



European Network against trafficking in human beings

La Strada International

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**Prevention of Trafficking in Persons
in Central and Eastern Europe**

Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Macedonia
Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland & Ukraine

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Abbreviations

CEEC	Central and Eastern European Country
GO	Governmental organisation
IO	International organisation
LSI	La Strada International
NGO	Non-governmental organisation

1. MISSION & AIMS

The International La Strada Association is a network of nine independent human rights NGOs (non-governmental organisations) in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Macedonia, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine. La Strada was one of the first initiatives in Eastern Europe to address trafficking in human beings (THB). The La Strada offices monitor the drafting as well as implementation and effects of European (inter)governmental action plans and legislation. Next to this, they provide information to raise awareness, organise prevention and education programmes, as well as providing direct support to victims of trafficking. All La Strada offices are registered as independent NGOs and work at the grassroots level. Under the umbrella of the La Strada network, registered under the name La Strada International, they cooperate at the international level with common policies, action plans, lobby activities and advocacy programmes.

All La Strada member organisations implement an anti-trafficking programme consisting of three campaigns:

- Information & Lobby
- Prevention & Education, and
- Social Assistance, including Safe Return & Social Inclusion

In general, La Strada hopes to achieve a multiplier-effect, by disseminating knowledge and expertise on the issue of trafficking in human beings throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the New Independent States (NIS), and by transferring its know-how to governmental organisations (GOs) and NGOs in Europe and elsewhere.

1.1 La Strada goals

- To educate and inform potential victims about the risks of trafficking.
- To educate professional groups about the issue of trafficking and how to deal with victims of trafficking.
- To facilitate the safe return and social inclusion (reintegration) of victims of trafficking and provide direct and indirect support to victims.
- To raise awareness in order to influence public opinion and to keep the issue of traffic in women high on the political agenda at the European level.
- To stimulate national governments and European institutions to take action on the issue, based on a human rights approach.
- To fill the information gap on trafficking in women and men, by providing reliable, extensive and accurate statistics, case studies and research and background information on the issue.
- To further strengthen the nine independent La Strada NGOs against trafficking in persons in their capacity as regional, national and international expert centres.
- To transfer the La Strada model and good practices on support to victims of trafficking to other NGOs working on the issue.
- To successfully implement international cooperation between the La Strada countries and with organisations from Europe and beyond, and to stimulate mutual cooperation and harmonisation of national campaigns.

1.2 Target groups

Most identified victims of trafficking are young women between 18 and 24 years of age, followed by women between 25 and 30 years of age. Often, they are single or single mothers, with a problematic family background and/or from minority groups. However, women from all kinds of economic classes and social backgrounds are trafficked. Women trafficked from the NIS countries are often well-educated. Women trafficked from the CEECs, including the Balkan countries, are generally less educated and are often younger, sometimes minors. Although La Strada was established to address

trafficking as a women's rights violation, La Strada is offering services to male and child victims of trafficking as well, although not yet at a regular basis. As a result of the new and broader definition of trafficking in persons, as laid down in the Palermo Protocol,¹ La Strada offices are increasingly confronted with minor and male victims of trafficking, as well as trafficking into sectors other than the sex industry, such as begging, domestic slavery, etc.

The Prevention & Education Campaigns and the Social Assistance (Safe Return & Social Inclusion) Campaigns provide support for actual and potential victims of trafficking. However, the La Strada Programme also provides information, expertise and training to the following professions and target groups:

- Relatives and friends of (possible) trafficked persons.
- Potential risk groups: students at secondary schools and universities, young unemployed persons, persons with low-paid jobs, young divorced women who take care of small children, girls in orphanages, sex workers, homeless youngsters, immigrants and minority groups.
- Government and state representatives, such as Members of Parliament, political parties, embassies, border agencies, labour agencies and the law enforcement (police, public prosecutors and lawyers).
- NGO representatives, such as human rights groups, (women's) NGOs, professionals groups (social workers, psychologists, job trainers and teachers).
- Media representatives.
- General public, civil society.
- La Strada staff (project coordinators, managers and volunteers).

¹ Palermo Protocol (2000): 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime'.

2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT

In 2005, La Strada celebrated its 10th anniversary. The cooperation with the La Strada partner organisations dates back as far as September 1995, when La Strada was established as a trilateral programme involving the Netherlands, Poland and the Czech Republic. Since then, the network gradually expanded, including Ukraine from January 1997 and Bulgaria from June 1998. In 2001, La Strada further expanded to include Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Moldova and Macedonia. Currently, all La Strada organisations have a national legal status as independent NGOs.

With every new partner in the programme, expertise was transferred and much effort was put into the building of strong, independent NGOs against trafficking in women. La Strada feels the responsibility to share her know-how with others, through the organisation of training seminars for NGOs from other CEECs and the establishment of an NGO platform.

2.1 Management structure

The current 2005–2007 programme is a joint project of nine autonomous NGOs, of which, as of January 2005, the International La Strada Association functions as the main applicant and general coordinating office for common projects. In contrast to the preceding La Strada IV programme, the national member organisations are now fully responsible for their national programme implementation and are in direct contact with donor agencies, excepting common funding applications. As for the management of the International La Strada Association, all nine member organisations are represented in the general assembly of the newly established international association.

2.2 La Strada International (LSI)

Since January 2005, the nine La Strada organisations are being facilitated in their work by the International La Strada Association (LSI), the international secretariat based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The International secretariat consists of an international coordinator, an advisor public affairs, two project assistants and an external bookkeeper. For research and temporary projects, additional temporary staff may be employed. The La Strada International staff focuses on international networking, lobbying and public relations on behalf of the whole La Strada network, as well as coordination and harmonisation of the national campaigns, including capacity building of the national teams. In doing so, La Strada International facilitates and expands relations with national governments, European institutions, international organisations and UN bodies. Through the international office, La Strada can also provide training to other NGOs and offer a forum for NGOs on the issue of trafficking. Moreover, an international archive and documentation centre was set up, and an international website with links to all national La Strada websites established in 2006. Furthermore, the international secretariat holds the final responsibility towards donors for joint projects submitted by the La Strada network.

2.3 La Strada member organisations

All La Strada teams consist of at least one national coordinator and two to three project managers, supported by additional staff, including project assistants, bookkeepers, social managers and hotline consultants. In some offices, legal advisors, psychologists and lobbyists are recruited as well. Most of the offices have extended their staff since 2004, about 100 persons were employed in the 10 La Strada offices in 2006.

The national coordinators are responsible for the implementation of the national plans as a whole and for the Information & Lobby Campaign in particular, whereas the project managers are responsible for the Prevention & Education programme, including setting up prevention activities, designing the prevention strategies and monitoring the trends in the educational field. In some cases, the prevention

managers also keep responsibility for the operation of the hotline and manage the coordination and training of the hotline volunteers; in other offices, this is the responsibility of the social assistance manager and/or a special hotline manager.

The social assistance managers are responsible for the management of the social services, including the preparation of victim support strategies, communication with partners, the organisation of regular social workers meetings, gathering and controlling data on numbers and nationalities of clients, regular provision of information on case studies and on problems and results of the social assistance department. Those offices that do have a shelter, also employ shelter managers and social workers. The project assistants mainly provide administrative support to the national coordinators and project managers. In all La Strada offices, external bookkeepers are employed.

2.3 Selection of staff

National staff members are recruited and selected through the national teams. However, the national team can ask another La Strada member to become part of the selection committee. In the case of selecting a new coordinator, this is a common practice; in the case of managers or other staff members, this only occurs occasionally. There is a preference for female staff in light of the target groups of the La Strada programme, although a small number of males are employed. Job descriptions and requirement for international staff are discussed and agreed upon by the international assembly.

2.4 Capacity building

To (further) develop the quality of the services, as well as to improve the working skills of the La Strada staff, regular staff meetings are organised at the national level to discuss strategies and next concrete steps, whilst problems are regularly discussed. Supervision and internal evaluations sessions took place as well, next to regular evaluation meetings. In some cases, staff members followed additional educational programmes in their personal capacity. At the international level, La Strada International organises specific capacity building trainings and meetings, usually parallel to the assembly meetings and in the framework of the NGO platform.

For example, during March and June 2006, the La Strada Moldova Drop-in-Centre staff and hotline consultants working directly with trafficking survivors attended a retreat and associated activities to prevent burn-out syndrome (sports, massage, etc.). Furthermore, an independent consultant was hired as individual supervisor for the high-level management of the organisation with regular supervision sessions.

Expert trainings within La Strada Bulgaria (Animus Association)

Members of the La Strada Bulgaria team who work directly with the survivors had 178 supervisions in 2006. The supervisions are individual and are provided by leading specialists and experts in the field of mental health. There are 8 individual supervisions provided to senior staff members by experts from abroad. Supervisions have a supportive and training character and are considered to be an effective prevention of burn-out for the team. Members of the Bulgarian La Strada team in turn gave 104 individual supervisions for the team of the 24-hour Crisis Unit, who work directly with victims of trafficking, and 12 group supervisions for the volunteers working at the 24-hour help-line of the organisation. In February 2006, a clinical seminar was conducted with Dr. Alberto Hahn, senior consultant and training analyst at the Tavistock Institute in London. Training for work with children and adolescents survivors of violence and at risk of getting involved in trafficking was organised in June 2006 for the team of the helpline. Six new help-line volunteers were trained in June. Training and teambuilding for the Crisis Unit of "Animus Association" Foundation is planned for the second half of the year.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Trafficking in Europe today

Although estimations differ, there are sufficient indications that every year, several hundred thousand persons are trafficked within Europe. They are misled, often sold and forced to work, and exploited in different sectors. Women are typically trafficked into the sex industry, domestic work or into forced marriages; male persons are dominantly trafficked into construction, agricultural or factory labour, but also into the sex industry, while minors are mainly trafficked into the sex industry, begging and domestic work.

The reason that slavery-like practices, such as trafficking, continue to exist in the 21st century in Europe, can to a large extent be explained by so-called *push factors* (root causes) and *pull factors*.

The persistence of difficult political, economic and social situations in some parts of Europe, especially in the former Soviet Union countries and the Balkans, has exacerbated unemployment, inequality and instability, due to which people are pushed to migrate and find employment elsewhere. This situation increases the risk to fall prey to 'mediators', criminal groups or individuals who 'help' them to enter a country and arrange their 'visa and working permits' and then exploit them. Traffickers operate through nominally reputable employment agencies, travel agencies, entertainment companies, or marriage agencies.

With regard to 'pull factors', there is the demand for specific types of labour in certain industry sectors, and a general demand for cheap labour, which is increasingly provided by migrants with an insecure or no work or residency status in the receiving country. These factors are not new and migration flows have existed for centuries. However, globalisation and the increasing gap between rich and poor countries, the fact that it has become much easier for people to migrate whilst immigration policies have become much stricter, as well as the growth of new media technologies that reach millions of people, are all key factors that explain the increasing amount of trafficking cases.

Persons originating from Central and Eastern Europe are still largely trafficked to the West European countries, in particular the European Union countries, however, increasingly also to the Middle East and Asia.

Recent years have shown remarkable changes and new trends in trafficking practices. People seem to be trafficked at a younger age, internal trafficking occurs more often and trafficking routes cover greater distances. As for trafficking flows within Europe, countries in both, Western and Eastern parts of Europe, can currently be regarded as countries of origin, transit and destination for trafficked persons, due to considerable changes in trafficking routes. As a result, several Central and Eastern European countries have become countries of transfer and destination at the same time. This applies in particular to women from the former Soviet Union states of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan), the Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan) and Asia, but from neighbouring countries as well. Moldavian women may therefore be trafficked to Russia whilst Russian women are trafficked to Poland.

3.2 Addressing the problem

Since the 1990s, the issue of trafficking in human beings has become a growing European concern, even though most national and international laws and regulations on trafficking and slavery practices date back to the beginning of the 20th century. European institutions, such as the European Union (European Commission, Parliament and Council) and the inter-state body Council of Europe, have been actively engaged in the development of a counter approach to trafficking and have adopted various legal instruments to fight trafficking. In addition to this, more international actors are addressing the issue, such as the UN, OSCE and IOM. The same goes for the national European governments, which have adopted and implemented new legislation and national action plans on the fight against trafficking.

Although governments should bear the main responsibility for suppressing and punishing trafficking in persons, civil society has an important role in addressing the issue and raising awareness among both the general public and decision-makers. As a result, they contribute highly to putting the issue on the political agenda. Moreover, they play an important role in prevention and providing direct social assistance to victims, especially where adequate support mechanisms and infrastructures are lacking. Relief organisations at the grass roots level can win the confidence of victims of trafficking, due to their independent status and direct work with the target groups.

As trafficking is typically an international crime, efforts to prevent and combat trafficking should also be international, and should be based on respect for the human rights of the persons concerned. The La Strada Network has been established for these reasons. International networking and cooperation is crucial for the work of NGOs; it enables individual organisations to strengthen their work, to multiply their actions and to build up the capacity of their offices, by exchanging information and learning from lessons learnt by others and by cooperating in practice when assisting trafficked persons in need. The existence of La Strada organisations and their networks with GOs and NGOs make it easier for women to return safely and reintegrate into society. Next to offering shelter, La Strada can offer medical, juridical, psycho-social and some financial support and guide women in rebuilding their lives. By working together in an international setting, La Strada can reach international governmental structures, such as the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

3.3 Migration and crime control vs. human rights and addressing root causes

Although since the 1990s, the problem of trafficking has become much more acknowledged, and (next to increased prosecution measures) better protection and prevention programmes have been put into place all over Europe, trafficking in human beings continues and seems to be a widespread phenomenon, even if opinions differ with regard to its increase or decrease². Moreover, despite all the action that has been taken, there is no evidence to show that the risks of trafficking have diminished, or that the rights of trafficked persons are better protected.

This can be explained by the fact that up until today, states have concentrated predominantly on measures in the area of crime control and migration policies, rather than on victim assistance and protection. Stronger border control, for example, can improve control on trafficking practices and possibly prevent it, but it can also lead to more illegal practices of trafficking and immigration.

In general, labour rights of migrants, especially undocumented migrants, are poorly protected, and governments should consider increasing opportunities for legal labour migration, as well as improving the protection of migrants' human rights. Migrants who have been severely exploited are often not identified as trafficked persons, but regularly expelled from West European countries as illegal immigrants and not provided with protection and support. Especially those who are not willing or able to cooperate with the authorities lack basic support.

La Strada believes that all trafficked persons should be entitled to basic social assistance and protection, including safe accommodation, health care, legal assistance, education, training and employment opportunities. Governments should also address root causes for trafficking and provide support for countries to overcome economic and political difficulties. Civil society should encourage governments to take further action. Not only should NGOs continue to provide assistance to trafficked persons, but they should also maintain and strengthen democratic processes in societies and monitor and advocate the implementation of social support and human rights commitments by states.

² In general, international organisations and political institutions tend to claim that trafficking is increasing. There is, however, no sufficient evidence to support this claim. In some instances, it might be possible that trafficking is increasing, in others it might be decreasing (e.g., La Strada Moldova and La Strada Bosnia Herzegovina both mention in their annual reports 2005, that there are indications that trafficking practices in their countries are declining).

4. PROJECT ENVIRONMENT

The effect of the work of La Strada at the national and international level is strongly influenced by the political, economic and social developments in the La Strada countries, as well as global developments. Despite the increasing growth of the economies of Central and Eastern Europe, the living standard and unemployment rates are still alarming in all La Strada countries. This is still the case in Poland and the Czech Republic, which entered the European Union in May 2004, as well as in Bulgaria, which will join the European Union in January 2007. However, there are changes visible not only economically, but also with regard to border management and other EU accession related changes (*see also 6.6 and 6.7*).

4.1 Political-economic environment

In some remote areas of the La Strada countries, the unemployment among women is as high as 60 percent.³ As a result of poverty, limited work opportunities and unemployment, certain groups are vulnerable to be addressed by criminal groups with promises for employment abroad, with the risk of being exploited and/or trafficked internally or outside the country. Next to economic insecurity, the instable political situation, in most of the La Strada countries, contributes further to the creation of a risk environment for trafficking. The frequent political changes, bureaucracy and remaining corruption within state structures negatively affect the societies, while changes towards more democracy and openness are only in their beginnings. Especially in Belarus and Ukraine, the political situation was unstable in 2006. In different measures, Moldova, Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina are still affected by the results of the war, while several countries are still affected by the remains of the former communist structures. Together with the bad economic situation, this creates a negative social environment, including lacking social support systems and absence of governmental human rights protection.

Political situation in Belarus

In Belarus, the activities of the organisation in 2006 remained hampered due to the general political situation in the country, and worsening attitude toward NGOs from the side of the government. State control over NGO activities has increased; even social NGOs are treated as political and the reluctance of local authorities to cooperate has increased. In Belarus, onerous tax inspections and NGO registration requirements made it difficult for civil society organizations to operate,⁴ and attacks against members of the independent media continued. Many working hours of the BYWCA managers had to be spent on survival issues of the organisation, rather than on the development of the organisation. The current economic, social and political situation in Belarus thus remains difficult, which is a strong push factor for emigration and for a growing risk of human trafficking. As a result of the implementation of new anti-trafficking policy⁵ the number of commercial companies that have licenses for providing employment either offer au pair possibilities, vocational training or exchanges abroad, has been decreased, so that Belarusian citizens have very limited access to travel abroad.

4.2 Governmental support & cooperation

Concerning awareness among governments about the issue of trafficking, the general claim can be made that most European governments, including those from non EU governments – sometimes as a

³ La Strada Macedonia reported that the unemployment rate in Macedonia is still quite high and according to the last statistics from the State Institution, the unemployment rate is around 37%. Moreover each year the media and NGO calls for attention for the brain drain – a high percentage of young educated people is going to work abroad, which is a well known phenomenon for poor and undeveloped countries.

⁴ In November prodemocracy activist Dmitry Dashkevich was sentenced to 18 months in prison for operating an unregistered NGO. See Human Rights Report of CEDAW.

⁵ Decree № 3 of President «On some measures on counteraction of trafficking in persons» dd. March 9, 2005 and Decree № 352 “On prevention of consequences of trafficking in people” dd. August 8, 2005

result of pressure by the European Union - have acknowledged the problem and have taken measures to address the issue, including the establishment of national action plans, *see further below*.

However, some European governments still tend to present lower trafficking figures, or deny certain elements of trafficking, such as internal trafficking taking place in their countries. Moreover, in countries of the former Soviet Union, such as Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, governmental representatives still tend to confuse illegal prostitution with trafficking or to publish relatively low state figures on trafficking in order to present a more positive picture of their country.

However, despite the tendencies described above, there have also been some improvements. Recent years brought important changes. Governments also tend to be more open for cooperation with NGOs, including La Strada, *see National Action Plans below*. The main ministries La Strada works with are the Ministries of Interior, Ministries of Education, Ministries of Health or Welfare, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Labour and or Social Policy and the Ministries of Justice. With several ministries the La Strada offices signed official memoranda of understanding or protocols that refer to official cooperation regulations. La Strada Macedonia, reports that "This is very important for building a mutual national strategy concern for combating trafficking. La Strada Macedonia has established good cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which is extremely important for the development of initiatives within the realm of social assistance". Some countries, among which La Strada Moldova, signed protocols on the identification and assistance to be provided to victims of trafficking including children.

Several countries have also special regulations in place for shelters, either on victim assistance in which La Strada is a partner, often these regulations are part of official models, action plans or other state frameworks that unite measures and policies against trafficking in human beings.

A positive element is that NGOs including La Strada are more frequently invited to consult/give expertise and assist in the development of such regulations, standards and protocols etc. La Strada Macedonia, for example, works with the Ministry of Education to develop and implement prevention lectures at the local and national level with primary, secondary schools and special schools. In some countries, however, these common activities are hampered by bureaucratic hurdles: in Moldova, the Ministry of Education issued decision nr. 307 in 2005, according to which NGOs do not have the right to conduct any educational activities in educational institutions without a special licence/permit issued by the Ministry of Education.

- ❖ In 2006, La Strada Macedonia (Open Gate) initiated the signing of an official "Memorandum of understanding" with two Ministries that will contribute to an improvement of the victims' referral system between the social centres, police and the shelter of La Strada Macedonia. In addition, Open Gate initiated the signing of a Memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy on 14th of June 2006. This Memorandum regulates relations between Open Gate and National Referral Mechanism concerning victims of trafficking.. Furthermore, in the near future La Strada Macedonia hopes to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Interior as well.

4.3 Legal situation

Most legal changes – adopted as a result of the ratification of the Palermo protocol – took place in 2003 and 2004. However, in some countries changes in legislation took place in 2006 as well. In Macedonia, for example, a new draft law for witness protection was enacted in 2005, coming into force in January 2006. The Moldovan government also started the implementation of a new anti-trafficking law, which was adopted by Parliament on 20 October 2005.

Anti-Trafficking Legislation in the Ukraine

In Ukraine, the Anti-trafficking Article (149) as well as the Article on prostitution (303) was revised. The draft of the new anti trafficking Article (Article 149) in the Criminal Code of Ukraine was submitted to the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) and was adopted on 12 January 2006. One of the most important aspects of the new Ukrainian Article is that it corresponds with international

standards, that it excludes border crossing as a precondition for constituting trafficking, and that it introduces special paragraphs regarding trafficking of minors and infants. Next to this, the Article on prostitution (303) was revised and now includes separate paragraphs on involving minors and infants into prostitution. Besides, with the new Article 303 the prostitution is no longer criminalised in Ukraine, but the involvement and forcing to prostitution is punishable. In November 2006 the Cabinet of the Ministries of Ukraine submitted the Law about the National Plan of Action on Counteraction Trafficking in People to Ukrainian Parliament for consideration. It is expected to be adopted in January or February 2007. In 2006 the process of drafting the National Plan of Action of Realization of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for 2006 - 2010 and in particular the positions on counter action trafficking in children and exploitation of children came to the final stage. Though, only the Conception of this National Plan of Action was adopted in 2006. The Plan itself is still under consideration of respective authorities. Furthermore, the process of the national Child Labour Monitoring System development was enforced during reporting period. This issue is very new for Ukraine and such activity has defined possible ways of improving the existing legislation.

With regard to international legislation, all the governments in the La Strada countries had ratified the Palermo Protocol before the year 2006. As for the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 May 2005 and opened for signature in Warsaw on 16 May 2005, this Convention has been signed so far by seven of the nine La Strada countries.⁶ The Czech Republic has not yet signed the Convention, neither has Belarus, but Belarus is not a member of the Council of Europe.

With regard to ratification, only one La Strada countries had ratified the Convention in 2006, namely, Moldova (19.5.2006). The Convention will be in force once ten countries have ratified, of whom eight have to be Member States.

Reflection period for trafficked persons in the Czech Republic

In April 2006, an amendment to the law on the residence of foreigners was published in the Czech Republic. Apart from the long-term residence provision, the amendment also provides for a so-called reflection period for trafficked persons. The amendment is based on the *EU directive 2004/81/EC on short term residence permits issued to victims of action to facilitate illegal immigration or of trafficking in human beings who cooperate with the competent authorities*. The law came into force on 26 June 2006.

Since 2004, La Strada (International) has closely followed the developments around the drafting of this Convention until its adoption in 2005. La Strada believes that the Convention is not as far reaching as was hoped for, because as a rule, Conventions are only agreed upon after a compromise between the participating countries. One of the main criticisms is the fact that the Convention links the right of trafficked persons to government support to pressing charges against their traffickers. La Strada strongly believes that all trafficked persons, whether or not they are in a state or willing to press charges, should receive adequate support. However, as the only legally binding instrument for combating organised crime,, La Strada will start an active lobby campaign towards European member States to ratify the Convention in 2007.

Other examples of legal developments facing La Strada organisations include:

- ❖ In the Czech Republic, in March 2006, the Czech Government has withdrawn the discussed draft law on regulation of prostitution. The draft was for a long time pending in the Parliament. Prostitution therefore remains to be neither regulated, nor criminalized in the Czech Republic. The wording of the draft mostly concerned promoting the government's interests in regulating places of soliciting, securing obligatory health check-ups and tax collection, rather than paying equal attention to protection of the rights and interests of sex workers. In the framework of the ongoing cooperation with the Czech government, particularly the Ministry of Interior, La Strada commented on the draft law. La Strada Czech

⁶ Moldova (16.5.2005), Poland (16.5.2005), the Netherlands (17.11.2005), Ukraine (17.11.2005), Macedonia (17.11.2005), Bosnia & Herzegovina (19.1.2006) and Bulgaria (22.11.2006).

Republic underscored the need to focus more on the rights and interests of sex workers, as opposed to sole promotion of government's above-named interests. La Strada also drew attention to provisions that may increase the vulnerability of migrant sex workers by making them more likely to fall prey to traffickers, to be re-victimised by authorities or by decreasing their ability to seek and find outside help.

- ❖ In April 2006 an amendment to the law on the residence of foreigners was published. Apart from the long-term residence provision, the amendment also provides for a so-called reflection period for trafficked persons. The amendment is based on the EU directive 2004/81/EC (on short term residence permits issued to victims of action to facilitate illegal immigration or of trafficking in human beings who cooperate with the competent authorities.). The law came into force on June 26th 2006.

Lack of implementation allows for impunity for traffickers

In general, the situation regarding the prosecution of traffickers shows, that although countries might have sufficient legislation, it is still more an exception than a rule that traffickers are punished according the specific trafficking regulations. In most cases, they are punished for other verdicts, due to which sentences remain rather low. Moreover, cases are often closed, due to lack of 'sufficient evidence'. Furthermore, it is still a problem that victims of trafficking tend not to press charges, out of fear of their traffickers and because of lacking social structures to support them. If victims do decide to press charges, they generally face lacking witness protection measures in all La Strada countries, and do not receive sufficient information regarding their trial. According to the Moldovan law on trafficking, no outsiders except victims' advocates or lawyers are admitted in the court room, thus trials are monitored from a distance. The major conclusion by La Strada offices is, that basic human rights, and specially victims' rights, are not being observed and often, even the victims' advocates fail to do so.

However, there are also small success stories. In Poland, for example, new cases of investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases have occurred as a result of the creation of a special anti-trafficking police unit in March 2006. The new unit consists of 4 young police officers who are also aware of other forms of trafficking (forced labour, slavery like practices) and they have provided a number of operations in cooperation with other European police units (the Carabinieri in Italy, Europol and Interpol). As a result, several organised crime groups have been identified and more than 20 perpetrators have been arrested. Yet it remains to be seen whether and on what charges they will be sentenced.

La Strada members lobby at the internal level to improve legislation and implement it according human rights standards. One important aspect of anti-trafficking policy is the access of trafficked persons to social services and other forms of support:

Belarus lobbies for the state to follow its obligations with regard to trafficking victims

Constant lobby efforts of La Strada are focused on strengthening cooperation mechanisms between NGOs and GOs in the domain of trafficking prevention and assisting victims, and recognising NGOs as subject of anti-trafficking legislation. The idea of elaboration and signing Memorandum of Understanding between the state and civil institutions is still not supported in Belarus. La Strada is planning to study existing limitations and provide relevant recommendations in the framework of an assessment research financed by ODIHR of the OSCE. In the last report (annual report 2005), it was mentioned that La Strada Belarus lobbied for ensuring access for victims of trafficking to the social and medical services irrespective on their residence situation in the country. In the past, trafficked persons who wanted to get assistance in other city/town place than their own place of residence were denied because of the registration system "propiska".⁷ In 2006, a provision that victims of trafficking

⁷ According to this system people can get state free of charge medical and social services only in the place where they reside/registered. Only the exceptions are possible when person needs urgent assistance. In some cases state social centres could assist only people living in the same district of the city where the centres are registered.

can receive support regardless their place of residence has been included into the legislation, but in practice it is not implemented. After the year since new legislation has been entered into force, practice shows that state centres offering social assistance to the population are not able to serve as points for referral of trafficked persons. The local structures of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) do not refer trafficked persons to these centres, but prefer to communicate with international organisations and NGOs for the better benefits of the clients. Given the positive character of such cooperation it should be noted that contacts between the MoI and NGOs are not institutionalised, therefore not sustainable. Law enforcement do not refer trafficked persons to the social centres, because cooperation with IOM is more profitable for them as they receive technical and other kind of support. On the other hand, state social providers can not ensure the same qualitative and quantitative support for trafficked persons as IOM and NGOs and a therefore it is beneficial for victims of trafficking as well to refer them to NGOs and IOs. However, with regard to national referral mechanisms, it is an obligation of the state, and not of intergovernmental organisation and NGOs to ensure protection and support to trafficked persons. That is why La Strada Belarus believes the involvement of state service providers is necessary and very important. La Strada Belarus raised this problem in the research for OSCE and hopes it will be taken up by the international body.

4.4 National Action Plans

The adoption of new legislation and drafting of action plans is undoubtedly a sign of the changing attitude towards human trafficking at the governmental level. However, the key issue remains to see these national action plans implemented, tested in practice and adjusted according to the findings from practice, so that it becomes an effective tool for both, combating human trafficking and protecting trafficked persons' rights.

Actions plans that exist only on paper are of no use. The specific role of La Strada has been mentioned in most of the National Action plans. La Strada is especially mentioned as a provider of social support and as an organisation working on prevention of trafficking. What is often neglected though is La Strada's role of a 'watchdog', including monitoring governmental institutions on how they fulfil their tasks in the process of implementation of the National Action Plans. This role, however, is of utmost importance, since La Strada's experience in cooperation with governmental institutions often shows discrepancies between declaration and real commitment. Moreover, La Strada offices have been actively involved in drafting and commenting on National Action programmes.

Some La Strada offices have raised concerns on the slow implementation of existing National Action plans as well as on specific parts of National Action Plans. Most criticism concerns the little attention given in national strategies for human rights protection and prevention programmes. However, generally speaking, the La Strada offices state that action plans improve and that governments are slowly taking on more responsibility.

Poland lobbies for national action plan

There is intensive lobby work of La Strada Poland going on as a member of the working group implementing the "National Action Program to prevent and combat trafficking in persons in Poland". La Strada is an official partner of various governmental institutions, ministries, the national prosecution office and the role of La Strada is to be a 'watch dog' and to monitor how different institutions and organizations are completing their tasks. La Strada also lobbied in the field of legislation and supported the idea of incorporating the Palermo Protocol's definition of trafficking into the Polish Penal Code. So far the Protocol is signed and ratified but the definition should still be formally included into a special vocabulary.⁸ Although there is disagreement between the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice (the latter is reluctant to draft a proposal of legislative regulation), La Strada Poland continues in its lobby efforts.

⁸ There is disagreement between the Ministry of interior and Ministry of Justice – the second one is reluctant to draft a proposal of legislative regulation. La Strada Poland keeps lobbying for it.

All La Strada organisations play an important role in influencing their national legislation on trafficking in persons, and they have regular meeting with government representatives. For example, upon request of the Ministry of Interior, La Strada Czech Republic formulated a proposal for the new law on trafficking in human beings, of which the drafting is currently being considered. As a result of a successful lobby campaign, La Strada's comments and recommendations have been included in the evaluation report of the Minister of Interior.

In Bosnia & Herzegovina on the other hand, La Strada is asking for more involvement of NGOs as equal partners to governmental bodies, and is still unhappy with the State's preference for "closed shelters". La Strada Bosnia runs an open shelter.

Unites States TIP report: La Strada Czech Republic disagrees with country ranking

In 2006, the Czech Republic continues to be source, transit and destination country with regard to human trafficking. In the annual Trafficking in Persons Report 2006 of the U.S. Department of State, the Czech Republic has been moved in classification from Tier 1 to Tier 2. The TIP report states that the Czech government does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The Czech Republic was placed in Tier 2 because of inadequate sentences for traffickers and concerns over forced labour. Furthermore, concerns that exploitative labour occurs among contract labourers provided to Czech private industry by the North Korean (D.P.R.K.) regime prevail. According to the report, the Czech government has not to date denied these allegations and should therefore focus on vigorous investigation of all reports of suspected labour trafficking and regulate the practice of labour brokers that recruit guest workers to work in the Czech Republic.⁹ La Strada Czech Republic, however, thinks that the efforts of the Czech government to address Trafficking in Human Beings are significant and have not decreased in comparison with efforts in previous years. There might be additional (political) reasons for the US to place the Czech Republic in Tier 2, but this is not known.

4.5 European policy

The risks of falling victim to trafficking could be diminished by a more tolerant immigration policy and liberalised labour regulations for certain employment sectors that make use of immigrant labour. However, Western governments are attempting to close their borders against the growing amount of immigrants. It is still the case that governments treat victims of trafficking as unwanted undocumented economic immigrants, and return them without taking into account their background stories, or without referring them to legal support or relief organisations, such as La Strada. Nevertheless, there is also growing concern at European level that more support should be offered to victims of trafficking, and initiatives have been taken to develop European human rights based Directives and Conventions, including provisions for the right to temporary residence permits and reflection periods that delay immediate return.

4.6 EU enlargement

The enlargement of the EU (May 2004) was expected to cause considerable changes in migratory behaviour within the EU. Countries that were formerly regarded as countries of origin in terms of migration may now become countries of destination. Due to limited possibilities of free movement, smuggling practices were expected to increase, including cases of trafficking. Being unable to travel legally, people will need, and in some cases will make use, of mediators and become more vulnerable to trafficking practices. However, in the Netherlands, it is expected that the government will lift the limitations for employees from the new European countries and enable them to work in the Netherlands. In 2005, it could be observed that increasing requests for information about employment possibilities in EU countries were made, particularly in the Czech Republic and Poland.

⁹ Trafficking in Persons Report, U.S. Dept. of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons June 3, 2006, <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/>

It is obvious that people know little about the real possibilities to work in the EU and are not even informed about the criteria and/or the labour limitations for both, citizens of the new EU countries and non-EU citizens. In other Western European countries, including the Netherlands, an increase in migrant workers from the new EU countries is visible, regardless of the existing restrictions. La Strada Netherlands also recorded 31 cases of persons trafficked from the new EU member states, including the Czech Republic (18 cases) and Poland (13 cases). La Strada Poland was also informed about Polish nationals trafficked to Sweden.¹⁰ This is remarkable, as over the last years, Polish and Czech nationals have not been registered in La Strada databases as victims of trafficking.

Poland's experiences with enlargement: focus on prevention of forced labour

The enlargement of the EU caused that more persons migrate to EU countries for a job.¹¹ This fact has its influence on La Strada Poland's prevention work: more persons ask for information on employment conditions and employers. Mostly women are calling on the hotline and a growing number of leaves for legal jobs was observed. In general, more information on working conditions and about safe job migration appeared in the Polish media. Hopefully this will contribute to a reduction of trafficking cases from Poland. Polish victim of trafficking were referred to La Strada Poland - for the first time - from Australia. La Strada received more information on trafficking of persons for other purposes than prostitutions, mostly forced labour. In Poland, the Polish police reported cases of trafficking into forced labour and slavery like practices. Reported cases of "forced labour camps" in southern Italy (the Bari and Foggia regions) were reported, where more than 1000 victims, mainly Polish nationals, have been identified. Other cases of Polish nationals being forced to labour were reported from Spain and Great Britain. In April 2006, a case of trafficking for the purpose of stealing (pick pocketing) and stealing in supermarkets in Sweden (Malmo), was reported. A new case of six Polish persons being trafficked for forced labour in the Netherlands was revealed in June 2006.

"Operation PENTAMETER"

In 2006 a special campaign, called "Operation PENTAMETER", was launched in Poland. This is part of the larger campaign held also in Great Britain, focusing on the fact that several hundreds workers from Poland are now working in Great Britain and it is important to raise their awareness on the issue of trafficking, particularly trafficking for prostitution and the sex business in general and forced labour practices.

Bulgaria is soon to join the European Union. The European Commission 2006 Monitoring Report on Bulgaria's preparations for EU accession was approved on 16 May 2006. The pre-accession processes and the active role of the civil society led to some positive changes in the country regarding trafficking in persons. La Strada Bulgaria provides information to international organisations that also monitor this process, such as the office of Mr. Olli Rehn, member of the European Commission and Commissioner for Enlargement.

On 31 March 2006, La Strada Moldova (in cooperation with the Centre for International Relations, (Poland), National Bureau for Migration of the Republic of Moldova and IOM Mission to Moldova) organised the international conference "Extension of the EU Border in the Light of the Global Experience - Migration and Human Trafficking Issues. Is Moldova Ready to React?". The Conference was conducted in Moldova with the participation of major anti-trafficking and migration regulation actors from the academic, NGO and GO communities from Moldova and a number of international experts. The Conference aimed at discussing on the findings and practices of different countries in overcoming problems related to undocumented migration and human trafficking phenomena, to discuss possible consequences of EU extension of Moldova. In particular it allowed for identifying major areas of intervention and make certain recommendations for strategy and policy in this domain.

¹⁰ See annual report La Strada Poland.

¹¹ There are several statistics provided about Polish job migration - mostly in different newspapers and specialized press. It is estimated that about 80.000 Polish persons found a job in Great Britain and about 40.000 in Ireland (both of these countries opened their job markets to the new member states). Another region for job migration from Poland is the Scandinavian region. Sweden opened their job market to nurses and medical personnel in general, as well for physicians.

4.7 New trends

Next to the new trends described above, some trafficking trends that were observed by the La Strada countries in earlier years continued in 2006. First of all, more internal trafficking seems to take place, possibly due to the stricter controls at borders. Further, women being trafficked for sexual purposes appear to be increasingly forced to work in private houses, rather than in public places, making it more difficult for police to trace them. Initially, La Strada members were only contacted with regard to cases of women trafficked into prostitution. However, because of the broadening of the definition of trafficking, the first cases of other forms of trafficking, including trafficking into marriage, into the agricultural or *au pair* sector were reported to La Strada in 2005 and 2006, although still only occasionally.

The La Strada offices also noted multiple forms of exploitation including begging, sexual exploitation and exploitation in other sectors. Because of the new definition and the reported changes in clientele, La Strada offices are trying to readjust their programmes and services to the new situation. This requires establishing contacts with other cooperation partners at the national and international level. La Strada has already started to set up closer cooperation with national and international organisations and networks on the issue of child exploitation and trafficking, including ECPAT and Terre des Hommes.

With regard to trafficking into sectors other than the sex industry, La Strada Poland was confronted with two Vietnamese clients in late 2006 – one contacted La Strada from a deportation centre – she was already in the deportation procedures and was identified by the police as a victim of trafficking for the purpose of forced labour. A second case is more connected with domestic violence and abuse. In Belarus 463 victims of trafficking were identified by the Ministry in the first 10 months of 2007, 55 of them minors. 375 cases concerned exploitation for the sex industry (including 51 minors) and 88 – for labour exploitation (4 minors).

The trafficking situation in Macedonia

Until recently, Macedonia was regarded mainly a transit and destination country for women trafficked from Eastern Europe to Southeast and Western Europe. The majority of these victims were foreign women originating from Moldova, followed by Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russia and Belarus, while in 2005 also several individual cases of girls from Kosovo, Serbia and Albania were revealed. However, new statistics and information published in trafficking reports show significant changes. According to the State Department Report 2006, Macedonia is regarded as a source, transit, and, to a lesser extent, destination country for women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Some Macedonian victims are trafficked internally within the country. Victims still originate from Moldova, Albania, but to a lesser extent Romania and Bulgaria. Traffickers moved victims through the country en route to Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo, Albania, and Western Europe.

During the first six months of 2006, of all Macedonian citizens that were identified as potential victim or victim of trafficking, most were exploited in Macedonia, while two women were transferred and forced into prostitution in Kosovo. The pattern of recruitment and exploitation is quite similar in all cases: mainly the boyfriend or potential partner is the recruiter and mediator in transferring and selling of the girl from one part or city of Macedonia to the other mainly western part. All of them were exploited for sexual purposes. During the first half of the 2006, an increasing amount of incidents of smuggling of migrants was noticed, mainly from Albania through Macedonia to Greece, including underage prostitution and "Mail Order Brides". young women from rural parts of Albania were brought to Macedonia through arranged marriages.¹² La Strada Macedonia did not assist cases of forced labour.¹³

¹² In the west and in the southeast part of the country, there are small towns where the sex business has rapidly developed and where women from Macedonia and abroad are imprisoned and forced into prostitution. Most of the women that are forced to work in prostitution work either in nightclubs or near restaurants, but also increasingly in rented or private apartments, houses and weekend houses. Control of this type of buildings is especially needed taking into account that these are not only the places where forced prostitution is occurring, also where trafficked victims are sheltered until their trade. Due to the more frequent controls in the more official

Some countries acknowledged new transfer routes and means of transport, and changes in countries of transfer and destination, for example, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. Former Soviet Union countries like the Caucasus and Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tadzhikistan and Turkmenistan) are increasingly considered as countries of origin. La Strada Macedonia also reported a change in trafficking routes. Unfortunately, there is no detailed and verifiable data on the extent of the problem of trafficking in human beings in most La Strada countries, due to non-existence of an adequate reporting mechanism on registered cases or identification of victims of trafficking.

places (including restaurants and night clubs), the occurrence of forced prostitution in apartments becomes more intense.

Bulgaria - The main reason for trafficking is sexual exploitation. Most of the women who received help at Animus/La Strada returned from Germany. This is not a new tendency. The countries where Bulgarian women are most often trafficked to are Germany, France, the Netherlands and Italy.

¹³ There is no official information of IOM regarding their assistance to foreign victims of trafficking and whether their information differs from the information gained by LS Macedonia. So far there is no information, that IOM or other organisations assisted cases of forced labour outside the sex industry.

5. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

In 2006, La Strada member organisations continued to implement the three La Strada campaigns focusing on

- Information & Lobby,
- Prevention & Education, and
- Social Assistance (Safe Return & Social Inclusion).

5.1 Information & Lobby Campaign

The Information & Lobby campaign is directed at information dissemination and advocacy to raise awareness and to stimulate action. All La Strada countries pursue an active media strategy; some offices have attracted journalists to support them in their media campaign or developed special tools to prepare and evaluate media contacts.

5.1.1 Media outreach

In 2006, La Strada members continued to hold press conferences and specific events for journalists, as well as issuing press releases, statements, background articles, columns, and La Strada newsletters. As in previous years, La Strada assembly meetings and NGO platforms are used to generate publicity on the issue of trafficking. At the assembly meeting in Kiev, Ukraine in September 2006, a special press conference was organised, while specific trainings for journalists, journalist consultations and competitions were organised at the national level in the La Strada countries.

Several La Strada offices received increased media attention in 2006.

- ❖ In Poland, the discovery of “labour camps” in southern Italy, where around 1.000 Polish immigrants were exploited, also increased media attention on trafficking into the forced labour and slavery-like practices, and La Strada Poland served as an expert centre for journalists and the media during that time.
- ❖ La Strada Moldova was approached by journalists in June 2006 requesting comments by Condoleezza Rice’s (US Secretary of State) remarks about illegal migration and trafficking in Moldova. La Strada Moldova also generated media attention with its campaign “I care”, which was aimed at creating more social acceptance towards trafficked persons, in particular women who returned from having been trafficked into forced prostitution, and counter existing stigmas. La Strada Moldova gave several interviews on EURO television and answered questions with regard to the establishment of an anti-trafficking hotline in Transnistria.
- ❖ The 2006 World Cup in Germany also generated media attention and created media outreach work for La Strada offices. La Strada International, but also some national offices were contacted and LSI published a special Q&A sheet for journalists and the public. LSI hereby tried to provide objective feedback on the often highly exaggerated estimations on an increase in trafficking into the sex industry in relation to the World Cup, often publicised by politicians. An issue La Strada criticised in particular was the misguided conflation of prostitution and trafficking issues in these debates. Reports by IOM and SIDA later confirmed that the estimations were exaggerated and no direct increase in trafficking could be detected.

In 2006, La Strada offices were contacted mainly by local and national, but also international media. La Strada Czech Republic, for example, reports that about 2/3 of their media contacts in 2006 took place with Czech media and 1/3 with foreign media. Media contacts take place mostly by phone and in writing (e-mail), followed by television and radio.

International media contacts included Austria (Wiener Zeitung), Belgium (national newspaper) Denmark (the Danish Broadcasting Corporation News), Finland (National Television), Germany (ARD and Deutsche Welle), Greece, Italy, Lithuania (National Radio), Russia (National

Television/NTV) as well as the UK (The International Herald Tribune, the Daily Mail and BBC World and the Guardian) as well as World Radio Services and Euro TV in several countries.

National media also contact offices in other countries, for example, Polish media contacted La Strada Belarus, Dutch journalists contacted several La Strada offices in Eastern Europe, and a Czech Television station interviewed the international LSI secretariat.

In general, La Strada offices reached a higher score than the target set for media contacts for 2006, with more than 700 media contacts. In addition to interviews, several La Strada offices published their own media articles.¹⁴

Other specific examples of media outreach in 2006 include:

Campaigns

- ❖ At the end of 2006 La Strada Czech started preparing a cross-promotion campaign for the film *Trade* with Blue Skye film distribution company. The US film *Trade* will be released in 2007 in the Czech cinemas (country-wide) and La Strada will have a unique chance to participate in the promotion campaign of the film and to promote its activities along with the film screenings.
- ❖ During the first half of 2006, La Strada Bosnia Herzegovina launched a TV awareness campaign together with UNODC. Similar campaigns were carried out with the Office of the State Coordinator on Trafficking in Human Beings, OSCE, UNFPA, IOM and the Ministry for Security in Bosnia Herzegovina.
- ❖ In August 2006, La Strada Czech Republic was contacted by the advertising agency Young& Rubicam and was offered a possibility of launching a media campaign against trafficking in human beings. The campaign aired in September on TV youth channel "óčko."

Specific Events

- ❖ Several La Strada offices, including La Strada Netherlands/STV, La Strada Ukraine and La Strada Belarus organised media activities within the framework of the international action '16 days against gender violence' around 8th of March 2006. La Strada Ukraine organised a special press conference together with the Ministry of Youth and Sport Affairs and the Ministry of Interior in Ukraine.
- ❖ In Poland a special event organised on International Women's Day on March 8th, a campaign focusing on trafficking in women, implemented together with the European Parliament attracted a lot of media attention, as did the campaign 'Operation Pentameter' implemented together with the British Embassy

Exhibitions

- ❖ Representatives of La Strada Bulgaria gave consultations related to trafficking in women to a young artist - Boriana Ventzeslavova - who was preparing a multimedia exhibition "Outside it was always dark" in the Sofia City Gallery and a photo exhibition.
- ❖ On the occasion of the International Child Rights Protection Day 1 June 2006, La Strada Ukraine organised a graffiti contest "World of Childhood" for youth living in the transit centre for minors.
- ❖ During May 2006, La Strada Macedonia had contacts and meetings with several representatives of the print media with the aim to lobby for free advertising of the SOS line.

¹⁴ For example, two publications were written by La Strada Czech Republic, La Strada Macedonia issued five press releases and La Strada Ukraine wrote 15 articles for professional and specialized editions as well as 38 newsletters and three electronic bulletins in 2005 and 2006.

As a result of its efforts it was provided free advertisements in the daily newspapers 'Dnevnik', 'Vreme', 'Spic', 'Oglasnik M', etc. La Strada Czech Republic also obtained free advertising space in the Russian newspaper Gazeta. The newspaper included a La Strada advertisement in its yearly calendar distributed as a supplement.

Newsletters

- ❖ During 2006, La Strada Macedonia published two editions of Network Newsletters. These were being disseminated among embassies, governmental institutions and international organizations. The newsletter is in both available in an electronic and printed version and is being published in Macedonian as well as English.
- ❖ La Strada Ukraine distributes a weekly newsletter to 270 partners (state structures and non-governmental organizations in Ukraine and abroad), focusing on THB, trafficking in children and commercial sexual exploitation of children. 43 newsletters were issued in Ukrainian, Russian and English, and an additional 5 informational bulletins were produced.
- ❖ La Strada Czech Republic published quarterly press releases providing background information to journalists, writing articles and giving interviews.
- ❖ LSI published 4 quarterly newsletters in 2006, providing news of the national offices, LSI meetings, European policy developments and new publications and conference dates.

Press Conferences

- ❖ La Strada Czech Republic raised its media profile during a press conference with the Czech Minister of Interior on the topic of forced labour and THB.
- ❖ At the closing of the training for police, prosecutors and NGO representatives, held in May, 2006 in Sarajevo, a press conference informed journalists on the cooperation between governmental institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), OSCE and La Strada BiH.
- ❖ 5 press conferences were conducted by La Strada Ukraine, «Every child has a right to protection», dedicated to the International Child Rights Protection Day (May 30, Kyiv), "Knowledge of law is protecting" (March, 6, Kyiv); Press conference dedicated to the NGO Platform meeting (September, 26, 2006, Kyiv); "16 days against violence", presenting results research on the situation with children of labour migrants (November 24, 2006, Kyiv); "16 days against violence", (November 27, 2006, Kharkiv).

Media Contributions

- ❖ La Strada receives more attention from new media as well, next to providing information on websites. La Strada Belarus, for example, took part as a main expert in two internet conferences on anti-trafficking issues, organised by the International Access Training Programme (IATP) in Minsk.
- ❖ Ukraine contributed 15 articles to professional and specialised publications.
- ❖ La Strada Macedonia contributed two newspaper articles. One to "Graganski Svet" on the topic National Referral Mechanism by providing recommendations on the First Round table. A second article was published in "Vecer" on the implementation of public events awareness raising and fundraising events.
- ❖ La Strada Ukraine contributed 3 video spots broadcasted national TV channels in 2006, on trafficking in children as well as advertising the National toll free hotline number. Two video spots were initiated and supported by OSCE Ukraine. An informational audio spot with the hot line number was created and will be broadcasted in 2007.
- ❖ Interviews with La Strada Macedonia were broadcasted on the Regional Bike Tour, the Anniversary of the SOS hotline and Human Rights Day.

5.1.2 Trainings for journalists

Even though it is notable there has been a significant improvement in the way in which trafficking and its victims are presented in the media, national offices report that trainings for journalists are still relevant. National publications and press issues on trafficking are monitored daily and it can be concluded that the issue of trafficking receives more and more attention by the media. Still, media representatives often request interviews with La Strada clients, in order to cover personal stories. La Strada however brings trafficked persons in contact with media only on rare occasions, as in principle it is not seen to be in the interest of the reintegration process of the trafficked person to be exposed to media attention. In fact, it can seriously endanger the safety of a person, in case personal information about a person is revealed. In case a La Strada client does request contacts with the media, a La Strada staff person is always present at the interview.

- ❖ In March 2006, a manager of La Strada Moldova participated in the seminar “Stop stigmatising”, organised by the Moldovan NGO Association of Journalists in Medicine with participation of NGOs working with various target groups, among which trafficked persons. The preliminary results & findings of the La Strada campaign on creating a tolerant and adequate attitude towards trafficked persons, between November 2005 and March 2006, were presented here.

5.1.3 Websites

Since mid-2004, the websites of the La Strada member organisations have considerably improved and now offer all kind of information on the issue of trafficking, including case studies, useful links and addresses, Q&A pages, background information, etc. During 2006, websites were further updated and maintained, offering information both in English and national languages. Some La Strada offices (Bulgaria and Czech Republic) reported an increase in hits, pointing to the fact that the Internet is increasingly an important tool in prevention and education campaigns. Because of the increased demand for digital information also in Central and Eastern Europe, La Strada offices have started to provide online access to international publications and even online consultations for risk groups and trafficked persons. National La Strada websites are linked through the La Strada International website www.lastradainternational.org, which was established in February 2005, and comprehensively restructured in 2006.

- ❖ The new updated La Strada Moldova website was released in August 2006 on the occasion of the organisation’s 5th anniversary; La Strada International launched its new website at the end of the year, in December 2006.
- ❖ The Bulgarian La Strada website is currently building a special section for trafficking of adolescents and young people. The forum will provide interactive information about the risks of trafficking. The forum will be announced in all prevention materials for adolescents and young people to facilitate access. New contacts were established and exchange of links and information are underway with teen sites, popular women sites, but also sites of companies offering work abroad. For 2006, the forum of AAF was visited by 450 visitors. For the first half of 2006, the forum was visited by 297 visitors, while the website was visited 34 957 times. Visitors were discussing 35 themes related to experienced violence or matters of trafficking or prostitution.

5.1.4 Research & publications

In the past years, and continuing in 2006, the La Strada offices have contributed considerably to research projects, either by contributing La Strada data and information on the situation of trafficking to other projects or related governmental policy initiatives, or by carrying out its own research activities. In 2006, La Strada offices remained in close contact with the academic and research community, analysing the issue of trafficking. Research is carried out for national partners, such as

governmental institutions, but also for foreign partners and key international partners. Additional national research is regularly carried out on request, often in support of or with other organisations.

- ❖ **La Strada Bulgaria** (Animus Association) was involved in a (report) research of Terre des Hommes and UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS entitled “Action to Prevent Child Trafficking in South Eastern Europe - A Preliminary Assessment”, by researcher Mike Dottridge.
- ❖ **La Strada Macedonia** contributed to a book published by the International Relations and Security Network (ISN) that examines strategies against human trafficking, with a focus on Southeast Europe and sex trafficking. It provided information and statistics on the situation in Macedonia as well as presenting La Strada programmes.
- ❖ Together with NGO partners from Italy, Germany, Estonia, Portugal and Lithuania, **La Strada Poland** is involved in the HEADWAY project entitled Improving Social Intervention Systems for Victims of Trafficking. Within the framework of this project, a comparative study on the legal situation of the participating countries and the availability of social and vocational inclusion programmes is being implemented in 2006. The study will be published and the publication will be launched in June 2007 in Rome.
- ❖ **La Strada Ukraine** conducted a study on referral systems used for child victims of trafficking in Ukraine and prepared an analysis of the national legislation on counteraction to child trafficking. Moreover, the organisation conducted two sociological polls, with the Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies and a research on the situation of children of labour migrants, of which the results were presented at a special press-conference on 24 November 2006. Another research focussed on “Violent treatment of children”. La Strada Ukraine further published the book “Measures to counteract child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (international and national legislation)” for specialists working on children’s rights protection, and developed a manual on the child labour monitoring system in Ukraine. Further, it published a compilation of articles by its national coordinator Kateryna Levchenko on human rights, prevention trafficking in people, women rights and gender policy in the book “Person, Freedom, Democracy”.
- ❖ In early 2006, the report “Stolen smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe¹⁵” was released by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Both **La Strada Czech Republic** and **La Strada Bulgaria** were among the research project partners. The publication was presented at a high-level conference on trafficking in human beings, especially children, organised by the Austrian EU presidency and the OSCE on 17 March 2006 in Vienna. The publication focuses on the impact of trafficking on psychological and physical health of women and adolescents. To date there has been a little quantitative evidence about the physical and psychological health needs of women, who have been trafficked in Europe. This study gathered some first-ever statistical data and evidence on the health needs of women who had recently escaped from a trafficking situation. One of the goals of the study was to contribute to better, more holistic care for these women.¹⁶ **La Strada Czech Republic** further published a country report on trafficking in human beings and exploitation for the purposes of forced labour in the Czech Republic,¹⁷ as well as an end report of the project “Viable alternatives – social inclusion of victims of trafficking and commercially exploited persons”.
- ❖ **La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)** was an implementing partner with ‘Medica Zenica’ in a research project aimed at monitoring the work of the State Court of Bosnia

¹⁵ This study was funded with support from the European Commission’s Daphne Programme. Additional funding was provided by the International Organization for Migration and the Sigrid Rausing Trust.

¹⁶ Stolen Smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe, The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, 2006. The English version of the report in English is available at www.strada.cz.

¹⁷ The report is available in Czech and English language in the La Strada Czech Republic office. It will become available on the La Strada web page during 2006.

Herzegovina.¹⁸ This research has been finalised in 2006 and is available upon request. Further, La Strada BiH conducted joint research on the status of trafficking victims together with ICMPD. It also participated in UNODC and Human Rights Watch research projects on trafficking.

- ❖ In 2006, **La Strada offices in Belarus and Bosnia** completed questionnaires for research projects of international organisations and networks, such as GAATW, IWRAW Asia Pacific (CEDAW reports, Women and Society), OSCE (delinquency among minors), OSCE – ODHIR and the OSCE Special Representative on Human Trafficking. The latter focussed specifically on national trafficking situations and legal measures. Also contribution was provided to a research of IOM Bosnia (cases of HIV/AIDS among shelter beneficiaries and ordinary population), the German network KOK, UNGVEST (questionnaire for the selected group of CSOs concerning their cooperation with the UN), the Council of Ministers of BiH/Direction for European Integrations (questionnaire: analysis of the absorption capacities for final beneficiaries), UNOHCHR (questionnaire on forced marriage and trafficking in persons), Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) survey on self-reflection) as well as of ICMPD on transnational referral mechanism for trafficked persons in South-Eastern Europe. Contributions were also made to research and projects implemented by Amnesty International (London office), the International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA), the UNICRI webpage on trafficking in minors, IPU (Inter Parliamentary Union, which conducted research on traffickers and their contacts with politicians and war crime suspects), IBHI (on child trafficking and other forms of child abuse), a Spanish journalist research on the status of women victims of war crimes in Bosnia Herzegovina and another research on refugee camps in Bosnia.
- ❖ In April 2006, **La Strada Moldova** published a thematic edition of its newsletter “Express”, on the issue of identification of trafficked persons. A total of 500 copies were published in Romanian and Russian and 500 copies English. The publication targets mainly practitioners (law enforcement, judiciary, NGOs, migration officers, border guards) but also decision-makers and strategy developers. La Strada Moldova also contributed in 2006 - on a quarterly basis and with information notes and reports - to the shadow report assessing the implementation of the EU Plan of Action in Moldova in 2005.

In 2007, La Strada is planning to focus more on her own research and on publishing LSI research reports. Issues to be researched are risk assessment for trafficked persons returning to their countries of origin and the possibilities of providing trafficked persons with compensation.

5.1.5 Monitoring and Coordination

In addition to research and media monitoring, La Strada offices gather available data and information on national laws on prostitution and trafficking and on the issue of trafficking in general. Further, La Strada monitors the state’s compliance with human rights standards and victim protection with regard to trafficking in women, mainly through case studies and court cases. La Strada Belarus, La Strada Bosnia Herzegovina and La Strada Poland all closely monitored several court proceedings at the national level in 2006.

In 2006, all La Strada offices also continued to maintain contacts with the main governmental bodies, including relevant ministries, parliamentarians and state institutions. These contacts are essential for a successful implementation of, and support for, La Strada activities. The recognition of La Strada offices as anti-trafficking expert centres expresses itself in the frequent invitations La Strada receives to speak at governmental events as well as requests to directly take part in governmental activities.

Monitoring

- ❖ In 2006, La Strada Poland was a social representative in 6 court cases and assisted to 9 witnesses in testimonies.

¹⁸ The results of the research have not been finalised yet.

- ❖ La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina closely monitored cases of trafficking in BiH. In 2006, one trafficking case was monitored: the trafficker was sentenced to 10 years and 11 months of imprisonment for trafficking. One trafficked person who was accommodated in the shelter of La Strada BiH agreed to witness in another trial against traffickers.
- ❖ La Strada Macedonia not only monitored but actively participated in one court proceeding where 7 persons were accused under article 418 on trafficking in human beings, and were sentenced between 5 till 8 years imprisonment. One witness was granted 216.666 MKD (3.523 Euro) compensation for immaterial damage. The victim witness was accommodated in the La Strada Shelter and a La Strada social worker accompanied the young woman in court as well as providing her with a legal adviser to prepare a statement to the main hearing. Next to La Strada, the Unit for Witness Protection was also involved in this case.

No comprehensive figures are available showing the number of trials that took place in 2006 in the nine La Strada countries.

Monitoring trials in Macedonia

In Macedonia, the NGO Coalition for Fair Trials, which consists of several teams that monitor all trials conducted in Macedonia from January to May 2006, observed 15 trials relating to Article 418a of the Criminal Code (Creating a slave relationship and transportation of persons into slavery/trafficking), 15 trials under Article 418b (smuggling of migrants) and 13 trials under Article 191 (Mediation in prostitution). In 76% of these observed cases, submission of legal property claim was reported. It is also reported that trial hearings were regularly postponed in the monitored period: in 23% of the cases, the hearings were postponed with 31-40 days, in 19% of the cases with 21-30 day, and in 15% the hearing was delayed for more than 60 days. As for the level of punishment, the statistics – like in the previous year – show that most of the verdicts follow or are below the statutory minimum sentence. The Secretariat of the National Commission – a governmental body that monitors the international legislative regulations on trafficking – adopted almost all new international instruments into national law.

All La Strada offices closely follow not only national and international developments in the trafficking field, but also the adoption of international legal instruments by their national governments.

Cooperation

As mentioned above, La Strada representatives closely follow anti-trafficking developments by maintaining close contacts with GO representatives and key allies and by collecting documents and monitoring newspapers and the internet. Findings and opinions are reported in national La Strada newsletters and research papers. Based on the findings, Members of Parliament and governmental institutions are addressed and consultation and advice is provided, in particular to the National Action Plans on trafficking. *See also 4. Project Environment – national action plans.* To encourage policy-making on trafficking, also in 2006, La Strada member organisations organised and contributed to Round Tables, workshops, conferences and seminars for both, NGO and GO representatives.

On 1 August 2005, an international lobbyist was appointed to the international La Strada secretariat in Amsterdam to support common international lobby and in particular to address European institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. The main issues highlighted and reacted upon by La Strada International in 2006, were the European Convention on Trafficking in Human Beings, the European (Parliament) draft Action Plan and the Communication, as well as the European Parliament Resolution on Trafficking.

Cooperation also takes place with academic institutions. La Strada Czech Republic, for examples, maintained close contact with the research community in 2006, providing information on human trafficking in the Czech Republic and related government policies as well as its own activities. These include the University of Auckland (New Zealand), King's College London and Dartmouth College (US).

In general, La Strada lobbies for better human rights protection of trafficked persons. Although the emphases of the lobby campaigns differ per country, there is a common focus on advocating for minimum standards, including temporary residence permits and reflection periods, witness protection programmes and for voluntary as well as safe return. Intensive lobby activities, not only of La Strada but also from other actors in the field, have helped to achieve amendments to national legislations and changes in national action plans and have led to increased awareness among governmental representatives. However, a huge gap still remains between the protection of human rights of trafficked persons on paper and the protection of human rights in practice. There is therefore still a great need for improvement, if the human rights of trafficked persons are to be secured and protected in practice. *La Strada International's lobby plan 2007-2008 is available upon request.*

Government Contacts

Below are some examples of the type of government contacts that La Strada maintains at the national level. *See also chapter 4 Project environment – governmental cooperation.*

- ❖ **La Strada Ukraine** is a member of the Coordination Council under the Cabinet of Ministries of Ukraine, and a member of the Gender Council under the State Committee on Family and Youth Affairs.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** is a member of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking chaired by the vice prime minister as well as being a member of the National Child Anti-Trafficking Group.
- ❖ **La Strada Bosnia** maintained regular contacts with GOs in 2006, such as the Office of the State Coordinator on Anti-Trafficking, the Ministry of Security, the Ministry of Human Rights, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Border Guards. La Strada Bosnia lobbied for the human rights of women, with a special focus on women who have been trafficked.

5.1.6 Libraries & archives

Most offices keep a small library or archive which interested researchers can use. In 2006, these libraries were extended with new publications in digital or hard copy documents. Although libraries are mainly used by scholars for research studies, journalists and activists sometimes make use of them as well.

- ❖ **La Strada Macedonia's** library mainly functions as a resource centre for local partner NGOs which are regularly supplied with information including reports, statistics and other relevant information regarding the anti-trafficking situation in Macedonia and at the international level. During 2006, La Strada Macedonia's library was also used by professionals and students conducting research.
- ❖ **La Strada Belarus'** library was updated with over 100 new items and currently consists of over 1.000 different sources. A list of available items is available on the website.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** maintains a library, open from Monday to Thursday from 10am - 4pm, as well as an online database, both of which were reviewed between January and June 2006 to draw up an action plan to fill gaps and needs. During 2006, the library was supplied with 45 new titles; it includes publications on the migration regime, human rights domain, modules of trainings for professional groups, thematic editions and reports. At least 50 titles were consulted on a monthly basis. Many library visitors are students.
- ❖ **La Strada Czech Republic** also maintains an extensive library of publications on issues related to human trafficking, social work, non-governmental organisations, gender issues and relevant legal regulation and documents. In 2006, La Strada obtained 51 new publications covering issues such as migration, psychology, social work, exploitation, gender and human rights.

Digital databanks were updated in 2006, too. They contain data on migration, employment and visa regimes, contact data of partners and national and international support organisations and service providers, trafficking prevention tips and information on counselling, trafficking cases, background stories of victims, statistics on the use of the hotlines and social assistance services, as well as specific client information.

Databases are largely used by hotline consultants for social assistance and prevention work (*see also 3.2 Prevention Campaign and 3.3 Social Assistance Campaign*), however, some information can be provided to externals, too. Personal information extracted from the client database is never made public and names and private information of clients are carefully protected.

- ❖ **In Bosnia**, the new template for registering client data - developed in 2005 - was tested during 2006 and approved to be a useful way to collect, store, exchange and evaluate diverse data in the area of social assistance and to reflect upon the needs of its clients. Naturally, the data collected remain strictly confidential and secured.
- ❖ In December 2006, **La Strada Belarus** began developing an electronic database, which is considered a new step in strengthening social assistance to trafficked persons. The information to be collected is divided in three main sections: pre-trafficking situation (person profile, migration motivation, family situation, etc.), trafficking situation (recruitment, transportation, means of coercion, types of exploitation, etc.) and post-trafficking situation (assistance delivered, monitoring duration, etc.). Social staff is being trained to work with the database and it is still being tested.
- ❖ On November and December 2006, **La Strada Macedonia** received several responses for a bid for setting up an Electronic SOS Helpline Database, with support from the OSCE. The offers were carefully examined and one company was chosen to create and maintain the database, the creation of which will start in January 2007. Furthermore, La Strada Macedonia maintains a list of licensed employment agencies - provided by the ministry of Labour and Social Policy - which is updated every three months. A separate client date base is maintained by La Strada's Social Assistance Campaign, the SOS line and the Prevention & Education Campaign.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** collects information and maintains a database assisting counselling services for potential migrants. The database contains information on visa regimes, laws on migration and migrants as well as data on new countries of interest or destination, as a result of analysis of calls. La Strada Moldova also improved and maintained its database on trafficking cases for monitoring and analytical purposes. The data on trafficking in adults contains identified trafficking cases and information and assistance provided ("Consulted Cases Database").

5.2. Prevention & Education Campaign

The aim of the Prevention & Education campaign is the prevention of trafficking in persons and empowerment of (potential) risk groups and trafficked persons. An important asset of the Prevention & Education Campaigns are the telephone hotlines, where persons seeking advice on jobs abroad and other questions regarding migration and/or a stay abroad are informed of the risks involved. All prevention and education activities are principally guided by the empowerment principle and the principles of interactivity, confidentiality and flexibility with regard to changing trends. Prevention and education activities are carried out by means of:

- Lectures, seminars, workshops, discussions and trainings of specific target groups.
- Dissemination of printed information and prevention material often linked with information events.
- Dissemination of information through web pages and the media.
- Dissemination of information via hotlines, e-mail, etc.

The presentation of the problem of human trafficking through media outlets, is an important part of La Strada's Prevention and Education campaign (*see also 3.1*).

5.2.1 Prevention material & dissemination

In 2006, all La Strada offices continued to prepare and distribute educational material for different target groups.

- ❖ **La Strada BiH** produced new material in cooperation with a professional designer, such as posters, T-shirts, bags, etc.
- ❖ **La Strada Bulgaria** disseminated 350 copies of four different posters produced by UNODC and one poster produced by La Strada Belarus. In total, 1440 leaflets were disseminated during 2006, as well as 500 Posters and 2500 flyers for the Film festival
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** distributed 98 000 materials (informational and educational) via seminars, mobile offices, and NGO partners.
- ❖ **La Strada Poland** produced 10 000 prevention booklets (Polish) 5000 stickers (Polish), prevention leaflets (Russian, Ukrainian - 10 000 each version), and 1000 notebooks.
- ❖ **La Strada Czech Republic** also produced and distributed more prevention and information materials in 2006, and increased distribution amongst target groups in the field by outreach workers (within the framework of the project 'Viable Alternatives').

The prevention (and hotline promotion) materials developed since the start of the La Strada Programme are diverse, including block notes, calendars, leaflets, booklets, postcards, travel guides, advisory booklets, posters, stickers, T-shirts, books, buttons, bill boards, videos, etc. In addition, manuals and other specific material for professional groups have been published. When designing prevention material for a special target group, the particularities of each group is taken into account, such as age and social characteristics, and new practices and trends (recruitment methods, places, routes, etc.) are taken into account. Materials also include promotion materials to publicise the use of the services of the organisations among which the helpline.

- ❖ **La Strada Ukraine** developed an information brochure "Are you going to Greece? Learn more about this country", which contains information on Greek legislation regarding job placement, marriage and foreign students, and information on criminal law regarding the punishment of human trafficking and regulations on providing assistance for trafficked persons.

Distribution And Cooperation Partners

New and old channels of distribution have been used in 2006, including border crossings (in cooperation with border police, for example, in Bulgaria. In Belarus, for example, major efforts and time was dedicated to the preparation and implementation of an Information Border Campaign on Human Trafficking Prevention in the regions of Brest and Grodno.

Other distribution points include labour agencies, embassies, health centres, child protection and delinquency departments, children's homes, educational institutes, police stations, airports, and brothels, and internet forums. At the organisational level, materials are distributed to international organisations and NGO (networks), governmental institutions, SOS child villages, social work centres but also through consulates, other La Strada offices, and churches.

Prevention and information materials are also published on La Strada websites and are often designed, printed and disseminated in close cooperation with La Strada partners. La Strada in turn also supports partner NGOs in writing and designing prevention materials. La Strada Bulgaria, for example, helped volunteers from the Peace Corps to organise an educational campaign about trafficking in human beings, supporting them with information and various materials among which posters, cards and leaflets. Other examples of cooperation in dissemination of prevention materials include:

- ❖ **La Strada Bulgaria** continued its cooperation with representatives from the international tourism private sector, namely with the Scandinavian tour operators (Kuoni Scandinavia, Apollo).
- ❖ **La Strada Belarus** carried out a pilot cooperation model with Youth Departments of Mogilev region and Bobrujsk city Executive Committees. 19 000 leaflets, booklets were distributed among the most vulnerable risk groups. This cooperation allowed to cover a broad range of risk groups, to established new channels of spreading the information about hotline (for example, message boards of women's clinics, which informed those who neither work nor study about the hotline).

A special focus was given in 2006 to projects with minority groups, including immigrants and Roma. La Strada Czech Republic, La Strada Macedonia, La Strada Moldova and La Strada Bulgaria started cooperation with Roma NGOs already in 2003. La Strada Czech Republic implemented a special project on specific anti-trafficking programmes for Roma target groups.

Some La Strada offices joined prevention and awareness raising campaigns of other organisation (e.g. La Strada Macedonia cooperated with IOM). La Strada member organisation also organised a series of specific events, generating publicity and raising awareness.

5.2.2 Prevention lectures

In 2006, La Strada staff members continued to visit schools and universities to strengthen self-confidence of pupils and to inform them about the risks of job offers abroad. Participants receive information on the definition of trafficking in human beings, recruitment methods and the risks of searching for jobs abroad. Film materials and case stories are presented during these lectures. A large number of people can be reached through these lectures, especially when peer groups or lecture groups are used to implement lectures in local communities.

Prevention Lectures by La Strada Bulgaria (Animus Association)

La Strada Bulgaria considers lectures to be the most efficient prevention method, especially for high risk groups, such as children in institutions. The personal contact with each child is much more influencing than printed materials. The need for individual empowerment of children, especially from orphanages continues, which is La Strada Bulgaria especially targets children from residential institutions. In this work, La Strada Bulgaria has found that children in institutions need additional training on developing social skills: communication skills, gender issues, planning their free time, vocational training, establishing contacts out of their usual environment.

Several La Strada offices continue to involve partner NGOs from different regions in the Ukraine for conducting preventive and educational events. The lecturers are provided with informational and methodical materials as well as handout materials to be used and distributed in the regions. The amount of prevention lectures implemented (*see 6. Results*) differs considerably in each country, due to the different circumstances. For example, in Moldova, anti-trafficking prevention education is part of the official school curriculum, in Poland, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Ukraine and Bosnia, it is not. Most of the La Strada members, however, have good relations with the national ministries of education and with educational institutes, which is why they can offer anti-trafficking prevention at schools.

The following target risk groups were reached in 2006: schoolchildren, students of vocational and technical schools, university students, orphans, unemployed, military servants, representatives of NGOs. (*specific examples of lectures and figures are available on request*).

Training peer groups

An important element of La Strada's work is increasing the level of professional knowledge of specialists by lecturing at institutions and professional training seminars.

- ❖ In 2006, **La Strada Ukraine** cooperated with: the Central Institute of Further Pedagogical Education, the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, National University of Internal Affairs, State Employment Centre, providing input in courses of further education for state authorities and other relevant institutions.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** released a Peer Educators Guide in June 2005, listing good practices of La Strada and providing specific examples, case studies, tools and methods of activities that can be easily applied in practice. The Guide was used as an internal tool throughout 2006 and was supplemented with additional information and best practices.
- ❖ **La Strada Belarus** provided 10 lectures for 460 professionals from Brest, Grodno, Gomel and Minsk regions and organised a round table with the National Institutes of Advanced Studies, to strengthen and expand the cooperation and discuss the methodology of preventive activities. The outcome of the round table was a decision to introduce the topic of the trafficking in persons in several courses and to increase the lecture hours in existing counter-trafficking courses in the National Institutes.

Cooperation with MTV

La Strada received the MTV Exit award in November 2004 and was involved in the development of MTV prevention materials within the framework of a European-wide MTV media campaign on trafficking. In 2006, several La Strada offices (Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia and Bulgaria) took part in specific MTV prevention campaign activities, and all La Strada offices disseminated MTV materials.

- ❖ In July 2006, **La Strada BiH** co-organised the kick-off event in Sarajevo for the MTV EXIT concert tour started. La Strada actively advertised the event and distributed tickets and other materials; a peer-group training also took place prior to the concert. During the concert, the volunteers of La Strada BiH and peer-group members distributed prevention materials of La Strada BiH and MTV.
- ❖ In September 2006, **La Strada Belarus** was one of co-organisers of MTV EXIT Festival event held in Minsk in one of the night clubs. La Strada Belarus national coordinator took part in the press conference and volunteers distributed La Strada's and MTV's printed materials.

Educating professional groups

Next to prevention lectures at educational institutes, La Strada trained professional groups such as policemen, lawyers, social workers, and representatives of shelters and governmental institutions, sex workers, military personnel and employees of NGOs, social care and orphanages. In addition, La Strada trains its own staff, in particular its hotline consultants.

- ❖ **La Strada Bulgaria** trained police officers from the Missing persons Department as well as Judges and prosecutors. Upon requests also Policemen from Child Delinquency Departments of South Bulgaria were trained.
- ❖ **La Strada Czech Republic** continued its cooperation with the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Budapest, in a common project together with Siak, Austria, Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic and On the Road, Italy. In February 2006 the project partners held a follow-up meeting in Vienna. At this meeting they evaluated and exchanged experience gained through testing of the draft-training module on human trafficking for law enforcement agencies in the EU developed and tested in individual countries during 2005. The results of the testing have been discussed and the training module has been completed. In the Czech Republic, the module will be implemented into the school curricula by the Ministry of Interior.
- ❖ **La Strada Poland** conducted four trainings for law enforcement from eight regions – more than 100 police and border guards representatives, prosecutors, judges and also social workers were trained on identification of trafficked persons, victim/witness protection, referral work and networking in assistance of trafficked persons.

Materials for professional groups developed and disseminated in 2006

La Strada's contribution to the prevention of trafficking is also reflected in its wide range of material regularly produced for professional groups who come into contact with trafficked persons. Some of these include:

- ❖ **La Strada Poland** developed two new instruction films about the identification of trafficked persons by the police and about the interrogation of trafficked persons in criminal proceedings, respectively. Special focus is put on a human rights approach to trafficked persons and its implementation by the law enforcement towards trafficked persons in practice.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** published a protocol on victims identified applicable to all anti-trafficking actors. The publication was preceded by an analysis of various sources including a research on current identification practices and associated documentation, a study of national and international legal framework, and data collection via interviews with experts and practitioners.
- ❖ **La Strada Ukraine** produced a new training manual, "Prevention of trafficking in children and commercial sexual exploitation of children", and developed a brochure, "Counteraction to trafficking in children and commercial sexual exploitation of children (international and national legislation)" for specialists working in the field of children's rights protection.

5.2.3 Contacts with local NGOs

Maintaining contacts with NGOs is a regular activity of La Strada members and was continued throughout 2006. In almost all La Strada countries, regional and national networks have been established. In some countries, new networks of NGOs providing support to victims of trafficking were set up. Contacts were also maintained with international organisations, based in the same but also foreign countries, mainly working in the area of provision of social assistance, training and education, exchange of information, as well as working on a coordinated approach towards influencing government strategies on trafficking in persons and on policies that might affect

trafficking in persons. The cooperation with NGOs is used for referrals, for exchange of information and transfer of knowledge, for cooperation on common projects and for exchanges and capacity building.

La Strada Belarus: sharing expertise and promoting cooperation

La Strada Belarus conducted four seminars in 2006 on “Social assistance to victims of trafficking” for 110 specialists of 86 state centres providing social assistance in the Grodno, Brest, Vitebsk and Mogilev regions. One of the problems is that despite the fact that centres are obliged by law to provide assistance to victims of trafficking, no cases have as yet been registered. Some centres run helpline counselling, mostly for domestic violence victims, and can offer psychological services for citizens, but they lack specific knowledge on working with trafficked persons. The seminars therefore provide participants with methodological information on first contacts with trafficked persons, rules of interviewing, safety and ethics rules for social workers, such as how to identify needs of trafficked persons or balancing interests of investigation procedures. As not all Centres have the capacities to provide accommodation for trafficked persons La Strada services and capacities were described in detailed. Additionally, a draft version of a brochure for specialist of these centres was tested during these events. More than 3000 copies of printed materials were distributed among different organisations in 2006.

5.2.4 Hotlines

The hotlines run by all La Strada offices are important tools in the prevention campaign. Consultants provide information on destination countries, including information about the national situation and legislation of these countries, useful telephone numbers, safety tips and on possibilities of help in case of emergencies. The same information is also provided by e-mail and telephone. Several offices provide consultation for migrants, also in foreign languages – for example, in the Czech Republic, consultation is offered in Russian and Ukrainian language, while in Poland, consultation is offered in Vietnamese and Russian. La Strada Macedonia offers Albanian consultation and La Strada Moldova offers Romanian consultation as well. In Ukraine, the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy continue to consult on employment agencies and licence issues every Saturday (10.00 – 14.00) on the national toll free hotline which, developed out of the La Strada hotline and is still coordinated by La Strada Ukraine (see 3.3 *Social Assistance campaign*). For an overview of hotline statistics, see 8.1 *Quantity indicators*.

- ❖ In early 2006, **La Strada Czech Republic** tested new possibilities for expanding its hotline services in a common pilot project with the IOM Prague office, Czech Caritas and the Czech Ministry of Interior, with the objective to run a German and Czech language hotline for clients of prostitution from the Czech Republic, Germany and Austria. The hotline should indirectly help trafficked persons and persons that have been commercial exploited for sexual purposes., and is run in three regions of the Czech Republic with the highest rates of prostitution. The operating hotline is complemented by an information campaign. La Strada and its project partners are currently preparing a continuation of the project for the year 2007.
- ❖ Since May 2006, **La Strada Poland** is operating a new hotline in Vietnamese, for the estimated 40.000 Vietnamese living in Poland. The hotline was developed after a number of signals were received that trafficking in persons and exploitation of Vietnamese women and youngster is taking place within the community, and is the first hotline in Vietnamese language in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe.
- ❖ **La Strada Ukraine** runs a national toll free hotline, providing consultations on legal procedure of employment abroad, consequences of illegal employment, marriage with foreigners, studying abroad, search for missing persons, and organising assistance for trafficked persons, amongst others. Statistics shows that information requests are becoming increasingly popular. Furthermore, La Strada Ukraine continues to provide methodical support for eight regional hotlines, in the frame of the project supported by Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs EU and implemented by OSCE.

5.3 Social Assistance (Safe Return and Social Inclusion) Campaign

The Social Assistance campaign aims to build up an infrastructure of support to victims in close cooperation with governmental institutions and other NGOs. Within this campaign, the telephone hotline enables the La Strada teams to get in touch with victims and provide them with social, juridical, medical, practical and emotional support; for emergency calls the lines are usually in operation for 24 hours. Following the earlier example of La Strada Moldova and La Strada Ukraine, Belarus runs a national toll free hotline since the April 2004, to which people can call from all over the country for free. The monitoring of this hotline takes place under the auspices of the mentioned La Strada offices.

Victims of trafficking are also given direct support and advice in practical, medical, juridical and social matters. Depending on the individual circumstances of victims of trafficking, support is offered with regard to counselling and education, including psychological counselling, emotional support, crisis intervention, temporary sheltering, restoring of personal documents, basic legal aid or referral to other legal services, securing contacts with the family (upon request) and humanitarian aid in the form of food, medicines and basic commodities. In order to provide adequate services, the La Strada offices make use of services provided by others, and refer clients to specialist clinics and legal aid agencies.

5.3.1 National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and NGO networks

In some countries NGOs have formed national anti-trafficking networks and coalitions for combating trafficking in human beings on the local level. In Macedonia, for example, La Strada takes part in a coalition that includes members from the police, the Centre for Social Policy, local government, courts, customs and NGOs. In the Netherlands, La Strada coordinates regional networks of direct assistance providers involving shelters and the police, which coordinate referrals and services for identified trafficked persons all over the country. These coalitions contribute to strengthening the links between NGOs and government institutions, especially key actors, and are intended to fill gaps in care and referral mechanisms.

- ❖ **La Strada Poland** cooperated with numerous organisations and offices in 2006, including social workers from welfare centres in Poland, psychologists from Nobody's Children Foundation, psychiatrist from the "Center Psychomedica", lawyers from Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, CARITAS (shelters), ITAKA Foundation (for Missing Persons), the Immaculate Mary Association in Aid of Girls and Women, the Women's Rights Centre, TADA- association of street workers, and IOM Warsaw - on assistance in specific trafficking cases, and shelters for homeless persons.
- ❖ **La Strada Macedonia** signed a Memorandum of Understanding for better referral of clients with the "Organization of Women of the city of Skopje", the NGO "Megasi" and the "SOS helpline on narcotics". In May 2006, La Strada also signed a contract with "SOS helpline for domestic violence" Semper-Bitola and conducted a two-day workshop "National Referral Mechanism and the role of the Unit in Ministry of Interior for combating trafficking in human beings". One of the aims of the seminar was to strengthen the cooperation between the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Unit of the Public Prosecution for organised crime and the relevant NGOs. Furthermore, La Strada Macedonia coordinates the work of NGOs that are part of the informal national NGO Anti-trafficking Network. In cooperation with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), La Strada Macedonia and its counter-trafficking partners have been working towards, firstly, mobilising and strengthening the NGO network, and secondly, influencing key actors to improve support for victims of trafficking. The network currently comprises twelve organisations, representing Macedonian, Albanian, and Roma groups as well as urban and rural groups. The network is currently in the process of formalisation.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** is an active member of a national working group to elaborate SOPs on the assistance to trafficked persons. The working group is an initiative of the international anti-

trafficking community in Moldova and comprises agencies such as IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, and Terre des Hommes. The overall aim of the group is to harmonise all existing procedures and develop a minimum standard set of procedures applicable when organising/providing assistance to trafficked persons within a referral mechanism.

La Strada also cooperates internationally on safe return and reintegration. In January 2006, **La Strada Poland**, for example, initiated a support and protection programme for foreign witnesses/victims of trafficking. This programme is implemented and financed through Poland's National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, coordinated by the Ministry of Interior. La Strada Poland also cooperates with Polish consulates and embassies in Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Cyprus, Greece, Norway, USA, and Great Britain. International cooperation with NGOs abroad included Payoke (Belgium), Phoenix (Germany), Casa dei Diritti Sociali (Italy), La Strada Moldova, La Strada (Bulgaria), La Strada Ukraine, LSI in the Netherlands, the Poppy Project (Great Britain), Contra and Koofra (Germany).

5.3.2 Provision of comprehensive services and legal support

Next to referring trafficked persons to service providers, La Strada also provides direct social, legal and emotional support. Sometimes, La Strada develops a complete care programme for trafficked persons, including emotional and social support, safe shelter, and medical and legal services. Some examples of these include:

- ❖ In 2006, social workers of the crisis intervention centre and counselling centre run by **La Strada Poland** organised medical help for 64 persons in 2006. Moreover, 79 persons benefited from psychological care. La Strada Poland also addresses specific needs for people in prison or refugees, and organises help in specialist care centres (therapy in special hospitals and centres). In 2006, it organised rehabilitation courses for a disabled migrant client. Mediation between clients and their families is also part of La Strada Poland's social care programme, including making interventions in the custody court. In 16 cases, La Strada Poland took part in the court cases as social representatives and assisted 20 clients with witness testimonies.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** runs a mobile multidisciplinary team. The mobile team membership depends on the aim of intervention, and can be formed (multidisciplinary) upon the case: social workers from La Strada, policemen, psychologist or other professionals. The main objective of the mobile team is the identification of trafficking cases; meeting at the point of arrival; escorting of beneficiaries to the place of services delivery; assistance in minors' proactive identification (penal cases); social representation of victims of trafficking during the penal process; psycho-social intervention in crisis situations. In 2006, 51 mobile field visits were made.
- ❖ In 2006, **La Strada Belarus** provided direct support to 89 trafficked persons and relatives, who were searching for their family members abroad suspecting that they had been trafficked. 88 of them are Belarusian citizens and one woman is a citizen of Russian Federation. Three minors were supported as well; even though children are not a focus group of La Strada Belarus, and services are not advertised among this target group, children being trafficked and referred to La Strada Belarus are supported if possible.

Animus Association: combining individual work with work in the community.

La Strada Bulgaria combines individual work with trafficked persons and work in the community. The individual work aims at overcoming the emotional crisis, coping with the symptoms of the psychological trauma and creating a vision about the future. It is implemented within various programmes and services, including accommodation at the Crisis Unit, emergency psychological consultation, psychotherapeutic and counselling programme for women and girls survivors of trafficking, counselling programme for family and relatives of survivors of trafficking, empowerment programme and finally, facilitating the return and reintegration of the survivors in their environment.

This includes work with the families, referral to other organisations, the creation of multidisciplinary teams, advocacy, etc.

Legal support and support during court cases are in fact important elements of the La Strada Social Support campaign. La Strada Macedonia, for example, hired a women lawyer specialist in the area of trafficking in human beings. Meetings are held with the relevant government departments and if necessary with the public prosecutor about specific trafficking cases, and victims are accompanied to court and back to the shelter, if they are clients of La Strada. In Poland, La Strada provided a total of 60 legal consultations for clients in 2006. In addition, 100 legal consultations were provided by the hotline services and 13 via e-mail. For its legal support work, La Strada Poland also hired a lawyer to support a total of seven cases in 2006.

5.3.3 Reintegration & social inclusion

Next to short term assistance and safe return, the focus of the social assistance work is on long term support and social inclusion of victims. For each individual client, a tailor-made programme is developed, including – if needed - vocational training and help in job searching. Over the years, La Strada has developed expertise in the area of integration which is regularly shared with relevant organisations through meetings and the publications of handbooks, for example. Some examples of social and economic reintegration measures include:

- ❖ **La Strada Poland** implemented a pilot project in 2006 on advancing employment possibilities for trafficked persons, entitled “IRIS – Social and Vocational Reintegration of Women – Victims of Trafficking in Persons”. 23 persons received active help and support in job searching (counselling, obtaining documents, financial support for local transport and access to telephone). Some clients took part in a “Workshops on active job seeking” organised by the Centre of Empowerment of Women. Clients also had support from a coach and job consultants, received help in finding new schools and started internships.
- ❖ **La Strada Macedonia** opened a new shelter in 2006 and as part of the reintegration programme for the clients accommodated in the shelter, different vocational courses were offered. According to their wishes and abilities, clients chose to follow and successfully completed hairdresser and sewing courses. La Strada Macedonia is also considering for one of its client accommodated in the shelter to be employed by La Strada and currently supports her with her further education by organising relevant documentation and evening classes.
- ❖ Together with various NGOs, **La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina** advertised its Adult Entrepreneurship Training programme for women entrepreneurs through local radio and TV stations. Moreover, La Strada BiH invited possible candidates to round tables attended by over 40 women from all over HN Canton. The training provided information on business plans and how to start small business, possibilities, possible obstacles, procedures, and other technical points.

5.3.4 Shelters

In the past years all La Strada offices have established their own shelters; in June 2004 and in the beginning of 2005, the shelters in Belarus and Macedonia became respectively operational. La Strada Ukraine, La Strada Moldova and La Strada Netherlands make use of shelters of others and do not have their own shelters, although La Strada Ukraine is currently negotiating with the local government and other organisations to establish a shelter for returnees in Kiev. In all countries, victims are also referred to state shelters, shelters of the IOM, and religious and humanitarian organisations. All La Strada offices can offer the services outlined in *annex 1*.

- ❖ The shelter of **La Strada Bosnia** consists of two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, dining room, bathroom, toilette, office for shelter managers and psychologists. It can accommodate 15 persons. From January 2006 on La Strada assisted 30 clients. Some of them still live in

shelter; some of them had been there for a few months. Fourteen additional external clients were involved in the social assistance programme. La Strada Belarus' mini-shelter was established in 2004, and in 2005, its operation being financially supported by SDC and Norwegian Church Aid. External psychologist and social workers are being invited to work with shelter clients.

- ❖ In early 2006, **La Strada Czech Republic** succeeded in extending its long-term accommodation capacity for trafficked persons by obtaining a new shelter. La Strada now has two asylum shelters - one for female clients in long-term and short-term care, and another for male clients and for training clients in long-term care. The Czech office therefore significantly increased its capacity to offer better quality and more complex services.

Lobbying for shelters in the Ukraine

During 2006, La Strada Ukraine continued to lobby state support in opening a shelter for trafficked people, especially towards the Ministry on Youth and Sport Affairs. Though the government recognises the need for such a shelter, it has been rather reluctant in assisting La Strada by providing permission to use the required premises. Nevertheless, La Strada-Ukraine continues to lobby this issue. Until now, clients of La Strada Ukraine are placed in premises of religious and charity organisations, including Caritas Kyiv, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church organisation and the department on charity and social service. New contacts were established with the International Charitable Foundation "Otchiy dom" (Kyiv). Next to this, La Strada-Ukraine has close working contacts with non governmental partner organisations in different regions of Ukraine, which run shelters to which La Strada clients can be referred to.

5.3.5 Knowledge exchange and trainings

Another important element of La Strada's work in the framework of social assistance, is the exchange of knowledge and best practices with other NGO partners and state institutions to improve services. La Strada members are often invited by NGOs and state institutions to give trainings and themselves initiative round tables, training courses and the dissemination of reliable and objective information on the issue of trafficking and social support. Again, here are some examples of La Strada's work in this area in 2006:

- ❖ **La Strada Macedonia** continued to provide recommendations, assistance, guidance and advice to NGOs partners regarding direct service delivery, especially on reintegration of victims. La Strada conducted a two-day Training for direct service delivery to victims and community context of at risk population. In this workshop, network NGO partners gained knowledge and skills in providing physical, psychological and social support to victims. The main topics that were discussed on the training were: Identification of the at-risk group, identification of the victims of trafficking through interviews and the confirmation of the needs of victims of trafficking. In April, three seminars were organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and its National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Office. The purpose of the seminar was to train social workers for working with victims of trafficking and to introduce the National Referral Mechanism. Members from the La Strada Macedonia Residence project staff were invited as speakers to share the experience of working directly with the victims. Furthermore, during the NRM seminar supported by UNICEF (25-27 April), La Strada was invited to provide speakers to present the organisation and the project as one of the best practices of direct work with trafficking victims.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** organised Round Table with professionals on the national referral mechanisms focusing on the role - and promoting - the drop-in centre. La Strada then issued recommendations on the National Action Plan and national counter-trafficking strategies and La Strada Moldova experts elaborated a draft system for the monitoring of the implementation of the National Action Plan. The draft system was circulated among the members of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking for comments and in the end submitted to the National Committee (NC), which approved the plan in February 2006.

In the framework of the social assistance campaign, several specific research and projects were carried out to improve the quality and effectiveness of the social assistance provided at the national level and international level.

- ❖ For increasing access to social assistance, **La Strada Ukraine** took up the issue of identification of trafficked persons. Firstly, working contacts with head staff of the special police unit in the airport Boryspil were maintained; additionally, methodological recommendations for border police specialists on the identification of trafficked people were defined. After a long process of negotiations, La Strada Ukraine managed to place information on the territory of the international airport Boryspil (Kyiv), including informational materials of La Strada and its hotline number. Further, other La Strada offices organised specific trainings or elaborated special materials on direct social support for various professional groups – *see also 3.2 training of professional groups*.
- ❖ **La Strada Moldova** published the Guideline “Social Assistance to Trafficked Persons especially women” - 1000 copies in Romanian and Russian languages, which was officially endorsed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. La Strada Moldova will publish a recommended Protocol on case identification in 2006. La Strada Moldova has set up multidisciplinary mobile teams (police officers from Centre to Combat Trafficking in Persons of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and social staff of La Strada Centre) to immediately respond any signal of trafficking and conduct identification and evaluation of trafficking cases.

La Strada regularly evaluates the services it provides to clients. **La Strada Czech Republic**, for example, continued working with cooperation agreements on long-term and short-term assistance with clients in 2006, which can be renewed on request. With every new agreement signed by the client, the La Strada team evaluates current and past cooperation between the client and the organisation and consequently plans and adjusts the content and extent of future cooperation according to the changing needs of the client. Furthermore, the new template for registering clients’ data, developed in 2005, was tested during 2006 and proves to be a useful way to collect, store, exchange and evaluate diverse data in the area of social assistance and to reflect upon the needs of its clients. Naturally, the data collected by any La Strada member remain strictly confidential.

5.3.6 Specific projects implemented in 2006

The Viable Alternatives project

In 2006, **La Strada Czech Republic** started a new project in the framework of its Social Assistance campaign entitled “Viable alternatives – social inclusion of trafficked and commercially exploited persons”, funded by the Daphne IC facilities project. The project introduced some new aspects into La Strada activities, such as outreach work aimed at gathering information in and delivering information to the field, or providing new forms of financial support to clients. La Strada therefore defined new basic guidelines and frameworks for their implementation. For example, outreach workers and social workers designed safety guidelines for outreach work in consultations with the police. The document includes safety procedures for communication with the target group and safety tips on how to handle difficult or unsafe situations in the field, especially among migrants working in the Czech Republic.

In September 2006, two outreach workers started their research for the Viable Alternatives projects, which resulted in valuable information on forced labour and trafficking in human beings in migrant communities in the Czech Republic. The collected data are currently being evaluated and used to design an information campaign, which started at the end of 2006 and informs the target group on issues of immigration, forced labour, trafficking and employment-focused services provided by La Strada. In the framework of the project, La Strada also started providing direct financial support to its clients. A set of rules guiding the allocation of such direct support has been designed with the aim to motivate clients in further cooperation with the organisation and active participation in increasing their employability in order to ease their entry to the labour market.

Emergency assistance

Within the Project "Quick impact actions: direct assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings", supported by OSCE Mission to Moldova and implemented by **La Strada Moldova**, 40 women and their 20 children were given humanitarian aid packages (hygienic products, foodstuffs, general medicines) associated with International Women Day. 36 trafficking survivors were furthermore provided with different type of direct emergency assistance (payment for medical assistance, buying cloths, payment for public utilities, coal, etc.).

Municipal Anti-Trafficking Youth Forum

In April 2006, **La Strada Moldova** organised a Municipal Anti-Trafficking Youth Forum in Chisinau, planned as a final event for 2005-2006 school's year under the agreement between La Strada Moldova and Municipal Department of Education. The Forum awarded the winners of the anti-trafficking contests organised prior to the Forum, in March 2006, among the youth who participated in trafficking prevention seminars held by La Strada. Awards were made in the form of money, diplomas and promotion material and the best individual art and essays were presented during the forum. The jury included representatives of the Municipal Department of Education, La Strada Moldova and journalists.

6. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

All La Strada offices maintain international cooperation within and outside the La Strada network. This includes cooperation and concrete projects with other NGOs and international networks (e.g. ASI, GAATW, ECPAT), international organisations (e.g. OSCE and UN organisations), and intergovernmental organisations (e.g. IOM) as well as general information exchange and visits to strengthen and complement the work of La Strada. Besides the regular attendance of network and working group meetings, La Strada International and numerous La Strada member organisations concluded, started or continued to carry out specific cooperation activities with international organisations, detailed here below. Cooperation with national NGOs also takes place for the purpose of referral, and information and expertise exchange, which is described in more detail in the previous chapter.

6.1 Cooperation with international NGOs and NGO networks

Amnesty International (AI) and Anti-Slavery International (ASI)

Cooperation between the human rights organisations AI and ASI and **La Strada International** in 2006 focussed in particular on common advocacy work towards European institutions, especially directed at the Convention on Trafficking in Human Beings drafted by the Council of Europe. **La Strada Czech Republic** cooperates with ASI in a two year AGIS project focusing on gathering information on trafficking for forced labour and developing a standard protocol for victim assistance. **La Strada Netherlands** cooperated with ASI on a common manual. **La Strada Belarus** contributed to a research of Amnesty International London office on trafficking.

The Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW)

All La Strada offices are members of GAATW and maintained close contacts and cooperation throughout 2006. The national coordinator of La Strada Poland is also a member of the board of GAATW. Moreover, the coordinator of GAATW met with LSI staff in June 2006 at the LSI office in the Netherlands to consult with LSI and other European GAATW members on common actions and lobby and the developments of the GAATW office. A European consultation of La Strada and GAATW members took place, the results of which were presented at the members' congress in October 2006. A La Strada Ukraine representative participated in the GAATW *Access to Justice* consultation that took place in Bangkok, at the beginning of June 2006. La Strada Belarus and other La Strada members contributed to this research by completing questionnaires on access to justice and prevention.

In November 2006, La Strada Macedonia participated in a consultation meeting on prevention in Bangkok, organised by GAATW. At this meeting the following topics were discussed: safe migration, good and bad practices on prevention, measure and evaluation on influence on prevention on human trafficking. Participants included representatives from Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT)

Regular working contacts at the national level are increasingly taking place with representatives of ECPAT. **La Strada Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and Bulgaria** cooperated on child trafficking cases with ECPAT affiliates. In addition, cooperation took place on training seminars, which ECPAT organised in 10 Central and Eastern European countries, with the aim of drafting a manual on child trafficking for law enforcement and social workers. The LSI international coordinator was invited to become a member of the ECPAT advisory team and attended a consultation meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria. As a result, LSI has taken the initiative to conduct research amongst the different La Strada offices, addressing child trafficking and their cooperation with ECPAT. It is expected that in the

future, closer ties with ECPAT can be established, as well as with other organisations addressing child trafficking, such as Terre des Hommes and UNICEF.

La Strada Ukraine maintains regular working contacts with ECPAT International and UNICRI on the realisation of the common project "Development of a national referral system for providing assistance to child victims of trafficking for sexual purposes in Ukraine". In February 2006, two representatives of La Strada Ukraine participated in the workshop in the framework of this project. The workshop took place in Bangkok, Thailand and was dedicated to the presenting the interim results and outcomes of the project in the Ukraine, Costa Rica and Thailand. The final conference of the project took place in October in Rome, Italy, where project partners presented results of the activities realised, discussed problems and shared positive experiences.

Anti-Corruption Anti-Trafficking Association (ACTA)

There were developments in the relationship between La Strada and ACTA in 2006. In the past, **La Strada Macedonia and La Strada Moldova** were in close contact with ACTA and represented the La Strada network within ACTA. In 2006, La Strada Macedonia also took part in a training organised by ACTA to exchange experience in the field of prevention, to discuss new trends of trafficking and how to make the preventive programme more effective. However, at a board meeting of 4 October 2006, La Strada Macedonia decided to withdraw from the ACTA network, because the past period of cooperation the organisation faced several problems that would sometimes lead to the difficult position to choose between the La Strada network and ACTA. Although La Strada Macedonia gained positive experiences and broadened its cooperation with Balkan NGOs by joining ACTA, it was felt best to avoid any further conflict of interest. Nevertheless La Strada Macedonia continues to cooperate with the NGO members of ACTA on an individual basis. La Strada Moldova on the other hand continued to work within the ACTA network and participated in the regular ACTA Council Coordination Meeting in Belgrade in January 2006 to discuss the annual report of ACTA Council and elaborate a work plan for 2006. In March 2006 La Strada Moldova representative participated in the work meeting "Victim assistance Protocol" that took part within ACTA in Serbia. The workshop was dedicated to the analysis of the existing protocols on victims' assistance available with the members of ACTA and elaboration of the unique ACTA Victim Assistance Protocol. As a result of the meeting, drafts separate protocols for victims of trafficking and corruption have been elaborated; the protocol included the following issues: victims' identification and registration, direct assistance, short and long term assistance, case management and monitoring. The protocol was finalised by the end of the year 2006.

6.2 International organisations

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

All La Strada offices maintain close contacts with different OSCE missions and institutions and LSI continued its membership of the Alliance Expert Co-ordination Team (AECT) of the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. LSI's international coordinator attends the quarterly expert group meetings. Moreover, Dr. Helga Konrad, the Special Representative, became member of the La Strada International advisory council. As OSCE Special Representative, she visited several La Strada countries in order to assess the situation on trafficking, and met with La Strada representatives in the Netherlands, Belarus and Moldova. At the national level, several offices (**La Strada Macedonia, Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina**) attended meetings on anti-trafficking measures, coordinated by OSCE missions. Some offices have been funded by OSCE and or have been invited as trainers for OSCE training seminars in non-La Strada countries; representatives of La Strada Moldova, for example, trained NGO representatives in Kazakhstan. In Ukraine, the OSCE supports the hotline work.

La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina co-organised SECI Seminars for prosecutors (held in September 2006 in Mostar, Banjaluka and Sarajevo), with the OSCE and the Council of Ministers of BiH. The topic

was: “Application of international mechanisms in processing trafficking cases”, particularly focusing on the role of SECI Center and INTERPOL in processing trafficking cases, as well as the cross-border cooperation and previous experiences concerning the issue. Furthermore, La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina regularly attends Anti-trafficking Inter-Agency Coordination Meetings organized by OSCE Sarajevo. One of the main topics discussed 2006 meetings were the “Guiding principles for the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings in BiH (initially named “Code of Conduct”). In the creation of these principles La Strada BiH was actively engaged. The draft principles are now to be agreed by other interested parties, such as NGOs, IOM, etc.

In 2005, **La Strada Ukraine** prepared an update of the analytical manual “Counter-action against trafficking in people: legal acts of foreign countries”, in cooperation with the OSCE and ILO. In 2006, the CD and Manual were disseminated among specialists working in this field. Furthermore, La Strada Ukraine cooperated with the OSCE in Ukraine on the creation of two video spots with the National Toll Free Hot Line number, which was broadcasted on the national television. The creation of the video spots was initiated and financed by the OSCE.

La Strada Macedonia signed a contract with OSCE for the continuation of the project “SOS Line for help from human trafficking” financed by the OSCE, UNICEF and Macedonian Telecommunication and the Project “Residence”, a shelter for victims of trafficking financed by USAID through OSCE partnership. **La Strada Czech Republic** participated in a high-level conference on trafficking in human beings, especially children in Vienna in March 2006, organised by the Austrian presidency of the EU and the OSCE. In Moldova, the OSCE launched a trial monitoring project including trafficking cases, which started with a training of experts and in which **La Strada Moldova** participates.

In late 2005, **La Strada Belarus** signed an agreement with OSCE on the implementation of the research “Assessment of anti-trafficking structures in Belarus”, aimed at preparing the ground for the development of a National Referral Mechanism. As a result of the project, a report was researched and developed in 2006, to be published in 2007, with recommendations for the governmental structures regarding providing assistance and protection to Victims of Trafficking.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

La Strada Ukraine and Moldova have signed agreements of cooperation with ILO/IPEC on the implementation of a project on assistance of trafficked children, in cooperation with national local communities in Ukraine and Moldova and continued cooperation in 2006. La Strada Ukraine, for example, strengthening the capacity of Local Action Committees to prevent trafficking and facilitate reintegration of victims in two pilot areas of Ukraine: Donetsk and Kherson oblast. A La Strada Ukraine specialist participated numerous sessions of the local action committees on prevention trafficking in people and children. La Strada Ukraine also cooperated with ILO and OSCE on updating the manual “Counteraction trafficking in people: legal acts of foreign countries” (*see above*). A series of meetings took place between La Strada Moldova representatives and ILO representatives from Bucharest and Moldova in 2006, including a mid-term project evaluation meeting with an independent evaluator subcontracted by the ILO and US State Department in the framework of the Project on the assistance of trafficked children supported by the ILO. The meetings aimed at assessing project progress, raising problems and gaps, discussing possible solutions and possible future cooperation. It is expected that also **La Strada Bulgaria and La Strada Poland** will cooperate with the ILO more closely in the future.

Other UN agencies

In 2005, La Strada cooperated with several UN bodies, both at the national and international levels, especially UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF and UNODC. LSI’s national coordinator meets representatives of these organisations at the quarterly meetings of the OSCE Alliance Expert Co-ordination Team (AECT, *see above*). **La Strada Moldova, La Strada Belarus and La Strada Ukraine** implemented joint UNDP projects, including a programme on the creation of five Regional Placement Centres in Moldova for disadvantaged groups, including victims of trafficking, and on a study visit to Germany, with representatives of La Strada Belarus and La Strada Ukraine. The UNODC (Advocacy Section Public Affairs and Inter-Agency Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) situated in

Vienna, Austria, broadcasted video spots promoting the La Strada hotline on the national TV stations. In May 2006, **La Strada Macedonia** representatives took part in the seminar "From trafficking in human beings to safety", organised by UNICEF. The aim of the seminar was to develop and improve the National Referral Mechanism for referring children victims of trafficking. La Strada Macedonia also took part in the launching of the UNDP Report "At Risk: Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe" on 17 October. The launch was organised as a contribution of the United Nations Poverty Week and observance of the Decade of Roma inclusion, at the Holiday Inn Hotel. La Strada participated in the promotion of the report as part of a broader effort of UNDP to address and alert on different dimensions of vulnerability in Southeast Europe.

La Strada Belarus concluded an EU/UNDP project in December 2005. Plans for launching a new EU/UNDP programme in 2006-2008 were announced of which La Strada Belarus was mentioned among the partners, the project's launch was postponed until 2007. Cooperation with the UNODC was renewed in regard to advertising the La Strada hotline in radio spots created by this agency.

La Strada Moldova met with UNODC in the framework of the UNODC anti-trafficking project launched in 2006 on developing an NRM in Moldova. Within this activity, La Strada Moldova shall work jointly with an international expert to conduct review of current referral practices in Moldova with regard to trafficked persons' assistance and prepare full report with specific recommendations including in form of models/forms of interventions. In May, La Strada Moldova participated in a meeting called by UNICEF on the ways to strengthen secretariat of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking.

6.3 Inter-governmental organisations

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Project cooperation was maintained by several La Strada members with ICMPD in 2006. **La Strada Czech Republic** participated in a common project together with Siak, Austria, Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic and On the Road, Italy. In February 2006 the project partners held a follow-up meeting in Vienna. At this meeting they evaluated and exchanged experience gained through testing of the draft-training module on human trafficking for law enforcement agencies in the EU developed and tested in individual countries during 2005. The results of the testing have been discussed and the training module has been completed. In the Czech Republic, the module will be implemented into the school curricula by the Ministry of Interior.

Several La Strada members are taking part in the project *Trans-national Referral Mechanisms (TRM) for Trafficked Persons in South-Eastern Europe*, implemented by ICMPD, local NGOs and the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior. **La Strada Bulgaria** has been invited to take part in the development of the programme, which includes Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and the UN-administered territory of Kosovo. ICMPD is looking for partners from NGO and GO sector that will form expert working group for creation of TRM, and in December 2006, La Strada Macedonia had an initial meeting with an ICMPD representative to discuss the TRM project. **La Strada Macedonia and La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina** also agreed to take part in the working group.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Nearly all La Strada offices cooperate on a daily basis with the IOM. Cooperation takes place especially on the issue of reintegration and return services for trafficked persons. In Poland, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, special agreements have been signed for this cooperation. Cooperation also exists on prevention work, the hotline services - in some case hotlines are funded by IOM - and other concrete activities. La Strada Moldova, for example, cooperated on trainings in Turkey and Kazakhstan. La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented 12 workshops for the target groups of students/parents/teachers in four high schools in the area of Mostar. Although La Strada and IOM have different mandates and sometimes a different approach, it is acknowledged that smooth cooperation is essential.

In 2006, **La Strada Macedonia** continued its contacts with the IOM and attended their DARS (Direct Assistance and Referral Services) meetings. In May, a Regional Conference for Temporary Permission for Residence of victims of trafficking and their protection was held in Belgrade, which was organised by the IOM in cooperation with the National Coordinator for combating trafficking in human beings in the Republic of Serbia (Ministry of Interior). Participants from Macedonia were members from IOM, Ministry of Interior, Deputy Public Prosecutor and La Strada Macedonia. The IOM prevention campaign launched in 2005 continued during 2006 and with approval La Strada SOS line number was displayed on most of the written and electronic materials that were part of the IOM Campaign. **La Strada Belarus** took part in a number of events organised by IOM in the framework of its counter-trafficking projects. Cooperation with IOM has improved in 2006, especially in the field of clients' referrals, although the need to discuss operational procedures remains.

In the framework of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Programme, agreements were reached to coordinate information sharing between IOM and other project partners, including **La Strada Macedonia, Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria and Belarus**. Belarus reports that one positive result of the project activity is a strengthened cooperation with IOM Minsk: IOM referred 10 trafficked persons, three of them minors.

In April 2006, **La Strada Moldova** representatives participated in a training seminar organised by the IOM Mission to Moldova in the framework of the 2005 AGIS project (phase II of the AGIS 2003 project), conducted in Kiev with the participation of delegations from all project countries. The course was based on the "Guide for members of Law enforcement, judiciary and NGO/International Organizations on best practices in combating trafficking in persons".

6.4 Cooperation with national NGOs from outside La Strada countries

With a view on the possible extension of the network in the future, contacts with NGOs – based in non La Strada countries, but with similar ideas and activity on the anti-trafficking issue - were made, including NGOs in the Central and Eastern European region. Contacts have already been established with NGOs in Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo and Croatia, Slovakia, Romania, Albania, Estonia and Russia, with NGOs in the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), with NGOs in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) and with NGOs in Western Europe (especially UK, Belgium, Italy, Austria, Greece, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands etc.), Israel and the Middle East. With some of these NGOs, trainings and or common projects are implemented. These are only some of the cooperation projects with non-La Strada NGOs:

- ❖ In November 2006, **La Strada Ukraine** was approached by the **Georgian** NGO "Center for information and counselling on reproductive health" (TANADGOMA), Batumi branch, with a request to organise a study visit to Ukraine, which took place on 15–22 December. La Strada Ukraine prepared the programme and organised meetings and trainings for TANADGOMA representatives, including meetings with experts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Department on Combating Crimes Related to Trafficking in People of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, OSCE, and IOM. Experiences were shared between La Strada Ukraine and the Centre on conducting prevention and educational campaigns, lobby, social assistance and informational campaigns, running a hotline, etc.
- ❖ **La Strada Poland** has a LIFT partnership to identify European good practice in diversity management (how marginalised groups – in this case trafficked persons – are included in the inclusion process) for employers. The project focuses on the process of social and vocational inclusion. This program is implemented with partner organisations from Germany, **Great Britain** and **Italy** (two partners). The role of La Strada Poland as partner is to develop a toolkit for employees of trafficked persons and migrant workers – as marginalized groups entering the job market.
- ❖ **La Strada Czech Republic** continued numerous contacts with aid organizations in different European countries focusing on information exchange, referral of clients and other forms of contact. In 2006, cooperation took place with organisations in **Germany, Sweden, Bulgaria,**

Great Britain, Austria, Ukraine, Slovakia and embassies of Ukraine, the USA and Switzerland in the Czech Republic.

- ❖ **In 2006, La Strada Belarus** cooperated with the **Russian** NGOs “Sisters”, “Angel Coalition”, the German NGO “Phoenix”, Austrian NGO “Lefo” and **Israeli** NGO “Women to women”, with the aim of common case management and exchange of information. However, cooperation does not always run without problems: A joint project, “Combating the Phenomenon of trafficking in Caucasus countries, Moldova and Belarus”, which was implemented in cooperation with the **Greek** NGO “KEDE” in 2005 and should have lasted until October 2006 (supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece) unfortunately had to be stopped in December 2005. The partner NGO “KEDE” did not fulfil its financial responsibilities, which negatively influenced the second year of the project. As a consequence La Strada Belarus had to cancel all activities planned within the framework of this project in 2006.

The international NGO platform organised by La Strada also leads to new partnerships with NGOs active outside of countries in which La Strada is already represented. La Strada Belarus, for example, met an NGO from Uzbekistan at the platform, which subsequently visited Belarus to share information.

6.5 Specific projects implemented in cooperation with other organisations in 2006

European Social Forum

La Strada Macedonia took part on the fourth European Social Forum that took place in Athens-Greece between 4 and 7 May 2006. Two representatives from La Strada Macedonia attended the workshop “Council of Europe Convention on Action against trafficking in human beings and even more gave presentation on” Direct assistance”. La Strada Macedonia was invited by Caritas France and COATNET that prepared and organized this workshop, where representatives from different countries discussed topics related with direct assistance to trafficking in human beings and exchanged suggestions.

AGIS anti-trafficking project

In 2006, La Strada continued participating in the European Commission’s AGIS project as a project partner together with Anti-Slavery International, the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV) and the Migrant Rights Center, Ireland. The two-year project focuses on gathering information on trafficking for forced labour and developing standard protocol for victim assistance. In January 2006 the project partners held a two-day meeting in Prague to evaluate and share the results of the research on incidence, forms, sectors and other aspects of forced labour in the target countries.

Study Tour Visit to Romanian organisations

In June 2006 La Strada Moldova representative participated in the Study Tour Visit to Romanian organizations that are involved in counter-trafficking activities. The study tour visit was organised by La Strada Netherlands, the Dutch shelter organisation Asja, and La Strada Moldova. Apart from anti-trafficking NGOs, meetings were held with the Dutch and Norwegian Embassies in Bucharest, the National Agency for Prevention Trafficking in Human Beings and Monitoring Assistance provided to the Victims of THB. The aim of the study tour was to establish work contacts and strengthen cooperation with direct service providers in Romania, and to share experience in this field.

7. INTERNAL LA STRADA COOPERATION

As already mentioned above, La Strada International became officially operational on 1 January 2005, and since then has facilitated the cooperation between member organisations by organising bi-annual meetings and coordinating lobby activities and information exchange, with a central documentation centre and common website. In 2005, La Strada celebrated its 10th anniversary and at a parallel thematic meeting, the idea for an annual NGO platform on the issue of trafficking was born. The following section provides an insight into internal La Strada cooperation and common themes that are discussed and elaborated at meetings.

7.1 Main policy issues

Issues discussed at La Strada assembly as well as in-between meetings in 2006 were:

- Partnership with other networks – including ACTA and GAATW and individual NGOs - and the need for creating and maintaining contacts in certain countries (including Russia and Turkey).
- La Strada associate membership procedures, code of conduct and IOM cooperation.
- Improvement of reporting and common facts & figures provision, and the need for minimum standards for the La Strada campaigns.
- Representation at the international level and at different bodies.
- Accreditation to important political bodies like the UN and the Council of Europe.
- How to react in general to new developments and trends (and target groups).
- How to get structurally funded and how to deal with donors in general and specifically the USAID policies.

Most of these discussions and strategies are still continuing; upon request more information on the discussions can be provided.

On 9 November 2005, at the symbolic day of the fall of the wall, La Strada International moved to Amsterdam. The International La Strada Association (in 2006, comprising four staff members and an external bookkeeper) focuses on international networking, lobbying and public relations on behalf of the whole La Strada network, as well as coordination and harmonisation of the national campaigns, including capacity building of the national teams and fundraising. LSI tries to expand its relations with national governments, European institutions, international organisations and UN bodies. LSI staff receives updates and reports from the offices and follows and comments on national activity and developments. In 2006, it continued to provide consultation to its member organisations on staff situations (and attracting staff), financial issues and funding applications in general, but also on strategies and policies.

The international secretariat holds the final responsibility to donors for joint projects submitted by the La Strada network and commits itself to fundraising for both, the international secretariat and the separate La Strada offices, according to urgency and need. Moreover, at the end of 2006, the LSI office completed the online documentation centre and an international website with links to all national La Strada websites. As for the general La Strada capacity-building programme, LSI continued to investigate gaps and needs of all offices for further staff trainings; a capacity-building programme will be developed for the coming years, based on the gaps and needs identified.

7.2 Internal cooperation and communication and La Strada meetings

All La Strada offices cooperate closely on the common La Strada campaigns, including the provision of individual victim support. For example, Bulgarian victims of trafficking who end up in Poland are assisted both by La Strada Poland and La Strada Bulgaria, in close consultation.

Moreover, La Strada representatives meet twice a year, at the annual assembly meetings and at the thematic meeting. At these meetings, the La Strada teams exchange experiences, receive further

training and develop new methodology and strategies. For these meetings, a special management training programme has been developed, addressing the capacity building of the organisations as well. In in-between meetings, La Strada representatives maintain contact through e-mail and telephone and meet at joint projects or international events organised by others.

7.2.1 General Assembly meeting (April 2006, Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

On 17-21 April, the third assembly meeting of La Strada members took place in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where the following issues have been discussed: lobby strategies, challenges of the network and ideas for common projects, financial situation LSI and members, as well as cooperation with other networks and organisations. Especially fruitful session was dedicated to elaboration of harmonised registration system within the network. Furthermore, LSI prepared a session with an external facilitator on the future focus of La Strada. This session was later followed up with a revision of the mission statement, as well as other new actions to be taken.

7.2.2 NGO platform (September 2006, Kiev, Ukraine)

An important event in the field of international cooperation was the 2006 NGO Platform with the theme: Anti-Trafficking Activity Towards Safe Migration Perspectives Role of NGOs as Watchdogs & Service Providers, which took place on 26 and 27 September 2006 in Kyiv. La Strada Ukraine took on the logistical and organisational arrangements for the vent, such as maintaining contacts with organisations from different countries to be selected for participation, drafting (visa) invitation letters, selecting workshops, and arranging food, accommodation and side-events. During both days there were plenary sessions with guest speakers, next to several workshops on different themes linked with the general them of the role of NGOs as watchdogs and service providers. The sub-themes of the workshops were:

- National referral mechanism
- Donors relations & approach
- Running anti-trafficking hotlines
- Implementing a HR approach in anti-trafficking activity
- Innovative prevention activity
- Social support and shelter management
- Lobby and monitoring techniques
- Safe migration perspectives
- Quality and quantity indicators

In addition, time for bilateral sessions was planned so that all representatives had a chance to meet and exchange ideas and thoughts with other NGOs present. Another unique event that took place during the NGO Platform Meeting was the Posters' Exhibition on 26 September. It displayed posters aimed at prevention of trafficking in persons, published by La Strada member organisations during their ten years of activity. Representatives of non-governmental organisations from more than 20 countries of the world, and representatives of the governmental, international and non-governmental organisations based in Ukraine took part in this event.

7.2.3 La Strada cooperation on projects and meetings

Next to holding meetings and discussion to develop common strategies, La Strada members also cooperate in specific projects. Some of these include:

- ❖ During the first months of 2006, **La Strada Poland and La Strada Czech Republic** cooperated on finalising the Daphne project "Trilateral Initiative to Prevent Trafficking among Roma Women in Slovakia" for which a common meeting in February 2006 took place. The national coordinator of La Strada Poland is also member of the board of LSI. La Strada Poland further cooperated with La Strada member organisations in Bulgaria (Animus) and the Netherlands (STV) on direct assistance to trafficked persons.

- ❖ Another bi-lateral meeting between **La Strada Macedonia and La Strada Bulgaria** took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, between 30 October and 1 November 2006. The shelter team of La Strada Macedonia participated, as did representatives of the crisis centre of La Strada Bulgaria. The aim of the bilateral meeting was to exchange experience in the field of working with the clients in the shelter, gathering new information's etc. Also an analysis was made of two cases one Bulgarian, one Macedonian for which the positive and negative elements were analysed of the (cooperation) work on cases of victims of trafficking.
- ❖ On 2 to 4 November, a representative of La Strada Macedonia actively participated in the regional "**Conference Harmonization of Government and Non-governmental sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the field of combating trafficking in human beings**". This conference was organised by **La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina** in memory of Olena Popik, Ukrainian women victim that has died in Mostar in November 2004. At this conference, La Strada Macedonia presented the experience and model of networking between GO and NGOs in Macedonia.
- ❖ In March 2005, **La Strada Belarus** and **La Strada Moldova** took part in an international Seminar "East meets West in Poland", organised by La Strada Poland. In November 2005, several La Strada representatives participated in the regional conference for Hot line and Help Line counsellors, organised by **La Strada Ukraine**.

7.2.4 La Strada information and expertise sharing

Information-sharing and learning from each others' experience is one of the advantages of and international network. Examples of these include:

- ❖ **La Strada Belarus** shared its experiences in organising innovative preventive activities, such as using art films for awareness raising of risk groups, with **La Strada Bulgaria, Ukraine and Moldova**. Based on the provided information and advice, La Strada Bulgaria organised similar event in Sofia.
- ❖ **La Strada Bulgaria** cooperated with all La Strada offices on common issues like preparing and issuing policy papers, newsletters, exchange of information about journalists and organisations, but also on practical issues like managing help-lines (with **La Strada Macedonia**). An exchange of materials risk groups and professionals took place between **La Strada Moldova** and **La Strada Belarus**, as did an exchange of information and experience in the creation of national referral mechanisms in both countries.

7.2.5 La Strada cooperation in social assistance (return and reintegration)

The most practical form of cooperation concerns the referral of clients. These are some specific examples of this form of cooperation in 2006:

- ❖ **La Strada Bulgaria** cooperated in 2006 with **La Strada Poland** on cases of victims' referrals. **La Strada Moldova** also collaborated with **La Strada Ukraine** on a trafficked person with Moldovan citizenship, which resulted in his repatriation to Moldova.
- ❖ **La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina** cooperated with **La Strada Bulgaria** within the La Strada campaigns as well as on concrete cases within the social assistance campaign. In one case contacts were established with the family of a Bulgarian woman, who was accommodated in the shelter of La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina. In another case, a Moldovan girl who is now living in Bosnia and Herzegovina and who asked La Strada BiH for assistance in providing her with some official documents from Moldova, La Strada Bosnia contacted **La Strada Moldova**, and they provided their assistance in this matter.

Detailed country reports and a detailed activity report on 2005 of all La Strada offices as well as the international secretariat are available upon request.

8. RESULTS 2006

8.1 Quantity indicators

To show the effect of its work, every La Strada team has defined qualified and quantified expected results for their country before the start of the La Strada 2005–2007 programme. For the year 2006, the following specific quantity indicators were reported by La Strada offices, the results of which are compiled according to the three campaigns, namely, Prevention & Education, Social Assistance and Information Lobby. shown in the tables below. Concerning quality indicators, specific 'minimum standards' were developed, described further below.

NB: La Strada Netherlands does not work entirely according to the La Strada method (with three campaigns) but functions as a national reporting and registration point for trafficked persons. Its figures therefore differ and merely the number of registered trafficked persons is specified.

Prevention & Education services. January - December 2006

Type of activity/service		Belarus	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Macedonia	Moldova	Netherlands	Poland	Ukraine	Total
Lectures for 'risk groups'	Amount Lectures	25	32	10	43	24			88	606	828
	Amount Participants	625	724	187	1306	648			2129	6572	12191
Seminars for professionals	Amount Lectures	6		40	3						49
	Amount Participants	247		618	36					7303	8204
Counselling & advice											
Hotline		756		1317			1011		219	4720	8023
Email/internet		27		9					162	198	396
Other		140		158							298
Materials											
Leaflets				1440	7383				20000		28823
Information brochures				2500					10000		12500
Publications					405						405
Posters				850							850
Postcards											-
CD											-
Video											-
Stickers									5000		5000
Other		97000							1000		98000

Notes

Belarus: In total, 45.000 different printed and other materials for risk groups and specialists were elaborated and printed and over 52.000 booklets and leaflets were distributed

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Social Assistance campaign. January - December 2006

	Belarus	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Macedonia	Moldova	Netherlands	Poland	Ukraine	Total
New Clients	89	17	33	23	14	336	579	133	199	1423
Old Clients		110	7			283		97		497
Assistance provided to new clients	22								420	442
Assistance provided to old clients										-
Hotline	75	72	122		41	882		5625		6817
E-mail consultation										

Notes

Belarus: no specification whether clients were old or new clients

Belarus: hotline concerns data on counselling

Bulgaria: total number of calls regarding trafficking & calls from victims

Information & Lobby Campaign. January - December 2006

	Belarus	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Bulgaria	Czech Republic	Macedonia	Moldova	Netherlands	Poland	Ukraine	Total
Interview										
Radio	15	8		14						37
Newspaper, magazines	22	12		23						57
TV	13	18		12						43
Interviews not specified			58		18			114	58	248
Others										
Articles in written press					53				15	68
Newsletter									43	43
Press conference										-
Press release					4				5	9

Notes

Bulgaria: 58 presentations (37 interviews for national and 21 for international media)

Czech Republic: 50 contacts with the media of which 46% were contacts with the press, 28% were contacts with the radio and 25% with the television.

8.2 Quality indicators

To ensure common quality, a Code of Conduct was established in 2002, which was revised and signed again in April 2005. This Code of Conduct lays down the 'international etiquette' of the partner organisations with regard to cooperation within the La Strada framework. Moreover, a La Strada 'Mission Statement', which lays down La Strada philosophy and basic principles, has been developed, together with a policy statement. Both documents have been developed and signed by all La Strada teams. All La Strada offices should fulfil the La Strada International membership criteria, as should future members. Several general principles are additionally set as guidelines so as to ensure a similar approach and minimum standards. These include:

- Integration of a human rights perspective: human rights must be at the core of any anti-trafficking strategy.
- Adherence to the principle of non-discrimination.
- Trafficked persons have a right to adequate remedies, including assistance, protection and compensation.
- The need for a professional, integrated, holistic and multidisciplinary approach.

More specifically, a human rights based approach implies:

- Respect for individual decisions.
- The rights, interests and needs of trafficked persons are central.
- Empowerment and participation.
- Education in human rights and women's rights.
- Confidentiality, safety, non-victimisation and non-discrimination.
- Lobby for the implementation of human rights standards for the treatment of trafficked persons.
- Direct contact with trafficked persons is the basis for all campaigns and advocacy work.

At the national level, some members have added additional guidelines. La Strada Czech Republic social team workers, for example, are guided by the *Standards for Quality in Social Services* published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

8.3 Monitoring & Evaluation

Two aspects can be discerned in relation to monitoring and evaluation. Firstly, accountability and transparency to the public in general, donors, governments, international organisations and other La Strada members; secondly, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the La Strada programme.

La Strada is currently discussing with its donors how to further assess and monitor what effects its activities have and how to judge the efficiency of its approach, the quality of its work and the impact it has on the group it wishes to address. The fact that numerous factors contribute to changes in the field of human behaviour, politics and trends in trafficking, makes it difficult to establish a direct causality between La Strada's work and those changes. However, by constantly developing quality indicators, La Strada gains more insight into the effects of its work. One important monitoring and evaluation tool is La Strada members reporting on project implementation and outcomes in annual reports. Members also undergo external evaluations and incidental assessments for measuring the effectiveness of its prevention and awareness raising activities.

9. ADDRESSES OF LA STRADA MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

La Strada International

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La Strada the Netherlands / STV

Dutch Foundation Against Trafficking in Women, STV
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La Strada Belarus

Young Women Christian Association of Belarus
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La Strada Bosnia & Herzegovina

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La Strada Bulgaria

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La Strada Ukraine

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