



Transactions

Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women
(Stichting Religieuzen Tegen Vrouwenhandel)

SRTV Newsletter Eighth Issue

July 2006

Contents

15 Years of SRTV	1
The Inspiration: Johan Naron	3
A Man Alone in Amsterdam	7
Column	12
About the SRTV	
Actions against Forced Prostitution during World Cup Football	5
SRTV on a visit to Amsterdam	9
In the News	
MTV Europe: Ukrainian NationWide Tour on THB	4
Estonia Approves National Action Plan 4	
Modern Slavery is Close to Home	6
Fighting Sex Trade in the Czech Republic . 8	
Green Tulip against Forced Prostitution . 9	
UK: Sex Slavery Unit set up to Tackle growing Trade	10
USA Trafficking in Persons Report 2006	10
Churches cooperate in Combating THB 11	

15 Years of SRTV

On Thursday April 6th the Foundation of Religious Against Trafficking in Women (SRTV) celebrated its 15 years of existence with a symposium for religious congregations, helpers, ex-helpers and invited guests. Chair for the day was Mrs. Wies Stael-Merkx. For the occasion two special speakers had been invited from abroad, viz. Sister Florence Nwaonuma who runs a home in Nigeria for victims of women traffic, and Sister Eugenia Bonetti from Italy who befriends streetwalkers in Rome.

Sister Florence

In 1999 the Nigerian Council of Women Religious took the initiative to establish a committee to defend the dignity of women. "It was the slavery, the sexual exploitation, forced labour and the inhumanity among human beings experienced by women and children at the hands of their pimps which impelled us to start a project that directly involved us with the victims of the traffic in women and children and help to restore the sense of personal dignity of these victims. Since its inception the committee has held the frontlines in the battle against women traffic in Nigeria, as well as the rehabilitation of victims who have gone through this modern slavery."

Sister Florence told us the project has been entered upon inspired by the work begun by the religious in Holland. Her religious superiors asked her to undertake the project and that it is how it all began. The Dutch warning leaflet was the model on which their own Nigerian version was based.

A small group of three sisters and two lay-helpers now spreads information in Nigeria among women, men and youths in the most divers places. Their activities reach people in the markets, drivers of bicycle-taxis (in Nigeria called 'okada') as well as national and foreign drivers. The sisters visit exclusively male preserves such as cafés as well as small independents like hairdressers, tailors and farmers. It is necessary to go into far-off villages because the traders and their agents go there to recruit their unsuspecting victims.

The sisters are also actively engaged with the integration of returning victims. They meet the - often young - girls at the airport or bus station, offer them temporary lodgings in their own communities and start



the often lengthy process of restoring a girl's contact with her village and family. Nearly always the process is hampered by the fact that the girls, before being trafficked, have been influenced by a voodoo priest in such a way that, as a rule, psychological damage has been inflicted. The Sisters are now planning to set up a real centre that offers a safe place where they, together with the girls, can start the long process of healing of the physical and psychological wounds incurred during their stay in Europe.

Sister Eugenia

The second speaker of the day was Sr. Eugenia from Rome. This tiny, not so young but very spirited sister appealed for more cooperation among the societies that are engaged in the battle against traffic in humans.

"Today I like to speak to you of the dedication and commitment of many religious women. How they try to find an answer to the hopeless situation of girls and women traded as objects of convenience, imported and exported worldwide for the sex market. Let us begin to admit that this form of slavery still flourishes in the year 2006. And next realise that only concerted effort can defeat and eradicate this plague." → p.2

We live in a prosperous society in which everything is for sale, even the body of a minor. Religious women were the first to recognise this 'new sign of the time'. When girls managed to escape from their pimp and ask for help, many different convents took an unpublicised yet considerable risk in sheltering these girls. The Sisters had to face many problems, e.g. of the language and culture, questions of ethics, public opinion and law.

Having listened to the startling stories, the Sisters soon understood that 'work' as a prostitute - still referred to as the world's oldest profession - was not entered upon by free choice, but that they were victims of a modern form of slavery. "This meant a challenge to our norms and values, to our traditions as well as to our safety," she continued, "at present some 250 sisters from 70 congregations work in 110 shelters in Italy."

The Italian Sisters, however, do much more: they counsel, they speak with streetwalkers and bring pressure to bear on members of parliament. Over and above this, they try to demonstrate to other religious that religious life in the third millennium demands that this modern curse of international traffic in women must be stopped. This is, says Sr. Eugenia, the charisma of the religious in our days. This has prompted them to take several initiatives. One of them is to prepare a set of informative pamphlets for religious communities, seminaries, schools, parishes and youth groups. The kit is available in six languages: English, Italian, Spanish, French, Polish and Rumanian; a Portuguese and German version are in preparation. In 2004/5 a training course for religious sisters on human traffic was held in Italy, Nigeria, Albania, Rumania, Thailand and the Dominican Republic. A similar course is planned for Brazil, the Philippines and Portugal.

"I am happy to be present and celebrate the 15th birthday of the planting of the small seed by some daring female religious. They were women concerned about human rights and the dignity of so many women 'created in the image of God but treated as slaves'. That tiny seed has grown into a big tree in the shadow of which many young women have found shelter when in search of the joy of living."

Prayer in Common

After these inspiring lectures the whole assembly went to the chapel to be led in prayer by three women of the SRTV. Everyone was delighted to see Joke den Dulk and Sr. Michel Keesen, both founding members of the SRTV, present at the prayer.



The service centred on the stone as symbol. The reading was taken from John 8, 1-11, where the scribes and the Pharisees present Jesus with a woman caught in adultery. They wanted to stone her as the Law demanded.

They wanted to put Him to the test in order to find a pretext to accuse Him. Jesus, however, went down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning Him He said: "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." When they withdrew, one by one, Jesus said to the woman: "Has no one condemned you?" She answered: "No one, Sir." Jesus then said: "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way and from now on do not sin again."

After this Lideke in 't Veld of the SRTV led in reflecting. In her meditation she observed that the women kept silent and that no one questioned her. Just as we do in the case of trafficked women, Jesus takes this woman seriously and tells her to go her way and sin no more because her past behaviour has been sinful. But He did not condemn her and never put her to shame.

It is hard to take an unbiased view of a strange situation. Each one should consider if they are without sins themselves. Each one present is offered a stone and asked: "Here is a stone. With the gospel scene in mind consider if you are prepared to cast it."



The afternoon

After a first-class luncheon we took off to have a look at the photo exhibition: '15 years Religious Against Women Traffic'.

Next, the group broke up into 8 workshops to discuss how we, as Christians, could follow Jesus' example. In a plenary session some of the results of the workshop were reviewed. One group, for example, came to the conclusion that we ought to 'count to ten' before we form a judgement as this was what Jesus did when He wrote on the ground. Another group proposed to write a letter to the political parties asking them to give a more humane treatment to victims of woman traffic.

To conclude the day the floor was given to Mrs. Korvinus, National Reporter on Traffic in Humans, who opened with a moving personal experience. After this she acquainted us with the scope of her office and told us what research data they publish, adding that her organisation is the only one in Europe that collects actual statistics as a data base for further research.

After her address Mrs. Korvinus received a stamp of the campaign *Show human trafficking the Red Card*, more on which can be found elsewhere in this publication.

Ivonne van de Kar and Elma van den Nouland

The Inspiration

A very Interesting Life

What a dynamic life! Johan Naron, Secretary of the SRTV Board, has had many eventful experiences and he can tell you about them enthusiastically. He told his life history with justified pride.

He was born in 1944 to a good Catholic baker's family in a small village. When his father fell ill, the family moved to another village, where they lived 300 meters from the queen's residence. Johan was an altar boy in the 6th form when a father of the Society of the African Mission (SMA) came to school. This visit awakened in Johan a call to become a missionary. And so he went, as a twelve year old, to the Minor Seminary of the fathers. He went on to the Major Seminary and was ordained a priest after only three years of studying theology. He seemed destined for Ghana. During his studies, he received lessons in cultural anthropology from an inspiring Holy Ghost father. He was drawn to a new experiment in Cameroon.



A Person among the People

The initiative came from a Holy Ghost sister who was working there. She had been expelled from her congregation due to her revolutionary idea of going to live among the people as a missionary. She was looking for colleagues to join her. Johan's teacher knew of this project and informed him of it. It was 1969, he was 25 years old and his provincial superior agreed.

Upon his arrival he was named the boys football coach. In return, the boys had to help him lay a road and build bridges. The football team finished first in that year's competition and the road to the cacao plantations was completed.

Johan and his colleagues worked to form a co-op for the cacao farmers. He also was a priest for a small congregation outside of town and would celebrate the Eucharist with people he met. The organisation transported the cacao to the harbour with trucks that returned with building materials. Members of the co-op had to save 20% of their income. The extra money was then used for education and health services.

Sabbatical

In 1976 Johan went on a sabbatical leave and studied missiology in the Netherlands. During that leave the co-op in Cameroon was forced to shut down by the government, which claimed that the co-op had become a state within a state.

Johan's doctoral thesis was about the responsibility of the people, to whom missionaries devote themselves. One of his conclusions was that while the Church as an institute helps people, she doesn't help them become responsible for their own lives. They therefore remain dependent on help. This conclusion led him to resign from the priesthood.

A new Calling

Johan then got the chance to go and work for the High Commission for Refugees as a program officer and later became the temporary head of an organization that looked after the Ethiopian refugees in East Sudan, who were spread over many camps.

Right before he left for the Sudan, he met his wife. She is a Cameroonian who came to the Netherlands under Dutch sponsorship and studied as a doctor in Belgium. She was refused a Belgian residency permit and was sent back to Cameroon. When he went to the Sudan he visited her in Cameroon; they married and she went with him to the Sudan.

Soon after that, he was named head of the UNHCR sub-office in North Cameroon where 2,150,000 refugees from Chad were seeking shelter. After the refugees were brought home, Johan changed jobs and became the regional delegate and later director of the Foundation of Dutch Volunteers (SNV) in Cameroon. During this time, Johan and his wife had three children: two girls and a boy.

In 1987 the Naron family returned to the Netherlands. Johan became responsible for operations in West Africa for the Protestant development organization ICCO. He worked for ICCO for 8 years until he started working for the Catholic Central Mission Commission (CMC), where he was director until May 2004.

During that time, sister Michel Keesen asked the CMC if they knew someone who wanted to form a Board for the Workgroup of the Religious Against Trafficking in Women. This workgroup needed to be reorganized and become a foundation. Johan asked her: "Would you like → p.4

me do that?" Sister Michel agreed wholeheartedly. Johan now has taken retirement, but he is not using his time to rest on his laurels.

A Hallmark?

He is very motivated to work as Secretary of the SRTV Board. What he would like most is to see the 'consumers' of these women become aware that while some women do this 'work' voluntarily, others are coerced. The women should therefore be given a hallmark. The SRTV could contribute to this. He is pleased that the SRTV is supported by religious people and organisations. That is why the trafficking of women is on the agenda of the religious in the Netherlands. He thinks the SRTV is doing good work with few resources. Johan is drawn to the foundation. He

went on a service trip with Ivonne van de Kar to Ghana. Future trips are already booked for Cameroon and Eastern Europe. We must create and distribute new materials about the trafficking of women. The film, 'Anna', which we reported on in the last issue, is a good example.

He won't sit still

Johan Naron won't and can't sit still, even now that he is retired. He is active on the boards of several organizations. He is also in charge of his own household, as his sweet wife is still working as a midwife and his three children are all still students. And he still manages to find time for them all. Thank you, Johan, for your multifaceted efforts.

Gijs Liefvering

In the News

MTV Europe Broadcasts Ukrainian Rockers on Nation-Wide Tour Against Human Trafficking

MTV Networks Europe's television channel, MTV European, has produced and broadcast a special program featuring Ukrainian rockers Okean Elzy and their nation-wide tour to raise awareness and promote the prevention of human trafficking, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration Mission in Ukraine (IOM Ukraine) and MTV Europe Foundation.



The program - a special episode of MTV European's flagship magazine program Switched On - featured live concert footage and interviews with Okean Elzy and Ukrainian anti-trafficking organizations, key antitrafficking messages, and highlights of Kiev's night life, shopping, and tourist attractions. The program has been broadcast to MTV European's 19 million households in over 22 countries, including Ukraine, other countries throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and Turkey, South Africa, Israel, and the Middle East. The counter-trafficking campaign, funded by Sida, the Swedish Agency for International Development Coop-

eration and USAID, the United States Agency for International Development, began in September 2005.

The Okean Elzy concerts, held in 30 cities across Ukraine for approximately 100,000 people, also featured the participation of local anti-trafficking NGOs, who offered concert goers information about how to protect themselves if going abroad to work, study or travel. The tour will be followed in the near future by a television and advertising trafficking awareness campaign.

For more information about MTV EXIT, see www.mtvexit.org.

Estonia Approves National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking

A national plan to prevent human trafficking between 2006 and 2009 was approved on January 26, 2006 in Estonia, a significant source country of women and girls traded for trafficking.

Under the plan, Estonia will monitor and document problems related to human trafficking in order to obtain comprehensive and reliable information about the scope and forms of human trafficking. They will also work to educate the public about the problem.

Government leaders fear trafficking will increase if the East European member states of the European Union (EU) join the Schengen open-borders agreement in 2007, whereby travellers arriving at one of the EU's outer borders are checked only once, and thereafter have freedom

to cross all the other national borders in the Schengen states.

Justice Minister Rein Lang said human trafficking may become a major problem for Estonia if it is not tackled immediately. "With human trafficking it's just like it used to be with narcotics abuse and HIV. At the beginning of the 1990s it was said about narcotics abuse that it was not a problem for Estonia and concerned only people from the bottom layer of the society. Five years later narcotics abuse had become a problem", the minister said.

For more information on human trafficking in Estonia: <http://gvnet.com/humantrafficking/Estonia.htm>

SRTV mail: srtv@srtv.info

SRTV website: www.srtv.info

Actions against Forced Prostitution during World Cup Football

Several organisations took the initiative to start campaigning against forced prostitution around the World Cup Football in Germany that was played last month.

This didn't happen out of the blue. In the past it has been proved that great sport events like this lead to an increase of prostitution: in many cases the women involved have been forced to work as a prostitute.



During the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens hundreds of women from mainly Eastern Europe were recruited, trafficked and forced to prostitute themselves during this huge sports event.

By now these women are to be found all over Europe. Like other survivors of this new form of slavery, those who managed to escape are often

suffering from physical and psychological problems.

Recurrence at the World Cup Football last June is certainly not imaginary. Organisations that assist victims of trafficking expected similar problems, but it is yet to early to tell.

Different Campaigns

Women's organisations in Germany as well as in other European countries have been campaigning before and during the World Cup event in order to point out the responsibilities to potential clients and encourage them and the general public to help trafficked persons to escape from slavery. The synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany has decided to support a campaign by the German Diaconate involving the German Football association and FIFA (the International Football Association).

Show Human Trafficking the Red Card !

Another example is the stamp-campaign of the Dutch Religious against Trafficking in Women (SRTV) in cooperation with Churches in Action (KerkinAktie) in the Netherlands. Their aim was to reach as many (women's) organisations as possible and ask them to put a stamp on their outgoing mail in order to express their aversion to trafficking in women.

Many Dutch organisations responded enthusiastically to this simple but effective action. The English text of the stamp is, 'Show human trafficking the red card!'. There were also

Dutch, German and Romanian versions. Over a hundred stamps have been sold to organisations in the Netherlands and abroad that have been used to mark letters or other items to highlight the issue of trafficking.

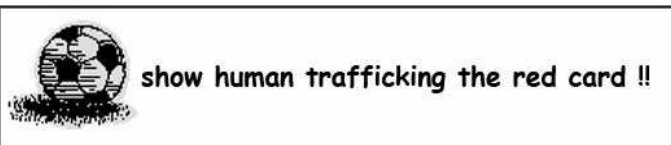


These two organisations also launched an information campaign for football supporters. A small orange 'business card' with information for supporters and victims was sent to the supporter club of the Dutch Football team.

At a European meeting in May 2006, organisations against trafficking in women presented these two campaigns to the Dutch football association (KNVB). A week later the KNVB adopted both actions and even signed the same letter of intention as the German Football Association did.

At this moment it is too early to tell if or how many women have been forced to work as a prostitute during this major sports event. As soon as more details are known we will write about it.

Ivonne van de Kar



Modern Slavery is Close to Home **The Dutch Campaign to Raise the Awareness of Trafficking in Human Beings**

It is estimated that 30 million people a year fall victim to human traffickers. Since the fall of the Berlin wall, human trafficking in Europe has greatly increased. This trade will continue to increase due to the entry of the 10 new EU member states, says Unicef. According to the Organization for Safety and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the victims of human trafficking in Europe are getting younger and their number is increasing. Since there has been a sharp decline in requests for asylum, the amount of human trafficking in our country has significantly gone down.

About 3500 women are traded in the Netherlands every year, and many of them are forced into prostitution. Even minor asylum seekers in our country aren't safe from traffickers in the relief centres. In 2004, 716 disappeared from these centres. The OSCE recently detailed 230 cases of child trafficking, most likely only a tenth of the actual number. Three quarters of these victims were working as prostitutes. The others were used as house slaves or forced to work as food service workers, cleaners or drug runners.



Expansion of the Human Trafficking Law

Since 1 January 2005, the human trafficking law in the Netherlands has been expanded, due to the urgings of Ms. Korvinus, National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Hu-

man Beings, to cover social economic exploitation. Before then, groups fighting human trafficking directed all their actions toward the sex industry. Ms. Korvinus sees the human trade seriously damaging the human rights and personal integrity of the trafficked individuals. The core element, for her, is the exploitation; the abuse of people purely for profit, hand in hand with the use and misuse of authority, threats, violence, deception and abuse of the fragile position of the victim. She sees it as a form of modern slavery.

National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, Ms. Korvinus, as National Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings, has one of the most unique positions in the world. It is particularly unusual that her position is independent of the government. Her office functions mainly as a link between the government and society, where bottlenecks form and government policy is criticized. In order to give the government more insight into how best to tackle human trafficking, Ms. Korvinus collects as much reliable information about human trafficking in the Netherlands and elsewhere as she can. Managing the aid organizations is not her job.

The human trade is not always about crossing borders, according to Ms. Korvinus. Some legal residents in the Netherlands face such atrocious working conditions that they fall under the definition of human trade. She believes that attention paid to this side of the human trade shouldn't take away from the attention paid to the trade in women. The government should allocate more money for these issues.

Awareness Campaign

Aid organizations have very little information at this time about other forms of human trafficking and continue therefore to direct their efforts towards the sex industry, says Ms. Korvinus. This must change. "Thankfully", she says "an awareness campaign is coming to the Netherlands. Perhaps this will lead to more people blowing the whistle when they come across instances of these abuses."

*Summary of an article by Cees Veltman
in Volzin, January 2006*

The SRTV motto:

'It's not only the dreams we share
that are important,
but especially the work
we do together.'



Visit our website:
www.srtv.info

After reading this Newsletter,
don't throw it away.

*Please pass it
through to someone else!*

A Man Alone in Amsterdam

For his job, he had to attend study sessions in Amsterdam. In the morning there was an introduction and after that a workshop. There was a lot of talking. In the afternoon he took a stroll through the city centre with the rest of the group. It was nice, there were lots of things to see and they had a good guide. But he was a bit tired. In the evening he wasn't in the mood for hanging at the bar with his colleagues. After all, he didn't really know them so well.

So off he goes on his own. He ends up in the red light district. He has never been there before. He sees scantily clad women standing behind windows. Some are beautiful, some are on the chubby side and some are just plain ugly. Some of them just sit there wearing a bikini or lingerie. Others show off their body. Strange, he thinks, why do they do this? Once he heard that not many women do this type of work voluntarily.

There is one prostitute who catches his attention. She has a nice face. Should he go in or not? After all, his wife has no idea what he is doing. He doesn't have to go to bed with this woman. He keeps standing outside her window.

The woman winks at him and the door opens. She brings him in and closes the curtains. She asks him in broken Dutch what he wants. He suddenly feels very awkward. They are standing opposite each other. She is nice, and has a beautiful face with sumptuous eyes. He suspects that she has lovely soft breasts under her skimpy bra. She doesn't seem eager to jump into bed with him. Maybe she never wants to jump into bed with strange men.

There are two chairs and a bed in the small room which is neat and tidy. There is a box of condoms on the bedside locker. The chairs stand close to each other. He feels, without touching her, the warmth of her body. He becomes aroused. He tries to explain to her that he has only come to the red light district out of curiosity. He finds her nice and even friendly. How does such a sweet woman end up selling her body night after night? She hasn't even mentioned a price to him.

He asks her what her name is. The name sounds like Mary. No surname. He tells her his name and why he is in Amsterdam.

He doesn't know if she understands everything he says. She seems to. She knows that all he wants tonight is some company. She puts on a bathrobe and sits down beside him. It doesn't disappoint him that she puts somet-

hing on instead of taking something off. He begins to feel more comfortable in her presence. She notices this and is obviously happy that he has no further intentions.

"How did you end up here?" he asks. Hesitating and in broken Dutch she tries to tell him that she is forced to do this work. A countryman of hers in Eastern Europe had told her that she could earn good money as a chambermaid in the Netherlands. This man was very charming and she believed him.

The good job turned out to be a job in a sex house. Waiting at the bar for customers and then going to bed with them. All the money she receives she has to hand over to her pimp. And now she has to stand in the 'shop window' and have sex with whoever passes by. She hopes that she can go back to her family one day. But she isn't so sure if she will return with much money in her pocket.

She tells him that she has been in the Netherlands for about six months. She has only known sadness and pain since she came here. She has been repeatedly raped by pimps and their accomplices. The idea that she has to share her bed night after night with strange men revolts her. He can't understand that, despite everything that happened to her, she is still a nice woman.

He wants to help her. He asks what he could do for her. At the moment nothing, she says. He thinks that the least he can do is to inform the police about her situation. She seems to get frightened at the mere mention of the word police. Afraid of more painful humiliation.

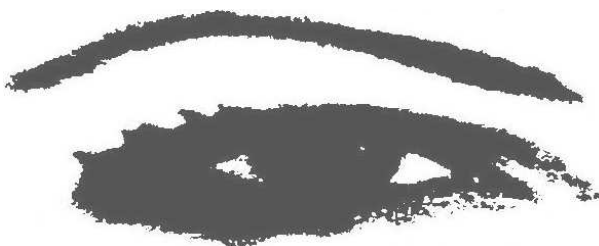
She asks him if he wants to drink something. She makes coffee. They drink their coffee in near silence.

He asks her what he owes her. She doesn't know. He gives her € 50. She is grateful and he decides to try and help her. He will look for an organisation that tries to help women in similar circumstances.

He gets up to go to his hotel, and kisses her on the cheek as he leaves. He sees tears in her eyes. He himself has a lump in his throat.

That night he doesn't sleep very well. He keeps thinking of the terrible situation in which Mary finds herself. And tomorrow, another lecture and more workshops.

*Musings of a male SRTV member
after hearing stories of trafficked women.
Gijs Lieffering*



Fighting Sex Trade in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is situated squarely between East and West, where the promise of freedom and prosperity remains in tension with the trials of a post-Communist state. Women from the former Soviet republics - Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Belarus - and from eastern European states such as Bulgaria and Romania, and from further east, mostly Vietnam and China, are trafficked to the Czech Republic and either sold there or sent further west to other European countries, including Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Czech women are trafficked abroad or internally; the Czech Republic has an unregulated, thriving sex industry - a great tourist draw - concentrated in the capital, Prague, on notorious highways and in towns bordering Austria and Germany. It is here that Caritas 'street workers' seek out and befriend prostitutes.

The Magdala Project

Jindriska Krpalkova is coordinator of the Czech Caritas' anti-trafficking Magdala Project, set up in 1998. "Our street workers go to places where prostitutes are found, like erotic clubs, to talk to them and offer health information and medical care. The women only have contact with pimps, barmen, club owners and clients, so usually they are happy to meet a 'normal' person to have an ordinary conversation. If trust is built over time, a woman may decide to leave." This is easier said than done. "Often we must send for the police," said Jindriska, "otherwise the women would never be able to leave." If they do escape, destitute and traumatised, the women's battles are far from over.



When Czech victims are shunned by their families because they were prostitutes, Magdala workers seek to mend ties. "The rejection is hard because they badly need their families," said Jindriska. One client, Hannah, a 21-year-old single mother, was lured into prostitution in Spain by a man who promised to marry her. She escaped and sought her parents' help, but they refused to talk to her. Hannah managed to return to the Czech Republic when a Spanish charity contacted Magdala. Eventually, she was reconciled with her parents and now has a home and a job as a cook.

Hannah's story shows that despite the formidable odds, trafficked women can recover. The Magdala Project aims to enable Czech and foreign women to win back their self-respect and freedom. Project workers are well aware of what is at stake: "At first, it's really difficult; it takes one or two years for the women to resume ordinary life and to regain confidence." Drawing on the Caritas network of social and health services and in partnership with

the Government and another non-governmental organisations, Magdala offers legal aid, psychotherapeutic counselling, retraining, language classes and, crucially, accommodation in Caritas shelters and material help. Collaboration with overseas NGOs (non-governmental organisations) ensures support across borders.

International Network

"It's good to know each other," said Jindriska about membership in Coatnet, an international network of Christian organisations against trafficking.

Magdala workers share the women's stories with others, to illustrate how they were victims of a serious crime widespread in the Czech Republic: "People often think women do it voluntarily and that the problem is not so bad. We visit congregations, parishes and schools to describe the reality."

Speaking out is crucial to warn at-risk groups against traffickers, who exploit vulnerability and lack of information, as their typical choice of victim reveals. And traffickers prey on poverty: most Czech women sold internally come from the deprived ethnic Roma community.

Caritas workers go to schools to put teenagers on their guard. They also visit detention centres for illegal immigrants, armed with multilingual leaflets, and warn against the traps used by traffickers to gain victims' consent, like promises that they will become models, dancers, waitresses or maids.

Global Strategy needed

Given the global nature of inequality, which paves the way for trafficking, decisive international measures are urgently needed to reduce dependency on traffickers, especially more open migration and labour policies. This point was underscored by Caritas Internationalis in a document issued late last year, *Created in the Image of God, Treated Like Slaves*, which urged member organisations to lobby for change and to recognise trafficked people as needing assistance and protection. The network's commitment to be 'on the front lines in the fight against human trafficking' was welcomed by Jindriska. "You'd think the Church might have problems with this kind of work, so the statement is very important for us."

The misery fuelled by traffickers is so overwhelming that the relatively modest efforts of field NGOs may seem insignificant. But just as trafficking mafias are devastatingly resourceful because of their effective trans-national systems, spanning Europe's poorest villages and wealthiest cities, global networks like Caritas can have an impact too.

Their potential lies in uniting and enhancing the unstinting efforts of their members, like the Magdala team, who leave no stone unturned to free each and every captive they come across.

Summary from The Tablet 18/03/06 by Danielle Vella

In the News

Green Tulip against Forced Prostitution

The first football team to take action against trafficking of women and forced prostitution is 'The Green Tulip'. The players of this team are members of the German Parliament and represent the Green Party. From now on these players will carry the logo of the Campaign 'The final whistle - stop forced prostitution!' on their green shirts.

The shirts were handed over on 30 May 2006 by Irmingard Schewe-Gerigk, the Coordinator of the parliamentary group in Berlin who is also

the spokesperson of the Green Party for the improvement of the status of women.

The Green Party is an official supporter of the 'final whistle' Campaign and its members are taking part in country-wide actions, such as helping to staff the information booth of the German Women's Council which has been set up during the World Championship.



The football team 'Green Tulip' was founded in 1983 and has been playing against the teams of the British Embassy and journalists of the German weekly 'Der Spiegel'.

It is hoped that this initiative by the Green Party will inspire the members of the 'FC Bundestag', a football team composed of MPs from different parties, and also be an example for football teams that actually played the world cup.

For further information:

<http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/frauen/dok/126/126389.htm>

The SRTV in the Netherlands

SRTV on a Visit to Amsterdam

On Thursday the 8th of December 2005 all the workers of SRTV gathered for a very pleasant meeting with coffee near Elma's house in the heart of Amsterdam.

Afterwards the group was split into three and went to the Red Light district. The plan was to visit organisations in Amsterdam that the SRTV has never met before and that in some way deal with trafficked women.

The first group went to visit the Red Thread. This organisation, a sort of trade union for prostitutes, was formed about twenty years ago with the aim of encouraging the emancipation of prostitutes. The organisation offers assistance to women who want to step out of prostitution and begin a new life. They also highlight the problems surrounding trafficking in women and try to monitor any new trends. The latest trend is Chinese massage saloons that act as a cover for illegal prostitution.

The people of the Red Thread do a lot of field work. They visit brothels to try and improve working conditions for the women. They talk to the prostitutes and have information available in different languages. They present themselves as a lobby group for prostitutes. For that reason they are not really welcome in the brothels. They do come across many injustices. Prostitutes from Eastern Europe are especially vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and coercion.

Workers of the Red Thread do their best to make contact with the women, sometimes in a playful way, for example, by giving them a box of peppermints with an enclosed message, or a personal care set with a list of helpful addresses in various languages.

After an extensive walk through the Red Light district, the second group went to visit the Scarlet Cord. This organi-

sation is part of a large Protestant relief organisation that was founded 150 years ago by a famous Dutch Reverend. The Scarlet Cord is situated in the middle of the red light area. It functions as a sort of 'living room' for Spanish speaking prostitutes.

This living room is also used for meetings of prostitutes who want to quit working in prostitution. The women receive help from various other organisations. Resistance training is also arranged for the women.

Three times a week workers from the Scarlet Cord visit prostitutes. They have developed a programme aimed at helping prostitutes to begin a new life. They give talks in schools about the dangers of 'lover boy'. They perform this work as part of their Christian duty.



The third group of SRTV members went to visit the Community 'Oudezijds 100'. This is a living and prayer community; their name is also their address. It is a 'cheerful and open monastery' with an ecumenical community consisting of men and women. Many different activities are organised there. In the common living room general social work is offered. In the guesthouse some 50

people in crisis situations are provided with shelter. They also provide medical and psychological for people who do not have medical insurance.

After making their visits to the various groups the SRTV met again in the heart of Amsterdam for an enjoyable meal. It was a very informative and inspiring day for all.

Ivonne van de Kar

UK: Sex Slavery Unit set up to Tackle growing Trade

Young girls brought to Britain as sex slaves have been found wandering the streets after being discarded because they were pregnant police said today. The girls aged between 14 and 17, were discovered during a national drive against human trafficking. A dozen teenagers, many of them from West Africa, were found during Operation Pentameter and about half were pregnant.

A permanent unit is being set up to continue the work already carried out. The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC), based in Sheffield, will include police, lawyers from the Crown Prosecution and officers from the Serious Organised Crime Agency.

Police believe that there is a growing trade in girls brought to Britain from countries including Sierra Leone, Ghana and Cameroon.

Grahame Maxwell, deputy chief constable of South Yorkshire and the head of Pentameter, said today that the abandoned girls had been found in a number of cities by police. They were set adrift because they were no longer of use to the gangs who ran them and could not be sold to another sex operator.

Sex Slavery in the UK

Police estimate that there are at least 8,000 women and girls kept working against their will in brothels, massage parlours and saunas across the country.

Mr Maxwell, reporting on the end of the four month operation, said "sex slavery is happening in the United Kingdom" and girls were being kept against their will not only in city centres but also in leafy suburbia.



He told an international conference in London that three women were recently rescued from a house they were held in a suburban area close to a cathedral. "This is hap-

pening in suburbia," he said. "This is an international crime but is also a very local problem."

Pentameter targeted the more obvious end of the trade like saunas, but now police working with a new national co-ordinating centre will start to hunt down more of the 'covert' brothels operating among unsuspecting neighbours in blocks of private flats or quiet streets.

Girls are being brought in by East European gangs and groups from the Far East. Many are duped like the 17 year old girl who answered an advertisement in Russian to work in Spain who was taken to Italy and Germany before being sold to an Albanian who brought her to London.

A 15 year old Lithuanian girl was sold in an airport cafe and another 15 year old was sold to human traffickers by her mother.

Women as Commodities

Mr Maxwell said the price of sex is dropping as the number of women brought into Britain rises.

Bill Skelly, an assistant chief constable in South Yorkshire and the second in command of Pentameter said that average price for trafficked women was £ 2,000 to £ 3,000 but prices for newly-trafficked women can be much higher, with some up to £ 8,000.

He said: "Young, innocent, virginal women attract the highest prices. People are seen as a commodity. It is awful to talk about people as commodities, but that is how they are viewed by the trafficking gangs."

In one case, a Lithuanian girl was said to have been sold for £ 8,000 on arrival in the UK because she was a virgin. Customers were charged anything from £ 40 to £ 60 for half an hour and the girls were sometimes forced to work 16 hours a day. Men were urged to report situations where the girls were reluctant and could not speak English.

The operation involving every police force in the United Kingdom led to 232 arrests after searches of 515 premises. Police found 188 women and at least 84 women and girls had been forced into prostitution. Some have been returned home and others are in care.

Times Online June 21, 2006 by Stewart Tandler

USA Trafficking in Persons Report 2006

The US Department of State's released on June 5, the 2006 Trafficking in Persons Report.

"Human traffickers prey on the most vulnerable and turn a commercial profit at the expense of innocent lives. The State Department's efforts to end this evil trade exemplify transformational diplomacy. We work with international partners to secure the

freedom of those who are exploited and call on governments to be effective and accountable in prosecuting those who exploit."

"The movement to end trafficking in persons continues to gain momentum, thanks to Presidential leadership, Congressional commitment, and support from innumerable faith based, community, human rights, and women's groups, as well as from individual citizens. Thank you for joi-

ning this abolitionist movement on behalf of the world's most vulnerable citizens."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/

Reactions:

- from USA-based organisation Vital Voices: www.vitalvoices.org
- from The Advocacy Project: a US, Europe and Nigeria based organisation: www.advocacynet.org/

Churches in Europe encourage closer Cooperation to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings

Representatives of some of the most experienced international networks combating trafficking in human beings have met for an international conference in the Netherlands, 28-31 May 2006 in order to identify possible areas of future cooperation. Invited by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), the workshop 'networking the network' brought together participants from networks such as La Strada International, Anti-Slavery International and the Global Alliance against Trafficking in Women (GAATW). The Dutch Protestant Church and the Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women (SRTV) hosted the event as part of the project 'Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking in Women' (CAT).

During the three-day conference, participants discussed new challenges in the fight against trafficking in human beings and exchanged experiences of their ongoing work. Broad space was devoted to identifying the strengths and specific competence of the different networks and to see how these could be combined in the interest of preventing and combating trafficking in human beings.

Common strategies for advocacy for the rights of trafficked persons on European and international level were highlighted as an area where better cooperation was of particular importance. The different organisations shared the view that advocacy for better possibilities for legal migration and the protection of the rights and working conditions of all migrant workers were an essential part of such joint efforts. Participants exchanged experiences on recent challenges to a rights-based approach, which puts the interest and self-determination of (potential) victims of trafficking at the centre of policies.

Networking

The meeting also was an occasion for extensive encounters between international networks and Dutch NGOs, churches, governmental representatives and police. Vari-

ous Dutch NGOs underlined the problem connected with restrictive migration policies in the Netherlands. Representatives of the Dutch Refugee Council explained how the current deterioration of standards of treating asylum claims of unaccompanied minors in the asylum procedure resulted in high numbers of accompanied minors being trafficked. Representatives of the independent National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings also underlined how a repressive climate around migration and the practice of immediate removal of undocumented migrants made it very difficult to identify trafficked persons in different areas of exploitation.

"Different European and International networks against human trafficking with different strengths and profiles have developed over the last decade", explained Torsten Moritz, coordinator of the CAT project. "While we all can profit from cooperation, lack of mutual knowledge and sometimes even a sense of competition has on occasions characterised relations between these networks. We hope that our conference will help to overcome that situation among networks with shared perspectives and will encourage closer and more regular cooperation", he added.

For more information:

*CCME- Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
Website: www.ccc-kek.org/CCMEeng/ccmeindx.htm*



Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

Slavery Still Exists Campaign

The Slavery Still Exists Campaign is a public awareness program designed to allow grassroots activists, community members, and celebrities across cultures to send a united message against modern-day slavery. One way that traffickers gain power over their victims is by saying, "No one cares about you, and no one will help you." The Slavery Still Exists Campaign tears down this deception

and sends a powerful message to trafficked persons everywhere that we do care, we will not remain silent, and we will always stand with them. It is also a forceful reminder to the traffickers that people have the power to end trafficking in their own communities and will fight for a world without slavery.

Read more on:

<http://www.slaverystillexists.org/slaverystillexists/>



Trade Exchange : Shells, Oil, People

In Bucharest you can buy a child for sex, straight from the family, or through an intermediary who rakes in the profit. In Marrakech a pimp gives a mother € 10 to let him have her child for a while. In Thailand the connoisseur has a wide choice of 'very young girls, fresh and unblemished, because that's the way we like them, don't we'. These are the words of the director of a travel agency who flew over from the Netherlands to show his customers the ins and outs (source: revealing TV program Undercover). People don't really want to know this terrible information. But burying your head in the sand is not going to help. Neither is pointing an accusing finger at the parents. It has to be recognised that poverty lies at the root of this problem. Economics is based on trade exchange, whether

Prayer

Victims of Human Trafficking, God, are so vulnerable, in defenceless submission to strange and groping human hands. May all who carry responsibility in our world, urgently call for an end to this inhumane exploitation of people in search for a better life. We ask you this in Jesus' name, who always especially cared for the modest and powerless of our world.

February 2006, Kerk en Wereld, Belgium

it's labourers working for a pittance or world leaders offering political support for oil. If a family has no means of subsistence, and there are plenty of children running around who can be easily traded, well then ...

Campaigners don't accept 'well then ...' The answer to these practices must always be 'no', just as child labour can't be justified by saying, "Well, at least there is some money coming into the house." It seems simple: not allowing one more boy or girl to work in the factory will automatically generate employment for the parents and therefore also chances for the future of the youth, who can then go to school.

An ideal, a vision, but at the same time an illusion. How do you organise resistance against the merciless mafia who control this lucrative business of trading in people?

The same is true for the trade in women. It seemed a good idea to legalise prostitution in the Netherlands.

It was supposed to safeguard the branch against forced prostitution. But girls who fall prey to cunning criminals can't be helped by the law, workplace inspectors or tax obligations. With the legalisation of prostitution, the man who makes use of the service is officially recognised as a client. He is only prohibited from visiting illegal prostitutes.

But then again there is still Thailand and Bangladesh and 'the whole of Asia is a meadow where the grazing is good', according to one connoisseur.

It's a poetic image; but it is in stark contrast with the widespread idea that 'a whore is lower than a dog'. This is what a prostitute says: 'Allow my daughter to take up this trade? Never.' And will you ever get married? A scornful laugh: 'I know men too well, they all cheat on their wives'.

Coks van Eysden

Transactions is distributed free, but if you want to contribute to the cost of making and sending this newsletter you can make your donation to the *Dutch Foundation of the Religious against Trafficking in Women* (SRTV).

Bank account details of SRTV:

Full name of the Bank: Postbank
IBAN-Number: NL 79 PSTB 0000 4205 57
(International Bank Account)
Swift-code/BIC : PSTBNL 21
Currency of the account: Euro

Name of Account Holder:
Stichting Religieuzen Tegen Vrouwenhandel
Address of Account Holder:
*Sint Janssingel 92,
NL 5211 DA Den Bosch
The Netherlands*

Colofon

Editors

Ms. Ivonne van de Kar
Mr. Gijs Lieffering
Mrs. Tonny Verhoeven
Fr. Frans Kwik
Mrs. Berti Oprins

Editorial Address

SRTV
Sint Janssingel 92
NL 5211 DA Den Bosch
The Netherlands
Tel: +31-73-6154444
Fax: +31-73-6154449
e-mail : srtv@srtv.info
Internet: www.srtv.info

Translations

Mr. David Sloan
Mr. Michelle van der Pijl
Fr. Wim van den Hurk
Sr. Gertrud Dederichs



A summary of the Newsletter 'Verhandelingen' of the SRTV is translated into 'Transactions' and is distributed free.