



# Newsletter

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With this quarterly newsletter, La Strada International wants to inform and update about developments in the field of trafficking in human beings and the activities of La Strada International and the La Strada member organisations. We welcome reactions and contributions. Please [mail us](mailto:mail@lastrada.org) by 1 December 2010, if you have news, information about your organisation, a new report or documentary or an outspoken opinion on (inter)national developments.

## La Strada News !

### La Strada celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary



Today, on 15 September 2010, La Strada celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. La Strada was born in 1995, when three women rights organisations in the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Poland initiated a one-year La Strada programme. Over the years La Strada has grown, the network has extended, an international secretariat was established in 2004 and currently La Strada International (LSI) has 8 full members in Poland, Belarus, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Moldova, Macedonia, Bulgaria and the Netherlands.

In this special newsletter LSI reflects on the 15 years that passed and presents current projects and future plans.

### One-year anniversary campaign

To celebrate the anniversary, LSI has planned a 'celebration year', starting officially today. During this year, different activities are planned within the framework of a common campaign, both by the La Strada International member organisations at the national level and by La Strada International at the international level, consisting of special events, publications and overall prevention, lobby and advocacy activities. More information will be provided at the LSI website [www.lastradainternational.org](http://www.lastradainternational.org). These are some highlights of the planned activities:

*"At the age of 15, teenagers often go through a period of being a 'rebel without a cause'. I'd like to recommend to La Strada to remain a rebel, but with a clear cause..."* Torsten Moritz, CCME

**La Strada Belarus (YWCA Belarus)** will promote the potential of the network and its expertise gained during its 15 years in Europe, by informing local NGOs and the educational community via publications and information on social internet sites. An article describing the LSI network standards in the anti-trafficking sphere has already been published on specialised websites for educators and social workers. **La Strada Poland** will organise a public debate with the title: "Freedom of speech and the right to privacy". High-level journalists, human rights activists, women rights defenders and other specialists are invited. The debate will focus on social responsibility of the media and will focus on how the media deals with and presents social topics such as violence and human

trafficking. In addition, La Strada Poland will host a theatrical performance titled "Theatre of Oppressed" based on the experiences of trafficked persons, which is an initiative of the Dutch NGO BLinN. **La Strada Czech Republic** will use the 15th anniversary campaign to promote the organisations' reliability and ensure further recognition. During the fall of 2010, La Strada Czech Republic will launch a new graphic identity for the organisation. At this opportunity the 15th anniversary of LSI will also be celebrated. In connection with the 15th anniversary, **La Strada Macedonia (Open Gate)** will organise a press conference and a reception for media, local NGOs, international organisations and governmental



institutions. Open Gate also celebrates its own 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, for which a special logo has been developed. **La Strada Netherlands (CoMensha)** plans to promote the long lasting work and successes of the La Strada network mainly via their website and publications and will organise a national event around labour exploitation. **La Strada Ukraine** will conduct an international workshop on social anti-trafficking standards on 7-8 October 2010 in Kyiv within the framework of the Danish Program. Linked with this event, a reception is planned to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the Danish embassy on 6 October.

At **La Strada Bulgaria (Animus Association)**, the anniversary will be celebrated together with the official presentation and signing of the Bulgarian National Referral Mechanism for trafficked persons which will be on 25 November 2010. The **La Strada International** NGO platform, to be held in September 2011 for NGO partners in the field, will mark the end of the celebration year.

### **15 years La Strada: Cooperative, Constructive and Critical**

In the 15 years of its existence, the La Strada International network has witnessed the enlargement of the European Union, changes in labour migration routes, the growth and decline of economies in Europe, global economical highs and lows, feminisation of poverty and migration, changing opinions on prostitution, awareness of the position of minority groups in societies, increased discrimination and racism, the opening of borders and the limiting of labour migration opportunities. All of these developments have had their influence on the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings and therefore on the work of LSI and the individual members. The work of LSI is based on the principles of universal human rights – equality, non-discrimination, participation, empowerment, accountability and transparency.

In 2010, LSI published a policy paper, formulating an understanding of the internal principles and how they are incorporated in the daily work of LSI and its members. To really live the principles and work by them, LSI has further developed standards for its services, its organisational structure and (staff) management. These standards are currently being piloted by all LSI members. After the pilot period in 2011, a seminar to finalise the standards will be organised, after which the standards will be published for general use by other actors in the field of trafficking.

LSI combines national direct assistance programmes for trafficked persons and prevention work for groups at risk with international advocacy work for anti-trafficking policies, which are founded within the human rights framework. The unique combination of grass roots and international work provides LSI with a special position in the anti-trafficking field, in which the organisation is both trusted and respected by national and international NGOs and governmental organisations.

At the national and international level, LSI plays an important role as a watch dog by monitoring the process of development and implementation of international legislation and national policies. LSI is as critical towards itself and partner NGOs as it is towards the authorities.

*“La Strada International, together with Amnesty International and Anti-Slavery International made valuable contributions to the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. Now that the monitoring mechanism of the Council of Europe Convention begins its work, co-operation with civil society and NGOs such as La Strada International remains crucial so that GRETA can have at its disposal a broad range of relevant and reliable information from civil society when assessing the implementation of the Convention by the Parties. I wish you a happy celebration on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of La Strada International and I look forward to our continued co-operation into the future”.*

### **Secretariat of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings**

#### **Anniversary wishes**

In the past 15 years the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings has changed from a marginal issue that mainly women NGOs were interested in, into a highly politicised issue in which all major intergovernmental organisations are involved. The result is that in the anti-trafficking debate, there are many and sometimes conflicting interests at stake and politics are not always dedicated to preventing people from being exploited and to prosecuting the exploiters. At the age of 15, LSI is old enough to understand this political reality, and young enough to believe it can be changed. In the special anniversary communiqué LSI has formulated some ‘birthday wishes’, that are not new, but crucial for anti-trafficking policies to serve their purpose: To end exploitation and abuse of workers.

#### **1. Take on the human rights approach**

Human rights should be at the core of any anti-trafficking strategy and the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system are to be integrated into all legislation, policies, programmes and processes.

## 2. Focus on root causes

Next to the root causes in the countries of origin, such as poverty, unequal gender relations and traditional social structures, there are root causes during the migration process, such as the lack of safe and legal migration opportunities and root causes in the countries of destination, such as the demand for cheap, exploitative (irregular) labour.

## 3. Respect and value the independence of NGOs

NGOs should be supported to operate independently from the state and other actors, raise a critical voice – regardless of their funding – and be supported to implement activities based on the grass roots experience (field work) and not dictated from above.

## 4. Stop talking and drafting, start working

Start implementing existing measures, monitor and assess the effects on the human rights of trafficked persons and adjust measures if/where needed. For the extensive recommendation, please download the [LSI Anniversary communiqué](#).



*“Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious social problems we are facing nowadays. An effective response should favour a durable solution in the best interest of the trafficked person, especially with regards to children. La Strada’s future work could strengthen its current focus on the social inclusion of trafficked persons as a final goal of the assistance process.”*

Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

## What have 15 years brought La Strada International?

The International La Strada Association was established in 2004 with an international secretariat, based in Amsterdam. The secretariat focuses on international networking, advocacy and public relations on behalf of the member organisations, producing common policies and action plans and harmonised lobby and advocacy programmes. It maintains and expands the relations of the La Strada network with national and international organisations, governments, European institutions and UN bodies. The secretariat supports capacity building of the members and provides a forum for NGOs on the issue of trafficking. Whereas many international organisations know the people working at the secretariat of La Strada International and know that LSI has partners in 8 countries, often people are surprised to hear that there are more than 120 persons working for all La Strada offices. Today some La Strada members reflect back on the past and current status quo of their organisations.

## La Strada Ukraine

The International Women’s Rights Center “La Strada Ukraine” has been working in the direction of human trafficking prevention, the elimination of all forms of discrimination and public violence, respect for human rights, gender equality, and children’s rights protection since 1997.



La Strada Ukraine has become a member of the Expert Working Group under the Interdepartmental Council on Family Issues, the Gender Equality, Demographic Development and Human Trafficking Prevention (since 2003), Civil Council on Human Rights Observance under the Ministry of Interior of Ukraine (since 2005), the Expert group on Domestic Violence Prevention Issues and Expert group on the issues of gender equality introduction under the Ministry of Ukraine for Family, Youth and Sports.

Within its many roles, La Strada Ukraine actively cooperates with a variety of national and international actors to address the injustices of human trafficking and exploitation in Ukraine and abroad. It has worked with international organisations to form common strategies of preventive work aimed at the human trafficking

counteraction and elimination of all forms of public discrimination and has contributed to national legislation, documents and research on the topic of trafficking in Ukraine. Key activities include the provision of information and education to the public and private sectors through the mass media, the Centre's web site, conferences, education institutions and training sessions. La Strada Ukraine is a national centre for the development of scientific and methodological supply for activities devoted to human trafficking and violence prevention and to gender equality implementation. Between 2001 and 2009, more than 300 scientific articles were produced by La Strada Ukraine. La Strada Ukraine prides itself on its comprehensive provision of assistance to trafficked persons, their families and those at risk of not only human trafficking, but also domestic violence, sexual harassment, and other forms of abuse. From 1997 to 2009, La Strada Ukraine provided more than 1800 people with social assistance and over 41000 consultations were made via the national Hot Line.

Above all, La Strada Ukraine is dedicated to promoting and upholding the human rights of all individuals regardless of gender or age. Using its partnerships with various national ministries, international organisations and state bodies, La Strada Ukraine seeks to continue its work to address human rights violations and be a leader in anti-trafficking activities.

### **La Strada Bulgaria (Animus Association)**

For "Animus Association" La Strada started in 1998 as a project. Animus became part of the La Strada family, which at that time consisted of four countries. "Very soon it was clear that La Strada is a lot more than just a project or a programme. La Strada is a way of thinking. It brings a special feeling of belonging and triggers development and growth. La Strada is the framework for all activities for combating trafficking in human beings and support of its victims. La Strada makes us feel as a part of a larger community – the European civil society, which is in the roots of all contemporary policies for fight against human trafficking", states Nadia Kozhouharova, La Strada coordinator at Animus and currently LSI board member.



The achievements of La Strada Bulgaria so far include:

- A Hot-Line and a Crisis Centre, providing help and support to victims of trafficking.
- La Strada was the first Bulgarian NGO that instigated a public debate on the issue of human trafficking. We met with hundreds of young people and disseminated a huge amount of prevention materials, warning about the risk of trafficking.
- A Training centre, which provides academic and practical forms of training for specialists in the field of fighting trafficking in human beings.
- La Strada Bulgaria also put the beginning of the National Referral Mechanism for Trafficked Persons, which is based on the common efforts of Bulgarian civil society and state institutions in support of victims of trafficking.

"The logo of La Strada stands behind all our achievements. These achievements are shared with our partners because in addition to the common knowledge and experience, we also share support. This encourages us to continue with our efforts in combating trafficking and in providing support for its victims, concludes Nadia Kozhouharova."

### **La Strada Belarus (YWCA Belarus)**

"When I met the people from La Strada for the first time in 1998 in Budapest, the only question I had in mind was: how can I become a part of this great initiative and how do I bring La Strada to Belarus? Four years later, after some hard work – here we are – a team of dedicated activists", says Irina Alkhovka from La Strada Belarus. La Strada Belarus grew from a small project of volunteers to a team of passionate professionals with one shared vision. Major achievements of the anti-trafficking national policies are rooted in La Strada initiatives: national action plans and the new national anti-trafficking law, systems of awareness raising and education, assistance to trafficked persons; as well as the provision of safe migration information via the national toll-free hotline. As for the future, La Strada Belarus plans to strengthen access to compensation for trafficked persons, develop social standards in the anti-trafficking domain and to increase business involvement and accountability in the field of migration.

2010 is marked as the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the La Strada International network and in 2011 La Strada Belarus will celebrate also its first decade of existence. "During these years we have experienced highs and lows; we have learned a lot from each other and from the women we have assisted. We declare that no individual can be 'illegal' in the world regardless of how his or her status is defined by authorities. Human rights belong to everyone, and not one person can be judged upon another's perception of life, states Alkhovka. "We believe that empowerment of those at risk is a better solution than restriction and punishment; and whilst lobbying for transparency of our government, we must also be critical of our own performance. But the most important thing we have learned is to believe in what we are doing."

### La Strada Macedonia (Open Gate)

La Strada Macedonia was founded in 2000 as Open Gate/"Women's Lobby and Action against Violence and Trafficking in Women". In 2001 Open Gate became part of the La Strada programme and later, in 2004, one of the founders of La Strada International. Besides providing support and protection to many trafficked persons, with entering in the La Strada network, La Strada Macedonia built its capacity and gained substantial experience and knowledge in addressing trafficking from a human rights perspective.

Today La Strada Macedonia is recognised as a leading NGO in the anti-trafficking field. At the national level, La Strada Macedonia has provided recommendations regarding the National Action Plan on trafficking, revision of national legislation and contributed to various other governmental and non-governmental policy documents, events and debates. The efforts of La Strada Macedonia have made a significant impact in the recognition of internal trafficking, and have played important role in establishing and developing the national anti-trafficking NGO network BUDNOST. Today La Strada Macedonia represents an NGO voice within the Secretariat and the Trafficking in Children Working Group, both multi-disciplinary policy-making bodies within the government's National Commission to Combat Trafficking. La Strada Macedonia is recognised as a main service provider for trafficked persons and manages the only shelter for trafficked persons (nationals) in Macedonia.

Due to the increase of identified trafficked children, La Strada Macedonia has specifically addressed children in their prevention work over the last years. In 2009, the organisation won the first prize in the 2009 ERSTE Foundation's award for Social Integration with the project "Prevention Campaign for Trafficking in Children". This achievement recognised La Strada Macedonia's efforts to increase young people's awareness for trafficking in human beings and its role as an educator at the international level. On a national level preventive activities implemented by La Strada Macedonia have been highly recognised by the Ministry of Education and Science as an important tool to reach children as a particularly vulnerable group to human trafficking. La Strada Macedonia has been working to improve the status of women and children for the past decade by promoting human rights and the protection of all individuals from violence and trafficking. Therefore, enhancing the provision of protection, assistance and justice to trafficked persons including compensation will remain a priority for the future.

### La Strada Czech Republic

The fall of the Berlin wall signified a new found freedom for millions of people, however human trafficking - one of the most serious violations of human rights has since become recognised as an undesired consequence of the newly opened borders in post-communist Europe. Consequently, in 1995, The Netherlands, Poland and the Czech Republic launched the La Strada pilot program. At that time La Strada worked as one of the projects of the organisation ProFem. La Strada Czech Republic as an independent organisation started its mission in 1998, with a hotline to communicate with people who had been trafficked. At the end of the year 2000, a template for social services to assist trafficked women was decided upon and the organisation acquired its first emergency shelter. In 2004, La Strada Czech Republic started to offer its services to male trafficked persons as well. In 2006, La Strada Czech Republic broadened its operations significantly to encompass outreach work among migrant communities at risk of THB and exploitation in order to respond to the increasing number of forced labour, labour exploitation and associated trafficking cases.



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Within this 15 year period, La Strada Czech Republic has become recognised as an invaluable expert in human trafficking. "We have significantly contributed to the development of the national policy to combat human

trafficking in the Czech Republic by drafting recommendations, background documents and conducting research. La Strada is a respected, cooperative and self-critical member of the La Strada International Network, informs Irena Konecna, the director of La Strada Czech Republic.

Now, in 2010, La Strada Czech Republic is a stable organisation with 16 employees; running two shelters and last year almost nine hundred calls on the hotline were registered. La Strada Czech Republic currently places priority on broadening the definition of 'human trafficking' and in increasing the access to justice and human rights for those who have been exploited. Irena Konecna: "La Strada Czech Republic reflects the essential values that unite the La Strada International members - the belief that a human rights approach should lie at the core of any anti-trafficking policy, and that empowerment is the key principle of any direct assistance. This makes up the essential mission of La Strada Czech Republic and is reflected in its daily operations".

### La Strada Moldova

"We are involved in the field of anti-trafficking, first and foremost because we believe in and care for human rights. We believe that human rights cannot be bought and sold and no one is in position to do so - whether individuals or governments. We strive for this belief to be shared by all people so that we could all together build a society that can truly reflect universal human rights, so that we could live free - free from slavery, free from violence, free from exploitation", reflects Ana Revenco, director of La Strada Moldova.

"We" - means our team, which is the second motivating factor in our work. In the beginning, in 2001, La Strada Moldova started with only 3 staff persons - at this time, our understanding of human trafficking and human rights was limited. Today there are 40 of us in the team that makes up La Strada Moldova, all of whom live and share this belief in justice and human rights."



As the team formulates, "We joined the International La Strada Association because of the shared mission, shared values, shared beneficiaries and shared principles. We were looking for advocates willing to campaign for the rights of someone who maybe has less capacity to do so. Advocates, who could contribute to alleviating the sufferings and injustices faced by many women, and to ensure that all women have access to the rights that they are truly entitled to. As we strive for this goal, we once again praise the supreme value of freedom. It is all we have - we build and share - in our international team of "La Strada".

"As our biggest accomplishment we see the sustained attention that trafficking in persons has gained from our Government - be it in the form of the law regarding the rights of trafficked persons, the Moldovan National Action Plan that calls for comprehensive anti-trafficking actions, the National Referral Mechanism which created a stronger framework for cooperation and streamlined assistance and support for trafficked persons, or enhanced cooperation between police and NGOs to identify and protect trafficked persons", states Ana Revenco. "La Strada Moldova played a key role in all of these developments. It could be the tens of thousands of young people we spoke with about dangers of trafficking; the tens of thousands of migrants whom we counselled or hundreds of lives whom we helped regain freedom from slavery. Efforts that we hope encourage people to believe that human rights are not just a theory but reality. And this is all due to our team - a highly motivated, professional and recognised (both nationally and internationally) group of experts".

### La Strada Poland

Stana Buchowska, director of La Strada Poland reflects: "La Strada Poland is a co-founder of the La Strada network and started its operations with a team of four people in 1995. The work of La Strada soon expanded to include the provision of assistance to both Polish women who were trafficked abroad and migrant women trafficked to Poland. In 1997, a Russian hotline was set up. La Strada developed the first multimedia campaign 'The other side of the sun' in 2001 and a shelter for trafficked women was established in 2003. In the same year, after five years of lobby work by the La Strada team, a National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons was adopted. La Strada Poland ran a project for social and labour inclusion of trafficked persons from 2005 to 2008".

"In the past 15 years, La Strada Poland has met many important politicians that showed interest in the work of the organisation, among others the former Polish President, Mr Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, J.P. Balkenende. The most important

achievements of the work of La Strada is the visibility that the organisation has brought to the issue of human trafficking in Poland; it cannot be ignored anymore by a public opinion, decision makers, law enforcement or service providers. In 2010, a long-awaited definition of trafficking was adopted by Polish Parliament. Good quality services are available for trafficked persons, and a network of national and international partners has been developed, which is functional and operational on a daily basis. A team of 12 persons in La Strada Poland has created a well-recognised NGO – both nationally and internationally”, concludes Buchowska.

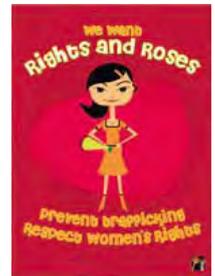
*“Amnesty International salutes the work of La Strada in providing assistance and support to individuals who are at risk of or have been subjected to trafficking with a view to their regaining control of lives and asserting their human rights. This work is complemented by your advocacy work within states, the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the United Nations with a view to ensuring that governments take measures which are consistent with respect for human rights to address trafficking including, respecting and protecting the rights of trafficked people. We urge you to continue this work, which is needed now as much as ever before: while many governments have taken steps to criminalise trafficking, there is much to be done to ensure that anti-trafficking measures and policies are implemented in practice, and that they respect and protect human rights and ensure reparation to survivors of trafficking.”*

Jill Heine, Legal Adviser, International Legal and Organisations Program, Amnesty International.

## What's going on ?

### Projects

Next to the core business of prevention activities for people at risk of being trafficked and direct assistance and support for trafficked persons, the La Strada member organisations are involved in national and international projects focussed on the improvement of anti-trafficking policies and measures and to promote a human rights approach towards trafficking in human beings. The international secretariat coordinates the joint projects of the La Strada members, such as the successful Rights and Roses campaign that was launched on International Women's Day 2008.



For the period 2010-2011, La Strada International is involved in several projects, either on own initiative or initiated by partner organisations.

### COMP.ACT



The [COMP.ACT](#) project, a joint pan-European project on promoting the right to compensation for trafficked persons, is well on its way. The project partners – organisations from Austria, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Spain, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, convened for the project's first Coalition Meeting in June 2010 in Prague, Czech Republic.

After this first meeting and official launch of the project, all partners will start with the national activities, most importantly conducting research on the available measures for claiming compensation for trafficked persons, and building a national coalition with relevant stakeholders. It has become clear that the project is a vivid result of the fact that the issue of compensation for trafficked persons is gaining momentum, both on the national and international level. The institutional and financial support from organisations like the European Commission, OSCE/ODIHR, Council of Europe, UN.GIFT and the King Baudouin Foundation, has also illustrated the importance and timeliness of this project.

La Strada International and Anti-Slavery International have secured a side event at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, focusing on 'Access to justice: Ensuring compensation for trafficked persons', on Tuesday 19 October 2010 in Vienna, Austria. This side event is a logical sequence on the programme, as the morning Working Group on Trafficking in Persons will focus on 'National Approaches to Compensation of Victims of Trafficking in Persons'.

*“UNODC has been privileged to work with La Strada for many years. Experiencing their ability to tackle thorny issues and to advocate for those whose rights are all too often ignored and violated has been extremely inspiring. It can only be hoped that for the coming 15 years La Strada will not rest on its laurels and be invigorated the more in helping to bring forth concrete results, especially in the area of justice for trafficked persons. UNODC congratulates La Strada to 15 years of fruitful work.”*

## Human Rights Impact Assessment Tool for trafficking policies

Many of the measures taken to address the problem of human trafficking fail to protect the rights of the people involved. This happens for example when trafficked persons are repatriated without adequate protection against their traffickers and without the wages for the work they have done. Many of the measures have a negative effect on the rights of other people. This is particularly the case for sex workers who are severely restricted in their possibilities to earn a living, but also for other groups such as migrant domestic workers and young women wanting to travel abroad. For an effective lobby to improve these measures, organisations need to clearly demonstrate where and how rights are violated.

La Strada International and La Strada Czech Republic, together with the Scottish Prostitutes Education Project (SCOTPEP), are involved in a two-year project to develop an impact assessment tool on human rights with regard to anti-trafficking policies, coordinated by AIM for Human Rights.

Next to providing an instrument for NGOs to assess the human rights impact of anti-trafficking laws, project results will provide NGOs with evidence-based information to lobby their governments to achieve better human rights protection for trafficked persons and other affected groups. The development of the tool is set up as a participatory process, involving the potential users of the instrument as well as key intermediary organisations. The latter play an important role in distributing the tool, as well as in supporting its application and using its outcomes for lobby and advocacy.

The draft tool has been tested by sex workers organisations, anti-trafficking projects and migrant rights groups in both Europe and Asia. The tool will be presented on Human Rights Day 10 December 2010 in Brussels.

## E-Notes

La Strada International is partner in the E-notes project that aims to establish a European-wide permanent monitoring mechanism (Observatory) and a comparable reporting mechanism implemented by the NGO community and network on measures against trafficking, exploitation and slavery in Europe in order to enhance and support public institutions' policy in the field of protection and assistance of trafficked persons. This one-year project hopes to define a shared and comparable methodology and a set of indicators for the NGOs reporting activity on measures to fight trafficking, exploitation and slavery in Europe. One of the outcomes of the project will be a web-based information centre for the functional exchange and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data organised along the identified reporting protocol and indicators.

## ENPATES

Despite the extensive experience developed in the last twenty years in the anti-trafficking field, NGOs still have some difficulties in defining their work and viewpoints in a wider perspective. There is still a lot of fragmentation in their efforts with significant consequences on their capacity to coordinate common analysis, programming and positioning before the national and European institutions.

The ENPATES project, coordinated by the Italian NGO, On the Road, aims to fill the above mentioned gaps by establishing a pan-European, stable, flexible, and adaptable platform for NGOs to develop a common framework for analysis and action to orient anti-trafficking policy, strategy and programming. This will allow for an effective coordination strategy among relevant NGOs in Europe and set up a system for the functional exchange and development of analysis, knowledge, good practices, and advocacy initiatives in the field of prevention, assistance, protection and social inclusion of trafficked persons. La Strada International is one of the members of the Steering Committee of the ENPATES project.

## What's new ?

### La Strada International future focus

'Growing up also means becoming more professional and organised'. Since 2009 La Strada International is working according to a three-year Strategic Plan. The current plan focuses on increasing awareness and influencing the (public and politic) opinion on human trafficking and its root causes from a human rights perspective. LSI works towards a switch in the international debate on human trafficking from *fighting* human trafficking to *preventing* human trafficking by addressing root causes, including migration policies. LSI will continue its general monitoring of European developments, but will put a special focus on the issue of migrant rights, partly through its membership of PICUM and (planned membership) of MRI, as well as membership of GAATW. LSI also aims to strengthen the network and to ensure further sustainability of the La Strada network which includes harmonising of LSI members' approaches to lobby and advocacy, prevention, victim assistance and organisational management; improving La Strada International's planning and monitoring processes, as well as improving the communication and accountability among the members. This year and next year, LSI will also have a closer look at its organisational structure and try to strengthen its bodies: the General Assembly, board

and advisory council. A new code of conduct signed by all La Strada member organisations is also to be adopted. LSI further aims to improve the representation of the network and ensure a strong LSI image.

In 2011 LSI will also continue to build the network capacity on common data collection and analysis. Further, LSI will work in 2011 on finalising the pilot period of standards and conduct an evaluation of the draft set of standards during a seminar. Cooperation with other NGO partners will in particular be strengthened through above mentioned projects. An NGO platform is planned in September 2011, as well as a meeting with the European members of GAATW. In order to ensure financial sustainability, more focus will be put on common fundraising strategies and support for national fundraising, coordinated at international level, ensuring diversity of donors and more focus on non-project-based funding.

Last but definitely not least, LSI aims to provide better assistance to trafficked persons. At the international level LSI will be working on strengthening the members' capacities to provide assistance, including improving access of trafficked persons to services and compensation programmes in the La Strada countries as well as improve the services provided by LSI members. LSI aims to create a social assistance map accessible online and provide more information on LSI member services to ensure adequate referral of trafficked persons. In the aftermath of the EU 116 helpline research, LSI is currently discussing La Strada's position on a common 116 hotline and attempting to establish closer cooperation on helpline services by LSI EU members, for which a common project has been applied for at the European Commission.

In 2011 also a new strategic plan is to be developed for the years 2012 – 2014. A full version of LSI's strategic plan is available [online](#).



*“Congratulations LSI! In the coming years in Europe we will continue witnessing how the spaces for the exercise of rights will be determined by the current categorization of people by the States (regular/irregular; trafficked person/‘exploited’ migrant; citizen/non-citizen; skilled/unskilled migrant worker, and so on). Keeping the focus on the human rights’ promotion and protection of trafficked women and at-risk groups, in the next 15 years LSI could monitor, unpack and denounce the rights violations resulting from this categorization in Europe, as part of a wider regional and global movement of denounce and redress.”*

Nerea Bilbatua, Regional Programme Officer Europe at the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women Secretariat.

## Supporters of LSI

In 2010 La Strada International receives its main structural financial support from the Dutch Foundations ICCO and CORDAID, the European Commission (Daphne III) and the Sigrid Rausing Trust, as well as specific project or coordination grants from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, King Baudouin Foundation and the European Commission (ISEC programme). La Strada members are supported by various other donors. La Strada International greatly appreciates financial support from private donors for our work. For more information on how you can contribute to La Strada's work, see [www.lastradainternational.org](http://www.lastradainternational.org)

## What's on your mind ?

### 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary reflecting back

Three of the six founding mothers looked back on La Strada's history: Trijntje Kootstra, Stana Buchowska and Baerbel Uhl. Below some quotes are presented. You can read the full article [on our website](#).

### The start & founding of La Strada

Stana Buchowska: “What I remember was a very special atmosphere in the women NGO movement environment at that time, as the official start of La Strada project began shortly after the Fourth World Conference on Women - Action for Equality, Development and Peace in Beijing. One might feel a lot of enthusiasm was radiating from participants who just returned back and shared their impressions and experiences. A generally shared feeling within the women's movement was that we could achieve a lot.”

Trijntje Kootstra: “The name La Strada was chosen after much brainstorming, eventually leading up to an ‘AHA Erlebnis’ in a well-known pub in the centre of Utrecht, the Netherlands. Stana Buchowska all of a sudden remembered her favourite movie, ‘La Strada’ by Federico Fellini, in which a young girl is sold to an old man, to work in a circus. La Strada refers to –literally– the street, representing the streets on which many women have to

work, the long way out of their exploitative situation and the long road the founders of La Strada saw in front of them towards effective strategies to deal with the issue”.

### **Challenges met**

Stana Buchowska: “I was quite amazed and convinced that I was part of a very special initiative, and that the work that I was starting was not only very special, but also very different even from other women' initiatives. Particularly difficult indeed was to convince, explain to others what La Strada was about and what human trafficking is. It was often funny to see the reaction of other people – totally not understanding, treating us as a crazy activists, or as people who had chosen a very “exotic hobby.”

Trijntje Kootstra: “The project caused many raised eyebrows, as not many people knew about the issue in the first place, and those who did, often condemned victims of trafficking as being responsible for what happened to them”.

Baerbel Uhl: “It is difficult to recall the time and situation in 1994-95 when we were trying to set up a Central and Eastern European program to address trafficking in women and girls within Europe. The difficulties are caused by the fact that the political landscape back then was totally different than today. Trafficking in human being was not at all on the governments’ nor on the European agenda. There were no Experts Groups, Monitoring Mechanisms, Anti-trafficking Departments, Rapporteurs or Representatives. Trafficking in human beings , or, as it was called infamously in the early 1990’s in the Czech Republic – Trafficking in White Meat – was most of all referred to as a historical concept rather than a contemporary crime. The mainstream public discourse on trafficking in Central Europe located the crime solely among socially excluded and marginalized groups such as sex workers and the Roma community”.

### **La Strada’s future focuses**

Trijntje Kootstra: “La Strada was the first initiative against trafficking in women in Central and Eastern Europe and therefore is a pioneer in the field. La Strada has really become a brand name. The combination of prevention activities, relief for victims and press and lobby campaigns is a strong one, still using grass roots and ‘bottom-up’ input from victims of trafficking for its strategies. Also the focus on a rights based approach is very valuable and should not be ignored. I think it is important always to keep your eyes and ears wide open, to look for new opportunities and not to become too confident of one’s own success. I would be very interested in working more closely together with sex workers organisations, as they have direct access to sex workers communities and can therefore advocate their human rights at the core level whilst fighting against exploitation and forced sex work. Moreover, I would be very happy if the La Strada partners would use their long experience of capacity building of their own organisations to support new initiatives in other parts of the world, for example in the Middle East or Africa.”

