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With this quarterly newsletter, La Strada International wishes to inform and update you on developments in the field of trafficking in human beings and the activities of La Strada International and the La Strada member organisations. We welcome your feedback and input. Please [mail us](#) by 1 December 2012 if you have news, information about your organisation, a new report or documentary or an outspoken opinion on (inter)national developments.



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Director of La Strada Moldova appointed as director of National Centre for Combating trafficking



Ana Revenco (until mid-September the Executive Director of La Strada Moldova) has been appointed as the new Director of the Moldovan Centre for Combating Trafficking in Persons- an agency under the Ministry of Interior that is responsible for the implementation of the country's national human trafficking policy. Her appointment to this important and strategic position is a positive response to the achievements of La Strada Moldova and the personal merits of Ms Revenco in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings in Moldova.

Ana Revenco was the founder and Director of La Strada Moldova since 2001; in this position Ana has contributed significantly to the development and consolidation of the organisation within the country and abroad. Ana Revenco has also been a member of the LSI board (2009-2011) and LSI General Assembly (2005 - 2009 and 2001-2012) and worked on the strategic developments of the network.

The new Executive Director of La Strada Moldova will be the former vice president Ms. Daniela Misail-Nichitin, who has also been involved with La Strada Moldova from the very beginning. La Strada International will certainly miss the valued contributions of Ana and wishes her good luck

with shaping the national anti-trafficking policy in Moldova! At the same time, LSI welcomes Daniela as the new representative of Moldova in the LSI General Assembly.

New Developments in Moldova

In July this year, the Government of Moldova adopted a new National Plan to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for the period 2012-2013. It was developed by the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in broad consultation with civil society actors and international organisations. The new Plan is based on the monitoring results of the implementation of the previous Plan (2010-2011) and takes into account the conclusions and recommendations of all relevant international reports on Moldova (e.g. the US TIP report, the GRETA report, the recommendations of UPR and OSCE, etc.). La Strada Moldova participated in the development of the new Action Plan with specific input for its improvement in the areas of strategic goal setting, links to other policy areas and victim support.

The Moldovan National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and Médecins du Monde published “Guidelines on identification of victims and potential victims of trafficking in human beings”. Earlier this year the guidelines were officially approved by the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and are now a tool of the national referral system (NRS) in Moldova. The aim of the guidelines is to strengthen the NRS, ensure access of trafficked persons to social assistance and protection services regardless of their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement, as well as to prevent human trafficking through the provision of social assistance to at-risk groups. The guidelines target governmental and non-governmental organisations that play an active role in the identification of trafficked persons in the framework of the NRS on the national and local level. They include recommendations on the main aspects of identification, referral and service provision. The guidelines were elaborated in line with the provisions of international, European and national standards and policies and with the participation of several stakeholders, including La Strada Moldova.

La Strada Poland organises film festival on human trafficking

To celebrate this year’s EU anti-trafficking day, La Strada Poland initiated the 18/18 International Film Festival on Human Trafficking “People are priceless” - an event, supporting the fight against human trafficking through films that raise social awareness for the issue.

During the [festival](#), a selection of 18 documentaries and feature films touching upon the issue of trafficking in human beings in its various forms will be shown. The jury of the festival will select one film that examines the problem of human trafficking most comprehensively and award it the Grand Prix. The screenings will be accompanied by meetings with authors, panel discussions and information fairs.

The film festival is organised by the Polish Ministry of Interior and La Strada Poland, with the financial support of the European Commission. The festival is conducted under the patronage of the Polish Ombudsman and the mayor of Warsaw and Polish actors [Anna Cieślak and Lesław Żurek](#).



Better access to information for trafficked persons in the Netherlands

At the end of August 2012, Comensha/La Strada Netherlands launched a leaflet and website for trafficked persons ‘[fromhereon](#)’ in five languages: Dutch, English, Hungarian, Polish and Bulgarian with the aim to inform trafficked persons about their rights as victims. The leaflet and website have been especially developed for trafficked persons who have had contact with the police and those who are considering to do so. Readers can find information about a range of issues that trafficked people face and useful tips, such as police contacts and Dutch legal provisions related to the reflection period, residence permit, financial and medical support, compensation, shelter and

return. The leaflets will be distributed to all police stations and counselling centres in the Netherlands so that trafficked persons can be informed about their rights at an early stage.

La Strada Poland celebrates 17 years of anti-trafficking work



On 15 September, La Strada Poland organised a special campaign to celebrate 17 years of anti-trafficking work, entitled “Wolnik” (“I AM FREE”). *“Free from exploitation and abuse, free to follow my dreams, free to be who I am”.*

The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness among young people about the dangers of human trafficking and to explain what they can do to protect themselves. The campaign also outlined the activities of La Strada Poland and the support it provides to trafficked persons and at-risk groups. In addition, the campaign also aimed to raise funds for the services of the organisation.

It was supported by a number of famous Polish actors and musicians; several media and others. Seven night clubs in Warsaw organised an “I AM FREE” party on 15 September 2012 to support La Strada Poland.

Also on 15 September 2012, the LSI network celebrated its 17th anniversary, as the first La Strada project was launched on 15 September 1995 with the cooperation of the Dutch Foundation against Trafficking in Women (STV, now CoMensha), La Strada Poland and La Strada Czech Republic.

La Strada Belarus in National Council on Gender Policy

Irina Alkhovka (pictured), the International Coordinator of La Strada Belarus, and Board member of LSI, has been appointed as a member of the National Council on Gender Policy, under the Council of Ministers of Belarus. This is an inter-ministerial body responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Country’s gender policy. The decisions of the Gender Council are only of recommendation character, but membership provides good opportunities for influence and bringing critical issues to the attention of the government. Irina Alkhovka is the third NGO representative in the Council and the only one appointed in recent years. Her immediate focus in the Council will be the development and adoption of the National Gender Equality Concept - a strategic document that outlines the national framework for gender mainstreaming for the years until 2020.



Hotline on domestic violence in Belarus launched

On 13 August, Gender Perspectives/La Strada Belarus launched their national toll-free hotline for survivors of domestic violence. The hotline works for 12 hours every day and provides psychological, legal and social counselling to victims. Its number is 8-801-100-8-801 and can currently only be accessed from Belarus. The hotline was established with the support of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the UNFPA office in Belarus. For the first month of its operation, the hotline received 228 calls, mostly from women aged 21-45 requesting psychological and legal support. Five percent of the phone calls were from men, mostly elderly, suffering from domestic violence by their closest family members. “The legal counselling is of significant demand among survivors, which required us to increase the number of counselling hours, from the current 1,5 days a week up to 2-3 days”, says Anastasiya Foleichyk, La Strada Belarus’ hotline manager. “The hotline serves as an entry-point for survivors to the national response mechanism for domestic violence. Apart from delivering immediate and direct support to those affected by domestic violence, the hotline serves as a source of unique data about victims’ and aggressors’ profile, the types of experienced violence and assistance requested. Moreover, the opinion of the victims received at the hotline can be used for monitoring, assessment and adjustment of national strategies”, she added.

Freedom to Walk: One month before take off



As reported in the previous newsletter, La Strada International is a beneficiary of [Freedom to Walk](#), a campaign in Thailand to raise awareness about human trafficking and funds for five organisations across the globe that work towards its eradication. On 3 November 2012, a group of volunteers from around the world will depart on a 16-day, 500-kilometre walk from Bangkok to Myanmar. With a little over one month to go before the walk commences, the preparations and the fundraising activities are

now in full-swing. On 20 September, the initiators of this campaign, Ali Weiner and Tanny Chientong (pictured) organised a fundraising dinner where approximately 55 people took part to show their support for Freedom to Walk and the five beneficiaries.

So far 20 walkers, aged between 20 and 63 from nine countries, have registered for the Walk with inquiries and interest still continuing. The initiative is receiving a good deal of media attention with coverage by The Bangkok Post, Coconuts Bangkok, BK Magazine, AsiaLife Magazine and others.

Freedom to Walk is soliciting walkers, sponsors, donors, and individuals who are willing to provide and publicise educational material about human trafficking for the benefit of the participants. If you are interested in getting involved in any capacity, visit www.freedomtowalk.org or contact Ali Weiner at walk@dreamprojectfoundation.org for more information.

Termination of LSI membership of La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 12 June 2012 the General Assembly of the International La Strada Association (LSI) decided to terminate the LSI membership of La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina as of that date. This decision was based on an evaluation of two years, which included two separate evaluation visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first one in February 2010, and the second - in January 2012. Based on the report of the last visit, the LSI Assembly concluded that no sufficient improvement had been made by the organisation over the last years to continue membership. La Strada International regrets that this decision had to be made. Over the past years, LSI has tried to support the organisation as much as possible, and numerous efforts have been made to improve cooperation with the organisation. La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina is expected to continue its activities and to remain in contact as a partner anti-trafficking NGO. In practice, the decision of the General Assembly indicates that La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina is no longer a member of the International La Strada Association and can therefore no longer act on behalf of the network, nor represent the network. On behalf of the LSI Board and General Assembly, La Strada Bosnia and Herzegovina has been asked to cease using the name "La Strada" for the organisation and anti-trafficking work.

What's going on ?

EU Anti-Trafficking Day Conference

To mark the 6th EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October, the Cyprus EU Presidency and the European Commission will organise a high level conference in Brussels.

The conference ['Working together towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings: The Way Forward'](#) will focus on the recently adopted [EU Strategy on Trafficking in Human Beings](#).

The meeting aims to serve as a forum for the exchange of views on shaping future actions to strengthen cooperation, victim protection and assistance, prevention and prosecution in the field of trafficking in human beings. A special lunchtime side event will be organised for an informal discussion on the possible establishment of an EU Platform for civil society organisations and service providers. La Strada International and several of our partners will be attending the conference and will participate in the brainstorming session at the EU civil society Platform.



EP endorses amendments to include undocumented victims of crime in Directive

On 12 September 2012, the European Parliament [endorsed](#) the proposal for the [Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime](#). Victims of crimes committed abroad may face serious problems due to differences between cultures, languages and laws. The agreed text, adopted by 611 votes to 9, with 13 abstentions, aims to ensure that whatever the crime - mugging, robbery, assault, rape, harassment, hate crime, terrorist attack, or human trafficking - and wherever it is committed in the EU - all victims enjoy the same basic rights in criminal proceedings, and are to be treated with respect and dignity with access to victim-support services, justice and compensation.

Furthermore, the mandate requires that all states provide access to the services deemed necessary by the individual assessment of necessary care for the victims of crime (ranging from psychological support to legal advice) even throughout the criminal proceedings. It is made clear that the victims are to be made explicitly aware of their rights in a suitable language, and they are to be actively included in the proceedings. La Strada International is very pleased that the Parliament amended the proposal of the Commission by specifically mentioning the rights of undocumented victims, for which LSI lobbied for in its [recommendations for amendments](#) and in its [joint statement with PICUM](#) last year. The text of the Directive is not finalised yet, as the Council still has to approve. Once the new rules are adopted, EU countries will have three years to transpose them into their national laws.

More transparency on the fundamental rights of Frontex

In 2009, the Charter of Fundamental Rights became legally binding on Frontex- the EU agency that coordinates the operational cooperation between Member States in the field of border security. Since then, a number of civil society organisations have questioned whether Frontex is doing enough to comply with the Charter, for example, the criticism by the European Court of Human Rights toward Frontex's deployment of EU border guards to Greece where migrant detainees were kept in detention centres under inhumane conditions.

In October 2011, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a Regulation, setting out additional specific fundamental rights obligations for Frontex. In March 2012, the [European Ombudsman](#) inquired with Frontex regarding its fulfilment of these obligations, including the obligation to draw up a fundamental rights strategy, as well as codes of conduct applicable to its operations.

In response, Frontex submitted its [opinion](#) in May 2012. It explained that, since 2010, it has developed a fundamental rights strategy, as well as a binding code of conduct for those participating in its activities. Frontex also listed other measures it is currently taking to ensure full respect for fundamental rights. One of those measures is the establishment of a [Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights \(CF\)](#). The aim of the provision was to bring together a wide variety of stakeholders including members of civil society in order to establish a knowledge and expertise resource body to support and provide information to the Agency relevant to the aim of developing and promoting the full respect of fundamental rights in all the Agency's activities. [PICUM](#), of which LSI is member, is one of the seven NGOs selected to participate in a collaborative forum to exchange views and hold discussions with other forum members, as well as the Frontex Executive Director and Management Board representatives. The European Ombudsman is continuing his inquiry and has invited organisations active in the area of the protection of fundamental rights to make observations on Frontex's opinion.

A call for closer monitoring of Frontex activities comes from the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, which unanimously adopted on 19 July 2012 [the opinion drafted by Nichi Vendola](#), Governor of the Puglia Region, Italy, on the [Global Approach to Migration and Mobility](#). Among other points, the Committee "stresses the need to respect human rights, particularly the principle of non-refoulement, at every stage in border control, and the related obligation for the EU institutions - in particular the European Parliament - to closely monitor Frontex's activities". It also "urges the institutions, together with the Member States, to make the sea search and rescue system more effective, in particular by improving coordination and setting common criteria for identifying the most appropriate safe location for rescued migrants to disembark".

