



ROYAL MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OSCE/ODIHR
ATT: Gabriele Reiter,
Warsaw, Poland

Your ref

Our ref

Date

Norwegian report on anti-trafficking activities

This report is written by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with contributions from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Justice and the Police.

The Norwegian government attaches great importance to preventing trafficking in human beings, criminalizing all aspects of trafficking, and supporting and protecting the victims. We are currently working on a plan of action to prevent and combat trafficking in women and children, which will be launched by the end of 2002. Our report to the OSCE will be coloured by the fact that we are still in the process of exploring the challenges involved and working out a system of coordinated measures. Hence, many questions raised by the OSCE country report template cannot be fully answered at the moment.

- **Research/media coverage/information**

Norway is mainly a country of destination for trafficked persons. The main focus in Norway has been on trafficking in women and children in connection with sexual exploitation. National reports on prostitution show a significant increase in the number of non-Norwegian nationals involved in prostitution during the 1990s, and an even more dramatic increase during the last few years. The majority have come from or via the Russian Federation, the Baltic countries and other Eastern and Central European countries. There are also women from Thailand and Latin America. We have indications that organized crime groups are involved to an increasing degree, although information on many aspects of trafficking is still not available.

The lack of information is partly due to the clandestine nature of the sex trade (e.g. brothels, which are illegal, are known to be an important destination for trafficked women and girls).

Another important aspect of trafficking is the demand that creates the market. A health survey on sexual conduct carried out in 1997 showed that a relatively high proportion of Norwegian men reported to have bought sex (12.8 per cent). During the last five years special attention has been paid to the situation in the county of Finnmark in northern Norway, where there has been a marked growth in prostitution, reflecting the fact that an increasing number of Norwegian men are buying sex from women coming from or via the Russian Federation. Some of these women are assumed to be victims of trafficking.

Some aspects of forced marriage may be relevant to trafficking. Such marriages often involve non-Norwegian nationals who come to the country in order to marry. In such cases one or both parties may be victims of threats or the use of force or other forms of coercion.

Some women are recruited through marriage agencies, e.g. on the Internet, and get into situations where they are exploited in Norway. Some of them even have children who are exploited.

In recent years some research, mostly qualitative, has been conducted on various aspects of trafficking, but this has not been systematized. The need for systematizing our knowledge and for further research will be taken into account in the forthcoming action plan.

- **Awareness raising**

There has been an increased focus on trafficking and organized prostitution involving trafficked persons in the Norwegian media. However, there is relatively little knowledge about the problem, and the action plan will have to pay attention to awareness raising in Norway.

Awareness raising on the following issues will have to be addressed: the blatant violations of the human rights and human dignity of the victims of trafficking, factors that create the demand for services that traffickers supply, sex trafficking across borders and Norwegian men's visits to less affluent countries for purposes of sex, the gender perspective of trafficking, and the difference between the traffickers and their victims when it comes to criminalization.

- **Legal framework/legislative review and reform efforts**

Sanctions

The Norwegian Penal Code dates from 22 May 1902. Sexual crimes are regulated in chapter 19, most recently amended in August 2000. The Penal Code does not have any specific provisions prohibiting trafficking in human beings, but the amendment of August 2000 has strengthened the protection of victims of sexual crimes.

It is now prohibited to *purchase* sexual services from persons below 18 years of age (section 203 of the Penal Code). The penalty is a fine or up to two years' imprisonment. Ignorance of the age of the person concerned does not exclude liability, unless the person has acted in reasonable good faith.

According to section 202 of the Penal Code, the *promotion* of prostitution by others is also prohibited. Misleading anyone into engaging in prostitution, exploiting such acts or providing housing or accommodation (on condition that the person concerned knows how the room will be utilized, or shows gross negligence in this regard), may be subject to a fine or up to five years' imprisonment.

Persons in prostitution who are subjected to violence or abuse from their pimps are eligible for free legal aid if they make a complaint. Free legal aid is extended to include compensation claims.

Finally, it is also prohibited to offer, arrange or request sexual services by *public notice* (section 202 of the Penal Code). The penalty is a fine or up to six months' imprisonment.

In Norway the *acts of persons in prostitution* are not punishable.

The Ministry of Justice will in the near future consider a *general* prohibition against purchasing sexual services, based on the experience of Sweden, where such a prohibition came into force on 1 January 1999. However, the consequences for those engaged in prostitution will be considered carefully, especially with regard to their need for protection and support if such provisions are introduced.

The legal implications of cases where victims of trafficking are subjected to treatment amounting to slavery or rape will also be further considered.

- **Government coordination**

The Ministry of Justice and the Police is responsible for coordinating all government efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in women and children.

- **National plan of action**

The Norwegian plan of action to combat trafficking in women and children will be launched by the end of 2002. The action plan will take into account the complexity of the problem and the coordinated and interdisciplinary response that will be required. Efforts are being made to ensure that it is compatible with international strategies and to take into account international instruments and recommendations, including Norway's OSCE commitments.

The action plan will have to consider the whole range of aspects of trafficking all along the chain, thus covering supply, transit and demand. Some issues are, however, of special importance to Norway since it is mainly a country of destination:

- 1) Protection and support for the victims, including the right to seek asylum and shelter, protection of witnesses, etc.
- 2) The criminal aspects of involvement in trafficking, including prosecution.
- 3) Border control, e.g. the training of border guards.
- 4) Prevention, e.g. focusing on the demand that creates a market in Norway, and on programmes to promote development in countries of origin.

- **Cooperation with non-governmental and international organizations**

Cooperation with NGOs is essential on several of the aspects of trafficking mentioned above. NGOs have a very important function as mediators between the government and civil society. Their involvement is crucial if we are to succeed in, for example, establishing functioning systems of protection and support for victims. Many NGOs and other organizations are involved in the preparation of the plan of action. On a general level efforts are being made to start a dialogue with partners who have knowledge and/or experience that will be relevant for the plan.

A Nordic-Baltic campaign against trafficking in women is being carried out in 2002. Norway has suggested making protection and support for victims the subject of a seminar that will take place in Vilnius on 20–22 October 2002. A Norwegian organization, FOKUS, which is a resource centre for women, gender and development that is affiliated with 58 women's organizations in Norway, was asked by the government to be responsible for mobilizing its Baltic and Nordic sister organizations and for coordinating their involvement in the planning process for the seminar.

- **Training of relevant government authorities**

Measures to educate and inform all relevant personnel will be included in the plan of action.

The Norwegian armed forces have a code of conduct for personnel posted abroad, and we are currently discussing the implementation of ethical rules of conduct for government employees that prohibit the purchase of sexual services, especially when travelling abroad.

This will be further outlined in the action plan.

- **Aid and development programmes abroad**

We know that poverty and conflict are part of the problem of trafficking. The reduction of poverty is the main aim of Norwegian development policy. Poverty and conflict make people vulnerable, particularly women. Organized crime, like trafficking, thrives under such circumstances. In order to prevent trafficking in countries of origin, special aid programmes must be designed for this purpose.

Norway supports the efforts to combat trafficking financially through development programmes, direct support to the UN Centre for International Crime Prevention, and the OSCE and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Regional cooperation with Asia in this field will be increased. Financial support is also given to those of the development banks' activities that are relevant to trafficking.

- **Bilateral and multilateral agreements and activities**

Norway has signed the Palermo Convention (the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime) and the three protocols. Preparations for ratification have begun.

Norway has ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

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- 1.1.1 Norway is also involved in anti-trafficking programmes through Interpol.

Through an association agreement with Europol, Norway has participated in the efforts to combat organized crime, included trafficking in persons, more efficiently.

Norway is a member of the Task Force on Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea Region (established in 1996). In 2000 an operating committee on trafficking in women was set up to explore the extent of the problem and to implement suitable initiatives within the task force cooperation.

Norway is taking part in the Nordic-Baltic Campaign against Trafficking in Women 2002, which was initiated by the Nordic and Baltic ministers for gender equality and the Nordic ministers of justice in 2001. Each country carries out local activities in pursuit of this aim. The Norwegian campaign will be carried out when the action plan is launched in late 2002.

Under the Nordic Council of Ministers, activities are being carried out in different sectors of Nordic cooperation, such as gender equality, legislation, and cooperation with the adjacent areas.

In its capacity as chair of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2002, Norway has invited all the Nordic and Baltic Ministers involved in the Nordic-Baltic campaign to a meeting in Riga on 28 November 2002 in connection with the end of the campaign. The aim is to promote commitment and to build an even more solid foundation for cooperation on combating trafficking in women and children in our countries in the years to come.

Norway also takes an active part in Children at Risk, which is a programme under the Baltic Sea cooperation. Norway has, among other things, contributed to an information network on

the Internet.

Norway participates in the EU programme DAPHNE (2000-2003) for combating violence against children, young people and women, which includes trafficking.