



**“Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children  
in the Baltic Sea Region”**  
A programme implemented by the  
Working Group for Cooperation  
on Children at Risk (WGCC)



**The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Contact Points  
In the Baltic Sea Region**

*Ministry of Interior and Administration*

*Hotel Łazienkowski, Ul.29 Listopada 3 B, 00-465 Warszawa*

*8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2007*



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## **The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Contact Points In the Baltic Sea Region**

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***8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2007***

### **Programme**

***Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> of May***

**Chairing** of the meeting: **Mr Lars Lööf**, Head of the Children’s Unit of the secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

**8.30 – 9.00 Registration**

**9.00 – 9.15 Introductory Welcome.** **Mr Piotr Mierecki**, Director, Migration Policy Department, Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration.

**9.15 – 9.30 Welcome address.** **Ambassador Christer P. Persson**, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

**9.15 – 9.45 Welcome address.** **Mr Björn Bredesen**, Deputy Director General, Norwegian Ministry for Children and Equality, Chairperson to the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (WGCC).

**9.45 – 10.15 Polish actions for tackling and preventing trafficking in human beings - actual problems.** **Mr Piotr Mierecki**, Director, Migration Policy Department, Ministry of Interior and Administration.  
**Questions and discussion.**

**10.15 – 10.40** Coffee break

**10.40 – 11.20 Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children in the Baltic Sea Region.** A Programme Implemented by the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk. Present challenges and recent developments. Mr Lars Lööf, Head of the Children's Unit, CBSS  
**Questions and discussion**

**11.20 – 11.50 The Danish study on children trafficked to Denmark for the purpose of criminal activities and sexual exploitation.** Ms Nina Hannemann, The National Board of Specialist Consultancy and Social Services, Danish National Contact Point. **Questions and discussion.**

**11.50 – 12.00 Short break for air and a stretch of legs.**

**12.00 – 12.30 The CBSS Task Force Against Human Trafficking.** Mr Per Wallén, Chairperson of CBSS TFTHB. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden.  
**Questions and discussion.**

**12.30 – 13.00 Children with foreign nationality arrested in Stockholm.** Social workers' work to interview children. Ms Karin Norlin, Stockholm City Outreach Unit for Youth.

**13.00 – 14.00 Lunch**

**14.00 – 14.30 A social worker's report from meetings with children, possible victims of trafficking.** Ms Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm, Stockholm City Outreach Unit for Youth

**14.30 – 15.00 Mapping cases of trafficking in children.** Presentation of the BSR CACVT project made possible through funding from EUs Daphne programme. Mr Svante Weyler.  
**Questions and discussion.**

**15.00 – 16.00 Group discussion: National Contact Points:** Looking at how to facilitate the work for the contact points.

**16.00 – 16.20 Coffee**

**16.20 – 17.00 Group discussion: National Contact Points:** Looking at how to enable the work with contact points.

**17.10 – 17.30 Summing up the group discussions. Conclusions and recommendations.**

**19.30 Dinner hosted by the organisers at Restaurant Conquistador, ul. Nowy świat 64. Within walking distance from the Novotel.**

***Wednesday the 9<sup>th</sup> of May***

**9.00 – 9.20 Summing up of the first day meeting.**

**9.20 – 9.50 National Contact Points.** Challenges for the National Contact Points from the Polish perspective. **Ms Katarzyna Fenik**, Nobody's Children Foundation.

**9.50 – 10.10 Unaccompanied children seeking asylum in Poland –** education and care for a group of vulnerable young persons. **Ms Agnieszka Kosowicz**, Polish Migration Forum.

**10.10 – 10.30. Child trafficking in Moscow region,** Ms Marina Novikova, NGO Women and Children First.

**Questions and discussion**

**10.30 – 10.50 Coffee**

**10.50 – 11.10 Council of the Baltic Sea States:** Stepping up activities fighting trafficking in Human Beings during the Swedish presidency. **Ms Eva Ekmebag**, Deputy Director, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Swedish member of the CSO.

**11.10 – 11.30 Ukrainian Children and Trafficking** **Ms Mariana Yevsyukova**, Assistant Consultant of Member of Parliament of Ukraine.

**11.30 – 11.50 Introduction of the Nordic Council of Ministers Pilot Project:** **Ms Marie Luise Nørrelykke**, Competence Centre on Prostitution, Århus, Denmark.

**11.50 – 12.10 The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe: Fighting Trafficking in Children.** **Ms Vera Gracheva**, Senior Adviser Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

**12.15 – 12.30 Summing up and close of the meeting.**

**12.30 Lunch**



“Дети без сопровождения и дети-жертвы трафика в регионе Балтийского”  
Программа проводимая Рабочей группой по сотрудничеству в области помощи детям в опасности (WGCC)



## **Четвертая Встреча Национальных Контактных Центров**

### **в Регионе Балтийского моря**

***Министерство Внутренних Дел и Администрация***

***Hotel Łazienkowski, Ul.29 Listopada 3 B, 00-465 Варшава***

***8 – 9 Мая 2007***

## **Программа**

### ***Вторник 8ое мая***

**Председатель:** Г-н Ларс Лееф, Глава Детского Отдела секретариата Совета Государств Балтийского моря.

**8.30 – 9.00**     **Регистрация**

**9.00 – 9.15**     **Вступительное слово.** Г-н Петр Миерецки, Директор, Департамент миграционной политики, Министерство Внутренних Дел и Администрация Польши.

**9.15 – 9.30**     **Приветственная речь.** Посол Кристер П. Перссон, Министерство Иностраннных Дел Швеции, Председатель Совета Государств Балтийского моря.

**9.15 – 9.45**     **Приветственная речь.** Г-н Бьёрн Бредесен, Заместитель Генерального Директора, Министерство Детства и Равенства Норвегии, Председатель Рабочей группы по сотрудничеству в области помощи детям в опасности (WGCC).

- 9.45 – 10.15** Действия Польши по предотвращению трафика людей и увеличению числа выявляемых случаев трафика– актуальные проблемы. Г-н Петр Миерецки, Директор, Департамент миграционной политики, Министерство Внутренних Дел и Администрация Польши.  
**Вопросы и дискуссия.**
- 10.15 – 10.40** Кофе
- 10.40 – 11.20** Дети без сопровождения и дети-жертвы трафика в регионе Балтийского моря. Программа проводимая Рабочей группой по сотрудничеству в области помощи детям в опасности. Нынешние задачи и последние достижения. Г-н Ларс Лееф, Глава Детского Отдела секретариата Совета Государств Балтийского Моря.  
**Вопросы и дискуссия**
- 11.20 – 11.50** Датское исследование по вопросам перевозки детей в Данию с целью сексуальной эксплуатации и эксплуатации в преступных действиях. Г-жа Нина Ханнеманн, Национальная коллегия специалистов по консультированию и социальным услугам, Датский Национальный Контактный Центр.  
**Вопросы и дискуссия**
- 11.50 – 12.00** Перерыв на развешивание и потягивание.
- 12.00 – 12.30** Целевая группа СГБМ по борьбе с трафиком. Г-н Пер Валлен Председатель Целевой группы СГБМ по борьбе с трафиком. Министерство Иностраных Дел Швеции.  
**Вопросы и дискуссия**
- 12.30 – 13.00** Дети иностранного происхождения, арестованные в Стокгольме. Работа социальных служб по интервьюированию детей. Г-жа Карин Нурлин, Stockholm City Outreach Unit for Youth.  
**Вопросы и дискуссия.**
- 13.00 – 14.00** Ланч
- 14.00 – 14.30** Отчет социального работника о встречах с детьми, предположительно являющимися жертвами трафика. Г-жа Розе-Мари Лёфвениус Эдхольм, Stockholm City Outreach Unit for Youth.
- 14.30 – 15.00** Регистрация случаев трафика детей. Презентация проекта РБМ ВПДЖТ, осуществляемого благодаря поддержке ЕС через программу Daphne. Г-н Сванте Вейлер.

### **Вопросы и дискуссия.**

**15.00 – 16.00** Групповая дискуссия: **Национальные Контактные Центры:** Как способствовать работе Контактных Центров.

**16.00 – 16.20** Кофе

**16.20 – 17.00** Групповая дискуссия: **Национальные Контактные Центры:** Как способствовать работе Контактных Центров.

**17.10 – 17.30** Подведение итогов групповых дискуссий. **Выводы и рекомендации.**

**19.30** Обед, организованный польской стороной в ресторане **Конквистадор, ul. Nowy świat 64.** В пределах ходьбы от отеля **Novotel.**

### **Среда 9ое мая**

**9.00 – 9.20** Подведение итогов первого дня.

**9.20 – 9.50** **Национальные Контактные Центры. Задачи Национальных Контактных Центров с польской точки зрения.** Г-жа Катаржина Феник, Nobody's Children Foundation (Фонд «Ничьи Дети»).

**9.50 – 10.10** **Дети без сопровождения, ищущие убежище в Польше – опека и обеспечение образования для группы уязвимых подростков.** Г-жа Агнежка Косович, Польский миграционный форум.

**10.10 – 10.30.** **Трафик детей в Московской области.** Г-жа Марина Новикова, НКО Women and Children First («Женщины и дети прежде всего»).

### **Вопросы и дискуссия**

**10.30 – 10.50** Кофе

**10.50 – 11.10** **Совет Государств Балтийского Моря: Действия по усилению борьбы с трафиком людей во время председательства Швеции.** Г-жа Эва Экмехаг, Заместитель Директора, Министерство Иностраннных Дел Швеции, член КСДЛ СГБМ.

**11.10 – 11.30** **Украинские дети и проблема трафика.** Г-жа Мариана Евсюкова, Ассистент-консультант члена парламента Украины.

**11.30 – 11.50 Презентация пилотного проекта Совета Министров Северных Стран: Г-жа Мари Луизе Норрелюкке, Competence Centre on Prostitution («Центр компетенции по проблемам проституции»), Орхус, Дания.**

**11.50 – 12.10 Организация по безопасности и сотрудничеству в Европе: борьба с трафиком детей. Г-жа Вера Грачева, Старший Советник, Офис Особого Представителя по координации борьбы с трафиком людей.**

**12.15 – 12.30 Подведение итогов и завершение встречи.**

**12.30           Ланч**

## **Welcome address.**

### ***Ambassador Christer P. Persson, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.***

It is my great pleasure to address you today in my capacity of Chairman of the steering committee of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). I am also pleased to have the opportunity to meet you in-person and, not least, to further develop our, meaning the CBSS' CSO and the Swedish CBSS Presidency's already strong and fruitful relationship with the Working Group for Co-operation on Children-at-Risk.

I have the honor to recall, that the first meeting of National Contact Points was hosted by Sweden in Stockholm in December 2003. The fight against trafficking continues to be one of the top priorities for the Swedish CBSS Presidency.

I would like to say a few words about the Council itself. The CBSS was established in 1992 as an overall political forum for practical regional intergovernmental co-operation consisting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs from each Member State and a member of the European Commission. Since its founding, the CBSS has contributed to positive developments within the Baltic Sea States region and has served as a driving force for multi-lateral concrete co-operation. It preserves its unique feature by encompassing under its "umbrella" eight EU Member States, and the three non-EU countries of Norway, Iceland and Russia.

The overall objective of the Swedish CBSS Presidency is cooperation to achieve common objectives and concrete results in collaboration with other regional councils, structures and organizations, and with countries in the vicinity of the Baltic Sea States. To promote a continued economic growth and sustainable development in the region the Swedish Presidency focuses on practical and concrete co-operation. The areas "Energy and Environment", "Trade and Investment" and "Civil Security" are the three priorities of the Swedish CBSS Presidency 2006-2007.

During this time, the CBSS has been working actively to further expand co-operation with the Observer states, in particular, Ukraine, and to the extent possible, with the non-observer state Belarus. All three priorities are being implemented through practical and concrete measures and activities about which you can read more on the website of the Swedish Presidency of the CBSS 2006-2007 (<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/6819>).

If I recall correctly, the topic of "children-at-risk" was placed on the CBSS agenda in 2001. However, it was given a particular attention at the VI Baltic Sea States Summit in Saint Petersburg (Russia) in June 2002. This was 5 years ago. At that time, the Working Group for Co-operation on Children at Risk, (WGCC) responded to the call for action, as expressed by the Heads of Government, and in doing so it recognized a strong link between children migrating on their own and children exploited through trafficking.

The WGCC intention was to extend the scope of activities to all children that are unaccompanied in a country not of their origin. The Swedish Government and the Swedish Minister for Migration and Development Co-operation together with the WGCC in February 2003 invited all the CBSS Member States to a special meeting on Unaccompanied Children in the Baltic Sea Region, which actually became a starting point for this valuable and vital activity.

I would like to stress that in the CBSS issues concerning children in complex life situations are placed under more general “umbrella” of Civil Security. Under the Civil Security the Swedish CBSS Presidency programme includes promoting democracy, human rights and social security, stability and prosperity in our region. Considerable efforts are undertaken in the area of counter-acting and combating trafficking in human beings.

In November 2006 a working structure of the Baltic and Nordic countries (eight countries) was transformed into a new CBSS body – the CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings, taking on board also Russia, Germany and Poland. The Task Force focuses its work on adults (aged over 18), while trafficking in children is being addressed by the CBSS Working Group on Children-at-Risk. The new Task Force is represented at this meeting, and tomorrow it will have an opportunity to introduce its plans.

Such countries in the vicinity of the Baltic Sea as Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine were invited to the dialogue as well, as having a strong cross-border links to what is taking place within our Region. As far as we are concerned, there is a strong involvement of NGOs in this field of co-operation, which we highly value and appreciate. In this connection I am glad to remind you that in June 2006 the Heads of Government at the VI Baltic Sea States Summit in Reykjavik noted a significant progress in this work, which we took as clear evidence that the Baltic Sea Region was successful in meeting challenges from the cross-border exploitation of human beings.

There is another crucial element of co-operation in this sphere that we should not omit. This element is the repressive measures, or differently phrased, the Police response. In order to collect as much as possible operative information on this matter the Task Force on Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea Region has created an expert group on Human Trafficking. This group strongly endorses the work of the National Contact Points, which increased possibilities of establishing interaction with other relevant organizations and agencies working to assist victims of trafficking.

We consider the National Contact Points as one of the pillars in assisting Police and other Law Enforcement Agencies in securing a well-functioning and professional victim support, including through efficient contacts between the CBSS Member States and our closest neighbors - Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

## **Welcome address.**

### ***Mr Björn Bredeesen, Deputy Director General, Norwegian Ministry for Children and Equality, Chairperson to the WGCC.***

I am working in this field since 1989 and it is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all at this meeting. I would like to thank our Polish host Piotr Mierecki and Ambassador Christer Persson for their earlier comments and their continued interest in the problem of trafficking in children.

CBSS and its Working Group for Cooperation on Children at risk (WGCC) both need outside and national support in order to prevent children from being trafficked and exploited. Children need protection and to provide this protection it is not enough to focus solely on national or international issues. To combat human trafficking effectively, we have to come up with viable national solutions, but also coordinate our actions through close international cooperation. That is the reason why you gathered here to share experiences and explore new ideas on how to strengthen efforts in this field.

Every country has national legal obligations in relation to exploited children. The most important document in this respect is Palermo Protocol. A number of other important international documents also address this issue.

Some of the Governments around the Baltic Sea have national action plans designed to combat trafficking in children. Norwegian Government has decided to follow up the process of establishing WGCC group by giving financial support to the meetings that will take place in Norway, Vilnius, Kiev and Stockholm. Norway is strongly committed to supporting the training of professionals working with trafficked children.

I would like to give you a brief overview of our actions in this field. Cooperation among CBSS states in fighting human trafficking has been going on since 1989. In 2002, this cooperation was put on a more formalized basis and supported by the work of a special unit within the CBSS secretariat in Stockholm.

WGCC is now established actor not only in our region but also in wider Europe. During the last year, the WGCC focused its activities in the following priority areas:

- Assistance to unaccompanied and trafficked children
- Monitoring of children living in institutions.

We have noticed a rise in the numbers of children living in institutions throughout the region. This fact was discussed in depth during the foundation conference “The rights of children in institutions in the region of the Baltic States”, which took place in Stockholm in 2006. The conference was attended by experts and senior officials from the entire Baltic region as well as Ukraine and Belarus.

During the April meeting of the WGCC, the decision was taken to start immediately the programme aimed at monitoring children at institutional facilities as well as provide them

with post-placement assistance once they reach adulthood and are no longer entitled to state care. The programme's components foresee the development of a monitoring system, which will provide us with readily available information about the state of institutional foster houses and children centers. Another programme component foresees provision of better support to children once they leave institutions and become easy prey for traffickers.

In the field of sexual abuse and exploitation, the WGCC works by identifying issues which are of interest to the wider public. Our work on safe internet has resulted in a publication issued last year. We have also been asked by the EU to assist its institutions by taking up the important issue of exploitation of children on internet.

Another important project that I would like to mention is research on adolescent sexual attitudes. The research was based on questionnaire responses from more than 25,000 young people from the region. The report of the study includes comparative analysis of respondents' own experience of sexual abuse and exploitation and attitudes towards it. We have collected data from all the Baltic Sea countries and each national study is prefaced with an introduction. Hopefully, this publication will help policy makers in developing effective policies on both national and regional level.

Another problem we all face today is unreliable data when it comes to estimating the numbers of trafficked and exploited children. Everybody knows that estimating the extent of children trafficking is a difficult task. From my side, I can tell that there are around 20 such cases investigated annually in Norway. Beyond providing such statistical information, the numbers on exploited or trafficked children do not stand on solid ground. We have to base our decisions on guesswork and estimates at best of the times.

We also feel uncertain about other information collected during contact with trafficked children: what is their country of origin? Do they have valid documents? What is the purpose of their trafficking? Is Norway a country of destination or transit? We hope that ongoing projects championed by the WGCC will enable us at least partially address these weaknesses.

To supplement our efforts in the area of the research we also have developed a training programme for people involved in fighting human trafficking. There are five two-day seminars prepared in the framework of this project. The training seminars will be conducted not only in the countries of origin, but also in destination countries. The trainings will bring together experts from governmental agencies and NGOs, educational establishments and state-run facilities from all the CBSS countries. If you want to receive more information on all these activities, please feel free to visit our website.

## **Polish actions for tackling and preventing trafficking in human beings - actual problems.**

***Mr Piotr Mierecki, Director, Migration Policy Department, Ministry of Interior and Administration<sup>1</sup>.***

When we first started working with the problem of human trafficking – back in the 1990s – Poland was mostly a country of origin: Polish women were trafficked to work in German brothels. By the end of the 1990s, Poland became a country of transit for victims trafficked from Ukraine, Moldova, and Bulgaria to the West. In 2000-2001, we registered yet another shift – Poland has become a country of destination: women coming from countries to the East and South not only move to the West, but also remain in Poland. Among the major “suppliers” of human trafficking victims I would mention Moldova, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania, and Belarus.

You can see the scale of this phenomenon on a graph. Unfortunately, the statistics in this case is inherently unreliable and reflects only a small number of registered crimes. We can see that over the last years the number of indicted traffickers as well as tried suspects is growing.

As to victims, there were many more registered victims in 2002 than in 2005. I could only add that very often the number of victims depends on the kind of operations implemented by the police in that year. For example, earlier – large-scale operations – pursued by the law-enforcement agencies were done on a larger scale, in one such instance we freed 200 women, whereas lately police was concentrating on smaller trafficking networks.

Every year, we register around 40-50 perpetrators of human trafficking and 100 victims. However, the official statistics does not withstand comparison to numbers provided by NGOs. For example, *La Strada* – NGO for trafficking victims – each year provides support to 150-200 victims who are not officially registered. So the total number of trafficking victims should be at least 400 people a year.

During the last year, the charges of human trafficking were filed against 720 people, while the police identified 1800 women – victims of trafficking. Children constitute 2-3% of the total number. If we dissect the results according to nationality, victims from Belarus and Ukraine predominate, but, of course, other countries are also present. Each year, we register a few cases involving women from Latvia, Vietnam, and Lithuania.

The percentage of victims from a particular nationality varies year on year. We assume that since Romania and Bulgaria have joined the EU, there will be a drop in the number of victims from there. However, the number of victims from Asia should increase.

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<sup>1</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 1 p. 2.

Polish legislation concerning human trafficking is similar to that one adopted by other countries. The Polish Government has signed Palermo Protocol, UN Convention, Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. We also have enacted certain EU legal acts in this area, which are binding in their nature.

At the same time, we admit that there are still certain shortcomings found in Polish legislation. For example, Article 253 of the Penal Code deals with trafficking of people, but does not provide a definition of trafficking. When it comes to training prosecutors and judges in the application of this Article, we have to rely on our imagination. To my knowledge, we are also the only European country not to have the definition of trafficking in the penal code.

At the moment, there are two articles which define the scope of trafficking crime in divergent ways. Prosecutors find it easier to work with Article 253, while Polish judges tend to use Article 204 more often – while it stipulates more lenient penalties, it also ignores the international aspect of human trafficking crimes. Clearly, investigating a case with international connections is both difficult and expensive, so instead of going through all this pain by applying Article 253, judges prefer to rely on Article 204. This way, it becomes easier to sentence traffickers to jail term, but the term of penalties is also shorter than the ones provided by Article 253.

*Palermo Protocol.* We have been able to amend the Polish Act on Aliens, which improved the conditions of victims willing to cooperate with Polish law-enforcement agencies. Introduced amendments allow a victim to receive a residence permit for a period of up to 6 months in order to cooperate with police. This, in turn, leads to more successful investigations. The new provisions came into force on November 1, 2005. Unfortunately, that is still too early to conduct a proper research into its effects.

A few words on anti-trafficking activities taking place in Poland. I have to admit that so far activities were mostly initiated by active NGOs, not the Government. La Strada organized a round-table meeting with representatives from the Government and civil society. In the time that has passed since that meeting, we managed to develop the first National Programme to Combat Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings. It took us almost 2 years to develop the programme and in this task we cooperated actively with the UNDP, which provided the funding for this purpose.

Unfortunately, no funds were available for this task from the Government. As a result, not all activities foreseen in the programme were implemented, but we did manage to set up a body, made up of experts from a variety of institutions, to deal with the issue of trafficking. The initial membership and structure of this body was criticized by both law-enforcement agencies and NGOs, because it failed to facilitate the flow of information and effective cooperation among member organizations. Taking these criticisms into account, the Prime minister has established a task force that advises him on the issue.

In the current role, the task force remains an advisory body – as a result, it cannot carry out programmes and instructions – rather, its aim is to advise the head of the

Government. Yet everybody tends to acknowledge that the current body is active and its members are efficient in achieving stated goals. The task force is chaired by the Deputy Minister of the Interior, while its members come from all relevant ministries dealing with human trafficking issues. I would also like to add that the composition of the task force can be changed according to the needs – the chair can extend an invitation to any Government representative if needed.

The Polish Government also uses this task force to cooperate actively with national NGOs, including the two biggest organizations active in this field - La Strada and Caritas – and smaller NGOs, like Ithaka foundation and Nobody's Children Foundation.

Due to the lack of time, I don't want to delve into the details of the 1<sup>st</sup> programme right now. Instead, I want to mention that we are currently implementing the 3<sup>rd</sup> programme, which will last until 2008. In the framework of this programme, we will publish the report on human trafficking in Poland in June. The report will also be translated into English and made available upon request.

Unfortunately, already now, before the report is published, we can say that it does not satisfy our needs. The main reason is that data collection system is outdated and inefficient. The methods used to collect information about perpetrators and victims of human trafficking crimes does not provide an accurate picture. As a result, we want to cooperate with La Strada organization and commission a comprehensive study, modeled on the study on the application of Palermo Protocol by Polish judges.

For the moment, we notice that information about trafficking is being collected in a haphazard way: occasional multi-funded projects focus on individual aspects of human trafficking, but they do not provide a reliable overall picture, which is the case with some other crimes we analyze and research.

One of the important goals included in the National Programme is organization of the conference on human trafficking in Poland. In connection with this goal, our team has actually established a working group, which meets twice a month. Yet, in order to create a broad coalition of actors addressing this problem, we have to move beyond group meetings. The conference will take place in June of the next year and should become an annual event. We believe that as a regular event, it will contribute to improving the efficiency of cooperation between national actors.

I would like to add a word about trainings. So far, we have implemented a training programme for representatives of law-enforcement institutions. It was a nation-wide programme, which produced an extensive network of police officers qualified in human trafficking matters.

In this context, we also organize an annual conference aimed to strengthen the cooperation with our counter-parts in origin and destination countries. We believe that coming together and sharing information we will be able to detect wider trends in the region and be better prepared to tackle them.

We would like to strengthen the capacity of our police force in investigating human trafficking cases. For this reason a specialized task force was set up at the Police HQ in September 2006. We could see the effect of such decision almost immediately, as the number of cases investigated by the police grew. The unit investigates human trafficking cases involving both Polish nationals and foreign citizens. The cases handled by the unit included forced labor camps, where Poles are held, in Italy, Spain, and the UK.

The Government also continues to support initiatives aimed at protecting victims and witnesses of trafficking. The pilot programme was launched in the region bordering Germany. We also managed to sign an agreement with La Strada to implement such programme. According to the agreement, the Polish Government provides funds, while La Strada renders support and assistance to the victims of trafficking. Unfortunately, only victims from non-EU countries are qualified to take an advantage of this programme. It will run till the end of 2007, but we plan to continue with this programme by extending it to other nationals, including victims from the EU member states.

Since I have talked about our achievements, it would also be appropriate to mention some of the problems we have been facing lately. First of all, we noticed unexpected rise in cases involving forced labor. We expected that since Poland became the EU member country, the cases of illegal and forced labor will decline. Yet, the situation turned out to be just on the contrary: more men were forced into labor camps. In this area, we have established good working contacts with Italian and Spanish police. At the moment, we also work to establish strong ties with the UK police because there are many cases of Poles being trafficked in this country.

At the same time, we suspect that there are forced labor camps organized in Poland, where Ukrainians and Byelorussians are exploited. However, so far we only identified a case involving forced labor of Vietnamese migrants.

The second problematic area is reintegration of victims of human trafficking into society. On one hand, we have Poles coming back from the West and suffering the consequences of exploitation. The regular welfare system is insufficiently equipped to deal with such people. We have to remember that privacy is an important issue here. Most of these people don't want to admit that they were sexually exploited. Therefore, we need to establish special centers equipped to deal with them without passing further any personal details.

A third problem concerns the system of assistance for foreign victims. At the moment, we are running a pilot programme for such people. As we started working with them we also became aware of the further issue – safe return to their country of origin. The transportation of these people is not difficult, we cooperate successfully with IOM on this matter. What proves to be much more difficult is how to get these people safely home. This is the area where we see a lot of potential for international cooperation.

## Questions & Comments

**Olena Kustova:** In your presentation you have mentioned the efforts to step up cooperation among the countries of origin, do you have any specific plans designated to improve cooperation among law-enforcement agencies within these countries in general and Ukraine in particular?

**Piotr Mierecki:** Yes. I have already mentioned annual expert meetings. Ukrainian experts were represented at such meetings on three occasions. We want to intensify our cooperation with Ukrainian counterparts and we have prepared some specific measures to this end, concentrating our efforts on improving cooperation with police units in identifying forced labor camps of Ukrainian victims in Poland. Secondly, we want to cooperate in providing victims with care and reintegrating them into society.

However, we should also remember that at this point the majority of victims come from Belarus. Due to legal quirks, these people are identified as victims not in Poland, but only in Belarus. As a result, human traffickers are very successful at exploiting Belarusian nationals and our preeminent obligation is to work harder to stop them.

**Lars Lööf:** Does Poland have a special law-enforcement unit dealing exclusively with trafficking in children crimes? What specific activities have you designed to address the issue of trafficking in children?

**Piotr Mierecki:** Initially, we did not think that there was a need for a separate unit for dealing with trafficking in children. Maybe it was a mistake, but at that time our attention was preoccupied with trafficking in women. This was the area we knew about most and it posed the biggest problem.

About two years ago, we started developing a whole set of activities aimed to address the needs of trafficked women or those who stand a risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. We think that by now we have developed a good set of services and activities for women. Next, we want to capitalize on our experience from working with trafficking in women to develop a similar platform to address the issue of human trafficking in children. Unfortunately, our resources are limited and this makes it difficult to progress forward quickly enough.

I would also like to note that experts taking part in the work of the trafficking task force are very knowledgeable about their subject, but they are few in between and thus, we would run into big problems if we wanted to set up a separate task force dealing exclusively with issues affecting children. For the time being we have a specialized sub-unit to deal with children trafficking within the task force, but it is not an independent body.

Yet, children are not forgotten. If we take a look at the national programme of combating human trafficking, there are quite a few activities designed for children victims or children from risk groups. At the moment, the biggest efforts are concentrated on developing a new algorithm for children victims of human trafficking. The algorithm developed for adults works quite well, but it fails to include children in a meaningful and efficient way. Our Government also continues its work on amending the legislation, a step that would help to address the issue of trafficking in children better.

**Vera Gracheva:** As a representative of an International Organization (IO), I would like to draw your attention to the resources made available by IOs. I have brought for your reference a manual for law-enforcement officers on how to combat trafficking in children, published by the IOM. There is a lot of useful advice in this publication as well as links to other resources online. Please take a look at it in your spare time.

**Piotr Mierecki:** I can only add that we are currently translating your material into Polish and it will be made available to all our policemen.

**Tamara Uliasz:** I am representing the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP). In Poland, MLSP is responsible for dealing with orphans and children. Over the last few years we have noticed an increase in the numbers of foreign unaccompanied children entering our children centers. Tomorrow, you will be briefed about the steps our government has taken to address the problem of unaccompanied foreign children. I would also like to note that we started monitoring their situation in cooperation with NGO “Nobody’s Children Foundation”.

## **Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children in the Baltic Sea Region. A Programme Implemented by the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk. Present challenges and recent developments.**

***Mr Lars Lööf, Head of Children’s Unit, CBSS Secretariat<sup>2</sup>***

There are currently 11 member states in the WGCC; Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova are also cooperating in this programme.

The first plan of action on unaccompanied children has been presented to the ministers at the meeting in Oslo in 2005. This first plan will be coming to an end in the fall of this year. The role of the WGCC will be to follow up on these results and act in accordance with the decision taken by the ministers.

In our view, it is very important to think about sustainability of NGO initiatives as well as the ways regional cooperation can contribute to ensuring the stability of NGOs active in

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<sup>2</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 1 p. 6.

the field. At the moment, a typical NGO implements activities for 6 months, then performs assessment for 3 months, and then spends another 3 months looking for new funding opportunities. If it proves to be successful, then another 6 months of activities follow. Clearly, such a mode of action does not contribute to the sustainability of the results.

By having national contact points in the WGCC member states we hope to achieve stability and sustainability. Today, we can say that we have, at least partly, achieved these goals, for we have created a network that exists and can be called upon to act.

WGCC seeks to share as much as possible its expertise with member countries in supporting police activities. We are also looking into ways of strengthening the cooperation between NGOs and Governments around the Baltic Sea.

And I would like to enumerate some of our achievements over this year: first of all, we have you – national contact points – operating in 12 out of 14 Baltic Sea countries involved in the WGCC programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children. At the moment, negotiations are still ongoing with Russia and Germany. Due to federal structure of these states, it is difficult for national authorities to decide what institution should be responsible for representing national Government in our forum.

The WGCC has also implemented the BSR CACVT programme, a training programme for professionals involved in rehabilitation of girls and boys victims of trafficking. The results of this programme will be finalized in September this year. The programme aimed at mapping the cases of child trafficking is currently ongoing.

Still there are several gaps and challenges that we have identified, such as lack of efficient identification methods, under-prioritization of domestic trafficking, overweight of short term funding and the maintaining of sustainability of efforts. The WGCC goal is to work on closing these gaps and furthering development in priority areas in cooperation with both national and international actors.

The NCPs, being placed in a ministry or a well recognized institutions and dealing with individual cases can provide valuable advice. This meeting will help us to explore the gaps as well as new initiatives and programmes in the region. We also hope that you will refer to our website in order to keep yourself informed about the latest developments.

## **The Danish study on children trafficked to Denmark for the purpose of criminal activities and sexual exploitation.**

***Ms Nina Hannemann, Danish National Contact Point The National Board of Specialist Consultancy and Social Services<sup>3</sup>.***

In January 2007, Inger Neufeldt and Casper Strand – who both are program coordinators from Save the Children DK – launched a new report on Trafficking in children in Denmark. As they couldn't be here today, I have promised to give a short presentation of the report put into the context of the Danish Government's new Action Plan to combat trafficking in human beings, which was launched after Save the Children's report in March of this year.

I will start with a brief introduction to the background of the report and the research prepared by Save the Children. In 2002 an Action Plan to combat trafficking in women was launched covering the following four years (2002-2006), and in March 2007 a new Action Plan to combat trafficking in human beings – covering children victims of trafficking – was launched by responsible Ministries. These included the Ministry of Social affairs, Integration, Justice and Education.

In September 2005 - the Danish government released an amendment to the Danish Action plan to combat trafficking in women. The amendment concerned initiatives to protect and support children victims of trafficking (VOT) and the foreseen period of implementation was one year. Save the Children DK was given the task to coordinate and gather information, and to monitor and evaluate the activities put into action by the amendment. The objective of this was to produce knowledge in order to provide input to the new Action Plan to be produced in 2007.

One result of the amendment was that the Ministry of Social Affairs concluded an agreement with four partner organizations: Save the Children, the Danish Red Cross, and two organisations working with prostitution and drug abuse in the streets of Copenhagen – The Nest STOP Trafficking in Women and Checkpoint. The four parties formed a committee, which cooperated for one year on how to handle the social and psychological dimensions in the cases in the best possible way, whenever a case of child trafficking was discovered.

Coming back to the report, it gives an overview of cases of children VOT known to the authorities, the police, and relevant organisations and NGOs working with these children within a 10 year period from 1995 till 2005. The more recent cases, from 2005-2006, are described in more detail. The report also describes procedures and practices adopted in Denmark to deal with children identified as VOT. It also provides recommendations on how to improve these practices in the light of international conventions and regulations.

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<sup>3</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 1 p. 12.

The definition of the concept of trafficking used in the report stems from the Palermo-protocol. Throughout the report the concept of 'assumed VOT' is used. This is due to the fact, that there are no official Danish guidelines or indicators to help social workers or the police to identify, when a child is to be regarded as a VOT. Luckily, this issue has already been addressed by the Danish Government in the new Plan of Action to combat trafficking in human beings 2007-2010, which has been released in March of this year.

In the period from 1995 to November 2005, Save DK has come to register around 115 assumed children VOT in Denmark. 17 of these children were assumed to be trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation; of these, two children were boys and 15 were girls. The children came from Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Nigeria and Ecuador. They were all between 15 and 17 years of age.

The majority of the children found within this period - approximately 100 - were assumed to be exploited in criminal activities such as theft. This finding is surprising, because it is widely assumed that in Denmark trafficking is related to prostitution. The children discovered in criminality were in general younger than those caught in prostitution, and they were primarily boys. All except one child came from Eastern Europe.

During the period of the project from November 2005 till November 2006, Save the Children DK came to register 7 children VOT. These children were much better documented, than the children mentioned within the 10 year period. Of the 7 children, 5 were girls and 2 boys. Four of the girls were caught in prostitution and the three other children were caught in criminality. The seven children were from Nigeria, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. Of the four girls caught in prostitution three disappeared from the Red Cross Centre, one of the girls was returned voluntary to the home country.

The authors of this report stress that the number of trafficked children provided, at best, should be treated as a qualified estimate. Most of the times, exploited children will belong to hidden populations in the country. Being in the country without official documents, these children often avoid the authorities, fearing personal consequences or threats of the traffickers.

In the second part of the report, five important issues related to Danish practice and procedures are addressed and put into the context of international conventions and regulations.

*Identification of Children VOT.* The mapping of identification procedures in DK uncovers some difficulties related to the identification of foreign children VOT. All unaccompanied children, who most often happen to be asylum seekers, are placed within the Red Cross Asylum System. These children have good chances of being identified as VOT, if they match relevant criteria. The social workers in the Danish Red Cross

Refugee Centres are well aware of trafficking in children and are well-skilled to identify such children.

Other children, who fall outside the asylum system, for example children staying in Denmark illegally are at greater risk of not being identified. Children placed in other institutions (e.g. secured institutions) are at risk of not being identified as VOT, so are children who have been turned down at the Danish border and had to return to their home/departure country.

The report points to the need to educate and qualify the professionals working within the competent authorities and relevant institutions to identify children VOT. It states that many social workers, officials and other professionals working with vulnerable children seem to lack the necessary qualifications, knowledge and tools to identify children being at risk of trafficking. Moreover, it emphasizes the need for the authorities to develop indicators from which professionals can identify VOT and to have identification procedures established at the immigration- boarder- and within the legal authorities regarding identification of child VOT.

Again the issue of educating professionals is already addressed in a new action plan as is the issue of developing methods and indicators to identify child VOT. This is to be organised and implemented in the near future.

Another interesting recommendation in the report regarding identification is the following: the identification procedure of children assumed to be VOT should be entrusted to a special unit – a care facility, which should receive all such children, whether identified at the border, in the street, in the secured institution or any other place within Denmark.

*Age Assessment.* In Denmark three different methods are used in the process of age assessment, which makes Denmark an example of good practice. The methods in use comprise somatic / physical assessment by medical staff combined with x-ray of the left hand root and an x-ray of the jaws and teeth. Save the Children also provided a number of recommendations to improve existing procedures and practices from a child rights perspective. These include

- Ensuring that a person, who objects to his/her age assessment, continues to be treated as a child, until the case is decided
- Ensuring that any doubt in an age assessment be resolved in favour of the child

*The role of the guardian.* One very positive initiative included in the amendment is that all children VOT, as all unaccompanied children, have the right to have a personal guardian or representative appointed. The guardian shall represent the child in dealing with relevant organisations and, among other things, is responsible for developing an individual plan of action for the child. The representative has to make sure that the child is placed in suitable care facilities and that the best interest of the child comes first in all matters regarding the child.

*Suitable care facilities.* According to existing procedures, all children assumed VOT will be placed either in Danish Red Cross Asylum Centre for unaccompanied children or in a secure institution. A few girls caught in prostitution have been placed in a protected Centre for trafficked women which is run by The Nest STOP Trafficking in Women.

The Danish Red Cross Centre can create positive conditions for physical and psychological development of resident children, taking into consideration the rights of the child and children's cultural backgrounds. However, the Centre can not secure and protect the children against their traffickers and continued exploitation, as it is an open centre, where people come and go as they like.

Secure institutions, on the other hand, can provide a child with protection from their traffickers, but they jeopardise children's rights to recover in a friendly physical and psychological environment. Once again, Save the Children recommends that a new special care unit for children assumed to be VOT be established in Denmark. However, the dilemma remains: how to secure children, who might not even express a wish for protection, without putting them behind locks and thereby violating their rights.

The New Action Plan from 2007 addresses this issue to some extent among others by stating the need to increase the number of secured places for trafficked children. The children will still be received and placed in the Danish Red Cross centre, where a child can be kept under enhanced surveillance by the staff, if they fear that the child will disappear. If the child is in danger of harming him/herself, s/he can be placed in a secure institution.

*Return to the home country.* During the year when the project took place, only one voluntary return of a child to the home country was arranged. The child in question did not wish to apply for asylum. The committee mentioned above took part in the planning of the child's return. The child was followed to his/her home-country and handed over to a local NGO. With permission from the child, the NGO contacted the local authorities and the local police. An assessment was made of possibilities for family reunification and steps were taken to ensure child's continued schooling.

Save the Children comes up with a number of recommendations regarding procedures and practice in Denmark when an assumed VOT is to be returned to the home country. Since the experiences of returning VOT are very limited, the recommendations builds on experiences from the practice of returning foreign unaccompanied minors in general. I will mention a few points here:

- Clear guidelines are prepared stipulating which indicators to be included in the assessment of the child's best interest, when a VOT is to be returned to the home country;
- An assessment of every child's best interest must be very clear before returning a child;

- Family condition and domestic situation of a child must be investigated before a decision of returning a child. Clear guidelines must be prepared saying who is responsible for this investigation, and what conditions that must be included in this investigation.

It is further highlighted in the Action Plan that the existing international network must be extended to include more countries as well as more organizations in participating countries should be partnered. The new Action Plan also states an objective to strengthen NGOs and ensure stronger contacts with authorities in the countries of origin, thus ensuring that children VOT receive more support from local authorities.

## Comments & Questions

**Evaldas Karmaza:** I just wonder what efforts did Denmark implement to locate all those missing kids? What procedures did you use to trace them? And my second question is, how do you define the term “missing child”?

**Nina Hannemann:** According to our statistics, around 60% of children at the Red Cross asylum center eventually disappear. They are missing and there are no means to locate them. You have to remember that they were unaccompanied in the first place. We cannot say where they are. We know that it presents a serious problem, but I am afraid that the Danish Government has not done much in this area until now.

**Erica Neiglick:** Could you say what nationality dominates among missing children? Are they Chinese? Does the number that you provided reflect the number of children who disappear from the center? Or is it the overall rate?

**Nina Hannemann:** Unfortunately, I cannot answer your question about nationality. We do not have this information available today. The number I provided is an overall percentage of children reported missing from the asylum center.

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** I have a question on the same issue. From the legal point of view, were ‘missing children’ allowed to walk away from the asylum center or have they run away?

**Nina Hannemann:** The Red Cross asylum center lies in the woods in North Zealand. Most of the children arriving at the asylum center apply for asylum in Denmark. The asylum seeking children are not under surveillance and they are allowed to walk freely; they can even travel to Copenhagen. That is when most of them disappear. For many of

them, Denmark is simply a country of transit and some of them are later found in other countries like Norway or the UK.

## **The CBSS Task Force Against Human Trafficking.**

***Mr. Per Wallén, Chairperson of CBSS TFTHB. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden<sup>4</sup>.***

The Nordic-Baltic task-force was set up five years ago. This initiative was taken up by the then Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Anna Lind. The task force worked until August 2006, when its mandate expired. At the 6th Baltic Sea States Summit in Reykjavik on 8 June 2006, the Heads of Government welcomed the initiative to integrate the successful work of the Nordic Baltic Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings into the CBSS framework.

The CBSS Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings will carry out concrete, practical hands-on work. It will:

- build on the results achieved of the former NB8 context, the WGCC and in other bodies/structures;
- invite representatives from other initiatives in/outside the CBSS structure, countries or organizations to take an active part in activities on an ad-hoc basis or at a later stage;

Recently, we have gained 4 new members – Poland, Germany, Russia, and the EU Commission. We will also try to extend our links to Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. The membership of the Task Force is made up of experts from relevant ministries.

The group shall meet 3 to 4 times yearly. Participants have expressed a wish for us to meet when it is really necessary and secretariat honored this request. If you are interested in decision making process: all decisions within the Task Force are taken by consensus and there is a rotating chairmanship structure. The chairmanship is rotated on an annual basis following the CBSS Presidency (from July 1 to June 30). The mandate of the Task Force will initially terminate on 31 December 2007. Upon receiving a final report, the CSO could choose to prolong the co-operation within the framework of the CBSS.

Our guiding instrument is the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, (ETS nr 197, 2005). However, our predominant focus is on practical measures designed to combat human trafficking.

So far, we have reached a measure of success in strengthening regional cooperation and took concrete actions to facilitate the establishment of national actions plans or state programmes to fight trafficking in human beings in all participating countries. We also commission regular reports on trafficking from national rapporteurs or focal points.

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<sup>4</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 1 p. 14.

Among the specific initiatives implemented by our task force, I would like to mention the promotion of victim identification and recognition efforts and co-operation between embassies in Baltic Sea region capitals.

Our group follows in the footsteps of the Nordic-Baltic Group by putting all available information on the web. This way we can serve as a useful resource for information about steps taken at the national level.

I would like to mention once again active cooperation between embassies of participating states in the capitals of the Baltic Sea region countries. We all know how important it is to develop working contacts between all countries – destination, origin, transit – in the region. This network will also help to establish closer ties and better share best practices and useful experiences as well as give insight on latest trends.

With this view in mind, it is essential to educate diplomatic corps who work in countries of origin and transit. Training could be aimed at consular officers, who deal with potential victims and traffickers on a regular basis, and include practical elements designed to instruct officials how to respond to different situation they might encounter. Specifics could include the basic information regarding flows of the traffic, key national and international legal provisions, instructions on ways to assist victims on social, medical, legal assistance issues as well as safe return programmes to country of origin, when appropriate.

We are also active in the area of assisting victims in safe return programmes. A pilot project was initiated by the Nordic-Baltic task-force earlier: it was launched in 2005 and will be running until 2008. The project is intended to be a capacity building instrument and aims to strengthen and consolidate cooperation and information exchange among public authorities and NGOs within the region's countries and across borders. One of the project elements foresees the creation of shelters for human trafficking victims in Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius.

Our group has been active for the total of 6 months and in that period we already had two meetings. We have been busy coordinating and presenting ourselves to different international organizations.

Staying ahead with the newest developments in the field is very important for us, because we want to avoid duplication of functions or competition with other worthwhile initiatives. In this context, we have visited some of the European institutions in Brussels.

For the moment, we are concentrating on the Council of Europe Convention, which singles out education of consular officials as one of the key efforts in addressing the inadequacies of fight against trafficking. After the last meeting, all the participants left for their home countries with a “homework” – the need to look for funds in national capitals.

## **Comments & Questions**

**Vera Gracheva:** Who are your partners in Russia?

**Per Wallen:** Unfortunately, I don't remember the names at the moment, but I can tell you that we are dealing mainly with two institutions – the Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Security Bureau (FSB).

## **Children with foreign nationality arrested in Stockholm. Social workers' work to interview children.**

***Ms Karin Norlin, Stockholm City Outreach Unit for Youth.***

Thank you for inviting us to give a presentation at the meeting of National Contact Points. We find the proceedings of this conference very interesting and useful. I shall talk about the foreign children arrested in connection with committed crimes in Stockholm. A note of caution, all the statistics used in this presentation comes from our unit.

Our outreach unit is rather small: there are a total of 8 social workers in our organization. Six employees are working on the streets with children under 20 years old. These field workers usually work with young people in risk groups involved in prostitution, criminal activity, or drug abuse. However, the focus of our presentation today's is on two social workers who have their offices in a police unit located in central Stockholm.

I will say a few words about our work. The main task of our unit is to highlight children in need of assistance by the social welfare office. We are specifically commissioned to work with other law-enforcement agencies and determine the need of a particular child who remains in custody or is temporarily detained by the police for the social services. As a result, every child who meets our social workers has already violated the law and is in custody with the police. Having said that, I personally think that we should find other ways to reach out to them but under current circumstances it proves to be difficult.

The crimes that these children often commit are pick-pocketing, shop-lifting and so on. In 2001, we have encountered foreign children committing such crimes for the first time. Back then, most of them claimed to be simply tourists in Sweden. Since then – helped by many other institutions in Sweden and NGOs from the outside - we have undergone a steep learning curve. Thus, in 2004, the Swedish police have for the first time discovered an organized group of adults who used children from Chile to perpetrate crimes. The intelligence information came from tapping telephone conversations.

Turning to statistical information, I agree with people who talked here earlier - we have the same problem in establishing and verifying the age of detained children. The children from Chile that I mentioned had their own identification documents and were help-seeking, whereas in most other cases, quite on the contrary, children are reluctant to talk.

In June 2004, we have registered 23 unaccompanied foreign children: 17 boys and 6 girls. They came from different countries, namely, Chile, Italy, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Russia and Estonia. During 2005, I first met Lars Lööf and had an opportunity to discuss the problem we faced at our unit – properly identifying detained children. At that same time, the discussions within the social welfare system, similarly, concentrated on finding ways to verify the age of children.

In 2005, the number of children discovered by our unit fell to 9: 2 girls and 7 boys, coming from Lithuania, Russia, Poland and Romania. In the beginning of 2006, situation has changed for the worse – we discovered many foreign children. The police briefed us that organized adult criminals often work with these children. They work in one place for a couple of months, then move on to another place, this way avoiding unnecessary suspicion and reducing the chance of being caught.

Our statistics indicate that there is a noticeable surge of children involved in criminal activity at the beginning of the year, then they disappear and when the winter comes, they come back once again. We have speculated as to where they could be during this period from early spring to early winter. Perhaps in Germany? It would make sense, since the World Football Championship was held there that year?

Let's look at the break down of the statistics. During 2006, the youngest child was – we think – 11 and the oldest 17. In previous years, children we dealt with tended to be older, the youngest usually being 13-14 years old. It is difficult to provide a comparative analysis of the yearly statistics of detained children because we started recording some of the data only lately. So far, this year we have had only 3 children. We expect this number to increase around June.

I would like to discuss the phenomenon of child criminality. Our colleagues from other countries often tell us that child criminality and begging go hand in hand. Yet, this is not the case in Sweden. Let's look at one particular case, which is very typical for our unit. The police have discovered a girl, who was caught shop-lifting. Initially, we suspected that she was a victim of economic violence, but on closer investigation she turned out to be sexually exploited.

As I said before, in the beginning we saw children who were “criminal tourists”, whereas now we have come to a stage, where we see children who are victims of exploitation and violence. These children are often traumatized and are suffering on account of their exploitation. Therefore, when asking them questions, we should bear in mind what background they come from and in what kind of environment they find themselves on a daily basis. After all, a child is arrested for something, he is kept in a police precinct and we have very limited amount of time to do something about it. Of course, it would be better to communicate with these children in a safe, friendly environment, but for the moment we can only talk to them in a police unit.

I would also like to mention that everything we do, we usually do in a close cooperation with our colleagues from the police unit. Our mutual relations are very good. I must also note that without the assistance of the police we would not have a single case over all these years.

## **Comments & Questions**

**Galina Semia:** You have talked about your work with foreign children. What language do you speak in communicating with them? Of course, you need an interpreter, but you should also bear in mind that they come from other countries – countries that usually are very different from Sweden. As a result, they experience a great cultural shock. Being arrested by the police is just one of the things that contribute to their disorientation; the other thing is cultural shock. Could you say how you deal with this problem?

**Karin Norlin:** Yes, we use interpreters while interviewing children, but my colleague Rose Marie will tell you more about this after the lunch break.

**Signe Kaplan:** You have found Estonian children who committed crimes in Stockholm on two occasions, but we have never heard anything about these cases. My question then is do you inform representatives of the countries of origin? If you do, who specifically do you inform?

**Karin Norlin:** We always make an effort to contact representatives of countries, from which detained children are originating. It is, however, a difficult process: very often we cannot properly identify a child. Since we meet them at police units, charged with some crime, many of them provide false names. Besides, unlike in the case of the Red Cross asylum center in Denmark, these children are not seeking asylum, they are not in contact with any other authorities in Sweden. So it is difficult for us to verify the information they provide through other governmental authorities.

**Signe Kaplan:** Even if you don't have reliable information, you could still make an effort to inform the National Contact point.

**Ruth Soonets:** I would like to know how are you working with detained children. You mentioned that there are 8 social workers and you visit police to talk to these children, but why do you interview them there? Why don't you interview detained children in a more friendly environment, for example, at your office? I would also like to know about daily activities of your organization.

**Karin Norlin:** Probably, I was not clear enough in my presentation in explaining our structure. We have 6 field-workers and 2 social workers who have their offices within a police unit. The police allow us to be present when they summon a child for an interview. However, we have no right to bring a child to other places. In some cases they are held in custody, and then we are allowed to visit and talk to them, but only at the premises of the police unit.

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** What happens to children who are caught begging or stealing? Are they released? They are minors, aren't they? I suspect that in some cases they are not victims of trafficking, but are in the country together with their parents.

We have a similar problem in Poland: many Romanian families arrive and are begging in clearly visible locations, for example, near churches. Of course, in many cases both – parents and children are living in miserable conditions and you can clearly see that. But there is also another part of the story. Begging is rumored to be a whole industry. Impoverished beggars, whom we see on the streets, are sometimes driven to work by wealthy criminals in flashy Mercedes limousines.

Another question, just out of curiosity, is about the country of origin of the victims of trafficking. You have mentioned children from Chile in your presentation and so did our Danish colleague in the presentation before that. Why is it that Chile – one of the most prosperous and wealthy countries in Latin America – figures so prominently in your findings? Does it have to do with special travel arrangements or some other factors?

**Karin Norlin:** I would like to start answering with the last question. I don't know why Chile figures so prominently. The reason I mentioned Chile in my presentation was that it was the first case when we managed to prove that children were forced to criminal activities by adult criminals.

As for your second question, concerning children begging on city streets, yes, this problem starts to appear in Sweden as well, even though, until now it was a relatively isolated phenomenon.

As to the fact of children and parents committing crimes together, in the cases we deal with, most children remain unaccompanied. In the past we have had cases – not many of them, but we had few – where adults would come to the police station and pick up children. Back then we assumed that these people were parents of children. However, since we became aware of the instances where adult criminals exploit children to perpetrate crimes, we started enforcing stricter rules. Now we do not allow for children to be picked by adults unless we have firm evidence that these people are the child's parent.

I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that my unit is not the unit which provides support for the children further down the line. We simply highlight children for local social security offices and draw their attention to the needs and risks that these children face. Afterwards, many different things can happen to these children. Similarly, the Social service takes different measures to help them. Each time it depends on a concrete case. It is also a fact that very often these children escape.

**Mariana Yevsyokova:** What is the age of criminal responsibility in Sweden? What about police officers who are working with children – are they specially trained?

**Karin Norlin:** The age of criminal responsibility is 15 years. As to the police, there are special units for working with young people who commit crimes. These units have a strong social component, they are closely involved with children. Yet, they are not specially trained to deal with trafficking issues. Trafficking issues are investigated by the special unit. Its main focus is sexual exploitation crimes and – mostly – adult victims or older children, aged 17-18. My wish would be for this unit to extend the scope of its work and focus on younger children perpetrating crimes.

Returning to your earlier questions, I would also like to add something: If a contact person in your country was not contacted about the cases I referred to in my presentation, it is usually because we could contact parents or some other authorities in your country, or the problem has been solved by other means.

## **A social worker's report from meetings with children, possible victims of trafficking.**

***Ms. Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm, Stockholm City Outreach Unit for Youth.***

We deal with foreign children on the same basis as we would deal with children from Sweden. In legal terms, the Swedish welfare office has the responsibility for all the children (not just Swedish nationals) on the territory of Sweden.

Usually, we are contacted by the police when a child has committed a crime. The most frequent crimes are pick-pocketing and shop-lifting. Our task is to talk to a child and make sure that his needs are taken into account. We sit down and listen without interrupting when police interrogates a child about a crime. What we can do is to give a child the right information and link him/her to the right social office.

After police interrogation we talk to a child in a separate room without police being present. The police trusts us and, in any case, we do not talk about the crime with the child.

In such emergency situations, we try to find out as much as we can about the child. We explain who we are. We ask them for their name and age. Usually, a child says something to the police, and then says something else to us, which gives us a chance to compare the information. We ask them what country they come from, who are their parents, how to reach them. When did they arrive in Sweden? What are they further plans? Do they want to stay here? How did they come to Sweden? Do they have a return ticket? Did they travel alone or with somebody? We also ask them about documents, identification, and their luggage.

In talking with children we noticed that answers are surprisingly similar. Most often children tell us that they are tourists. "I live in the hotel", they tell us. Yet, they have problems explaining how to get there. They don't know the addresses of the residences.

When children have passport/luggage, it is usually kept by their “friend”, whose location they cannot specify. Though, it is only rarely that they have any luggage at all.

Children claim to arrive in Sweden by bus or train. They say that they have arrived “very recently”, usually from Denmark, Germany, or Spain. They have around 100 euros and the reason for their journey is – they heard that Stockholm is a beautiful city or they want “to see snow”. Some of the children are well-dressed, others not. Upon further questioning, they sometimes admit using drugs.

If they say that they are older than 15, they are arrested and kept in custody for three days before an appointment with the judge. The trial usually takes 3-4 weeks to reach the verdict. That is where we get a chance to visit them repetitively in custody. We use this period to “open them up”, collect more accurate information. Children we are dealing with are very suspicious towards authorities, but we leave them with our contacts in case they change their mind.

We sometimes try to ask questions like: “When was the last time you slept in a bed?” and “How long ago was it?” or “What does your mother look like?” since such questions can help to better understand what is going on in the child’s mind.

A few children – maybe, 2 or 3 – told us that they were promised a house in Romania by a man. They are driven by an adult to Sweden, their money and passports are taken away, they are taught to pick pocket and are intimidated: If they defect and cooperate with authorities, their families will get hurt.

All the info we collect from children gets attached to a file and sent to the local social service offices. After the trial, 3-4 weeks later, they are usually released and sentenced to pay a fine. Yet, since they spend all this time in the custody, they do not need to pay this fine. Afterwards, the social welfare service tries to help them, provides them with shelter and assistance. Sometimes even transfer them to closed facilities providing a child with a chance to reflect. However, the most typical outcome is that children run away on the first opportunity.

In some cases we meet the same children in a police precinct. They come back to Stockholm, but when caught give another name and change their story. It is difficult to help these children, since they have a low level of motivation.

The advantage of our organization is that we are located within the police, so we can cooperate more effectively with the police and we have a high level of trust between ourselves: the police knows what we are doing and we know what they are doing.

## **Comments & Questions**

**Galina Semia:** Do you work within the police station? Does your police unit have a database with information about detained children? Or, perhaps, the police have a

universal database? So, the next time a child is detained, you can simply log on and check all the previous info about a particular child.

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** Yes, the police have such a database. When a child is detained, his fingerprints are taken. So, the second time a child is caught, s/he is identified by checking fingerprints. The police units also cooperate with law-enforcement agencies in other countries and, therefore, can obtain useful information from their foreign counterparts.

**Vera Gracheva:** I would like to ask about non-punishment clause in your national legislation? Do you have such a clause? It stipulates that in cases, where a crime suspect is believed to be a victim of trafficking, the police do not charge him/her with crime. What is the situation in Sweden? If there is a petty crime committed by a victim of human trafficking, is it followed up by a criminal investigation?

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** I would say that, in general, when it comes to trafficking or sexual exploitation, police usually concentrates on investigating these crimes and not other petty misdemeanors. The police unit where we work, on the other hand, is trained to work with young criminals, not victims of trafficking. So we try to highlight the instances where suspected criminals are also victims of trafficking, we stress how important it is to keep this fact in mind, when investigating a crime.

As to non-punishment clause, I think it is something we still have to discuss in Sweden. If the kids are suspected of being involved in shop-lifting and they arrive at the police station, they are investigated for this crime, notwithstanding they status as a victim of human trafficking.

**Evaldas Karmaza:** I liked your presentation. One reason – it is very new for me to hear about social workers being embedded within the police unit. I would like to introduce this idea back in Lithuania, but can you help me in this task and explain what important benefits such cooperation provides?

My second question is on procedure of your work. Do your workers always work in a couple with an interpreter? How do they work with a child?

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** You know, interviews that we have with children usually take a long time. We sit together with a child in a separate room and discuss. Police officers can see us taking a long time to understand a child; on the one hand, it brings up curiosity in them, on the other, they tend to trust us more.

Over time, both sides develop confidence in each other and that makes cooperating with the police much easier. After some time, police officers know our role, we know theirs, so we can work together with one purpose in mind – to help a young child.

Besides, by being based in a police unit, our social workers receive so much information, which would not be available if we were to work outside of the police unit. To illustrate

the point, on some occasions the police arrest somebody in the street and instead of summoning a drunken teenager to the police unit, they call us and refer this young person to us. This is one example of positive cooperation.

**Signe Kaplan:** Previously, you have told us that reports prepared on the basis of interviews with children are sent to local social welfare offices. Yet, the children you are dealing with come from different countries, they are not residing in Sweden, so which municipality will you send their reports to?

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** Usually, we refer them to the closest social welfare office to the place of custody. At the moment we work with two police units, so we send all our reports to the offices located within the territory of these police precincts.

**Signe Kaplan:** I also wanted to ask about custody. You said that children above 15 are kept in custody before appearing in front of the judge? Could you elaborate on this procedure? Is it a temporary court order? In which facility are these children kept?

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** Most often, children are arrested and transferred to Södermalm's police station, where they get detained for three days and then – if court decides – they are kept in the police custody until the court reaches the final verdict in their trial.

**Signe Kaplan:** In that case, I am a bit lost. You know, that detained children have no place to stay, no relatives, no friends or other ties, and yet – after the court decision is taken – you simply allow them to walk away freely. How is that possible?

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** No, you have misunderstood me. While children are in custody, the social office employees try to find a place where these children can stay, sleep, be fed after leaving the police. Children can be referred to emergency families, transferred to closed centers or even put up in a hotel. Yet, even when they are transferred to closed facilities, they still manage to run away.

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** I would like to ask about dismissed trials: suppose that after conducting an interrogation, the police fails to gather enough evidence to proceed and allows a child to walk off. What happens with these children then? Are they left unattended? Or do the police follow them? I, personally, imagine that at least in some cases such children could be linked to criminal organizations and investigation would benefit a great deal from tracking the movements of such a child. So what happens after the charges are dismissed and a child released?

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** It depends on a particular case. In some cases, where social workers suspect that this child is a victim of human trafficking and there is a basis to believe that a child will flee, they can decide to transfer him/her to a closed facility in order to gain time. During this time, social welfare office gets in touch with representatives from child's country of origin and tries to collect more information about him/her and his/her background.

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** So assistance provided to a child is involuntary? Is that correct?

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** The social welfare office provides both kinds of assistance: there are places, where a child stays voluntarily, and then there are closed facilities.

**Galina Semia:** You have mentioned that your social workers stay and work within police unit, but I have an ethical question related to that: everything is nice, when you and the police share common objectives, but I imagine that in some situations the police needs to obtain information from a child in order to prosecute a case. If they turn for such information to you, this would clearly put a child at a disadvantage. So what do you do in such situation?

**Rose-Marie Löfvenius Edholm:** Well, I would like to make it clear from the beginning - we are not allowed to discuss crime with a child. We are social workers and our task is to help a child, not quiz him/her on the circumstances, under which a crime has been committed. So, in reality, we almost never have any information on crimes committed and therefore do not face ethical dilemmas in dealing with the police.

## **Mapping cases of trafficking in children. Presentation of the BSR CACVT project made possible through funding from EUs Daphne programme.**

***Mr Svante Weyler, journalist and publisher..***

I have been a journalist for half of my life – working on cultural and political issues in Sweden and Central and Eastern Europe. I used to speak Russian fluently, but haven't really used it in the last couple of years. I am new to the field of human trafficking. Hopefully, that will provide me with an opportunity to give you a fresh, outside perspective.

When I was suggested to complete the mapping exercise, I did not realize what a difficult problem it was. I imagined that there were plenty of statistics and all those government authorities would provide me with all the necessary numbers. However, reality was very different.

I have done interviews with many representatives, in many countries, on different levels – from the ministries to social workers in NGOs and government agencies. The idea of mapping exercise was to extend it throughout a year, so we can catch cases and follow their development. For example, to see what happens to children who are caught up in

trafficking. What happens to them before they become victims? What happens after they are freed?

It turned out to be a difficult task. I would have to spend more than a year to follow a typical cross-border case. I will present one story from Donetsk. My aim is to present you with an incentive – for you to read the story and think – could I have prevented this young person from drifting into the trafficking network?

*Nadezhda from Donetsk.* She is now 18. She was raised in a suburb of Donetsk. It is a big city, it has a population of 1,300,000. Not completely the depressive and forlorn city we are expecting to see in the East of Ukraine, but a bustling city with a lot of things going on. Nadezhda spent a great part of her life living with distant relatives. But at 15 her aunt has died, so Nadezhda had to come back to her mother. Mother met some woman in the market, who offered to take her girl as a shop-assistant in Moscow, and agreed to send Nadezhda off to a distant city.

Just before leaving for Moscow, Nadezhda and her mother were told that there was a problem with a shop-assistant's job, but she would be offered something else instead. Nadezhda hesitated, but her mother made her go. The girl met a pimp already on a train, who took her directly to an apartment in Moscow, where she worked 3 months in difficult conditions.

After 3 months, she managed to escape with the help of a compassionate client who paid for her ticket to Ukraine. On the border she presented herself to custom officers. They believed her story and called IOM bureau. IOM got in touch and put her up in the hospital because she was very badly hurt. She spent a whole month recovering in the hospital. IOM found an organization in Donetsk that provides assistance to women on a variety of issues and has put Nadezhda in touch with them. Women at this organization took Nadezhda in, reintegrated her and worked with her mother.

Now at 18, she managed to finish school, is married and has a baby who is 7 months old. I asked Nadezhda if she can talk about her past experiences to her husband. "No." she said, "I can't talk to him and I don't want to talk to him about that". Girl's mother did not believe the story and continues to blame Nadezhda for the things that happened to her.

The story is illustrative. Why did Nadezhda's mother believe the woman on the market? Why was it so easy for Nadezhda to travel to Russia? Why is there a market for 15 year old girls in Moscow?

I also met other girls/organizations working with traffic victims and I can tell that they are doing tremendous job, with extreme dedication and extremely little money.

I would like to ask some more questions and identify certain problems we could discuss. Some of the problems we already mentioned today, notably, the lack of reliable statistics.

The second problem is that trafficking is a social phenomenon that crosses borders. Yet, at the same time, sometimes it fails to cross borders, or crosses the wrong borders, for example, the border between Belarus and Russia. Belarusian legislation on border crossing is very strict, but real attitude is, on the contrary, very lax.

There is a definition problem in here: how do we define trafficking? As prostitution?

An ethical problem. Should an international body be preoccupied only with cross-border trafficking and leave national problems for locals to solve? For example, I got an impression that internal trafficking is a much bigger problem for Lithuania than international trafficking.

Poland has mentioned that the main push for initiatives came from the NGOs. Sweden historically was similar – there civil society has pushed the state. Yet, recently we have seen deterioration in the state of NGOs in some countries in the region. Notably, Belarus and Russia have passed new laws on the status of NGOs. In Russia, the Government is not very fond of foreign-funded NGOs, but all the NGOs operating and working with street children in St. Petersburg are funded by foreign money. So where does such development leave us? Similarly, newly introduced laws have cut dramatically the number of NGOs operating in Belarus.

SIDA, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, has been providing a lot of money for a variety of social projects in Russia. Russia was one of the biggest recipients of Development Aid from Sweden. Yet, upon assuming office, the new Swedish Government said that this situation has to change very quickly. Except for one water cleaning project, no more money will be provided by SIDA to Russia, since it is a rich country now. This means that all those NGOs that relied on the Swedish money will have to find other sources of financing. Sweden was considered to be a reliable donor, but is perhaps not so any longer.

Or take an example of the Baltic States. Did anybody ask you about the exit strategy? How will you finance the projects once development aid will be withdrawn?

In this context, I would like to come back to the woman who headed a women's NGO in Donetsk. She was running an organization that was doing 7 projects generating money, but none of them lasted longer than 8 months. That woman was working full time raising money. I see some similar people present here. The interesting thing is that one of the big donors in Ukraine is the IOM office, but they said they never work with such short-term projects, their project life-span has to be at least 2-3 years.

What happens in reality, if you have a funding for a 1 year project? You basically work for 6 months and then start to apply and look for other sources of financing. But it means that there is a lot of risk when it comes to sustainability of championed initiatives. And at the same time, there are no state municipal institutions which can replace the NGOs in doing the work that they do.

There is another interesting relationship here and it concerns the question of how you raise money? How do you attract donors? I talked to one very experienced woman, who said that there are 1,000 street children in St Petersburg and advised me not to believe anyone claiming a higher number. Later in the afternoon, I met a brilliant guy who was very good at fundraising and he said that there are 30,000 children on the streets of the city. Maybe his figure was influenced by the need to secure donor funding. This makes me think that donor culture distorts the overall picture.

Let's discuss the case of Marijampole, it is an interesting city in Lithuania. It has a population of 50,000. Today, it is the biggest used car market in Europe. That is where western cars meet their Eastern buyers. It is interesting that Marijampole is known for its huge sex-market. Every weekend you can buy cars and sex. Anybody could be in the know. If you take so many men and put them in a place where they buy cars, they would also start asking where they can buy women.

While visiting Marijampole, I met two women from Caritas: they are tremendous, dedicated social workers. Through them I met Laura. Laura had a sad smile and reflected heavily on every question. Her father died when she was 5, mother met another guy and left her, just like that. She was pretty developed at a very early age. At 13, she fell in love with a man from Kaunas. He abused her sexually and in all other ways. At 15 she had an offer from a friend who suggested her to become a prostitute, but she refused. Through another friend she heard about Caritas office, she went there and soon started working with other abused women.

Laura tried to take her life 5 or 7 times. She will never trust any man again. She has never met a girl who went into prostitution on her own will. She says, "those girls feel totally worthless, they feel depressed" and it was the same way with her. Before meeting Giedre, who is now her colleague at Caritas, she had nobody to talk about their experience. Now, she feels stronger and she also wants to change and help others.

The point is to put all these stories on the agenda for you.

## **Comments & Questions**

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** I admired your interesting and colorful presentation. However, I found one – maybe seeming – contradiction: first you said that NGOs are very active in combating human trafficking and, therefore, should be promoted and given additional funds. But contradiction lies in the fact that when NGOs come looking for funds, they twist reality, they fool donors by providing inflated numbers. So how do you resolve this contradiction? Maybe it is useful to go through the Government in resolving these problems, after all?

**Svante Weyler:** I cannot give you a ready made recipe on how to resolve this issue. In my mind, when NGOs are distorting the picture, they are not the ones to blame, it is donor policies that are to be blamed. All too often, donors simply want to hear one

specific story. For example, internal trafficking is considered to be an internal problem – “it is your problem” – whereas international trafficking immediately gets a warm response – “oh, let us help you” – from donors.

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** But if we allow for this practice to continue, it will lead to very irresponsible results – money will be channeled for the wrong purposes and to wrong actors.

**Svante Weyler:** Well, that is why I have brought up this problem. Maybe, by focusing on this issue we will be able to clear certain obstacles and concentrate on real problems clamoring for our attention.

**Ruth Soonets:** To my mind, statistics doesn’t exist as such, even governments do not have reliable statistics and, therefore, exaggeration is not something extraordinary. It is a part of everyday competition for resources and attention. However, what seems to me more important is that we are forgetting about the primary responsibility of the states to provide assistance to trafficking victims, assist their reintegration into society. Donors can help and NGO representatives are certainly thankful for that, but donors alone cannot provide sustainability. Only when there is national ownership of anti-trafficking initiatives, will there be sustainability.

## **Discussion National Contact Points, Group 1**

***Chaired by Ruth Soonets, (Tartu Child Support Centre, Estonia)***

**Ruth Soonets:** I will ask you all to comment on the topics that are mentioned in the paper.

**Nina Hanneman:** In Denmark guardians are appointed for any unaccompanied child coming to the attention of the authorities in any manner. For victims of trafficking, or where there is a strong suspicion that the child may be a victim of trafficking, the guardian is a professional person with more in depth knowledge on children and protection of children. An individual action plan is made for each child using the child him/her self and the guardian as a resource in the formulation of such a plan. At the moment there are only 26 unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Denmark.

**Mariana Yevsyokova:** In Ukraine there are approximately 100 000 children in the street so there is a major problem of recognising those that may be victims of trafficking that do not come to the attention of the authorities through the accepted reporting channels. In principle guardians for children without a legal guardian are appointed, even though this may take some time. Children that are without guardians are in shelters, internats or in institutions together with children that for several different reasons are deprived of parental care.

**Ingrid Åkerman:** In Sweden guardians are appointed within one day after the recognition of the child as being unaccompanied. Children, asylum seeking or not, should then be placed in care with the local municipality. These are the responsible authorities caring for children in need of support, be they Swedish or foreign. If the child applies for asylum a lawyer is also appointed looking after the legal rights of the child in the asylum process. Sweden has seen a major increase in asylum seeking children the last year, 856 children applied for asylum last year. Most of them from Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Marina Novikova:** In Russia there are large numbers of irregular or illegal immigrants. Many of which are children that have left their families and are forced to stay on the street begging or otherwise finding whatever way they can to sustain themselves. Children without care are often found around railway stations in Russia, like Kursk station in Moscow where they resell tickets. Several borders between Russia and CIS countries are transparent and therefore travel across these into the big cities in Moscow is uncontrolled and heavy. Unaccompanied children and children that may be victims of trafficking turn up in transit shelters run by the city government in Moscow and St Petersburg for example. Legal changes are necessary to curb the illegal use of documents. To find a false document is easy in the cities. The crossing of borders should be monitored closer. NGOs should strive for existing legislation to be implemented.

**Mariana Yevsyokova:** It is true that it is too easy to cross some borders with a child. Not enough efforts are being put into identifying if a child is really the child of the adult bringing him/her across the border.

**Vassili Yermolov:** NGOs may claim the number of unaccompanied children to be too high and the government authorities will claim it to be lower. Difficult to know the extent of the issue.

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** The government will deal only with verifiable data. As it is now it is difficult to know the extent of the issues we are discussing.

**Heikki Sariola:** Unaccompanied children in Finland were exceptionally numerous in 2005: 220 children came to Finland seeking asylum. They are placed in asylum centres. No case of trafficking of children has been taken to court in Finland. Some cases of Chinese girls where there was a suspicion of trafficking were an issue in Finland. All in all, trafficking does not seem to be a frequent phenomenon in Finland. Trafficking for prostitution may happen from Asia. No substantiated cases from Russia or Estonia.

**Inga Dobelniece:** No case of children arriving as unaccompanied in Latvia. Latvia is not a destination country but more a country of origin. Legislation is now so strict, the penalty for trafficking of children including the confiscation of property and this may have deterred criminals to take the risk of trafficking children. The maximum penalty is set at 20 years imprisonment. Latvia is working on involving border guards in fighting trafficking more focused especially with the entrance of Latvia into the Schengen area.

Training of border guards in recognising and identifying victims of trafficking becomes important. A special unit within the police works on the issue.

**Marina Novikova:** It is a huge problem that many officials do not know what trafficking is. Even specialist are uncertain as to what constitutes trafficking and what does not. This is an indication to the amount of training needed on the general topic and on taking care of children.

**Ruth Soonets:** Thank you all for your valuable updates on the situation in your countries. Can we now look at identifying gaps relating to children that are trafficked?

**Marina Yevsyokova:** There are no special dedicated services for children victims of trafficking. No institutions with the specific mandate to care for them.

**Ingrid Åkerman:** We would need to disseminate wider the knowledge that now only exists in a few places. All over Sweden there should be enough expertise to be able to extend adequate services or find the place where care and protection could be ensured. A dissemination problem. Another issue is to increase knowledge on how to identify victims of trafficking for non-sexual purposes.

**Nina Hanneman:** One major challenge is the fact that we have too little to offer these children. They are usually not help-seeking. The uncertainty of their future, once identified in Denmark as a host country, poses an obstacle to them accepting assistance. This turns us to the topic of return or not. Return to their country of origin.

**Rose-Marie Lövvenius Edholm:** Is it always good to stay on in the host country?

**Agnieszka Kosowicz:** We also need to look at children that cannot return. Where we do not succeed in identifying the parents and where the host country is at a loss as to what to offer. Should there be provisions then for safe custody somewhere?

**Marina Novikova:** Should we attempt at developing a set of criteria when assessing whether a child should be returned or not? I believe this merits further considerations. Should a rehabilitation programme be implemented before a child is being sent back? There are naturally several services in all countries but they are patchy in some countries.

**Mariana Yevsyokova:** A gap I would like to highlight is the lack of child friendly witness procedures when a child is interviewed both as a victim of a crime and as a witness for the prosecution of a crime.

**Inga Dobelniece:** It would be ideal to have common procedures in place in several countries but this would take too much of our common resources to put in place. I see however room for increased training of judges and prosecutors.

**Andrei Solodovnikov:** The situation is not rosy in Belarus but the situation has in recent years somewhat improved. Children are not as visible as before in the street. In Belarus

the year 2007 is the year of the child. Assessing the situation we find that the family of origin is very often the root cause of what happens to a child and we must put efforts in that direction. In Belarus there is now a government decree to take additional measures assisting children in vulnerable families. A decisive approach has been taken on this and phenomena related to vulnerability in families such as alcoholism. Centres that would detect vulnerable families may be in place soon. In Belarus, a child can be in a shelter at any given point in time. Children in shelters can be of Russian origin, from other CIS countries and even from Asia. Most of these children are returned to their country of origin as soon as their nationality has been established. Belarus does not have a border with Russia. There is a major flow of girls looking for new opportunities in Russia that fall victim of Russian traffickers. The other borders are controlled. Rehabilitation of some children going abroad and returning will be provided with care, often by NGOs. Number of NGOs in Belarus working on the topic is limited. Many of the NGO projects are finance by Sweden.

**Ruth Soonets:** More attention in Estonia is now paid to general support for families in order for them to be able to care for their children.

**Marina Novikova:** The size of Russia is a challenge. The structure of the cooperation across such a vast domain is challenging in itself. The need for cooperation between different structures are difficult since many work with different plans and have different appreciation of the size of any given problem related to children, be they migrating or living in vulnerable or at-risk families. The cooperation between government authorities and agencies and the NGOs are sometimes in place but often there is mutual distrust, something which is a tragedy. An obvious gap is the national coordination of resources in order for the countries to respond to the needs of children.

**Mariana Yevsyokova:** Legislation is an issue I would like to raise as one gap. It is difficult to find legal initiatives attempting at reducing the demand for sexual services from children or the demand for result of other forms of exploitation such as cheap or free labour. In Ukraine there is no law against child pornography. Some international documents and treaties are not recognised. The criminalisation of using sexual services could be looked at. In Ukraine, buying sex from a child prostitute is not illegal. Abusing a child, yes, but not purchasing sexual services.

## **Discussion National Contact Points, Group 2**

***Chaired by Salla Konsti (Finnish Ministry of Interior, Immigration Department).***

**Galina Semia:** Should we discuss all the questions or concentrate on one of the questions? I personally, find the issue of a national contact center the most interesting. What is its structure? Role? Procedures? We don't have such a thing in Russia, so I would be very interested to discuss that.

**Signe Kaplan:** I would like to talk about foreign children. At the moment, we don't have any registered cases with children from other countries, but we are preparing for such scenario. We have already had two minors who came to Estonia as asylum seekers. They live in proper facilities and there are no problems with ensuring their well-being. As to foreign children, they would be placed in special centers located in Tartu and other places. The centers could provide them with all the needed services and we also work hard on training staff members at such centers.

In case where children commit crimes, we have 4 regional special prosecutors for investigating crimes involving children. In Tallinn there is a special department in police for children and throughout the whole country there are specially-equipped interview rooms for children.

**Salla Konsti:** I guess we would be interested in hearing more about national contact points.

**Galina Semia:** Yes, for example who pays your salary?

**Signe Kaplan:** The Ministry of Social Affairs was designated to be a contact point. The ministry did not really want to be a contact point, because the police have much more power to help the children in need. We do not get extra financing for this responsibility from the state budget. It is just a part of my work.

We have other institutions who work with implementation of the action plan, so in reality I don't see how anti-trafficking programmes work. The reason for entrusting me with the role of a contact point was different: I deal with cases involving Estonian children in other countries, for example, parents fighting over children's custody, so it was a natural evolution to put me in charge of children victims of trafficking. After all, I already have established good contacts with the foreign authorities, embassies and so on.

**Aliaksandr Alioksa:** I am based at the Department for Control of Narcotics and I am also in charge of trafficking in people. In the Republic of Belarus, like in Estonia, there are some trafficking channels going to the Western states. Accordingly, we have to have plans for dealing with unaccompanied foreign children found in the territory of our country.

In 2006, there were 6 cases, where children applied for the status of asylum seekers. Those were unaccompanied children. In cases, where entire family asks for asylum, we do not register the number of children separately. We also had some cases, where criminals brought kidnapped Moldovan children. Fortunately, we were able to identify the children and return them back.

While the work on human trafficking issues is coordinated by the Ministry of Interior, many other institutions also participate in these activities. We develop programmes to

combat trafficking in people. We also implement some criminal prosecution measures against the traffickers.

There are around 15 NGOs providing active help and assistance to victims of human trafficking in Belarus. The most active among them is La Strada organization. Last year we organized an international conference on the questions of human trafficking. It was a successful event and it proved a good way to strengthen the cooperation with other countries. In July this year, we plan to organize a training seminar for staff members involved in combating human trafficking crimes.

**Vera Gracheva:** In the case of Moldovan children who were repatriated back, did you make risk assessment before returning them home?

**Aliaksandr Alioksa:** Of course, we did consider this question. Yet after initial deliberations it was decided to repatriate the children back and reunite them with their families. You have to remember they were kidnapped and smuggled out of the country.

**Sabine Herzig:** We don't have a national contact point in Germany, so, similarly to my Russian colleague, I am very interested in the experience of other countries in establishing national contact center.

As to the statistics, from October 2005 till June 2006, we had registered 75 unaccompanied foreign children on the territory of Germany. The assistance to these children is usually provided by local child welfare offices.

**Anne Melchior:** We heard about Danish experiences today. My colleague already talked about that. Denmark is a destination and a transit country. We have recently prepared a new action plan.

**Olena Kustova:** Regarding trafficking of children in Ukraine, it is a country of origin, maybe a little transit. Internal trafficking also exists in Ukraine. I heard about the cases of trafficking children to Russia, because there are porous borders between these two countries. Around the area of Luhansk one can cross a border without any documents.

As to relevant legislation, Ukraine is now in full compliance with the Palermo Protocol.

The institutions responsible for contact point and implementing plan to combat human trafficking is the Ministry of Family Youth and Sports.

Who provides care and assistance to children, victims of trafficking? These are mainly NGOs, almost all of them deal simultaneously with adult and children victims of trafficking.

**Arturs Vaisla:** Latvia is in a specific situation. Until now, we did not have any cases of trafficking involving foreign nationals. We have enacted certain legal amendments in 2001 introducing harsher penalties for trafficking of children – perpetrators risk being

imprisoned for 10-15 years and having all their property confiscated. In contrast, trafficking involving adults calls for imprisonment term half that length.

We focused on working with media and informing the society at large about these sanctions and we believe our efforts bore some positive results. Thus, we registered only 2 cases involving children in 2003 and 2004. In 2005, there were no registered cases involving trafficking of minors or children. In 2006, there was one case involving a Lithuanian girl trafficked from Riga to London. After being tipped off, Latvian police staged an operation and released the girl. Latvian perpetrators were sentenced, but, as far as we know, our colleagues in London did nothing about Albanian pimps who were involved in this case.

Similarly to other CBSS countries we have anti-trafficking programme in place. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for coordinating the programme, while all line ministries – as well as NGOs and IOs – are involved in implementing activities included in the programme. So far, we have been happy with the progress of the programme activities.

To reflect on our national experience in fighting trafficking, I would like to note that Latvia has had a special police unit charged with investigating human trafficking crimes in place since 1989. The unit produces some very good results. We also have introduced a special course on human trafficking in the Police Academy. Cadets are taught to collect evidence, perform standard investigative actions, are informed about institutions and organizations to be contacted in human trafficking cases.

**Erica Neiglick:** I am representing the Ministry of Justice, more specifically the Department for Migration and Asylum Policy. Acting as a national contact point takes up just small fraction of my time and duties. Most of my time is spent working with other issues concerning children and migration.

What are our duties as national contact points? We are supposed to be acting as information channels among different countries. If for example an authority in Sweden is planning to send a child back to his/her home country, we can get involved with the task of researching what kind of reception opportunities are available for that child. If Swedish authorities do not manage to locate parents or relatives, they are obliged to identify another point of return before they can send the child back. In such situations, they can contact me, and I can contact the national contact point in the destination country to see what kind of possibilities are present there.

My second task as a national contact point, is to convene a meeting with Swedish actors, twice a year, in order to exchange information and keep each other updated on trends and each others work. I would say that people participating in such meeting form a very informal network, which nevertheless is effective.

Well, that was my official job description as a national contact point. In reality, we could benefit of more contact with national authorities. For at the moment, I am mostly

contacted by students who are doing research on related issues. There were only two real cases where I have been contacted so far, though, that may have to do with the fact that I have been in this position for only 6 months.

As to statistics, we had 400 unaccompanied children seeking asylum in 2005, and 820 in 2006. As you see, the figure doubled. A lot of it has to do with the developments in Iraq.

**Salla Konsti:** I can tell you that in Finland it is the Ministry of the Interior who is acting as a national contact point. As Ericka has already pointed out, being a national contact point is just a small part of our duties and, yes, we are not contacted too often. In 2005, there were 220 cases of unaccompanied foreign children registered inside the country. This number fell to 112 in 2006. However, the recent developments in Somalia might increase the figure again by the end of the year. Yes, in case you don't know, a majority of foreign children seeking asylum come to Finland from Somalia, Iraq and other hotspots from around the world.

**Maria Pamula:** I am representing UNHCR Office in Poland, the focal point of my activities are children and asylum issues. Each year we register around 80 cases of unaccompanied children stopped at the border by customs officials. Out of this number only 16 to 19 children eventually apply for asylum. To the best of my knowledge, at the moment there are 9 such cases under consideration in Poland.

**Evaldas Karmaza:** Lithuanian national contact point is based in the Ministry of the Interior. Unfortunately, he could not attend this meeting. I, however, think that he is a very appropriate person to act as a contact point, for he is also leading the national programme for fighting human trafficking – so we see a positive overlap of functions in here. I will not be able to inform you about the number of cases involving unaccompanied foreign children registered annually in Lithuania. As far as I know, such cases are rare. We do, however, have appropriate facilities to accommodate such children should there be a need.

**Katarzyna Fenik:** Our organization acted as a national contact point for three years, until very recently, when this arrangement has been changed. Now national contact point is based in the Ministry of Education, his name is Tadeusz Trzaskowski – you have met him earlier today. As to our NGO, we continue to implement activities foreseen in the national anti-trafficking programme. I can remark that our cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Security is very productive.

**Galina Semia:** Thank you very much for sharing your experiences. Just to summarize, a person acting as a national contact point performs his duties while working at the Ministry, in addition to his other functions. While the choice of the Ministry differs from country to country, the Ministry of the Interior is involved most frequently.

However, as I understand it, being a national contact point demands a lot of energy and time – a person has to follow latest developments, assemble necessary information,

prepare regular reports, analyze what is happening in neighboring countries as well as provide information to the public and the media. How do you manage to combine all this workload with your regular duties?

**Erica Neiglick:** I might have been misleading in my interlude, but I want to set the record straight – being a national contact point is not a complex job. We are not the ones talking to children and handling their cases, we simply deal with inquiries from other countries and provide information to national authorities, when needed.

**Galina Semia:** From what I know, earlier we used to have national coordinators, who are high-level officials chairing inter-ministerial commission on trafficking issues. There was also a national *rapporteur* – usually an independent expert monitoring a situation inside the country and reporting to the Government and Parliament. Now we also have a national contact point. What is his/her role? Does (s)he simply refer information? Or is he also responsible for establishing active cross-border ties?

**Signe Kaplan:** Perhaps, I can add a word. In the beginning, some 10 years ago, we simply had one national coordinator who did pretty much all the work with human trafficking. The main emphasis of the work performed by national coordinator was coordination of efforts aimed at preventing children who are at risk of sexual exploitation. Over time, as we talked with our counterparts in other countries, we started noticing that the problem of street children, trafficked children or sexually-exploited children are basically the same in all the countries.

So, to increase the efficiency of our national efforts as well as strengthen international, cross-border cooperation, we needed a structure that would enable us to communicate effectively with actors in other countries. As well as have a person who would be in contact with everybody inside the country. To illustrate my point, even if we do not know much about Estonian children detained in Sweden, just having statistical or general information could already help. Maybe by knowing what region a child comes from we would be able to locate somebody who could take care of him or, at least, inform a local community about such case.

**Per Wallen:** I would like to ask you a hypothetical question – “Would it help to have the same contact point for adult and children human trafficking cases?” What is your initial reaction to such proposition?

**Erica Neiglick:** I don't think it would be a very good idea. First of all, I work with children issues in the area of migration. For this reason, all my counterparts in other institutions are experts dealing with children issues. If, on the other hand, I had to deal with a case involving an adult, I would simply not know whom to contact. Besides, since I regularly attend meeting dedicated to children issues, I can see a bigger picture, be aware of trends and possibilities, but I would lack such information when it comes to adults.

**Olena Kustova:** Well, such proposition might make sense. However, in my personal opinion, when it comes to dealing with the cases of adult trafficking, it would be more appropriate to have a contact point working at the Ministry of the Interior, rather than at the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport, which is a case with children national contact point.

**Anne Melchior:** In Denmark, we handle such cases separately. Before, we used to have a unit which dealt with all the trafficking cases, but the effect of such practice was that children were treated as small adults, which is a very wrong way of approaching such things.

**Galina Semia:** I would like to make one distinction: we have responsibility for children, but adults are responsible for themselves. I would believe that in Russia it makes sense to separate the two – national contact point for adults and children – because if both functions were given to the same person it would simply constitute too great a workload to cope.

**Aliaksandr Alioksa:** In Belarus, there were some registered cases involving the trafficking of children. In such cases all the information is collected and kept by police. But what happens if we have two separate contact points? Information is not accumulated in one place, it is dispersed through different institutions. For this reason, I actually think that it makes sense for one person to perform both functions.

**Evaldas Karmaza:** Until now, we had only one contact point – not even for adults - for women victims of human trafficking. It is only recently that we came around realization that trafficking cases involving children actually might call for a different approach. So I would think that having a separate contact point for children issues makes sense.

**Per Wallen:** It was very useful to hear from you. I want to stress once again, it was just a hypothetical question, but we are considering it at the moment and it will be on the agenda of the CBSS TFTHB meeting.

**Evaldas Karmaza:** I would like to bring up another point – I think we are not using the existing contact point network efficiently enough. I just want to share with you two cases illustrating this point. One Lithuanian kid was found in St. Petersburg – local social workers did not know what to do with him. So a kid was simply brought to the border and ushered on a Lithuanian side. The other case I heard about happened in Ukraine. Another kid from Lithuania was found in Kiev. Local NGO made a few calls to Lithuania, but nobody could provide them with concrete information or refer them to an appropriate institution, so in the end the Ukrainian NGO decided to keep him in Ukraine.

To my mind, these cases illustrate the importance of having one general contact point for a whole country. To think about it, when a kid is found, social services work with him for a week or even a month. Afterwards, a child is allowed to go back to his/her native country. I would like to ask what happens with all that information which was collected and is not traveling after him/her? Not knowing what a child went through, what kind of

traumatic experiences (s)he underwent, just makes it so much more difficult for us to follow up. So how could we resolve this problem?

**Galina Semia:** Let's suggest to Lars Lööf and the Secretariat to prepare the documentation about the exchange of information - some critical information that has to be shared after a child travels to another country. We have to set up a certain protocol or procedure for exchanging such information, which would provide a concrete basis for cooperation.

**Signe Kaplan:** I believe it will be too difficult to achieve in reality, because each country follows its own legislation and they can differ significantly from one state to another. I cannot provide an example with trafficked children, but I can refer to my experience with children whose parents are getting a divorce. Thus, Finnish, Swedish social workers often ask us about the living conditions of child's family in Estonia. We are asked to evaluate parents' capacity to take care of their offspring. Our social workers make a visit to the family, check the living conditions and report back on what are the conditions. We have around 10 such cases a year and we manage them just fine without any special protocols, forms or transcripts. This just shows that if there is goodwill, cooperation is always possible.

**Galina Semia:** Maybe I joked. Of course, I do not expect everybody to start working on producing shared standards for exchange of information. Yet, some efforts to this end are necessary, otherwise we would not find the common language. Even now, I have a feeling that we are talking, using the same words, but imparting divergent meanings to these words.

And coming back to the point raised by Evaldas, indeed, what is the point of putting so much effort in collecting information about a child, if it does not follow a child to another country?

**Signe Kaplan:** Well, I would tend to disagree - we actually receive quite a lot of information. Especially, if our foreign colleagues do psychological interview and prepare child's report. Thus, when I receive children from Sweden, I also tend to get a thick folder of documents detailing testimonies of all kinds of people – foster family, child's mother, neighbors, social workers and so on. Of course, with criminal matters it is different.

## DAY 2

### Summing up of discussions during Day 1

#### ***Lars Lööf, Head of the Childrens' Unit, CBSS Secretariat<sup>5</sup>***

One of the issues we identified yesterday was the need to work on a more effective means of dissemination of information. To give you an example, we are getting constant calls for more training or knowledge resources, even though we know that there is already a lot of info about these issues out there.

*Dissemination difficulties.* So, I think the problem lies into connecting the right people, because by now most of the countries already have well trained people. It would be logical then to assemble teams of national experts available for training and advice inside the country. As national contact points, you will have the list of all 55 experts trained and contact details of those experts who are from your countries. They should definitely be used as a resource on a national level. How they should be used – that is another question to be discussed in more detail.

Some of the discussions highlighted the fact that national contact points are not used to their full potential within countries. We should recognize the fact that it is important for national contact points to receive all available information about what happens to unaccompanied children from their country. Even if no names are available, it is still useful to relay general information to appropriate representative.

I should also touch on the issue of disseminating national activities. In many countries national contact points are vital nodes of calling meetings and summing up information as well as looking up at the needs expressed by different actors.

*Child Friendly Witness Procedures.* We also discussed yesterday child-friendly witness procedures applied in relation to children that commit crimes. What do we mean by child-friendly witness procedures? These procedures should be used not only for children who testify in cases as victims or witnesses, but also for children who committed crime. National contact points certainly have a lot of expertise in this area. Of course, national contexts are very different when it comes to such procedure, but there is a certain overlap of provisions and this overlap should be analyzed and articulated. A further point was raised about the need to train judges and prosecutors about these procedures.

*Returning children to country of origin.* Another important issue we touched upon is the return of children to their home country. There is an inherent dilemma involved in every such case: on one hand, we should assess the risk of returning a child, consider rehabilitation process (s)he will undergo, decide whether rehabilitation should be

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<sup>5</sup> For the presentation slides, please see attachment 2, page 2

completed *before* a child returns, and, on the other hand, we are tempted to facilitate a speedy return, ensuring that a child receives the attention (s)he deserves in his/her own native environment. This issue has been discussed at the 2004 expert meeting in Helsinki, but it needs to be discussed further.

Of course, some groundwork in this area has already been done by the UNICEF, who published the guidelines on safe return. Separated Children in Europe programme<sup>6</sup> has also published a guideline for safe return of children. So, if we will start addressing this issue forcefully, we will not be starting from scratch. Yet, despite all this preliminary work there is still a need to discuss the issue in depth and consider thoroughly its ramifications.

*Children trafficked for exploitation in criminality.* We came to the conclusion that more efforts are required to identify children victims of exploitation in criminal activities early on, before they end up detained at the police station. The issue of non-sentencing clause was raised from the floor. The clause stipulates that children who commit crimes when being a victim of trafficking should not be criminally prosecuted. This provision has been established in a number of international conventions.

We also mentioned the issue of social workers – how their work could be improved. A valid point was raised that we need more contacts between police working with youth criminality and police fighting human trafficking. Several countries have reported that they are looking into ways of improving support mechanisms for families at risk. Efforts in this area should focus on preventive work with families and support to them in preventing the child from returning to criminality.

## **National Contact Points. Challenges for the National Contact Points from the Polish perspective.**

***Katarzyna Fenik, Nobody's Children Foundation<sup>7</sup>.***

I would like to tell you about our experiences in the field of fighting trafficking in children. Using this occasion I would like to thank the Ministry of the Interior, with whom we maintain a very effective cooperation and which also provided the venue for our meeting.

Our Foundation implements numerous programmes and one of them is specifically designed for unaccompanied foreign children being trafficked to Poland. I will present you with some information about our activities in this field. You can also find a lot of information – also in English – on our website.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.separated-children-europe-programme.org/>

<sup>7</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 2 p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.fdn.pl/nowosci/?lang\\_id=2](http://www.fdn.pl/nowosci/?lang_id=2)

We have been collecting information on this issue for some time, but we still lack comprehensive data. We know about risks groups and factors, but we cannot draw valid comparison by comparing different years, so far.

I would like to share with you the experience from the project which focused on interviewing foreign children. The project was launched as a result of a new law on providing protection for refugees staying in the territory of Poland. It was further enhanced by involvement of the Polish office of UNHCR. To be more concrete, the Law on Providing Protection for Refugees Staying in the Territory of Poland, which came into force in November 2003, includes innovative regulations concerning the procedure of granting a refugee status to unaccompanied minors.

Besides other provisions, the law obliges the state authority to create special, “friendly” conditions for conducting interviews with minors, including the presence of a psychologist and requirement for a psychologist to prepare an opinion about interviewed minor’s psycho-health condition. As I mentioned earlier, in implementing the project we cooperated with UNHCR and over three years have conducted 63 interviews.

Based on the agreement concluded between Nobody’s Children Foundation (NCF) and the Office for Repatriation and Aliens, our Foundation was entrusted with a task of conducting interviews with children seeking refugee status in child-friendly, secure conditions at the premises of one of the NCF centers. During the interview the child is accompanied by a specialist who looks after the child’s emotional well-being. So, in case child comes under stress, a psychologist can always interrupt an interview. Based on interview assessment, the psychologist develops an opinion on child’s psychophysical status.

In connection with this, I would also like to mention that our NGO acted as National contact point between 2004 and 2006. During this period our main task was to ensure that interviewed unaccompanied children are protected from further trauma.

I can provide a short summary of the testimonies given by children during interviews we held. As a rule, these children suffer from many deprivations – they lack:

- contact with their families
- proper identification – “I am not sure where my passport is, where I am right now, who I am”
- protection – “I can go whenever I want”
- legal guardian – it is a very complicated procedure in Poland. Legal guardian is a role that social worker can hardly fulfill and yet it is very important to have one in Poland;
- health care – “I have a tooth ache, I need insurance, prescription drugs”
- communication – we are at a loss when it comes to communicating with children from Africa or Chechnya
- orientation – “Is it Holland or is it Poland that I find myself in?”

A few words about anti-trafficking activities that we are involved in: NCF is involved in the National Programme for Combating and Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings, which has been implemented since 2004. Caritas is another organization actively involved in this field. We are also represented in the Expert Group of the Ministry of Interior and Administration.

At this time, we are starting a new project, whose aim is to monitor the situation of foreign children held in Polish institutions. Hopefully, this will allow for us to improve the lot of these children and to provide a further chance to strengthen our cooperation with the national contact point. We are currently preparing the report on situation for unaccompanied foreign children. It should be available in two or three weeks. You will be able to pick it up in English in the beginning of June.

We continue to work on developing a manual, which should contain useful practical information for law-enforcement officials on how to deal with cases of child trafficking. We also cooperate with the Polish Police Academy in a multi-disciplinary training project aimed at strengthening cooperation between the Police, Border Guards, and Social Workers. We will also develop basic tools for the identification of potential child victims of trafficking among the above-mentioned professionals' groups. We have been training police officers in the field of sexual and emotional abuse for a number of years, so we have good contacts with them.

In 2005, NCF initiated the first Polish programme focused on the problem of child trafficking. The campaign „Children are not for sale!”, sponsored by the British Embassy in Poland, included training sessions and practical workshops, the aim of which was to work out practical ways of preventing child trafficking. In continuing these activities, we will produce more campaign material: posters, leaflets, and a brochure.

Informational publications urge officers to pay attention to the fact that children crossing a border without his parents can be victims of human trafficking, while an accompanying person could yet turn out to be a perpetrator. Children themselves rarely reveal such information, because they are not yet aware of the fact that they are going to be sold.

We also provide further information to officers on how to assist children victims of human trafficking. In reality, many officials are simply afraid to report the cases of children victims of trafficking due to all the legal consequences it creates. For this reason we continue to educate staff members of the relevant agencies and ministries – give them presentations, lectures, workshops. We also provide professionals in relevant institutions with counseling support via e-mail and phone.

Last year we registered 65 inquiries from officers dealing with human trafficking cases. Some of them had very little prior knowledge about the subject. Occasionally, we would even receive questions like “if I find a child in a sack in a trunk of a car – does that constitute child trafficking?”

Another important area of our work is protecting children from further traumas. We provide psychological counseling to children in the assistance center “Mazowiecka”. When medical assistance is needed, we cooperate with organization “Mederi”. We also try to establish a safe haven for such children, a place free of prosecution.

What are our needs? They could be summarized by two words – money and changes. First of all, we need to research the phenomenon of trafficking more. At the moment, two actors are prominently involved in this area – La Strada foundation and us. We work with children from risk groups on a daily basis.

The need to improve cooperation on an international level. It is good that we have you here, it means we already have some working contacts. What we should do next is to improve the circulation of information. One concrete area of knowledge we are looking into right now is monitoring of situation and we would appreciate your advice on this issue.

The issues surrounding the system of protecting children. In Poland - and Eastern Europe in general – the issue of guardianship and legal definition of trafficking still needs to be addressed. We are cooperating right now with the Ministry of Justice on changing the definition.

Finally, it is important for us to publish the first report on situation of foreign unaccompanied children in Poland.

## **Comments & Questions**

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** A brief intervention from my side: I would like to inform you that it was officially announced that starting from March 2007, the function of national coordinator will be in hands of Ms Joanna Michalak from the Ministry of Education. National contact point for unaccompanied children and trafficked children will be handled by National Teacher Training Service, which is an agency under the Ministry of Education.

## **Unaccompanied children seeking asylum in Poland – education and care for a group of vulnerable young persons.**

***Ms. Agnieszka Kosowicz, Polish Migration Forum<sup>9</sup>.***

There a a number of situations that unaccompanied children in Poland can be, and in each situation the standards of care and protection of those children are different.

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<sup>9</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 2 p. 7.

**Legal status**

There are children stopped in Poland by police or border guards for their illegal stay in the country. It is very rare that such children appear at the border alone, claiming that they are alone and asking for asylum. Usually, they ask for asylum only once inside the country – and directed to emergency childcare units (Pogotowia Opiekuńcze). It is frequent that the children from this group remain on there for only 2 to 7 days and after that they usually vanish. No information is collected about such children.

Then, there are children with a regular status – granted either refugee status or permit for tolerated stay, and accommodated in child-care arrangements, usually - orphanages. There are individual cases of refugee children, or those with subsidiary status, that stay in adopted families.

Another group are children abandoned by their mothers in hospitals soon after birth. The lack of appropriate legislation does not allow providing such children with an adequate future. If the hospital knows the nationality of the parents, who cannot be located, a child cannot be granted Polish citizenship – but at the same time no alternative solutions are available. Such children often find themselves in Children Homes for years, as their legal status cannot be regularized (and the children cannot be, for example, adopted). The staff of Children Homes points out that this group of children is particularly vulnerable to illegal adoptions.

Among the group of separated children seeking asylum there are children who arrive to Poland with adults and together with them file requests for asylum. However, the definition of asylum seeker is strict – (s)he has to be persecuted on the basis of his/her race, nationality, political views, religion. As a result, it is often difficult to determine, whether a child is persecuted. Also, not all the children have reasons to ask for this kind of protection.

In Poland, there are various approaches to this issue: some experts believe that all unaccompanied children should seek asylum, because there is no alternative – and this channel at least solves temporarily the basic needs of children (providing them social care). Others object to this approach, as it encourages children to apply for something, they are not likely to get. The fact is there are not really many other opportunities for children to receive help, other than seeking asylum.

**Statistics**

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has recently collected data on children in Polish care institutions. From 2005 to 2006, over 300 unaccompanied children were identified. Earlier research in 2005 recorded some 70 children. This number represents only a tip of an iceberg, because many children simply disappear too fast to be recorded.

The number of children applying for asylum is not very high: it amounted to 113 children in 2005. In 2006 the number has doubled to 269 people. In terms of accommodation, these children stay at special foster homes, which are run according to an agreement with

the Office for Repatriation and Aliens, or in accommodation centers together with people, with whom they have arrived to the country.

Children that don't seek asylum represent a wide selection of nationalities. On the other hand, children that seek asylum almost exclusively come from Russia and the big majority of those come from the Caucasus – Chechnya, Ingushetia.

### **Group characteristics**

Our task is to identify the children whose rights need to be protected most. Many children don't even know that asylum exists. As a result, our task is to identify children who may have grounds to become refugees. We sometimes run into a problem of communicating with these children. At times, a child stays at the facility for 3-4 days, and (s)he is not even told what country (s)he is in, what is this facility, what (s)he can expect. In fact, analysis of the child protection needs is blocked by a language barrier – and lack of a system to quickly communicate with a child. Some countries run bilingual databases and employ regular interpreters. In Poland, such contact lists do not exist. Communicating with a child turns out to be more a matter of personal goodwill and perseverance.

A group of children seeking asylum is not uniform in itself. Poland receives unaccompanied children coming from as far as Africa and South East Asian countries. Then there are also children from closer countries, who know where their parents are and they ask for assistance. For many people coming from the East, Poland is the first country to enter EU, so according to the EU legislation, immigrants have to apply for asylum in Poland. Usually, asylum seekers are sent back to Poland after they crossed other borders within EU, trying to seek asylum in Germany or Austria, but with children it can be the other way round – they can be on their way to join relatives in the West and Poland can legally assist them to move westwards. Unfortunately, they do not realize that - that sometimes they can join their family members legally, even have their plain tickets bought to a destination country.

The last group is made up of children who have their relatives in Poland. I would like to provide some concrete numbers: in 2006, 269 separated children applied for asylum; 80% of children were below 14, with only 5 or 6 children being over 16; 70% of them arrive from Russia. Most of them arrive in Poland already knowing somebody.

### **Protection**

Out of the total number of separated children who sought asylum, only 11 children received a refugee status in 2005. Majority of children are not legalized and not offered any permanent or temporary solution. Often it has less to do with harsh Polish laws and more with the fact that people don't stay long enough in Poland to hear the outcome of their application.

Some children receive a tolerated status, which means that they get permit to remain legally in a country, but they receive no social protection. As a result, they find themselves in a difficult situation: they are children, so they cannot work, but they get no money (integration package granted to refugees, but not to holders of tolerated stay

status) either. Children's homes that usually take care of them in such situations, get really confused by such decisions – because they put them in difficult financial situation (not clear, who should cover the cost of child's stay in the facility).

Another difficult part of asylum process with separated children is interviewing. According to the law, the children should be interviewed in child-friendly conditions, in presence of a psychologist. In 2005, only 22 children were interviewed this way (out of more than 200 applicants). Katarzyna Fenik told you about the legal provision related to interviewing children. Yet, I would also like to bring to your attention that less than a fifth of children benefit from the provision enshrined in law. So, it is a good law, but in practice it has a limited impact.

### **Care**

Children, who come alone, are accommodated in a selected children's home (orphanage). One such home functions in Warsaw, and on average, there are 6-7 children present there at a time. Children accompanied by distant family members are accommodated in reception facilities, together with their relatives. However, such reception facilities can host 100-250 people. Families are given one to two rooms depending on their size. Each such site has one staff member. It is, therefore, unrealistic to expect him or her to know who unaccompanied children are or whether they are treated differently compared to Polish children.

Unusual situations also happen – Poland was recently confronted with a situation of an unaccompanied child, who arrived to Poland with family members, and when his biological parents arrived in the country – the family did not want to return the child to its biological parents, because then they would lose the handouts, to which they were entitled caring for the child.

The concept of „guardianship” in Poland translates to two forms of adult assistance to the child – legal representative (a person, who can sign documents for a child in the asylum procedure), or caretaker, guardian, curator – who take care of the the best interest of the child, and its everyday needs. In Poland, a child does not even know that he has these two people to help him sometimes. They often meet for the first time only in the interview room.

### **Education**

Polish legislation provides for the right to education on primary level to all children, including refugees, children with subsidiary status and children seeking asylum. More rights are granted to refugees, who can benefit from all levels of education in Poland, while other groups of children can do so at a fee (like all other alien children, who are in Poland with parents).

One can find an expression “children of asylum seekers” within the Polish legislation. Unaccompanied children or separated children are not „children of asylum seekers” so technically, they have no legal basis for education. In reality, they still get education, but the legislation in this aspect should be amended.

In many cases access to education turns out complicated in practice – and often depends on a personal commitment of a director of a school. There is one private school in Poland that provides education for all the unaccompanied children in Poland.

### **Trafficking**

Separated children – if you were traffickers and wanted to traffic someone – are the ideal group. They have nobody close, nobody they can communicate with. Ironically, they are vulnerable regardless whether they are or are not provided with protection. Refugees and children with tolerated status are vulnerable, because of deficiencies of the integration package in Poland. Those, who are not protected, look to leave Poland hoping for assistance elsewhere (and are likely to involve in illegal transit to achieve this). Children often disappear from Poland before they turn 18.

Polish agencies and authorities often seem to believe that trafficking is a phenomenon taking place elsewhere – there are many signals and indicators however, that the children are indeed trafficked from Poland, and through Poland. In my opinion, the first step to be taken to address this problem is to start communicating with children – making sure they are informed about their situation, and consulted when seeking solutions to their problems.

## **Comments & Questions**

**Katarzyna Fenik:** I would like to add that since April 1<sup>st</sup> new amendments were introduced into the Law on Social Services, which allow unaccompanied children to remain in residential educational establishments legally. They just have to approach the closest children's home. Money-wise, Polish orphans are financed by municipal authorities, while foreign children are financed by the central Government. We believe that such arrangement should help to solve the problem.

**Marina Novikova:** Where do you send off the information about 90% of Russian asylum seeking unaccompanied children, if there is no national contact point in Russia?

**Agnieszka Kosowicz:** I don't think that such information is provided to Russia. As far as I know, the information about asylum seekers is confidential. There actually were some contacts made by the Russian Embassy, which was interested in learning more about the asylum seekers, but requests for information were declined.

**Ruth Soonets:** I would like to pose a question to Katarzyna: What do you mean by child friendly interview facilities? Are you conducting interviews at your own premises? And how many such rooms are available in Warsaw? Do you videotape interviews? Do you use them as evidence in courts? Were all those 66 interviews over the three years with trafficked children?

**Katarzyna Fenik:** All the interviews were conducted with asylum seekers, we suspect that around 25% of them might have been the victims of human trafficking. In 3 cases,

we have passed on the evidence to prosecutors. Although I personally felt that around 40 cases out of 66 involved children who were facing a serious risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. Before this meeting, I tried to go through my notes, it turns out that only 5 out of 66 children were not victims of abuse, while the rest 61 experienced some sort of violence and abuse.

The interviews we conducted are confidential, because they form a part of asylum seeking procedure. Of course, we can give leads to prosecutors and police, but in general this information remains confidential.

## **Child trafficking in Moscow region**

### ***Ms Marina Novikova, NGO Women and Children First<sup>10</sup>.***

I am currently preparing a report on human trafficking situation in Moscow region. The report is not yet finalized, but I will present you with preliminary insights derived from questionnaires and research we performed.

The issue of human trafficking is new to Russia and, therefore, not very widely debated. Ministries and agencies dealing with trafficked children rarely record their data in an easily identifiable way. Therefore, in compiling this research, I relied on data collected by my colleagues from other NGOs. Some of the data is also taken from the Ministry of the Interior statistical report.

I realized that Moscow and Moscow region are, so to speak, a source and transit country. On one hand, we have internal trafficking from middle part and neighboring regions in Russia as well as children from Ural and Siberia. But then, Moscow is also the region of origin for many children trafficked to Italy, Germany, Cyprus, etc. Moscow is also a destination place for children trafficked from former Soviet republics – Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. For example, according to statistics compiled by the Moldovan authorities, 34 children are repatriated back to the country from Moscow in an average year. Many of these children were abandoned on the streets, they survived by begging or worked on construction sites.

According to data provided by the Research Institute of Prosecutor's Office in Moscow, the annual number of unaccompanied children is 1.5 million. During the round table in April, we also have noticed an increase of sexual abuse in 2005.

At the end of the 1990s, I had an opportunity to see a film by a Polish director – the Children of Leningrad Station. It is a horrible film, which raises strong emotions. Present situation is somewhat better: there are not so many beggars on the streets, almost none of

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<sup>10</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 2 p. 11.

them in metros or train stations. Yet, some cases persist. Children begging in the streets are often recruited into sexual exploitation, production of child pornography, dissemination of pornography.

A large number of pornography is produced and distributed using high technology in Moscow and Moscow region. The frequency of such crimes is very high. There were around 600 cases, where people came to prosecutor's offices with info about child pornography. Yet, the number of successfully prosecuted cases is tiny.

Moscow is a place where many migrants from former Soviet Union republics arrive looking for work. In some cases, children who are begging on the streets are rented out by parents to criminal groups for a certain price. Many children are involved in prostitution. A quarter of surveyed prostitutes – round 100,000 – started working at the age of 14.

Special asylums have accommodated 162 unaccompanied children in 2006. The number of children leaving special institutions and asylums decreased by 2.6% in that year. The ministry of interior runs a special database with information about minors who applied for asylum. There were 8679 such children identified in Russia in 2006. We used this database to extract useful information.

Most often, we find that trafficked children come from Belarus, Ukraine, and Tajikistan. At the moment, Moscow municipality is implementing a joint programme supported by IOM and EU, which is scheduled to last from 2006 to 2008. The pilot project is being implemented in Moscow: the staff of the programme is trying to identify and assist unaccompanied children on the streets of Moscow.

As to legislative amendments, several years ago draft legislation was developed to prevent trafficking in children. Unfortunately, today, 4 years later, these provisions are still not implemented.

I would also like to show you some intelligence we gathered. You can see on a chart that in 2005 and 2006 the number of sexually abused children remained the same. Another data is taken from the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation. It shows that every second (42%) sexual crime involves children and children constitute 86% of cases of depravity .

As you can see, the statistics presented by the state authorities is very different from NGO statistics.

We also want to develop single inter-institutional system on children trafficking. The preliminary agreement has been reached with miscellaneous departments in charge of children's affairs within Moscow city municipality.

On a practical level, our consultants work with children, but we also train staff at children homes on how to deal with children victims of human trafficking.

## **Council of the Baltic Sea States: Stepping up activities fighting trafficking in Human Beings during the Swedish presidency.**

***Ms Eva Ekmehag, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Swedish member of the Committee of Senior Officials.***

In my capacity as the Swedish delegate to the Committee of Senior Officials of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, it is my great pleasure to address you here today. In particular so since I, during the period 2003-2005 was seconded by the Swedish Foreign Ministry to the Children's Unit at the CBSS Permanent International Secretariat, in order to take the first steps in the development of a closer regional cooperation on unaccompanied and trafficked children.

Sweden has now been at the helm of the CBSS since the 1<sup>st</sup> of July last year and we will continue being there until the last day of June this year. Keywords for us are to exchange, enhance, and to elaborate the regional cooperation on all relevant levels and areas, in order to reach concrete and practical results to the benefit of the populations in our region.

We believe that regional cooperation makes small countries stronger and enables results that would be difficult to reach and maintain solely on a national level. Furthermore it bridges gaps between countries and groups of countries.

One of our priorities is to continue to promote the cooperation on unaccompanied and trafficked children in the Baltic Sea region.

I am very pleased to learn that the structure of the regional cooperation on unaccompanied and trafficked children is well in place. That nearly all NCPs, the backbone of the cooperation, have been appointed. Furthermore, that there is a close cooperation between the NCPs and the National Coordinators (NCs).

This is all well and fine, however building a structure does not necessarily mean that you reach any concrete results. Reaching concrete results demands a persistent mind, to be able to take and maintain contacts with relevant stakeholders on the national as well as on the regional level, flexibility and not least not to give up although one may encounter many obstacles.

I have during these two days listened to a variety of interesting presentations, on the state of play of the cooperation on unaccompanied and trafficked children, presentations giving us hope also for the future.

Being also a member of the Swedish CBSS Presidency team, a Presidency working towards the overall objective to reach concrete and practical results, some of the issues raised are of more concern to us than others.

I believe that some of the main challenges ahead in order for the cooperation on unaccompanied and trafficked children to be more efficient, practical and result oriented, are;

- to develop indicators that will enable us to better understand the dimension of the problem and for us to take appropriate actions in relation to this,
- to take appropriate actions in relation to the fact that the children being trafficked are mainly teenagers, a group of trafficked human beings that is a concern also to other structures of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region,
- to spread the knowledge of the trained professional network to all relevant stakeholders on the national level and link the information into the wider regional cooperation,
- to strive to make it a core responsibility for the governments in our region to earmark financial means, to make it possible to maintain a high level of support in order to meet and to prevent children from being victims of trafficking,
- to establish closer ties between prevention – investigation – rehabilitation/reintegration,
- to enhance the level of working together on a practical score, between responsible line ministries, agencies, NGOs, regions and counties, EU efforts, other regional initiatives such as the CBSS Task Forces' on Trafficking in Human Beings (adults) and on Organized Crime,
- to enable harmonized legislation in all relevant areas between the countries in the Baltic Sea region of relevance to combating trafficking in human beings, including harmonized implementation and thus refrain from the “easy way out”,
- to improve efficiency, sustainability and stability of the cooperation on unaccompanied and trafficked children,
- to acknowledge both the similarities and the differences between children/teenagers and adults victims of trafficking, to refrain from promoting the establishment of “empty houses”, and regarding children not least to develop the key role and responsibility of the guardian/representative,
- to encourage the NCPs to put more emphasis on reaching out, to have a more widespread, active and fruitful dialogue with the migration authorities, with the

- law enforcement authorities, with social welfare authorities, with the NGOs, and with the social workers, etc,
- to invite the (new) NCPs, to take advantages of the knowledge of the (older/other) NCP colleagues through bilateral/trilateral, etc. contacts/meetings also in between the ordinary NCP meetings,
  - to be sensitive to new trends of trafficking in children. Being in the forefront would enable us to be better prepared for the future.

## **Ukrainian Children and Trafficking**

### ***Ms Mariana Yevsyukova, Assistant Consultant to a Member of Parliament of Ukraine<sup>11</sup>.***

I will give a short presentation on children trafficking situation in Ukraine. I work for La Strada organization, which started its activities in Ukraine in 1997. Our organization became actively involved in fighting trafficking in children in 2002.

From our experience, typical victims of trafficking are children whose age ranges from 7 to 18 years, they are orphans or come from broken homes. In terms of human trafficking overall trends, we noticed that Ukraine, which was a country of origin for many years, lately has become a country of destination for some of the victims. It is important to note that in many cases recruiters and traffickers of children are their own parents, guardians, or close friends of parents. Two main destinations are port-towns on the Black sea.

In summer, we register a lot of children who are being trafficked from Moldova. Meanwhile, Ukrainian victims are trafficked to Russia, Poland, Germany, Italy and other places. They are then forced into labor, prostitution, pornography, and criminal activities.

What are main activities implemented against the trafficking of human beings? The most important documents are UN Convention, Palermo protocol. We also have provisions relating to human trafficking included in several Codes, including the Family Code. The programme against human trafficking was adopted two months ago and will continue until 2010.

The definition of trafficking used in national legislation is based on the definition provided in the Palermo Protocol. Children are divided into two main groups: infants and minors. Trafficking in minors results in an imprisonment from 5 to 10 years with or without confiscation of property. The same crime committed against infants stipulates a penalty of 8 to 15 years of imprisonment, again with or without confiscation of property.

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<sup>11</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 2 p. 18.

Who are involved in national efforts to fight trafficking? We have inter-agency coordination group working on these issues, though, the main coordinator is the Ministry of Family Youth and Sports Affairs. The Ministry of the Interior is also prominently involved in these activities.

So far, national efforts resulted in the development and implementation of the national anti-trafficking programme, which will last until 2010. However, the total budget for three years of this programme is \$200,000 – a meager amount if you consider the number of activities planned. All the same, La Strada-Ukraine is actively involved in the monitoring of the activities foreseen in the plan. So far, we can say that draft laws on protection of children's rights are being prepared.

We are also conducting a project on joint referral system for care givers. The project is a result of cooperation between La Strada-Ukraine and the Ministry of Health and its duration is two years. The main activities will prepare care givers working in medical facilities to deal with children victims of human trafficking.

We have established three national toll-free lines, aimed at support anti-trafficking efforts, fight home violence, and protect children's rights.

## **Comments & Questions**

**Ruth Soonets:** I have a question to Marina: it is very nice to hear that you have organized medical centers for neglected children in Moscow. Do you know anything about health conditions of these children? Once in the hospital or a center, are they tested for HIV? STDs? TB?

**Marina Novikova:** I should make myself clear, we are not talking about separate medical centers for trafficked and abused children, but rather special sections within regular hospitals for children. All of these tests you mentioned – HIV, STD, TB – are compulsory. Each year, a couple of hundred children are diagnosed with HIV this way.

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** A question to Maria. The figure of discovered cases of child exploitation you provided is very low, which makes me question the efficiency of procedures and research conducted. Did you consider the trafficking flow coming from the Balkan direction – Kosovo, Bosnia, Albania. Those countries are also a big source of trafficking, mostly women, but also children. Besides, you have mentioned that Moldovans are smuggled to Ukraine and then Russia. Are you meaning Moldova as a country or Trans-Dnestria region?

**Marina Novikova:** The statistical data I provided you is based on official numbers and, unfortunately, this is all that we have. I agree with you that numbers for the Moscow region are rather small, but if we look at the overall Russian statistics, it is more in tune with reality.

**Mariana Yevsyukova:** Statistics on registered cases in Ukraine reveals only the tip of an iceberg. The numbers I provided are based on the data assembled by the Ministry of the Interior. On the other hand, we also have NGO statistics: for example, last year, La Strada has rendered social assistance to 200 persons, some of whom were children. Similarly, a few cases were handled by the IOM office, who provides shelter and safe return to victims of trafficking. If we add up all this figures, it would amount to around 500 cases a year.

And to answer your question on Moldova, we are referring to the country as a whole.

## **Introduction of the Nordic Council of Minister's Pilot programme**

***Ms Marie Luise Nørrelykke, Competence Centre on Prostitution, Århus, Denmark<sup>12</sup>.***

I'm very glad to participate in this event. It's a very good opportunity for me and our project to become aware of the anti-trafficking activities in the region, to see a bigger picture, so to say. In my turn, I would like to present you a project currently implemented by our center.

The Pilot project was initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2004. However, the actual activities began only in 2007. The project is titled 'Preventing trafficking to prostitution of teenage girls and boys from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Russia to the Scandinavian countries'. It is sponsored by the Nordic Council of Ministers and carried out by Kompetencecenter Prostitution (Competence Center on Prostitution) in Denmark.

Kompetencecenter Prostitution (KP) works nationally with adult prostitutes as well as arranges and carries out prevention seminars for professionals who work with vulnerable teenagers at risk. KP is a public, governmental agency under the Ministry of Social Affairs with 13 employees covering all regions of Denmark. The centre collaborates with various Danish NGOs in the field.

One of the project activities are two 3-day seminars. We know from other statistics that children are trafficked and found in both criminal affairs and prostitution. During the seminars we will exchange this knowledge internally as well as initiate cross-border cooperation. The first seminar will take place in St. Petersburg and is aimed at Estonian and Russian professionals, while the second seminar, to be attended by Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish professionals will take place in Vilnius in the fall of 2007.

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<sup>12</sup> For the presentation slides see attachment 2 p. 23.

The programme for each of the two seminars is based on exchange of experiences, dialogue, network and perspectives of the national and international work with teenagers at risk of being trafficked for prostitution.

We envisage the participants of the seminars to be professionals from both rural and urban areas who work with vulnerable teenagers possibly at risk of being trafficked for prostitution to other countries. For instance, public social institutions, boarding homes for teenagers, young offenders institutions, NGO with services for teenagers at risk of being trafficked for prostitution as well as civil servants from the social or health area who meet vulnerable teenagers. A maximum of 75 professionals can participate in each seminar.

National focal point person and other key persons will participate in the 3 days seminar. A short presentation about the countries plans of action and activities concerning trafficking and prostitution of teenage girls and boys are to be made. The national focal point person will be able to deliver perspectives from the seminar to the second steering committee meeting, where recommendations for the future work will be discussed.

During the summer 2007 the Nordic Council of Ministers will contact and invite the governments of the participating countries. The participants at the seminars will receive invitations through their governments or national focal point person on trafficking to prostitution.

Other activities will include the steering committee meetings with representatives from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia and the Scandinavian countries or national focal point persons. Two meetings will take place in Copenhagen, one meeting before the first seminar and the other meeting after the second seminar. We will also publish a short manual in English and Russian written by the Danish coordinator for all participants in 2008. After the pilot project has been completed, the results and recommendations will be presented at a conference held by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about our center. We mostly work in the area of prostitution, providing support to prostitutes as well as implementing a number of preventive initiatives. However, last year we decided to experiment and introduced a toll-free telephone line for clients of prostitutes. Contrary to our expectations, the line proved to be very popular. Clients call the center and consults about the issues that concern them. Apparently, some of them have psychological issues that are very similar to the issues faced by the prostitutes we work with.

## **Comments & Questions**

**Evaldas Karmaza:** If you could comment more on a hotline for clients. It is a new idea. What is the purpose of this line?

**Marie Luise Nørrelykke:** As a Kompetencecenter for prostitution, we worked on small projects of short duration for the last 10-15 years. All of these projects focused on females. After some time, we started thinking that without clients there would be no prostitution. So as we grew we decided to broaden the scope of our activities and include clients and this way to build social knowledge, so as to enhance our understanding of the prostitution phenomenon.

The line was opened in summer of 2006 and, contrary to our expectations, many clients called sharing their problems – sexual, family, financials problems, addiction to buying sex, or simply curiosity. We also have been receiving a lot of attention from the press on this issue.

**Vera Gracheva:** we started preparations for the OSCE conference on child trafficking. It will also take place in Vilnius in October. So, I think we should coordinate among ourselves, so that our events don't overlap and create conflicting agendas.

**Sabine Herzig:** Why was not Germany involved in your pilot project?

**Marie Luise Nørrelykke:** I think it had to do with different problems and organizational procedures that you have in Germany. In any case, the decision was taken on a higher political level.

## **The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe: Fighting Trafficking in Children.**

***Ms Vera Gracheva, Senior Adviser Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.***

I would like to begin by noting that figures presented by participants of this seminar provide a lot of ground for concern. If we add up the number of trafficked children as assessed by individual countries and those by IOM, ILO, UNICEF and the State Department, we end up with a very high number - about 1 million to 1,2 million people – are trafficked around the world each year. For example, experts estimate that the annual number of trafficked victims in Russia is around 50,000. Yet, when we look into official

statistics, we see but a small share of this number registered officially. There is a huge gap, but where does it come from?

Or let's take another example – missing, runaway children – what causes such high drop-out and escape rate from children's centers and facilities?

Some time ago, I had a visitor from CIS committee, who was interested in how we can ensure implementation of our commitments. OSCE has a variety of commitments, but their implementation seems to be problematic. The issue of human trafficking was taken up by the OSCE already back in 1975. Not directly, but indirectly it was tackled already back then. The Helsinki Final Act, for example, addressing the obligation to protect the rights of children from migrant families, called upon the participating States "to ensure that children of migrant workers have access to education, as would be possible in their own country". Even 30 years after its adoption, countries still have to tackle the problem of discrimination related to the lack of opportunities for these vulnerable categories of children. If this act was implemented to the full scale (and it has numerous other provisions related to labor migrants, freedom of movement, and other basic rights), we would have a very different situation today.

All the subsequent decisions, taken by the OSCE in 1991, 1992 and 1995 also refer to the problem of human trafficking, although more in passing, than in substance. However, starting from 2000, the OSCE concentrated on elaborating and adopting by consensus special decisions in ministerial meetings on combating trafficking: for example the Vienna Ministerial Decision, the Porto Declaration, Maastricht Ministerial Decision (which endorsed the OSCE Action Plan to Combat THB), Ljubljana Ministerial Decision on Special Needs of Child Victims of Trafficking and, a year later an Addendum to the Action Plan which addressed this particular issue, et al.

There were more decisions taken by our foreign ministers on related issues – for example ensuring highest standards of behavior for personnel serving on international missions – the aim of this decision, inter alia, is to exclude any possibility of international personnel getting involved in human trafficking, directly or indirectly; on violence against women; on migration; on organized crime. In their entirety they form the OSCE political framework to address human trafficking within a multidimensional, human rights based approach.

These are all weighty decisions taken by 56 countries, but when it comes to implementing these decisions in practice, we run into difficulties. Sometimes we even have to consider including provisions on "enhancing the implementation of anti-trafficking commitments". In other words, to adopt commitments to stick to our commitments.

Of course we have to take into the account the fact that the primary responsibility for implementing decisions taken by the OSCE lies with the participating States, who themselves constitute the Organization. We – the Secretariat – see our role in assisting

them with implementing these decisions (and are actually tasked by the participating States to do it upon request).

We have a well-developed operational framework to fulfill this task by a number of executive structures. Let me start with an Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, an independent institution based here in Warsaw, which works on projects focused on protecting human rights of victims of THB. In Vienna, in the Secretariat, we have a Strategic Police Matters Unit which provides assistance to the law enforcement institutions (for example, projects related to the training of police, methods of investigation, indications of THB, etc.). The Office of the OSCE Coordinator of Economic and Environmental Activities deals with the socio-economic aspects of THB, and tackle the demand factor. We also operate field missions in 18 countries. Finally, we have the Office of the Special Representative and Coordinator for combating trafficking in human beings, also based in the Secretariat, which facilitates better coordination of these multiple activities, provides assistance to the participating States, and ensures that THB is placed adequately high up on the political agenda of the governments.

An important aspect of our job is to assess the efficiency of our activities. Last year we produced the first Annual Report, which provided an opportunity to compare the situation in the participating States five years ago and now. Though we are quite critical to the current situation, of course, we do not neglect and do not underestimate positive developments in the participating States. More and more countries are elaborating (or already updating) national action plans, establish high-level coordination bodies, appoint national rapporteurs or similar national reporting mechanisms, strengthen co-operation with NGOs within National Referral Mechanisms, etc. But national efforts should not stop at that. This year, we will produce the next Annual Report, which will focus on the anti-trafficking structures and programs of the participating States.

We believe the active co-operation with other international organizations to be crucial for establishing common agenda, priorities and exchange of best practices in combating THB. For this purpose, the first OSCE Special Representative initiated an Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, as an open (and informal) forum of the main International Organizations active in combating THB. The initiative has gained huge support from the participating States which benefited from experience, expertise and shared values of the international community brought by the Alliance to our regular meetings. Besides, we develop our bilateral co-operation with our partners, the CBSS being one, exchange information and best practices as well as organize conferences with a broad participation. For example, this May we shall have a conference of national rapporteurs, in September - a conference on the implementation of the Action Plan, data collection and research for identification of emerging trends and priorities. Both issues (data collection and research) were discussed during this meeting, and we would be glad to continue these discussions with you all in Vienna.

I would also encourage you to take a look at our new anti-trafficking website<sup>13</sup>, you will find a wealth of information available there.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.osce.org/cthb/>

## **Comments & Questions:**

**Tadeusz Trzaskowski:** Thank you for giving us some real-life data. You mentioned that there are around 1,000,000 trafficked children in the world. Annually. So when we talk about 10 or 12 cases discovered in one country, we see what a great gap there is on the ground. Obviously, talking about changing things is nice, but we also have to work systematically to implement these changes.

I think that core anti-trafficking activities should be concentrated in state institutions and agencies. I would also really encourage you to use my service, because I am here to solve these problems. I am very pleased to be present here.

**Vera Gracheva:** I can give you another figure, provided by the UNODC: 32 billion dollars of illegal assets – that is how much wealth human trafficking produces each year.

**Olena Kustova:** How do you coordinate your activities in a broader view with other IO activities?

**Vera Gracheva:** At the working level, we have a large expert coordination team, where representatives of other IO participate (Alliance Experts Coordination Team). The group has its meetings in Vienna 3-4 times a year on specific topics, to coordinate strategies, exchange calendars of events, etc. We also have big trafficking conferences, where we ensure participation of key figures to represent our views to states. Besides, we have many bilateral meetings and communicate actively with other organizations.

## **Closing remarks**

***Lars Lööf, Head of Children's Unit, Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States:***

The call for cooperation we heard from Vera is something that our regional initiative addresses. We strongly encourage and welcome cooperation with OSCE as we try to diminish and possibly eradicate trafficking and exploitation of children.

In closing this meeting I would like to thank you all for coming to this meeting. I would especially like to thank the Polish Ministry for the Interior and Administration for hosting the meeting here in Warsaw at the ministry's premises. A special thank you goes to Ms Katarzyna Fenik and Ms Gabriela Roszkowska from Nobody's Children Foundation who took care of liaising with the hotel and with the ministry. A special warm thank you goes to the interpreters who so skillfully managed to make us all understand each other.

The conclusions from yesterday's discussions that I presented to you yesterday, are available for comments and revisions by you all should you want to. Please contact me at the secretariat should you want to add anything or remove anything from them.

Closing the meeting I would really like to emphasize again the potential in our cooperation and the good work already being carried out by the National Contact Points in our region. The conclusions from the discussions held yesterday, and the report from the meeting will give valuable input to the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk as the group continues to develop its programme on Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children.



“Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children  
in the Baltic Sea Region”  
A programme implemented by the  
Working Group for Cooperation  
on Children at Risk (WGCC)



## The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of National Contact Points In the Baltic Sea Region

*Ministry of Interior and Administration*

*Hotel Łazienkowski, Ul.29 Listopada 3 B, 00-465 Warszawa*

*8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2007*

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