding, scholarships, bibliographic references and reviews. New members are asked to provide details on their name, degree or status, the subject and area of research in order to provide all list members with information as to who receives the messages and announcements that are posted. To sign up, contact the moderator: niklainez@yahoo.com

Bad working conditions for cabaret dancers in Switzerland

FIZ, a Swiss Women Information Center for women from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe living in Switzerland, initiated a detailed study about the living and working conditions of cabaret dancers. For non-qualified women from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe (non-EU and EFTA countries), the dancing profession is often [the only possibility to work legally in Switzerland](#), and their working conditions are typically bad. It was found that actual working conditions differ considerably from original agreements in written contracts. The study was published in German, however, a summary with the main results as well as solutions and strategies for the improvement of the living and working conditions of the dancers has also been published in German, French, and Italian. Summaries can be ordered at [FIZ](#). In 2007, a newsletter with a summary of main results and proposals for improvement will also be published in English, Spanish, and French and will be available on the website.



Book on Trafficking and Women's Rights

Christien van den Anker, academic expert on women's rights, and Jeroen Doornik, academic expert on (irregular) migration, have published the book "Women's Rights and trafficking", based on extensive research and cooperation across Europe. It provides cutting edge debate on the issue of trafficking and women's rights in practice and on policies on trafficking in women. 'Trafficking and Women's Rights' presents approaches to international and national law, policy models, NGO support, the role of economics and the need for long-term prevention. The book launch was held on 10 December 2006 to form part of the worldwide celebrations of the International Human Rights Day. Speakers highlighted the importance of women's rights for the development of adequate policy to combat trafficking in human beings.

Contributions to the book were made by, amongst others, Yakin Ertürk, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Helga Konrad, the former special representative from the OSCE and Monika Smit and Heleen de Jonge from the Bureau of the Dutch Rapporteur.

What's happening where ?

- February 26 February - 9 March, 2007. [51st Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women](#), New York, USA.
- March 21-22, 2007. Conference "[Hear My Voice: Identifying and Assisting Trafficked Persons](#)". Tel Aviv University, Israel. Invitation via L'isha, Isha Haifa Feminist Center, Tel: +972 4 8650977, Fax: +972 4 8641072, Ishahfc1@netvision.net.il
- March 26-28, 2007. International Conference: "[Abu Dhabi Global Initiative to End Trafficking in Persons](#)", organised by UNODC, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. For further information, contact: Richard Murphy, Spokesman UNODC, Tel: +43 1 260 60 5761, Mobile: +43 699 1459 5761, E-mail: richard.murphy@unodc.org
- Mid-October 2007, LSI NGO platform, Macedonia.. More information will be provided in June 2007 on the LSI website.
- End of October 2007. Triannual congress of the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), Bangkok, Thailand. www.gaatw.org

What's on your mind ?

Jyothi Kanics is currently Programme Manager for the Separated Children in Europe Programme at Save the Children and a member of the La Strada International Advisory Board



What's happening behind closed doors?

Several years ago, when one spoke about trafficking in human beings in Europe, people were often reluctant to recognise trafficking as not only a series of human rights abuses, but also in many cases as a violation of the individual's rights. It was easier to consider trafficking as a crime committed by organised syndicates or an offence in the private sphere, where one person deceived or abused another, but to assert the responsibility of the State to prevent trafficking and to respect the rights of trafficked persons was a difficult argument to make. Sometimes it still is.

While it is now accepted that States bear the main responsibility for preventing trafficking, prosecuting perpetrators and assisting victims, it is important that we still ensure that in doing so, States do not violate the rights of at-risk groups and trafficked persons. There are many potential violations that we could outline as we highlight this imperative for monitoring State responses to trafficking. Hopefully, most will be investigated by GRETA, the independent monitoring body to be set up after the Council of Europe *Convention on Action against Trafficking* comes into force. In this comment, I would like to focus on one response, which I believe does not always respect human rights standards and may further harm trafficked persons, and that is the use of closed facilities or detention to "protect" presumed victims.

There are many reasons why a trafficked person may end up in detention. In the worst case scenario, they have not been identified as a victim, but rather as an irregular migrant who is then prosecuted and given a prison sentence or placed in detention pending a deportation order. In other cases, identified victims are placed in closed facilities for their "protection" and the argument is made that the State must prevent victims from maintaining contact with traffickers or pimps as well as to prevent them from absconding. This rationale is strongest when the victim is a child – for then it is most often the State who acts as guardian and determines what is in the child's best interests. Of course, in many countries non-governmental organisations are the main service providers and also employ such methods to control and protect their clients. But is it justified to place trafficked persons and children in closed facilities? Under which circumstances and whose authority? With what consultation, monitoring and review? Is there any assessment of the impact this treatment has upon the individual?

In my current work, I find myself faced with these questions again and again, because trafficked children who are not in a closed facility tend to disappear. Therefore, many practitioners argue that controlling their freedom of movement is a necessary and justifiable evil. Is it a violation of their rights? The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that no child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. Furthermore, every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action. Regrettably, current responses to trafficking are far from respecting these standards.

What can be done? First: improving identification so that victims are not treated as criminals. Secondly, ensuring that there is no discrimination in the treatment provided to presumed trafficked persons. For example, they should be treated according to existing standards in place to protect victim/witnesses, those receiving mental health care or special vulnerable groups such as children. We must also ask tough questions of our governments and ourselves as outlined above in order to move closer to international human rights standards. Attention should also be given to developing and exchanging good practice in providing alternatives to detention. And finally, and most importantly, we must consult directly with presumed trafficked persons, including children, to receive more feedback on their experiences and to better understand how our policies and practices impact on their lives and future possibilities.

In 2007, La Strada International receives financial support from the Foundation DOEN. La Strada members are supported by various other donors.