LSI NGO Platform campaign: “One Story, two outcomes. Respect trafficked people’s rights”

Under international law, victims of human trafficking have important rights. These rights help them to recover from their experience of being trafficked and give them a chance to rebuild their lives. Unfortunately, all over Europe trafficked people’s rights are often not respected, leaving them vulnerable to re-trafficking.

For this reason the La Strada International NGO Platform - United against human trafficking in Europe - has launched a campaign to encourage governments to fully implement anti-trafficking legislation on the ground. Our campaign “One Story, Two Outcomes” tells the story of Anna, a woman who finds herself lured abroad and ruthlessly exploited by her employers. What happens to her illustrates what it means for an individual if rights are not respected, and what happens when they are.

The partners of the LSI NGO Platform urge governments to implement the important international treaties to ensure that human rights of trafficked persons are respected and protected.

LSI NGO Platform - United against human trafficking in Europe

On 20-21 November, La Strada International organised its 7th NGO Platform in Tallinn, Estonia, entitled “Monitoring Access to Rights and Taking Action”. The event was co-hosted by the Estonian partner NGO Living for Tomorrow.

The La Strada International NGO Platform was initiated in 2005 to enable European anti-trafficking organisations to meet with the aim of strengthening and maintaining closer cooperation on advocacy, awareness and prevention, referral and direct support to trafficked persons. With the NGO Platform, LSI promotes the anti-trafficking debate among civil society, and the exchange of best practices and lessons
learnt. The previous NGO Platforms were organised in Warsaw, Poland (2005), Kyiv, Ukraine (2006), Skopje Macedonia (2007), Berlin, Germany (2009) and Rome, Italy (2011).

This year, representatives of more than 20 NGOs and three networks from 20 European (EU and non-EU) countries gathered to discuss current challenges and opportunities in the field of combatting human trafficking. During the two days, the participants discussed in smaller workshop groups the current challenges in the anti-trafficking debate, including: **NGO monitoring** and how NGOs can become more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of anti-trafficking policies and what mechanisms NGOs can use. **Data protection** - defining the line between providing reliable data on human trafficking and keeping trafficked persons’ confidentiality and reviewing data protection provisions in place and how NGOs can influence the standardisation process of data collection and data processing in Europe. **Non-punishment provision** - how can NGOs ensure that this provision is observed in practice and how can grass-roots NGOs support its implementation? **Standards for service providers** - reviewing LSI and partners’ minimum standards for provision of services to trafficked persons, as well as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure NGO commitment. **Demand** - how to address the issue of demand, as it has fuelled the politicised and polarised debate on prostitution and human trafficking, and almost forces civil society to take a position.

The meeting ended with a plenary session devoted to **Joint Actions**, where the partners discussed several opportunities on national and international levels for collective advocacy and engage in joint campaigning actions. In order to reflect the formalised cooperation of LSI members and other partner NGOs in Europe, it was decided to add ‘united against human trafficking in Europe’ to the name of the platform. The campaign that was launched on 10 December 2013 (International Human Rights Day) is the first joint action defined at this year’s platform. The second was the joint statement on 17 December, International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers.

**LSI NGO Platform statement on the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers**

17 December, International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, was created to address the ubiquity of crimes against sex workers that too often go ignored. Following the statements by the “Green River Killer” in Seattle, Washington, who claimed to have chosen sex workers as his target because he knew few people would care, it has become apparent that this often neglected issue is in dire need of more attention and allies.

This year, partners in the LSI NGO Platform have issued a **statement** calling to end violence against sex workers and for the protection and promotion of their human rights. In the statement LSI and its partners flag the problems to implement the rights of sex workers, if sex work itself is considered violence against women. The criminalisation of clients of sex workers, which is done in the name of ending violence against women and of preventing and combatting trafficking in persons, deprive sex workers of the tools to protect themselves from violence and seek redress. By equating sex work to trafficking in persons, the very complex phenomenon of human trafficking is narrowed down to a moral issue, an approach that fails to address the economic, political and social root causes of human trafficking. Furthermore, trafficked persons in all other industries are not recognised and remain unprotected.

Unfortunately, in several European countries and in the European anti-trafficking debate, sex work and human trafficking are often conflated. The conflation of sex work and trafficking leads to inadequate counter-trafficking policies and to counter-productive prostitution policies. The two issues are both complex and need their own individual approach and policy. The LSI NGO Platform is worried about these developments as we believe that they do not contribute to the protection of sex workers from violence and
abuse, nor do they address the root causes of trafficking in human beings. We are also worried that this focus on sex work leads to a polarisation in the international counter-trafficking debate, which takes away the focus from what is needed now the most: the protection of the rights of those who have been exploited, violated and abused.

Addressing Demand in Anti-Trafficking Efforts and Policies
La Strada International and La Strada Czech Republic are partners in DemandAT “Addressing Demand in Anti-Trafficking Efforts and Policies”, a new EU project to conduct research on addressing demand for trafficking in human beings. The project is coordinated by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), based in Vienna, and partners with the universities of Bremen, Edinburgh, Lund, Durham, the European University Institute and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

While responses to trafficking have traditionally focused on combatting the criminal networks involved in trafficking or protecting the human rights of victims, European countries are increasingly exploring ways of influencing demand for the services or products of those trafficked within their own economies and societies - for example, through criminalising clients of sex workers, better control of recruitment agencies, and fair trade campaigns. This major interdisciplinary project will examine the history, economics and politics of such measures, and explore how effective they have been in practice. Rather than restricting the analysis to narrow international legal definitions, it will analyse efforts to address demand for a range of forced and exploitative scenarios of labour and production and draw on insights from related areas, such as addressing the demand for drugs, irregular domestic labour, and fair trade campaigns. The project will feed into EU and national policy-making to address human trafficking. The project will run from January 2014 until April 2016. More information is available on the ICMPD website.

La Strada Belarus new awareness campaign “Make your decision with open eyes”
In October, La Strada Belarus (Gender Perspectives) launched a new information campaign, in close partnership with the Ministry of Interior of Belarus and the NGO “Business women club”, to inform Belarusians about safe migration and how to protect themselves from trafficking and abuse.

The campaign consists of three video clips which are based on the most typical situations that Belarusian migrants face before travelling abroad for various purposes. The main feature in the video clips is the blindfold on the potential migrants’ eyes. This symbol is well-known to Belarusians as a sign of fraud, a sign that a person puts their faith in someone else’s words. The main characters take off the blindfold by making a call to the infoline 113, run in part of the country by La Strada Belarus. The video clips present the stories of a young man who is going to work abroad, a young woman who is offered a job as a dancer in a nightclub in a foreign country, and a young woman who meets a man on the internet and wants to travel to his country to marry him.

In addition to the video clips, the campaign will also be promoted through popular social networks. News and recommendations on how to act in crisis situations abroad are shared. Consultations regarding employment, marriage, study abroad and vacations in countries unfamiliar to much of the Belarusian society take place within the framework of this campaign.

Promoting Sustainability of State-Led National Referral Mechanisms for Victims of Human Trafficking
The Danish Programme against Human Trafficking in Eastern Europe (DANATIP), funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been supporting counter-trafficking efforts in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova since 2006, implemented by La Strada, IOM, OSCE and local NGOs in the three countries. The focus within its final phase (2012-2013) has been on strengthening the National Referral Mechanisms (NRM) in the three countries to ensure that these mechanisms become sustainable. To reflect on all results achieved in the last eight years and highlight lessons learnt, a final regional conference was held on 5 and 6 November 2013 in Kyiv, Ukraine.

The conference “Promoting the Sustainability of State-led National Referral Mechanisms for Victims of Trafficking” focused on how governments can manage sustainable NRMs in the context of constrained financing and constantly changing trends and on maintaining relevance and efficiency of the NRM’s responses in a mid- to long-term perspective. Panel discussions touched upon international experience and questions of principles, practices and challenges, burden sharing and social contracting and the contribution of NGOs and other non-state actors to the NRM and the role of monitoring and evaluation.
Participants of the meeting included representatives of both Governments and NGOs of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, the Danish MFA and programme partners (IOM, OSCE and La Strada), and international experts. The results of the discussions will be summarised in a conference report, which is not yet available. La Strada International and its member organisations in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova would like to use this opportunity to thank the Danish Government sincerely for their generous support and cooperation over the last eight years; without their support, the cooperation and progress made would not have been possible. La Strada would also like to thank the cooperation partners IOM, OSCE and other NGOs for the common results achieved. La Strada believes that the programme has been very successful and has led to positive results and therefore hopes that the cooperation established will continue. Currently La Strada is looking for other donors willing to support similar follow-up programmes in these three countries.

**Cut the strings of labour exploitation and child trafficking in Macedonia**

From 2 to 9 December, Macedonia marked the Week against Trafficking in Human Beings in Macedonia with the campaign “Cut the strings of labour exploitation and child trafficking in Macedonia”. The overall aim of the campaign was to establish a fund to support children who are forced to beg or victims of labour exploitation. A number of activities were organised in different towns in Macedonia, where Open Gate volunteers distributed awareness materials to inform the public about the issue of child trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation and what can be done to prevent it. Additionally, the volunteers motivated people to make a donation towards the provision of support to trafficked children. With the decision of the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, anti-trafficking week is organised every year in Macedonia, with the aim to intensify the efforts for combatting trafficking in human being and increase the awareness of the general public towards this issue.

La Strada Macedonia is asking European anti-trafficking NGOs to sign the Balkan Declaration on the suppression of trafficking and exploitation of human beings (see the previous newsletter for more information), to send a stronger message to Balkan governments to uphold their commitments for combatting human trafficking and protecting the rights of trafficked persons. If your organisation shares the values expressed in the Declaration and would like to sign it, please contact La Strada Macedonia.

**Vacancy for Director of La Strada Czech Republic**

La Strada Czech Republic is recruiting a new Director and has published a vacancy. The closing date for the applications is 6 January 2014 and the successful candidate will be expected to start work from February or March 2014. The announcement (in Czech) is posted on the La Strada website. For more information please contact La Strada Czech Republic.

**Going to Prague to have some fun?**

La Strada Czech Republic organised a press conference on Tuesday, 17 December, to coincide with the International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers. Lucie Otáhalová, the Interim Director of La Strada Czech Republic, presented to the attendees the campaign against human trafficking and labour exploitation. A short video, that aims to prevent violence against sex workers, was also presented. During the event Lucie Šídová, the director of ROZKOŠ bez RIZIKA, the Czech sex workers rights organisation and Stanislav Hyžík from the Municipal Police of Prague explained their work in the field of violence against sex workers. The conference was part of the project “Respect rights, don’t accept violence” supported by the Municipality of Prague, the Ministry of Interior and the organisation ROZKOŠ bez RIZIKA. The short video, called “Going to Prague to have some fun?” is available in English on the La Strada website and on YouTube.

**Conference on compensation for trafficked persons in The Netherlands**

On 10 October, La Strada Netherlands/CoMensha and the Dutch organisation FairWork organised a conference on the topic of compensation for trafficked persons. Over 100 participants from the Labour Inspectorate, police, National Prosecutor’s Office, ministries and service providers gathered in the building of the Dutch Senate to exchange experience and improve their cooperation.
FairWork presented a report from the Netherlands (in Dutch, will be available in English soon), which shows that although there are possibilities to claim compensation for material and non-material damages as part of the criminal proceedings, in the vast majority of cases, compensation is not claimed and/or not awarded. The Fund for Compensation for Victims of Crime explained the process of submitting a compensation claim to the Fund. Marije van Doorninck, Advisor Public Affairs from La Strada International, presented the COMP.ACT report “Findings and results of the European Action for Compensation for Trafficked Persons.”

The lawyer Annet Koopsen shared her experiences in claiming compensation for trafficked persons and the National Prosecutor’s Office demonstrated through several practical examples that receiving compensation through the criminal proceedings is not always very easy.

After several practical workshops, in which participants brainstormed how to improve the access to compensation, the conference ended with a speech by the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking, Mrs Dettmeijer-Vermeulen. She stressed that the fight against human trafficking needs to shift from prosecution of the offenders to the protection of the victims and that the possibilities for compensation have to be included in the Dutch National Referral Mechanism, which is currently being drafted.

CoMensha/La Strada Netherlands presents new website and logo

In October, The Coordination Centre Human Trafficking (CoMensha)/La Strada Netherlands launched its new website and logo to the public and its partners. The new website has a more user-friendly interface, clearer structure and easier navigation. The website provides information about the services, care programmes and shelters for trafficked persons, statistics about the nature and scope of human trafficking in The Netherlands, as well as new trends and developments.

Open Gate/ La Strada Macedonia educates future social workers on trafficking in human beings

On 11 December, 70 students - future teachers and social workers from Macedonia - were awarded certificates for their six-month practicum in the non-governmental sector, signed by the OSCE Ambassador and Ministry of Education and Science in Macedonia.

Since 2009, Open Gate has provided high-quality practicum opportunities for selected students from the Institute for Social Work and Social Policy in Macedonia outside the formal education system. The initiative was part of the project “Strengthening the pre-service teacher training system in a multi-ethnic society.”

By targeting future social workers, the practicum provides a crucial step towards increasing students’ sensitivity regarding trafficked persons and their needs. It prepares young people to work with trafficked persons of all ethnicities and increases their awareness and knowledge on the issue. The training provided them with practical skills, related with social assistance and prevention work, including hotline consultations. Over the six-month period the students increased their understanding of the role and responsibility of social workers and improved their teaching skills as a tool for prevention of trafficking in human beings among at-risk groups.

Humiliating Pathway: a movie produced 85 years ago but relevant to this day

On 20 October, La Strada Moldova invited the children of several schools in Chisinau to a special cinema and musical event – a projection of the film Humiliating Pathway with live music played by contemporary Polish artists.

Humiliating Pathway was produced in Poland in 1928 and touches upon the topic of human trafficking. The film was lost during the Second World War and was only recently rediscovered in Denmark. It reveals the story of two sisters who fell victim to human trafficking while looking for better opportunities abroad. Almost 90 years have passed since then but the movie is still relevant to this day both due to the situations faced by the film protagonists and the involved emotional burden.

The event was organised by the Polish Institute in Bucharest and La Strada Moldova within the Moldovan national anti-trafficking week, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combatting Trafficking in Persons. With this event the organisers and their partners aimed to attract once again the attention of the general public to the problem of trafficking in human beings.
HRDN campaign for the European Parliament Elections 2014: Stand 4 Human Rights

The Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) launched on 10 December its “Stand 4 Human Rights” campaign, ahead of the 2014 European Parliament elections. The HRDN, of which La Strada International is a member, is an informal group of 47 NGOs operating at the EU level in the broader areas of human rights, democracy and peace building.

The campaign will centre around five pledges, of which the HRDN is asking sitting MEPs and candidates to sign up to - and in doing so, they will affirm that they ‘stand for human rights’ and will actively work to strengthen the European Parliament’s human rights approach, should they be elected in the 2014 elections. The pledges outline straightforward actions that future MEPs can commit to undertaking:

1. To promote the EU’s founding principles and objectives of its human rights and democracy policy
2. To publicly and privately raise human rights abuses and cases of individuals at risk
3. To regularly meet with NGOs and human rights defenders
4. To support the improvement of the European Parliament’s work on human rights and democracy such as by actively supporting the establishment of a fully-fledged human rights committee
5. To improve transparency within the European Parliament and other EU institutions.

The full text of these pledges can be accessed on the website accompanying the campaign [http://www.stand4humanrights.eu/](http://www.stand4humanrights.eu/). The website also contains a list of sitting MEPs who have already signed the pledge alongside their quotes in support of the campaign, as well as videos of human rights defenders calling on the EU to reinforce its efforts to promote human rights and democracy.

Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings: One decade later

At the 976th Plenary meeting, on 6 December the Permanent Council of the OSCE adopted the Addendum of the 2003 OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. The addendum was presented by the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to the Alliance Expert Coordination Team at their meeting on 13 December. It provides the participating States with an updated toolkit and helps to address the current and emerging trends and patterns. The addendum includes a number of encouraging developments for the protection of the rights of trafficked persons. It recommends States to consider implementing “zero-tolerance” policies or other similar standards in government procurement of goods and services. With the Czech ‘Tree workers case’ still pending and the Czech Government not taking responsibility, this is real good news. Furthermore, the article that discusses the prevention of THB for domestic servitude, explicitly mentions diplomatic households.

The most notable articles are on the protection of the rights of trafficked persons. The addendum clearly states that trafficked persons should be identified as such as soon as there are reasonable grounds that they have been trafficked and that victims of THB should be provided with assistance even before the investigation is initiated. This last part is important as it detangles the support and assistance to trafficked persons from the criminal case, and provides a big steps towards unconditional support. Moreover, States are recommended to take appropriate measures so that NGO’s, trade unions and social welfare services, through a National Referral Mechanism, may initiate referrals for the assistance of victims of all forms of trafficking regardless of their nationality. States must also ensure that the process for decisions regarding all referrals is fair, transparent and respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the victims and that the decisions can be reviewed. This last part actually impose that trafficked persons can appeal against a non-identification.

La Strada International welcomes these very important improvements of the Action Plan and is looking forward to working with the partners in the Alliance to explore how they can be implemented.

GAATW raises concern about exclusion of NGO participation by UN Working Group on Trafficking

The United Nations Working Group on Trafficking in Persons held its fifth meeting in November in Vienna, Austria. On the agenda were discussions on consent, demand and “forms of exploitation not specifically mentioned” in the Trafficking Protocol. The Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW) has expressed their concern about the UNODC’s exclusion of NGOs from this meeting, given the centrality of these issues to States’ responses to trafficking in persons. NGOs and other civil society actors are named as
actors in the UN Trafficking Protocol and should be part of the discussions on the development of understanding of the Protocol.

GAATW-IS called on States attending the working group meeting to pursue a framework for understanding all forms of exploitation that would apply across all labour sectors, including within the sex work sector, and could be used to help frontline workers better recognise exploitative labour practices wherever they occur without profiling workers on the basis of race, gender, caste, or other factors. Such a framework should urge States to stop the over-extension of counter-trafficking laws, policies, programmes and initiatives to workers who have not been trafficked. This should be developed with the participation of trafficked persons and other migrants who have experienced abuse and also with others who have first-hand experience of the harmful effects of counter-trafficking and anti-immigration measures.

16 days of activism to end violence against women

Each year on 25 November, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence begin. The campaign began in 1991 and always launches on 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and closes on 10 December, International Human Rights Day, to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasise the message that violence is a violation of human rights. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women stressed in her message that “...violence knows no borders and it affects women and girls of all ages, all income levels, all races, and all faiths and cultures.” She called on world leaders to “show determination and mount a response that is proportionate to the violence threatening the lives of women and girls” and reiterated that to be effective, prevention must address the root cause, which is gender inequality. “We need equal economic opportunities and access to justice for women. We need women’s voices to be heard. We need more women politicians, police and peacekeepers”, she added.


On 25 November, La Strada Moldova presented its first cinema product covering the issue of domestic violence - an artistic movie called “Colours”, co-produced with Sergiu Prodan Studio and with the financial support of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The plot is based on the information collected from more than 5000 calls at the specialised Trust Line against domestic violence, operated by La Strada Moldova. The movie aims to appeal to a young audience using the development of a relationship between a man and a woman - starting with vehement love and escalating to unbearable psychological violence. The message is to create zero tolerance towards domestic violence, including psychological violence which often remains unidentified, even by the victims themselves. The audience is encouraged to seek counselling when identifying the first signs of a violent relationship and to access other assistance services, including via the La Strada Trust Line.

Statement on the seasonal workers directive

On 14 November the European Parliament LIBE Committee voted on the Directive on Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-country Nationals for the Purpose of Seasonal Employment in EU Member States, the so-called “Seasonal workers Directive”.

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the European Federation of National Organisations Working with Homeless People (FEANTSA), and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) published a statement in which they welcome the improvement of the treatment of non-EU workers but also express their concern that the Directive does not sufficiently address exploitation risks. The networks are particularly concerned with the vague definition of seasonal work, the conditions of admission and duration of stay, equal treatment and wages.

UN High-Level Dialogue calls for measures to protect the rights of migrants

More than 100 Ministers and other representatives of Member States and civil society gathered in New York on 3 and 4 October for the second UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon opened the HLD and launched the UN eight-point agenda to “make migration work”. He commented “we must do more to protect the human rights of all migrants. Too often, migrants live in fear of being victimized as the so-called ‘other’; of having little recourse to justice; or of having their wages or passports withheld by an unscrupulous employer.”
François Crépeau, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, made a strong call for human rights to be a core component of the HLD. At the HLD, the General Assembly members unanimously adopted the Declaration to work towards an effective and inclusive agenda on international migration that integrates development and respects human rights by improving the performance of existing institutions and frameworks. They also pledged to partner more effectively with all stakeholders involved in international migration and development at the regional and global levels. The Declaration also emphasises the need to respect and promote international labour standards and respect the rights of migrants in their workplaces. It reiterates the General Assembly’s commitment to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, protect victims of trafficking, prevent and combat migrant smuggling, and protect migrants from exploitation and other abuses.

The Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW) attended the HLD and intervened from the floor in the roundtable discussion on human trafficking and smuggling. They shared GAATW’s analysis of the harms to migrants caused when states conflate smuggling and trafficking and called on States to de-link smuggling and trafficking in order to better protect the rights of all migrants. Unfortunately, the Declaration continues to confuse smuggling and trafficking. It takes a protectionist attitude to migrants, particularly women migrant workers, rather than calling on states to protect their rights. This is an important distinction as the former can lead to restrictions on women's rights, including their freedom of movement and choice of employment, which instead of respecting their human rights pushes many to take riskier migration routes and can deny them access to justice. The Declaration also emphasises “the need to consider circular migration”, an approach that positions migrants as economic units rather than rights bearers and prevents and restricts the movement of migrant workers and puts them at increased risk of abusive and irregular situations where they can be exploited by recruiters and employers.

ILO Director-General calls for more regular migration channels in the EU

The ILO Director-General Guy Ryder addressed on 21 October a conference of the European Commission on EU labour law in a video message. Recalling the recent Lampedusa tragedy, which led to the deaths of more than 360 migrants, he advocated for joint efforts of the European Union, the ILO, governments, workers’ and employers’ organisations to create more regular migration channels.

In his video messages, Ryder paid special attention to the vulnerability of labour migrants to human trafficking and exploitation. He urged EU member states to follow the examples of Italy and Germany and adopt the ILO Convention No. 189 on domestic work. He also stressed the need for better protection measures and access to compensation for trafficked persons. To this effect, the ILO has begun developing an instrument to complement its forced labour Conventions. “It is yet another opportunity for our organisations to combine their efforts to achieve the elimination of forced labour. We can do this through bolstered anti-trafficking strategies coupled with development cooperation and labour policies that address mobility, subcontracting and informal work”, he stated.

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, on 2 December, marks the date of the adoption of the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. The focus of this day is on the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.

In his message, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressed that modern-day slavery affects the poorest, most socially
excluded groups, including migrants, women, discriminated ethnic groups, minorities and indigenous peoples, and that to fight it, we need to address poverty and social exclusion.

The 2013 People’s Global Action (PGA) on Migration, Development & Human Rights

Coinciding with the HLD, the People’s Global Action (PGA) on Migration, Development & Human Rights brought together activists from all over the world to discuss strategies to realise migrants’ rights. GAATW presented three workshops at the PGA. Several authors who contributed to the second issue of the GAATW Anti-Trafficking Review on human rights at the border were able to join the meeting in New York for the launch. The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and the Migration Advisor of the OHCHR contributed to a panel discussion looking at the dis/connections between smuggling and trafficking. GAATW’s New York-based member organisations joined for a workshop critiquing criminalisation and law-enforcement responses to trafficking in persons.

The outcomes of the workshops fed into the final PGA Declaration that calls for: a human rights framework for migration law and policy and to respect, protect, fulfil the human rights of migrants and their families, including full and inclusive labour rights for all migrant workers; alternatives to the prevailing free market economic policies that benefit the few at the expense of the majority; an end to the criminalisation of migrants, and movement-building with grassroots migrant organisations in leadership, at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

Anti-Slavery International UK campaign: Act now to protect victims of modern day slavery

Reports of slavery in today’s UK have been increasingly covered in the media in the past few months. What’s reported is unfortunately only the tip of the iceberg. Modern slavery is all too common in the UK. The recent cases highlight the need for a comprehensive law to protect and support all potential victims of slavery in the UK and to bring those responsible to justice. Currently only victims of trafficking, and not victims of other forms of modern-day slavery, have access to a system of protection and support. And even that access is discretionary as protection for trafficked persons has no basis in law, meaning the welfare of potential victims is based on a “lottery” where the support they receive is subject to the discretion and awareness of those dealing with them. Additionally, the UK authorities often focus on the immigration status of a trafficked person rather than on the fact that they are a victim of a crime. If they are deported then traffickers, the real criminals, escape justice.

The UK Home Secretary, Theresa May is currently introducing a new Modern Slavery Bill, a consolidated anti-slavery law. Anti-Slavery International welcomed this as something they have been calling for since 2007. But the current proposals do not include measures for the protection and support of the victims of slavery. The UK is obliged by international conventions to protect victims of modern-day slavery; for this to become a reality, it needs to be reflected in the UK statute.

Anti-Slavery calls on the public to Send an email to Theresa May to urge her to make sure that the Modern Day Slavery Bill prioritises victims of slavery.

New documentary on human trafficking

IOM Ukraine and MTV EXIT are releasing a documentary “Trading Lives” targeting Ukrainian youth, children and young people under 25 - the largest groups exposed to human trafficking in Ukraine. They make up 42 percent of all trafficking victims, assisted by the IOM mission in Ukraine for the last 12 years.

The documentary was aired for the first time nation-wide on 1 December and will be used for further prevention campaigns throughout Ukraine by IOM and its partners.

“Trading Lives”, hosted by the popular Ukrainian singer Jamal, gives Ukrainians insight into the dangers of human trafficking through first-hand accounts from victims. It also provides clear actions young people can take to minimise the risks when considering work abroad.

The film tells true stories of trafficked persons assisted by IOM Ukraine, like Marina, an interior designer who was promised a job in a sewing factory, but was trafficked to Moscow for sex work, and Oksana, a
salesperson burdened by debt who was trafficked into forced labour toiling 18 hours a day; and Oleg, a young builder trying to save money to buy a car, exploited in construction work in Russia. More information can be found on the IOM website.

EU Special Representative for Human Rights calls to strengthen the role of civil society
On 25 September, the European Parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights and Committee on Foreign Affairs co-hosted an inter-parliamentary meeting along with national EU parliaments on EU actions regarding human rights and the internal-external coherence of these policies. MEPs and MPs from EU Member States discussed ways to ensure greater consistency within Europe and in their engagement with third countries. The event also addressed the issue of strengthening the role of civil society at large.

The EU Special Representative spoke about what he called “the attack on civil society” that is currently underway in some European countries. Member States must ensure that their respective legal systems and national policies protect the public space for civil society entities to operate freely and without obstruction. We must underscore the universality of human rights, he argued, and leave no room for those who claim that they are simply a modern Western construct in opposition to “traditional values”. Human rights instruments are equally binding on all EU Member States. They articulate the voice of the powerless in the face of the powerful that would deprive them of their human dignity.

Morten Kjaerum, the Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), appealed for greater transparency on the challenges that EU Member States face in harmonising their structures and legislation in regard to national human rights policies. He also noted some shortfalls at a European level, such as the lack of an effective strategy to address human trafficking and consistent migration policies. Kjaerum also echoed Lambrinidis’ concern for the weakening of civil society in some countries.

What's new?

UK anti-trafficking monitoring group publishes report ‘Hidden in plain sight’
A 4th report “Hidden in plain sight” was published by the UK Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG), set up to monitor and evaluate the Government’s efforts to combat trafficking in human beings with respect to the UK’s obligations under both the Council of Europe Convention and the EU Directive on trafficking in human beings. The purpose of this report is to examine the progress in this area since the publication of the Wrong Kind of Victim? in June 2010 that assessed the UK’s adherence to its obligations under the Convention. The report notes that there have been a number of improvements in the area of prevention and awareness raising. The establishment of the National Referral Mechanism itself has had a positive impact on raising the awareness about trafficking amongst many professional groups. There have been improvements in data collection in the past three years, as UK Human Trafficking Centres’ assessments have drawn on data from a variety of sources, and not solely depended on the NRM data-base. However, gaps still remain. In particular there is little information about traffickers, few qualitative assessments and still no independent body with statutory powers to request data and information. A welcome development has been the increase in the number of first responders who may refer victims of trafficking to the NRM.

What are your perceptions of migrants?
On the occasion of 18 December, International Migrants Day, the ILO and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have teamed up to challenge the public perceptions of migrants.

Today there are approximately 232 million migrants worldwide - more than at any time in history. Even though migrants make a significant contribution to the economies of both their host and home countries, they are still too often met with suspicion and discrimination by the local communities and find themselves at risk of abuse and social exclusion.
To address some of the wrong perceptions in society about migrants, their role and their human rights entitlements, the ILO and OHCHR published a series of artworks challenging the myths and often false perceptions of migrants that still exist in the world.

**Human Trafficking and Related Corruption in the EU**

The paper *Human Trafficking, Border Security and Related Corruption* in the EU, by Atanas Rusev of the Center for Study of Democracy in Bulgaria, investigates the much under-researched aspect of corruption and human trafficking. Rusev explores this topic vis-à-vis border authorities and connected corruption to facilitate, inter alia, trafficking in persons and how this corruption can be related to the corporate sector and enter into the highest political spheres. Trafficking in human beings, as a transnational crime, involves the movement of people across borders. In this regard, border control authorities are expected to play an important role in preventing and curbing this phenomenon. Border guards are identified as key actors in the fight against trafficking in human beings both in the new Directive 2011/36/EU and the associated EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings. The role of border guards in combating trafficking is largely seen as in the role of ‘first responder’ as part of the National Referral Mechanisms in identification of victims of trafficking, as well as for the identification and apprehension of traffickers within border control procedures.

**Global Eye on Human Trafficking**

The 13th issue of IOM’s *The Global Eye on Human Trafficking* explores prevention: how best can we prevent human trafficking before it occurs, and thereby save the individuals and communities from its damaging impact? Certainly the most common approach to preventing human trafficking over the years has been to focus on raising awareness - of the public at large, or of people who might be particularly vulnerable to exploitation. But does this approach really work? In the 13 years since the Palermo Protocol, and with a significant investment of resources, what have our information campaigns achieved?

It also profiles the work of Mr. Tristan Forster who, with his private company FSI, is trying to protect migrant workers through the recruitment process. From the Polaris Project, Sarah Jakiel talks about the importance of empowering migrant workers to know and assert their human and labour rights, and also about the need for a communication point, such as a telephone hotline, to which they can report abuses. Jenny Agis from IOM reports on some of the innovative ways in which technology can be used as a tool to prevent trafficking and exploitation.

**Ethical principles for the reintegration of trafficked persons. Experiences from the Balkans**

Reintegration of trafficked persons involves a multidisciplinary approach, involving expertise and engagement from a range of different professional fields including social work, psychology, medicine and education. While each of these fields has guidelines and codes of conduct, there is no commonly agreed set of principles underpinning re/integration efforts. This paper by Rebecca Surtees is a first attempt to develop common ethical principles within the anti-trafficking re/integration field in order to ensure that the programmes and policies meet the highest human rights standards, offer the highest quality of care and are underpinned by and monitored according to internationally recognised and transparent ethical principles.

**Stepping up the Fight against Trafficking for Labour Exploitation**

Trafficking for labour exploitation has increasingly attracted the interest of policy makers, investigators and labour inspectors in Europe. For this reason a programme of training sessions for professionals was set up on trafficking for labour exploitation and related matters, such as cross-border judicial cooperation, transnational police investigation, and European and international legal framework of combating labour exploitation. In addition to strengthening the capacity of relevant officials to handle cases of trafficking for labour exploitation, the sequence of trainings laid the foundation for improved transnational and intra-European cooperation on this issue.

The publication, *Stepping up the Fight against Trafficking for Labour Exploitation* by ICMPD summarises the results from this initiative by reiterating the most important lessons learnt. It provides a basis for the potential replication of one or more of the training sessions conducted in its framework. The model for designing multi-disciplinary transnational
capacity-building activities, introduced by this publication, can serve as inspiration for cooperation and similar initiatives in other geographic areas.

Uncovering the links between recruitment, irregular employment practices and labour trafficking

This publication is a compilation of four independent research reports from Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Lithuania, commissioned under the umbrella concept of ADSTRINGO - Addressing trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation through improved partnerships, enhanced diagnostics and intensified organisational approaches. ADSTRINGO is a project of the European Union strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). This research compendium on recruitment practices in both countries of origin and destination provides new information on the vulnerabilities, factors, methods and channels that facilitate exploitation. Ultimately guidelines for employers and recruitment agencies will be developed in group settings which should further contribute to the prevention of trafficking in human beings by aiding the identification of exploitative situations and enabling the reduction of such situations occurring.

UN Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women

This Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women intends to provide all stakeholders with detailed guidance to support the adoption and effective implementation of legislation which prevents violence against women, punishes perpetrators, and ensures the rights of survivors everywhere. The handbook targets government officials, parliamentarians, civil society, staff of United Nations entities and other actors in their efforts at ensuring that a solid legal basis is in place for tackling the scourge of violence against women.

The rights of migrant workers

Martin Ruhs, lecturer at Oxford University released “The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labour Migration”. The book considers the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) and the reasons why it has received little ratification to date, leaving a large gap between rights of migrant workers under international law and in practice under national law. Ruhs highlights that the reluctance to ratify the CMW is caused by the effect that ratification would have on the national interest of host states when granting or restricting migrant workers' rights. The book emphasises the need to approach migrants’ rights as instruments of labour immigration policy and to include in the debate an analysis of the interests of states in granting the rights of migrant workers, for example, the fiscal effects of immigration depending on whether migrants' social rights are restricted. It also looks at the tensions between human rights and citizenship rights, the agency and interests of migrants and states, and the determinants and ethics of labour immigration policy.

Feminist overview of women’s rights and gender equality in 30 European countries

The Women’s Watch report by the European Women’s Lobby is a snapshot of the situation during a two-year period (2012-2013) and looks both at legislation and statistical data with 30 short country pages. The report looks at women’s situations and gender equality in three main areas: women in decision-making, women’s economic independence and care responsibilities, and violence against women and women’s sexual and reproductive rights, while also looking at the links between those areas. The report finds that women are increasingly visible in elected office, however, not enough in real positions of decision-making power; the crisis and austerity measures have affected the quality of women’s work and the gender pay and pensions gap are still persistent; legislation addressing violence against women in Europe still varies widely from country to country. The theme-specific and country-specific pages are on the EWL website.

What’s new on the web?

Know the Chain

KnowTheChain is a resource to promote greater transparency and dialogue around issues of forced labour in supply chains. It was created to educate companies, investors, policymakers, and consumers about the existence of forced labour in supply chains, and to encourage greater disclosure and transparency related to The California Transparency in Supply Chains Act.
Joining up fundamental rights

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has launched the toolkit [Joining up fundamental rights](#) - an online collection of tools on how to implement fundamental rights across all levels and sectors of government. It offers advice to help integrate fundamental rights into policy making, service delivery, and administrative practices. The toolkit is divided into five sections: Understanding fundamental rights shows where to find up-to-date expert information on fundamental rights; Coordination and leadership advises on how to engage politicians, colleagues and managers and secure their support and collaboration; Communicating fundamental rights contains tools and guidance on partnerships and practices that have been successfully used by public officials to communicate fundamental rights; Participation and civil society focuses on the people whose fundamental rights are being protected and enhanced; and Planning, monitoring and evaluation offers advice on how to identify issues to act on, plan activities, monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of measures taken to address a specific fundamental rights challenge.

High-heal passenger

High-heal passenger is a project/art installation focussed on human trafficking. The project consists of five labyrinths, constructed in 3 different continents, with exhibitions in Accra, Bern, Lisbon, Luanda and São Paulo. The project also offers an educational Android app, developed by software company Ubiwhere, which is based on the original form of the labyrinth. The purpose of the game is to find the exit of the labyrinth before the time is up by replying to questions related to human trafficking.

What’s happening where?

20 January 2014 - The EU and 21st Century security: Preparing for an uncertain future, Berlin, Germany
3-4 February 2014 - Concluding meeting of the project Tools for the validation and utilization of EU statistics on human trafficking, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
13 February 2014 - Expert Meeting Commercial Sex and International Development Cooperation, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
6-7 March 2014 - Conference on Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking, Bangkok, Thailand
June 2014 - LSI NGO platform in the framework of the project NGOs & CO - NGO-business engagement in addressing human trafficking, Sofia, Bulgaria
23-26 September – GAATW International Members Congress, Bangkok, Thailand

What’s on your mind?

Bulgaria’s new tougher policy towards undocumented migrants

Borislav Gerasimov is a Liaison Officer at La Strada International and follows closely Bulgarian politics.

In the beginning of November the Bulgarian Minister of Interior presented the Government’s plan for a new “tougher policy towards irregular immigration”. The goal of the new policy is to deal with the allegedly increased immigration flows from third-country nationals and contains measures like increasing the removal rate of undocumented migrants, shorter periods for assessing the situation of migrants, establishment of closed accommodation facilities, construction of a 30-kilometre fence along the Turkish border, information campaigns, etc. While the plan received some media coverage, little attention was paid to the possible harmful effects of (some of) the planned measures and the human rights violations that they can cause.
But first let me give some background information. Bulgaria has never been a popular destination for economic migrants or refugees and asylum seekers, but since the beginning of the war in Syria, more and more Syrian refugees started entering Bulgaria from Turkey. Additionally, migrants from Northern Africa and the Middle East also manage to enter the country illegally. At the moment there are less than 10 000 refugees and around 10 000 undocumented migrants, which should not pose a significant burden for a country of 7 million people. However, the insufficient capacity of the institutions became more and more evident in the past few months. Refugees are detained in closed facilities (akin to prison) with bad living conditions and no clear indications when and if they can receive their refugee status. Both refugees and immigrants are often depicted in the media as Muslim extremists and terrorists and a danger to the public order and wellbeing of Bulgarian citizens. All this resulted in an increase in xenophobic sentiments, which culminated in three anti-foreigner protests organised on the same day in Sofia by nationalistic and football hooligan groups and one parliamentary party, which shouted racial slurs, called for “cleansing of the country from the immigrant scum”, etc.

But back to the government’s new policy plan. The Ministry of Interior published a press release in English, which mentions the main points. The first thing I noticed was that the terms “refugees”, “asylum seekers” and “undocumented migrants” are used almost interchangeably and it is not clear who exactly the plan is supposed to target.

One of the objectives of the plan is “... to limit the number of entering people and accelerate the rate of removal from the territory of those who have no reason to be here”. The indicator for success included in the plan is to reduce three times the number of people entering the country illegally and at the same time increase three times the number of people who have been removed by March 2014. Such a target, however, can have a very dangerous effect - anyone without the proper documents, including victims of human trafficking, refugees and asylum seekers, may be immediately treated as an undocumented migrant and expelled, without much concern for his/her human rights and personal situation. Another planned measure includes significantly shorter periods for removal of undocumented migrants which is also a cause for concern as to how thoroughly each individual case will be evaluated.

In a recent study on the position of victims of human trafficking in the criminal and other legal proceedings in Bulgaria (not yet published) I found this short example:

On 30 October 2003, two women, who had been trafficked to Macedonia for prostitution, managed to escape. Two unfamiliar persons took them across the border on foot, but not through the official check point but through the woods, after which they were detained by the Bulgarian border police officers. The victims told their story to the border police officers and were identified as trafficked persons, however, they were transported to the Kyustendil District Court and sentenced in a speedy proceedings for “illegal crossing of the border” - a crime under Article 279 (1) of the Criminal Code [...][... the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (Sofia) lobbies for the abolishment of Article 279 (1), which is also widely applied in regard to refugees. They argue that it is a simply structured crime easy to prove - the person must be on Bulgarian territory - and the border police officers use it to increase their investigation rate...

If Bulgarian nationals, identified as victims of human trafficking, can be prosecuted for illegal crossing of the border to “increase the investigation rate”, it is doubtful that foreign nationals will be treated any differently.

Two of the other planned measures are “increased police presence in the areas frequented by refugees” and an information campaign about the “risks and threats stemming from the increased migration pressure”. This, on one hand, raises concerns about police harassment of anyone looking remotely foreign. On the other hand, by pointing specifically at refugees/migrants as potential criminals and a threat to Bulgarian citizens, the Government is actually contributing to the vicious circle of scapegoating, prejudice, suspicion and social exclusion which only leads to more violence.

As international experts and public officials (including from the European Commission and the United Nations) regularly point out, migration, in the long run, has a positive social and economic effect on both source and destination countries. After almost two million Bulgarians emigrated in the past 20 years, the country should welcome the current inflow of migrants as an opportunity for development and not as a threat. But this needs calm, careful and long-term assessment and planning and not short-term measures that only aim at receiving public support.