

23-25 April 2014, Tallinn, Estonia

SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

How to Reduce Demand in the Baltic Sea Region and Combat Illegal Recruitment

1. Needs time & awareness-raising

- **Information campaigns should take place at least every other year on a long-term basis.** It is important to think in terms of decades instead of years in order to change attitudes and habits – a **long-term strategy** is needed.
- **One joint information campaign in all countries, but in different languages, about the risks of being recruited for prostitution or work** in a foreign country. The campaign should also be targeted in different ways depending on the age of the victims, their language skills in general and their Internet skills. The information should be simple and specific so that even people with poor reading abilities can understand the message. The same applies to information on job-seeking forums and sex service forums. Advertisements about risks could be placed where victims travel, e.g. on ferries and planes.
- Information campaigns to **discuss what is behind very cheap services** – a change in the understanding of society (people's greed in wanting to buy cheap things and obtain cheap services). Consumers should be informed about the labour exploitation involved in producing the cheap goods and services they consume, and they should start refraining from buying them. The general attitude in the source countries – "We don't care about people who go abroad" – needs to be changed.
- **Awareness-raising via different channels.** First, different target groups need to be defined (the general population; the police; employers: hotels, schools, public places and clinics). Increase visibility in the media. Use popular public figures to broadcast the message, on TV for example, that it is not OK to buy sex. Sex-buyers must know that the girls may be being forced to sell sex.
- **Awareness-raising among young people and children in education establishments**, especially if their parents are unaware. There should be special information campaigns in schools where students are taught different 'manual' professions, such as construction, electricity and cleaning. The young – and in particular poorly educated young men – are a very vulnerable group. Educate teachers so that they notice when something is wrong with a child (e.g. problems at home).
- In the case of slave labour, **awareness-raising in the destination countries**

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- **Awareness-raising among potential future clients** in regard to why prostitutes become prostitutes, and about their work conditions (e.g. that some of them are trafficked).
- **Educate employers: what exploitation is and what forced labour is.** If labour seems too cheap, something is probably wrong. They should be informed and should act responsibly.
- **It should be easier to get information about what constitutes reasonable conditions in different employment contracts.** This information could be linked to the campaigns mentioned above.
- **Change public stereotypes** (in the case of sexual exploitation and slave labour)

2. There is a need for more unified, harmonised legislation among Member States

- **Concerning the basic principles of working conditions and salaries** – for instance, there should be no differences between working in Estonia or any Nordic country. At present, the differences remain too big in Member States' legislation, making it easier to recruit victims.
- **Legislation that criminalises the buying of sex services – the Swedish Model (as has been suggested at most round-tables).** Problems: making this legislation really work; and educating police officers to implement the legislation. Make it easier to punish companies e.g. via fines that can generate revenue for states to finance the tackling of trafficking. Council of Europe recommendations to address and reduce demand – the Swedish model was once seen as laughable, but has since met with widespread acceptance. There are legal barriers, but policy-makers should be careful because stricter rules and harsher punishments could further conceal trafficking and exploitation.
- **Improving migration policy**

3. There must be a higher level and closer cooperation

- **Between neighbour countries and between the countries of origin of the victims and the countries of destination.** In small countries, good communication ties between agencies, the state and NGOs could be developed. Trade unions must, in some countries, become much more involved in controlling their market.
- **Between different state bodies within each Member State** e.g. between the Labour Organisation/Authority, the Migration Board, the police and the tax authorities. The purpose here is to share information and take action against unsound conditions on the labour market, either jointly or separately. These state bodies should make the most of one another's possibilities and measures so as to take action against, for instance, suspicious companies. For example, if the police could not take action, maybe the tax authorities or the labour authority would be better placed to launch an investigation, ask the relevant questions and demand responses from the company concerned. In the long run, it will be difficult for companies/people who are not serious to operate in the country concerned since they will always draw the attention of the authorities. It is difficult to launch criminal proceedings when there are different rules in different states – fines do not match the scale of profits. It is also difficult to find funds/profits.

4. Corporate responsibility is a major issue as regards reducing demand for forced labour

- **Companies must consider ethical practices in subcontracting.** In public procurements, choices are usually made based on a company's lowest price. Change this so that companies cannot plausibly deny

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knowledge. Improve business ethics. If an employee does not belong to a union or have a collective agreement, it is not possible to submit a complaint. In practice, unions do not represent all workers.

- Issue of **job agencies** (especially in a recession) charging high fees to find non-existent jobs – target them.
- **Encourage businesses to consider what they subcontract.** All subcontractors acting unlawfully should be punished. There are sanctions that should be strictly enforced (against employers) in cases where employees without work permits are still employed.
- **Internet service providers' responsibility** (legal rules or voluntary self-regulation) to remove and/or report posts that match agreed criteria on trafficking threats – as is already done by Internet providers regarding sexually explicit content.

5. Focus on victim prevention

- **Reduce advertising**
- **Generate publicity in the media** about cases/prosecutions to serve as deterrents.
- There should be **warnings** from NGOs or state authorities on job-seeking forums/websites and sex service forums on the Internet concerning risks and typical warning signs, like unreasonably high salaries. The warnings should 'pop up' on the screen as soon as you enter the website. Hall of shame.
- **A generic EU-wide hotline** (e.g. an emergency number) for anybody who has questions related to trafficking – a 'one-stop shop' in which to ask all kinds of questions about THB or to report violations.
- **Common website** (all EU languages, more if possible – Russian et al.)

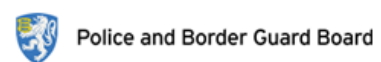
6. Better law enforcement

- **Stronger in implementing law** and greater penalties
- **To significantly boost the motivation** of policeman and prosecutors to investigate cases of THB – it is important that e.g. police and border guards recognise that some work permit requests can be for potential trafficking victims.
- Difficulty in building up enough proof to qualify a case for prosecution
- **Perform regular checks** on workers employed in construction, agriculture, catering, hotels etc.
- **Check working contracts, residence permits** etc. More resources (finances and power) should be channelled into control authorities such as the Labour Inspectorate. At the moment they can only demand that companies pay rather insignificant fines while these companies earn a lot from their exploitative acts. This must be balanced out.
- **IT police:** focus on trafficking/prostitution and not just on child pornography
- **Training for police officers**

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7. Research on demand, providing a knowledge base for decision-making et al.

- We need to gain a better understanding of who the clients are. There are specific categories of clients with different reasons for buying sex. They should be addressed using a variety of specialised strategies to make them refrain from buying sex. Psychological help should be provided to sex-buyers who may have been victimised in their past/during their childhood themselves.

Knowledge Forum I "Trafficking in Human Beings: Recruitment, Identification, Victim Support" held on 24 April in Tallinn was organised within the framework of a project of the Nordic Council of Ministers entitled *Nordic – Baltic – North-West Russian Border Regional Cooperation Part II: Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for Forced Labour, Children and Sexual Exploitation*.

Summary of the Knowledge Forum I: <http://www.norden.ee/en/about-us/news/item/8079-anti-trafficking-specialists-we-need-a-long-term-strategic-information-campaign>

Upcoming project activities:

- Forum II: 'Social Consequences' (September 2014, Riga)
- Seminar on judicial proceedings (12 & 13 November 2014, Stockholm)
- Peer review conference (April 2015, Vilnius)

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