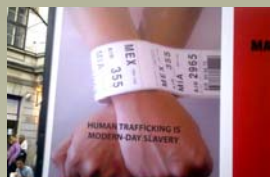


IN THIS ISSUE

Activities carried out to prevent and suppress human trafficking April – June 2012



Page 1

Events: Third expert meeting for lawyers "Health Consequences of Human Trafficking"

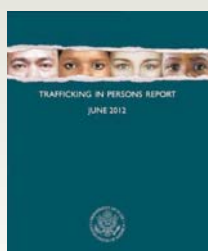
Page 4

Events: Media campaign "Human Trafficking. Labor Exploitation. Serious and Organized Crime"



Page 5

TIP Report



Page 6

You are looking at the 32nd issue of ASTRA E-Newsletter. In this issue, we present you the activities carried out in Serbia aimed at prevention, suppression and prosecution of human trafficking in the second quarter of 2012, third expert meeting for lawyers on health and psychological consequences of human trafficking, ASTRA's seventh anti-trafficking campaign "Human Trafficking. Labor

Exploitation. Serious and Organized Crime" and the section of this years US State Department's TIP report addressing the Republic of Serbia.

We would like to thank all of you who helped us by providing relevant information on your activities, thus contributing to this issue coming to light. Any new ideas, comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Activities carried out to prevent and suppress human trafficking April – June 2012

On **April 1-15**, an exhibition was staged in the Knez Mihajlova pedestrian street in Belgrade. Titled "**The Design of Dissent**", the exhibition portrayed different social phenomena dating from the 60s onwards. Panels were set along the street, depicting conceptual designs of diverse posters, book and magazine covers, badges and other materials. Among these, two panels showed the issue of trafficking in human beings – work of Americans Briseno and Ibanez presenting human trafficking as a modern day slavery and poster on human organs trade by Polish designer Jarek Bujny. On this piece a barcode placed on a kidney represents a symbolic warning that the poor and the helpless are nothing but "spare parts" for the more prosperous.



effective remedies, including compensation for trafficked persons and vulnerable groups. The meeting was attended by over 30 lawyers from Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, UK, USA and Uzbekistan. **Informal consultation meeting** held on **May 15** in Warsaw was another activity organized within the **ODIHR Anti-Trafficking Programme**. Participants – civil society organizations, legal practitioners, OSCE field presences' anti-trafficking focal points, and representatives of international organizations - shared their ideas on how to shape the Network in terms of priorities and structure. The consultation also allowed organizations and individuals to pledge their contributions to ensure the effective functioning of the Network. During

Strategy Meeting for Legal Practitioners was organized within the **ODIHR Anti-Trafficking Programme on April 3-4** in Warsaw, Poland. The meeting was the first activity aimed at establishing a new OSCE-wide Network of Lawyers committed to improving access to justice and



the Strategy Meeting, participants agreed on the establishment of an OSCE-wide Network of Lawyers to enhance accessible, adequate and free-of-charge legal assistance to trafficked persons and vulnerable groups.

Serbian Anti Trafficking Coordinator, together with anti-trafficking coordinators from the MARRI region, attended the **conference “Fighting Organized Crime and Human Trafficking”** and the **third meeting of anti-trafficking coordinators** of the MARRI Network in Sarajevo on **April 16-18**. The meeting aimed at the exchange of information and planning joint actions in combating human trafficking in the MARRI region.

The representative of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Appellate attended the **workshop “EU legislation in the area of fighting human trafficking and organized crime”** which took place in Sarajevo on **April 17-18**. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina with support of TAIEX and French Regional Technical Adviser in Combating Human Trafficking in SEE. Its goal was to promote the harmonization of EU and B&H legislation in the area of police and judicial cooperation in criminal and customs matters through strengthening the efficiency of investigation and prosecution regarding trafficking in children and fight against cross-border criminal networks at the regional level.

On **April 18-22, ASTRA** organized a **study visit** to Warsaw, Poland. The aim of the visit was to strengthen the partnership and exchange experiences with the representatives of different social sectors in Poland, whose work is relevant for the prevention and suppression of human trafficking with the purpose of labor exploitation. Additionally, this study presented the opportunity of enhancing intersectoral cooperation on national level, since Serbian delegation was constituted of representatives from NGO ASTRA, the Office of the National Coordinator for combating trafficking in human beings, trade union and a lawyer who represented victims in one labor exploitation case. Organizations and institutions Serbian delegation visited are NGO Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej that provides legal assistance to victims, ODIHR Warsaw – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Ministry of the Interior

of Poland, the Unit for fight against human trafficking, Trade Union Solidarnosc and NGO La Strada Poland.

Seminar “Trafficking in Human Beings and Confiscation of Criminal Assets”, organized by the Hans Zaidel Foundation, took place in Lukovska Banja on **April 23-24**. The seminar was intended for **police officers** as a part of the training in the anti-trafficking field.

Meeting of the National Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings focusing on **victims’ right to compensation** was held at the Ministry of Interior in Belgrade on **April 26**. On that occasion, multidisciplinary team of experts presented solutions of the working group made of representatives from different areas, including the judiciary, specialized NGOs, Judges’ Association of Serbia, Prosecutor Association of Serbia and academic institutions. After the presentation, Team members discussed about victims’ right to compensation and the establishment of a Compensation Fund. These actions would contribute to harmonization of the national legislation with the Council of Europe’s conventions and EU directives. Expert’s work and the study were supported by OSCE Mission to Serbia.

NGO ASTRA, in cooperation with the **Children and Youth Foster Care Center**, has started the implementation of the accredited educational program **“Foster Family as a Place for the Recovery and Reintegration of Human Trafficking Victims”**. The first educational seminar took place on **April 27-28** and gathered participants from Belgrade and Kolubarski Region. On **June 4-5**, another seminar for foster families and foster parents’ advisers from Macvanski Region was held in Banja Koviljaca. The main goal of the seminars held within the Program is to empower professionals in the social welfare system to provide adequate assistance, within their competence, to victims of human trafficking. Trainings are designed to contribute to solving the existing problems in providing support and assistance to trafficked persons, in



particular to foster (re)integration of minor victims which depends, inter alia, on emotional support, adequate accommodation and protection, which the existing system does not and foster families can provide.

Like every year, during **April** and **May**, final year students of the **Academy for Criminalistic and Police Studies** had an opportunity to listen to a series of lectures about different aspects of human trafficking from actors directly involved in the prosecution



of perpetrators and the protection of victims. Lectures were within the course “Illegal Migrations and Human Trafficking” and were delivered by police officers, Deputy Prosecutor of Appellate in Belgrade and ASTRA representative.

NGO ASTRA activists spent the Labor Day, **May 1** talking about labor exploitation as a form of human trafficking to picnickers on Avala



mountain. The action took place on this very date in order to draw public attention to the increasing presence of labor exploitation as a form of THB; the citizens who came to Avala were informed about the risk factors and the existing protection mechanisms. Picnickers were also introduced to harsh working and living conditions faced by the victims, recruiting methods, characteristics of suspicious job offers, and other details typical of this form of human trafficking. Thereby, they learned that victims of THB are not only the unprotected, naïve girls, but also working men, both young and old, even those highly educated. A number of young people, many of whom see seasonal jobs as attractive source of income, were informed about the labor exploitation as a form of human trafficking in the month when number of seasonal jobs increases significantly.

A workshop for the creation of the National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Victim Protection in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2013-2018 was held in Vršac on **May 21-23**. The workshop gathered the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator and representatives from the Interior Ministry, relevant ministries, NGOs ASTRA and Atina and international organizations.

The **City of Belgrade's Agency for European Integrations and Cooperation with Civil Society** organized the third **Civil Society Organizations Fair "SAMOinicijativa"** on **May 24-25**. The aim of this fair was to encourage



citizens to induce positive changes in society with their engagement, commitment and initiative. Over seventy

organizations participated in the fair and presented their current projects and plans for the future activities. Most of the organizations are focused on the protection of human rights, education, entrepreneurship and the media. On that occasion on ASTRA's stand people were provided with information about human trafficking, promo materials were distributed and videos produced for ASTRA's media campaigns showed to the public.

Meeting of the National Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings titled **"The Correlation between Human Trafficking and the Asylum"** was held at the Ministry of Interior in Belgrade on **May 30**. Participants of the meeting were introduced with the basic international standards of refugees' protection and the link between trafficking in human beings and the asylum by the representatives from the UNHCR office in Belgrade; representative from NGO Atina presented a case study that incorporates elements of both problems; Sanja Kljajić, director of the newly established Center for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, presented draft version of the Regulation on Minimal Standards for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking in the Social Protection System. These presentations were followed by participants' discussion. Also, ten years anniversary of the National Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings was marked on the occasion.

Cabaret show presenting the social status and lives of transgender sex workers in Belgrade was held on **June 4**. The show is part of **the Behind the Mirror project**, unique in not being determined by form or media. Rather it joins artists and sex workers in depicting the societal norms and political and legal frameworks which influence the social status and lives of this marginalized group, ultimately seeking to engage the public in a wider discourse on human rights issues.

Training "Protection of Trafficking Victim and the Asylum System as a Complementary System of Protection", organized by the



Interior Ministry and UNHCR, was held on **June 11**. The participants came from the Border Police Directorate – the Asylum Department and the Department for Combating Illegal Migrations and Human Trafficking, the Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, UNHCR, the Belgrade center for Human Rights, the Humanitarian Center for Integration and Tolerance and the Center for the Protection of Asylum Seekers.

On **June 13-15**, the **COMP.ACT Coalition** met in Vienna. The coalition is constituted from European NGOs dedicated to improve the access to compensation and legal redress for trafficked persons, mainstreaming remuneration into the national anti-trafficking measures and into the international anti-trafficking policies. On this occasion advocacy trainings



were held and working groups have created an advocacy plan on compensation accordingly. In addition, participating NGOs from ten different European countries presented their experience in the field. NGO ASTRA presented the progress of the Serbian Expert Group, recommendations made for improving the compensation mechanism and the issues needed to be resolved for successful establishment of the compensation fund for victims of violent crimes.

Third expert meeting for lawyers “Health Consequences of Human Trafficking”

Third expert meeting for lawyers titled **“Health Consequences of Human Trafficking”** was held in Belgrade on **May 18**. The expert meeting is part of the project **“Protection of Trafficking Victims’ Rights through/and the Provision of Legal Assistance”** carried out by **NGO ASTRA** and the **Netherlands Helsinki Committee** with support of the **Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MATRA)**. Participating legal practitioners were introduced to different aspects of health consequences of human trafficking and the traumatic experience victims endure by local and foreign experts in the field.



“In the court, focus of attention is on traffickers, while victims and their interests are put behind. On the other hand, international organizations are interested in trauma and recovery of the victim, making them disinterested in studying traffickers’ profiles and patterns of their behavior”, stressed Henk Werson, police inspector and expert of the Dutch Police Centre for Combating Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling. Nonetheless, suppression of human trafficking and the adequate treatment of victims depends on the cooperation of all actors tackling the issue and/or having contact with victims. According to Mr. Werson, such a holistic approach gave significant results, particularly improving treatment and protection of human trafficking victims.

In this mechanism, the role of the lawyers is not only to represent victims in court and protect their rights, but they should also make a realistic assessment of the situation and initiate the proceedings only when there is insufficient evidence to prove the perpetrators guilty of trafficking in human beings. Attorneys representing people who survived trafficking should recognize the trauma and do all in their power to ensure their clients feel secure, and ready to talk about their experience in a safe environment. Doctor Cathy Zimmerman from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine reminded participants of the meeting how extreme and petrifying life conditions of those trapped in the trafficking ring may be. “Imagine that you do not have the ability to control the most simple actions, like bathing, for example. Among our respondents were girls not only unable to choose when and how to bath, but also forced to share one towel with twenty other girls”, said Dr



Zimmerman, provoking gathered lawyers to put themselves in victims’ shoes and try to envisage what they are going through. Women who survived human trafficking and took part in Dr Zimmerman’s study “Stolen Smiles”, did not have control over when and what they eat, do they get to drink or not, when they get to sleep, use the toilet, whether or not they get to talk to their families and if they get medical help when needed. At the same time they were forced to have sexual intercourse with number of clients a day, constantly facing treats, physical punishment, and fear for their own life and lives of their family members. Since these women are used to someone else having control over their life and tell them what to do, their attorney needs to help them recover the strength needed to express their needs and wants and aid client’s regaining of the control over her/his life.

Participants of the meeting heard more about experiences and traumas victims of trafficking face from the Dutch expert in the field, Marjan Wijers and Biljana Slavković, a therapist from the Psychodrama Institute. Doctor Vera Litričin and expert witnesses, professor Slobodan Savić from the Institute of Forensic Medicine and professor Aleksandar Jovanović, the head of the Forensic Psychiatry Department of the Clinical Center of Serbia, shared their experience with legal practitioners participating in the meeting. “In cases involving victims of human trafficking we face a variety of health problems resulting directly from their exploitation. These problems can be proven in court, and if so, can contribute to the adequate legal sanctioning of the perpetrators”, said Doctor Slobodan Savić who further explained the role of expert witnesses to lawyers. The meeting was concluded by Biljana Sinanović, judge of the Supreme Court of Cassation in Belgrade. “Unfortunately this state does not have an appropriate solution for the institutional protection of victims of human trafficking. Therefore, it is on their legal representatives to inform them about their right to seek the application of security measures”, said judge Sinanović. She also made an appeal to attorneys representing victims of human trafficking, asking them to use findings of expert witnesses and exhaust all recourses to provide protection of their client’s interest of the best possible quality, since their colleagues, representing traffickers, do not choose their means to defend the perpetrators.

*Media campaign
“Human Trafficking. Labor Exploitation.
Serious and Organized Crime”*

NGO ASTRA presented the new **media campaign “Human Trafficking. Labor Exploitation. Serious and Organized Crime”** on a press conference held today, June 19, 2012, at Belgrade’s Media centre.

TV spot produced for the campaign was presented at the press conference. The authors are Nadežda Milenković and Milutin Petrović. It will be offered to national and local TV stations and you can see it at http://www.astra.rs/?page_id=9.

This campaign is a response to increase in the number of identified victims of human trafficking that have been subjected to labor exploitation, registered both by ASTRA SOS Hotline and relevant state authorities in Serbia. Data presented by the International Labor Organization (ILO) stress the gravity of the problem – according to this organization there are 2.5 million victims of labor exploitation as a form of human trafficking. “Annual income traffickers make is around 32 million USD. GDP of Serbia does not differ much. So, money traffickers obtain through exploitation of other people’s work matches GDP of a whole country”, said **Jovan Protić, national coordinator of ILO in Serbia.**

Unfortunately, this increase has not been followed by an appropriate state reaction – alongside the evident lack of understanding of this phenomenon, procedures for handling and prosecuting labor exploitation cases are not clearly defined, either. Even though public awareness of this problem is still rather low, ASTRA first came across a labor exploitation case back in 2005. Since then, every 6th victim in ASTRA Direct Victim Assistance Program survived labor exploitation. Therefore, the inability of authorities to tackle this problem cannot be justified by a relatively short presence of this form of human trafficking in Serbia.

Trafficking in human beings with the purpose of labor exploitation is present in numerous work fields; however,



victims are most commonly recruited for work in labor-intensive sectors, with large share of informal labor and/or long chains of subcontracting, like in construction industry. **Saša Simić, president of the Branch Trade Union of Construction Industry Nezavisnost** emphasized the role of trade unions in eradication of this form of human trafficking.

Ivana Radović from ASTRA pointed out that trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labor exploitation must be recognized as a problem which results from the situation on the labor market and which does not affect only one industry. In that respect, it is necessary to build and promote such labor market in which labor legislation will be persistently enforced with negligible share of unregistered labor.

“For successful and efficient recognition and prosecution of cases of human trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation, it is necessary to ensure high level of political will as a sign of real determination and commitment of society to put an end to this form of crime”, said Ms. Radovic.

Upon their return to their home country, victims of labor exploitation are to face the same problems that pushed them into the trafficking ring. This often leads them to accept suspicious job offers, which puts them under a greater risk of getting back into the trafficking ring. Additionally, the existing victim assistance programs

available in Serbia are not adjusted to the new user category, and society has proven reluctant to understand, accept and support victims of labor exploitation in the recovery process.

The campaign “Labor Exploitation, Human Trafficking. Serious and Organized Crime” is supported by the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia within the “Civil Society Support” program.



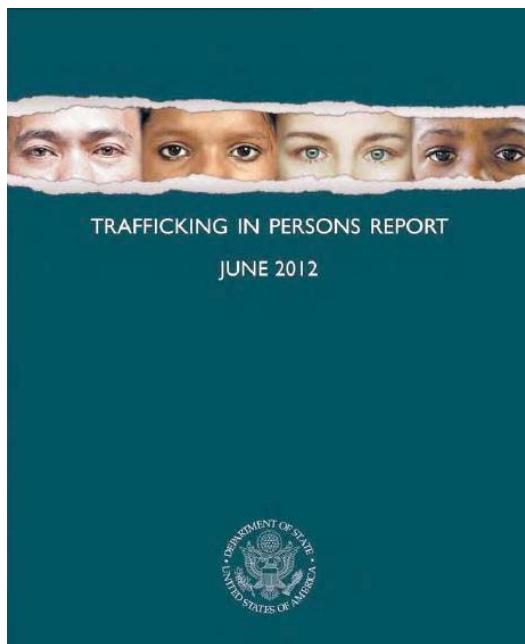
2012 TIP Report¹

This year's TIP Report was released on 19 June. The TIP Report is the most comprehensive worldwide report on governments' efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons. It includes countries of origin, transit, or destination for trafficking victims. It represents an updated, global look at the nature and scope of trafficking in persons and the broad range of government actions to confront and eliminate it.

The country narratives describe the scope and nature of the trafficking problem, and the government's efforts to combat trafficking. They follow the 3-P structure (introduced by the Palermo Protocol, i.e. the emphasis is on the prosecution of traffickers, the protection of victims and the prevention of human trafficking. Each narrative also contains an assessment of the government's compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking as laid out in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and includes suggestions for additional government actions. Based on that assessment, each country is placed onto one of the three Tiers. This placement is based more on the extent of government action to combat trafficking than on the size of the problem, although that is also an important factor.

Governments that fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking are placed on Tier 1. Governments that are making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards are placed on Tier 2. Governments that do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so are placed on Tier 3. In addition, the country may also be placed on Tier 2 Watch List.

The TVPA lists three factors by which to determine whether a country should be on Tier 2 (or Tier 2 Watch List) versus Tier 3: (1) the extent to which the country is a country of origin, transit, or destination for severe forms of trafficking; (2) the extent to which the country's government does not comply with the TVPA's minimum standards including, in particular, the extent to which officials or government employees have been complicit in severe forms of trafficking; and (3) the government's resources and capabilities to



address and eliminate severe forms of trafficking in persons.

Countries that are placed on Tier 2 Watch List are those in which: (1) The absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing; (2) There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking crimes; increased assistance to victims; and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or (3) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring

itself into compliance with the minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional steps over the next year.

The Department of State prepared this report using information from U.S. embassies, foreign government officials, nongovernmental and international organizations, published reports, research trips to every region, and information submitted to tipreport@state.gov.

This year, 185 countries were examined, 17 of which have been classified on Tier 3, which is considerably smaller number than one year earlier. As far as our neighbors and our region are concerned, Croatia and Macedonia are on Tier 1 and Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and Kosovo are on Tier 2; Bosnia and Herzegovina were on Tier 1, but this year it was moved back on Tier 2.

SERBIA (Tier 2)

Serbia is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor, including domestic servitude. Serbian women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking, and Serbian men and boys are vulnerable to forced labor within the country. Serbian citizens are subjected to forced labor in other countries, and foreign victims are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor in Serbia. Foreign victims of trafficking found in Serbia originate primarily from other countries in Europe. During the past year, foreign trafficking

¹ The whole text is taken and translated from the integral version of the TIP Report.

victims in Serbia originated from Montenegro, Bosnia, Ukraine, Moldova, Albania, Turkey, Slovenia, Russia, and Austria. Children throughout the country, including ethnic Roma, continue to be exploited in the commercial sex trade, subjected to involuntary servitude while in forced marriage, or forced to engage in street begging. Country experts reported an increased detection of labor trafficking victims in the country in 2011.



The Government of Serbia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The Serbian government vigorously prosecuted traffickers, increased its conviction rate for trafficking offenders, and carried out innovative anti-trafficking prevention activities in 2011. Furthermore, it took critical steps to transform and institutionalize its response to victim protection in 2011 by continuing its integration of victim protection for all trafficking victims, including males and children, into the existing nationwide social protection system. In late 2011, the government provided a new building and secured state financing to establish a stand-alone national agency charged with the immediate care of foreign and domestic trafficking victims. NGOs continued to rely mostly on foreign donors to provide psychosocial and reintegration assistance to trafficking victims during the year. Notably, the Serbian government identified a significant number of trafficking victims relative to the rest of Balkan region in 2011 and improved its detection of forced labor. However, the government must continue to strive for more effective and systematic identification efforts to detect trafficking victims. Social workers, a key group of front-line responders, need further training in order to develop the capacity to identify and provide specialized psychosocial care to victims.

Recommendations for Serbia:

Ensure that NGOs with a history of providing victim care in Serbia are included and integrated in the system of direct victim care, in order to ensure effective care and reintegration assistance; continue to take steps to ensure that social workers and other front-line responders are integrated into victim identification efforts and ensure that potential trafficking victims, including victims of forced labor, are proactively identified throughout Serbia; ensure availability of specialized accommodations for victims; implement pending legal reforms to ensure victims receive institutionalized support during judicial proceedings and sex trafficking victims are not prosecuted for prostitution

offenses; take steps to ensure trafficking victims are not jailed or punished for crimes committed as a direct result of their trafficking; vigorously prosecute, convict, and punish sex and labor trafficking offenders including any officials complicit in trafficking; ensure sustained state budget funding for comprehensive assistance, including appropriate support for NGOs providing longer-term care and rehabilitation assistance to victims; take steps to

establish formal partnerships between the government's central victim protection agency, NGOs, other social welfare centers, and front-line responders to continually improve outreach and victim care; encourage adoption at the local level of the interagency task force model, where appropriate, to establish a multi-disciplinary approach to handling trafficking cases; and consider the establishment of a full-time position for a national anti-trafficking coordinator.

Prosecution

The Government of Serbia sustained vigorous anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts in 2011. The criminal code for Serbia prohibits both sex trafficking and non-sexual exploitation through Article 388; however, this criminal code does not specifically distinguish between commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. Penalties prescribed under Article 388 range from three to 15 years' imprisonment; these penalties are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for other serious offenses, such as rape. Article 390 of the criminal code prescribes penalties for "slavery or a relationship similar to slavery" with penalties of one to 10 years' imprisonment. In 2011, the government reported prosecuting 36 criminal cases (27 for sex trafficking and nine for labor trafficking) involving 68 suspected trafficking offenders in 2011, compared with its prosecution of 47 criminal cases involving 99 suspected trafficking offenders in 2010. Courts convicted 47 trafficking offenders in 2011, convicting 42 under Article 388 and five under Article 390; this is an increase from a total of 36 trafficking offenders convicted in 2010. The government reported that sentences for convicted trafficking offenders in 2011 ranged from six months to ten years' imprisonment. According to Serbian law, those sentenced to less than five years' imprisonment could be released from detention during their appeals of convictions. Overall, only 15 out of 47 convicted traffickers were serving jail time in 2011. The Ministry of Justice adopted a protocol on treatment of victims in March 2012 to improve and institutionalize the

government's treatment of victims and witnesses during judicial proceedings. Some local government officials have initiated an interagency "task force" approach to encourage a coordinated, victim-centered approach to addressing trafficking cases. There were no reports of any allegations against, or investigations, prosecutions or convictions of any officials complicit in trafficking during the reporting period. The government's refusal to cooperate directly with the Government of the Republic of Kosovo continued to hamper Serbia's efforts to investigate and prosecute some transnational trafficking.

Protection

The Government of Serbia took innovative steps to institutionalize protection and assistance to trafficking victims during the reporting period. NGOs continued to provide specialized and rehabilitative services to victims, but received only limited funding from the government to provide this critical assistance to victims in 2011. The government agency for victim protection in Belgrade identified 88 trafficking victims in 2011; this compares to 89 victims identified in 2010. The agency referred 39 victims who requested assistance to NGO assistance providers while government authorities provided other services to victims. NGOs provided comprehensive psychosocial services and reintegration assistance to trafficking victims during the year; these NGOs continued to rely mostly on foreign donors to provide this critical care. In 2011 the government worked towards establishing a more systematic, comprehensive response to victim protection; in November 2011, the government provided a facility for its new victim protection agency and urgent care center by innovatively using permanently seized criminal assets to acquire the building. The government relied on international donors to help finance the center's first year of operations. During the reporting period, the agency received the equivalent of \$46,811 from the City of Belgrade government for victim protection services. In March 2012, the Government of Serbia provided funding in the amount equivalent to \$54,651 to the agency, which was mandated to grant formal victim status and provide protection to victims. In practice, specific support continued to be provided by NGOs. The agency remained understaffed in 2011 during the transition period as the government continued to implement its social welfare legislation. Country experts report that the government has yet to establish the capacity to provide specialized psychosocial care required by victims of trafficking, especially children.

The government drafted a protocol on treatment of victims in June 2011, and formally adopted it in March 2012 after an extended consultation period, in an effort to improve and institutionalize the government's treatment of victims and witnesses during judicial proceedings. Country experts, however, noted concern that some judges demonstrated a lack of understanding of trafficking and reported victims' secondary victimization during court proceedings. According to an NGO that monitored trials, victims may still be subjected to intimidation from their traffickers in court. Although the courts may employ victim-sensitive approaches by allowing video testimony or prepared statements, these protection measures were rarely used in practice. NGOs continued to report that authorities failed to recognize some victims of trafficking, occasionally resulting in victims being detained, jailed, otherwise penalized, or even prosecuted for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of their being trafficked. A 2011 report on labor trafficking, based on cases in previous years, found some labor trafficking victims were jailed based on their illegal residence in Serbia.

Prevention

The government significantly improved its trafficking prevention efforts during the reporting period. As a central part of Serbia's 2011 national awareness-raising campaign entitled "Better Prevent than Cure," the government co-financed and widely disseminated "Sestre" (Sisters), an award winning film on trafficking, to target potential youth victims throughout Serbia and the region. During Serbia's annual anti-trafficking month in October 2011, numerous officials took part in public events and radio and TV shows to raise awareness about human trafficking. The Ministry of Interior official charged with coordinating Serbia's anti-trafficking efforts continued to maintain an anti-trafficking website and social media site, and publicized Serbia's anti-trafficking hotline; however, this national coordinator was not funded as a full-time position. The Ministry of Interior also devoted its October 2011 bulletin to activities of police, and regional and NGO counterparts, in anti-trafficking prevention. The government coordinated with international stakeholders to develop a new anti-trafficking strategy and action plan, but did not issue a new national anti-trafficking action plan after the expiration of its current plan in 2011. The government did not report any efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts. The government has not identified a problem with child sex tourism.

IMPRESSUM

Prepared by: **Elena Krsmanović and Ivana Radović**

ASTRA – Anti Trafficking Action, Belgrade, Serbia

Tel/fax: **+381 11 785 0000 • +381 11 785 0001**

E-mail: **astra@astra.rs**

Web: **www.astra.rs**