



Mira's story

Mira, a 15 year old Polish girl, met at a friend's house a Dutch boy. He courted her and told her how beautiful she is. His Polish friend translated what he said. The Dutch boy told her that he wants her to come with him to the Netherlands, she will be his girl-friend and maybe they will marry. She was enthusiastic and went to The Netherlands with him.

Mira and her mother had been fighting a lot the last few months. They are poor and it is hard to make ends meet. She has three younger sisters. Her father has left them, he was unemployed and started drinking. Mira hasn't seen her father in more than a year. That doesn't bother Mira but her mother has changed a lot. Mira doesn't like to be at home anymore.

The offer of the Dutch boy promised her a good chance for the future. This illusion didn't last very long. The nice boy turned out to be a mean pimp.

She was overwhelmed. She couldn't ask for help because she didn't know anybody in The Netherlands and she didn't speak the language. She had no passport; he bought it for her and kept it. She had no money. And if she didn't do what he told her to, earn money for him, he locked her up, beat her black and blue and gave her no food for two days. She was really broken at one night, when two men came that raped her.

Mira was taken to a club and had to go upstairs with men. She thought she was losing her mind. She cried and screamed that she didn't want to do that. But her 'boyfriend' told her very calmly that he had paid €5000,- expenses for her. She had to earn that back first of all. It was so humiliating for her to stand there with ten topless girls in a row. She prayed that the man would choose someone else, but immediately she was chosen by an elderly man. She kept crying, but no way, he had paid.

She saw other girls taking refuge in cocaine but she didn't. The customers were not very pleased with her: she was crying all the time. The pimps took her to another club. Within two months she worked in 5 different brothels. She had lost any track of time. Everything was so terrible that she couldn't remember all of it.

This story is similar to the story of thousands of other girls. Trafficking in women doesn't happen only in the Netherlands but also in all other countries in Western Europe and the United States.

Mira shared her story at the Ecumenical Assembly in Graz in 1997, she gave us permission to share her story with you.