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ENUT

ENUT News 2/08

Publication of the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre, no 18

Human trafficking and prostitution special issue

From the Editor

This issue of ENUT News is devoted to the topic of trafficking in human beings and prostitution. In 2008 several important steps were taken that help to reduce the demand for prostitution and strengthen the network combating human trafficking. The most significant development has to be the legislation passed by the Norwegian parliament in November, criminalizing the buying of sex. Among the Nordic countries, Norway is the second country after Sweden, with almost a 10 year interval between the two, where the buying of sex is criminal.

The Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT) participated in several anti-trafficking projects during 2008. In the spring, ENUT had the project "Strengthening the anti-trafficking network among Finland, Estonia and north-western Russia" in partnership with the Coalition of Finnish Women's Association (NYTKIS). Its aim was to strengthen collaboration among these countries and to promote legal prohibition of the purchase of sex as an effective way to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation. The project was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The European Commission funded project "Cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the governments in South Caucasus to combat trafficking in women and children" continued throughout the year.

The first article is about the activities in ENUT's project "Strengthening the anti-trafficking network among Finland, Estonia and north-western Russia" and the international seminars held in Helsinki and Tallinn.

In the second article Tanja Auvinen, General Secretary of NYTKIS, discusses the issue of combating trafficking and prostitution in Finland.

Reet Laja writes about collaboration with non-governmental organizations in South Caucasus in the collective efforts to stop trafficking in women and children. Kadri Aavik writes about the Open Estonia Foundation funded programme in which ENUT representatives visited Azerbaijan and Caucasian NGOs representatives' visit to Estonia.

In conclusion, the reader finds an overview of the most significant developments in anti-trafficking and prostitution activities in 2008.

CONTENTS

lk 1	From the Editor
lk 2	Strengthening the anti-trafficking network among Finland, Estonia and north-western Russia <i>Liivi Pehk</i>
lk 8	Combating trafficking and prostitution in Finland <i>Tanja Auvinen</i>
lk 9	NGO and Governmental Cooperation Across the South Caucasus to Develop a Joint Response to Trafficking in Women and Children <i>Reet Laja</i>
lk 9	Gender equality and women's organisations' activities in Azerbaijan <i>Kadri Aavik</i>
lk 11	Anti- trafficking activities in 2008 in Europe <i>Liivi Pehk</i>



Strengthening the anti-trafficking network among Finland, Estonia and north-western Russia

Liivi Pehk, ENUT

Trafficking threatens a nation's internal security as well as international security, violating many people's basic rights. The traffickers cleverly take advantage of people seeking a better life and those who want to go abroad or to a large city due to poverty, unemployment, and economic and gender inequality.

Instead of finding a better life, those who do not know the local language fall victim to pimps and traffickers. Most of the trafficking victims are women. They are forced, violently and with threats, to work as prostitutes. They live in constant fear of infectious diseases and violence, and also, the fear that folks at home will learn how they are earning money.

Prostitution and its accompanying trafficking are problems which cannot be resolved individually; governmental assistance is necessary. Trafficking has

extensive international impact and, therefore, international cooperation is important.

Despite the increasingly numerous measures that have been adopted during the past 10 years, there is not a noticeable decline in the number of victims. Trafficking is a serious threat to both

domestic and international security and combating it embraces a broad spectrum of issues: protection of human and basic rights, improving of laws, elimination of discrimination, exiting economic depression, combating organized crime and corruption, and the development of adequate migrant services. According to several studies, Estonia is a destination as well as a transit country to nearby EU member states, first and foremost the Scandinavian countries, but also to western European countries, e.g., Germany. Trafficking within the country is also a problem, mostly from north-eastern Estonia to the capital. According to a European Crime Prevention and Control Institute report Estonia is a destination country for victims of trafficking from Russia.

Heretofore greater emphasis has been placed on assisting the victims of trafficking and punishing the criminals, but increasingly more countries have started to turn their attention on the demand or people who use the labour or services of victims.

OSCE held an international conference in Helsinki on September 10-11, 2008, which explored ways to be more successful in identifying victims of trafficking and the conviction of traffickers. Eva Biaudet, OSCE representative and coordinator of anti-trafficking activities, emphasized in her opening speech that without reducing the demand it is not possible to reduce trafficking. Although criminalizing the demand is but one of the possibilities, it could be the most effective means of combating trafficking.

About the project

ENUT has been engaged in combating trafficking and prostitution since 2002. In 2008, ENUT spearheaded the project "Strengthening the anti-trafficking network among Finland, Estonia and north-western Russia". The project is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the partners are

NYTKIS and the NGO Women's Parliament in Velikij Novgorod.

The project examines trafficking for sexual exploitation in the Nordic countries and Estonia, introduces the Nordic countries' positive experiences with measures to reduce demand, and using Nordic experiences it aims to influence legislators in Estonia and Finland to adopt effective legal steps to reduce demand for prostitution.

The buying of sexual services and offers to buy sex have been prohibited in Sweden since 1999. Prostitution is seen as violence against women and as a manifestation of inequality between women and men. The prohibition against the buying of sexual services in Sweden has significant international impact. The Swedish model is a topic of discussion practically at every trafficking and prostitution seminar and conference. The more countries follow the Swedish model in their legislation the less opportunities exist for global trafficking to expand. On the basis of the Swedish experience the legislation has had a significant role in changing attitudes in society since it is clearly stated in the law that the buying of sex is socially unacceptable.



Seminar on human trafficking in Helsinki, June 11, 2008

Anti-trafficking activities in 2008 in Europe

Liivi Pehk, ENUT

1.02.2008 The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings entered into force on 1 February 2008. Albania, Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Georgia, Latvia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom are the first 20 states to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against trafficking in Human Beings.

March, 2008 A Danish campaign calling for the prohibition of the purchasing of sexual services has been launched. In the campaign, signatures were gathered for such a prohibition. The signatures have been handed over to the Danish Minister of Justice on 18 October, the EU anti-trafficking day

16-17.04.2008 Anti-trafficking conference. The conference was being organised by St. Peterburg City and Nordic Council of Ministers Office in the City, which discussed co-operation between the Nordic Region, the Baltic Countries and North-Western Russia on combating trafficking.

24.04.2008 The Swedish legal prohibition of the purchase of sexual services, which entered into force in 1999, is now to be evaluated. Such a decision was taken by the Swedish government 24 April, and the evaluation shall be presented at 30 April 2010 the latest.

25.04.2008 the Nordic Council had a conference on the topic "Fight against trafficking in human beings". The conference took place in Riga, Latvia. Different areas were approached in the conference, including aspects of law and society regarding the problems of trafficking in human beings; and perspectives of cooperation regarding identification, prevention and combating of trafficking in human beings in the Schengen zone.

10-11.09.2008 OSCE conference in Helsinki "Successful prosecution of human trafficking-challenges and good practises". The aim of the conference was to: further catalyze political will of participating States and Partners for Co-operation to combat all forms of trafficking in human beings; advance the implementation of OSCE anti-trafficking commitments;

16.10.2008 The European Women's Lobby (EWL) held a seminar in the European Parliament 16 October on the theme "What is being done to prevent trafficking in women and to assist victims?". Myria Vassiliadou, EWL Secretary-General, gave a general overview of EWL actions and policy work on violence against women, and in particular on trafficking and prostitution. The results of the Nordic Baltic pilot

project were shared with seminar participants.

16.10.2008 EU Antitrafficking Day
16-17.10.2008 conference "Prostitution in Nordic Countries". The results of the one-year research project about knowledge and attitudes to prostitution in Nordic Countries were presented. Eleven researchers from all Nordic countries were engaged in project.

11. 2008 The Norwegian Parliament voted for changes in the legislation on prostitution, in effect criminalizing the purchase of sexual activity or a sexual act. The new section 202a is expected to enter into force January 1st 2009

In November 2008, the Norwegian Parliament voted for changes in the legislation on prostitution, in effect criminalizing the purchase of sexual activity or a sexual act, by introducing a new section 202a in the General Civil Penal Code:

Section 202 a

Any person who

- a) engages in or aids and abets another person to engage in sexual activity or commit a sexual act on making or agreeing payment,
- b) engages in sexual activity or a sexual act on such payment being agreed or made by another person, or
- c) in the manner described in (a) or (b) causes someone to carry out with herself or himself acts corresponding to sexual activity,

shall be liable to fines or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to both.

If the sexual activity or sexual act is carried out in a particularly offensive manner and no penalty may be imposed pursuant to other provisions, the penalty shall be imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.

A separate section applies when the relevant acts are committed against a person under 18 years of age.

Section 202a is expected to enter into force January 1st 2009, and will be applicable also to acts committed abroad by any Norwegian national or any person domiciled in Norway.

Parliament made no changes to existing rules that forbid human trafficking as well as promoting the engagement of other persons in prostitution.

December 2008 The end of 3-year pilot project, which aims to be a starting point for long-term change in the region, developing victim-centred and durable models for support and reintegration of women victims of trafficking (VOTs) for sexual exploitation in and between the Nordic and Baltic countries.

safety for trafficking victims and to create a rehabilitation system which would return them to the legal employment market.

In 2007, the government of Azerbaijan reported that more than 100 trafficking victims had been identified, but only 29 of them received assistance and support in the government funded shelter. According to the information originating from local NGOs, many trafficking victims do not trust the government funded shelter and they prefer to seek shelter among friends or NGOs which depend less on the government.

Our delegation had the opportunity to visit in Azerbaijan with the employees of the women's shelter "Clean World" which gives help to trafficking victims. The location of the shelter is confidential, but the employees said that the six beds at the shelter are constantly occupied. The victims are given free of charge psychological, medical, and legal counseling, including advice on initiating legal action against the pimp in order to demand damages. There exists also a hotline which victims can use for consultation. The different shelters have drafted a cooperation memorandum which makes it possible for a victim to change shelters in the interest of security.

We also visited Women's Crisis Centre which collaborates with the Young Lawyers Association within the framework of the project "NGO and Governmental Cooperation Across the Caucasus to Develop a Joint Response to Trafficking in Women and Children". In addition to the daily work of the crisis centre, the centre's specialists train social workers which are much needed in the country.

In Azeri society it is a widely held understanding (among men as well as women) even today that the man has to be the breadwinner in the family and the woman's role is to care for the children and the home. Women's position is less valued in society and it is more difficult to compete with men in the employment market. A divorced woman in Azerbaijan is no longer "suitable" for a man and after a divorce a woman has to fend for herself on the harsh employment market and also experience being shunned by society.

The society lacks awareness about the nature and problems of trafficking. It is widely thought that it concerns only prostitution. There are many cases where trafficking victims have been sold by people close to them. A typical example of women represented in the Azeri media is a story told by a representative of Women's Media Watch. Few years ago a 13 year old orphan girl who also had HIV was raped by several men. All media outlets in Azerbaijan that covered the story called the girl a prostitute and accused her of spreading HIV.

Propagation of gender equality in Azerbaijan means the breaking of society's numerous deeply rooted traditional stereotypes. Without a doubt such a process takes a long time and it will be met by many social groups' opposition. However, it is apparent that numerous NGOs work hard at improving the condition of women in society, and also at increasing women's contributions as well as recognising them.

A historical study issued in 2006 made a very

positive impression on us. It contained the life stories of remarkable women active in the 19th and 20th centuries. Likewise, the Azerbaijan Gender Information Centre created and administered website (http://www.gender-az.org/index_en.shtml) is a worthy undertaking. It contains updated information on gender related matters in Azerbaijan and abroad.

"Gender Attitudes in Azerbaijan: Trends and Challenges", a report issued by UNDP in 2007, confirms to a great extent what we saw and experienced - women do not have equal opportunities with men in most areas of the Azeri society despite the fact that the government has adopted numerous documents which affirm dedication to the achievement of gender equality.



Meeting with the representatives of the Women's Rational Development Center, on the background of pictures of prominent Azerbaijani women.

During the course of the project two international seminars and numerous meetings were held with politicians, and the press gave coverage to trafficking and prostitution topics.

The Estonian and Finnish women's organizations simultaneously lobbied politicians and public organizations; they emphasized the need to turn attention on the buyers of sexual services and urged the adoption of legislation which would criminalize the buying of sex, thus reducing the demand.

Stopping trafficking by reducing the demand

In June, 2008, NYTKIS and ENUT organized the international seminar "Stopping trafficking by reducing the demand" in Helsinki. The participants at the seminar included representatives from NGOs, politicians, governmental officials, university students and journalists. In her opening speech, NYTKIS President Tarja Filatov said that the Swedish law is an important example which shows how it is possible to change people's attitudes. Both Estonia and Finland are prostitution transit countries. Currently the present law in Finland does not make it possible to assist the real victims of trafficking. Estonia and Finland together have to find a way to reduce the demand for sexual services.

According to studies conducted in Estonia and Finland, many people do not see a problem with prostitution and often they blame the woman, or it is thought that prostitution is a woman's free choice. Johanna Suurpää, Finland's Ombudsman of Minorities, said that the current law in Finland, which forbids the buying of sex only from a trafficking victim, is a compromise due to the fact that the principle underlying the complete prohibition against the buying of sex differs from the prevailing traditional thinking about prostitution in Finland.

ENUT Board member Ilvi Joe-Cannon presented an overview of the trafficking situation in Estonia and said that attitudes on prostitution in Estonia



Ilvi Jõe-Cannon at the human trafficking seminar in Helsinki, June 2008

and Finland are quite similar.

Speaking about problems that occur in combating trafficking, Ilkka Herranen, member of Finland's Border Guard, said that often the trafficking victim does not want to be identified. He said that this is due to the negative opinions about prostitution and trafficking held by society and the media.

Robin Harms, OSCE special adviser and anti-trafficking coordinator, considers the changing of society's attitudes about prostitution of paramount importance. Lack of information is always the reason behind the lack of understanding and the concomitant attitudes it creates. OSCE plans to form an inde-

pendent centralized tracking mechanism which collects, analyses and presents comparative statistics on trafficking, and evaluates states' policies, initiatives and the assessment measures in use. Robin Harms expressed concern over the fact that every year the trafficking victims are younger and the number of children victimized by trafficking is constantly growing. Many persons have become

trafficking victims via their acquaintances, relatives or partners. It is critical to establish good cooperation with embassies, and airport, customs, border guard and police personnel in order to guarantee successful discovery and verification of trafficking victims.

Much has been accomplished in Finland and Estonia in the area of assisting trafficking victims. ATOLL, a centre for social and psychological rehabilitation of prostituted women, including victims of trafficking, was opened in 2005 within the framework of an EQUAL project. Roman Krölov, a director at the centre, spoke about its activities at the seminar. He said that the typical prostituted person is divorced with children or has family members that she supports; she has little education or has worked in a very specific area, she has experienced violent treatment in her childhood, is very vulnerable, submissive and helpless. Most of the prostituted women in Estonia come from East-Viru county.

According to Elina Saaristo, Director of the Monika Centre in Finland, the aim of the centre is to improve the lot of immigrant women.

Monica Centre operates facilities in Helsinki, Vantaa, Turku and a secret women's shelter named Mona. The centres provide counseling, crisis help, and the creation of support groups and networks. They have clients from 55 countries and over 4000 contacts. The Centre was established in 1998 and presently employs 26 persons. Major problems with which people turn to the centre are psychological, financial, physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence, trafficking and health. The typical client has little knowledge about Finnish laws, her rights and available services, and she is economically and socially dependent. They have language and cultural barriers and as a result they lack social contacts. The centre offers shelter, food aid, opportunity to rest, money and medical help.

The Helsinki seminar helped to improve understanding of the threats posed by trafficking and the seriousness of the situation; it also raised awareness of the problems ahead to be confronted. The general sense among the participants at the seminar was positive and supportive of continued promotion of legislation that would criminalize the buying of sexual services. The seminar provided a good overview of the present trafficking situation in Finland and Estonia, it brought to the fore the problems faced in common as well as the differences, and it highlighted the overlapping areas and pointed to the areas in which cooperation can continue.

In order to combat trafficking effectively, it is necessary for the states to have a united action platform and a shared vision. Due to its geographical location, Estonia is closely tied to the Nordic countries and, therefore, regional collaboration among the Nordic and Baltic countries is very important for Estonia.

Legislative changes to stop trafficking

ENUT organized in Tallinn on November 7, 2008, the second international seminar "Legislative changes to stop trafficking". The purpose of the seminar was to assess the trafficking situation based on sexual exploitation of women in the Nordic countries and Estonia, to emphasize the need for implementing stronger measures in the fight against trafficking and prostitution primarily via reducing the demand, and

to discuss the steps necessary to take next in the battle against trafficking.

The speakers from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland gave an overview of the legislative solutions that have been used or are planned for use to prevent trafficking in their own countries. Discussions were held about the trafficking situation and society's attitudes toward reduction of demand by criminalizing the buying of sex, possible developmental scenarios were analyzed, collaboration between government and NGOs on the issue of combating the trafficking of women, and discussions were held with the participating Estonian parliamentarians about the most effective legislative measures to be used in combating trafficking in the Nordic countries and Estonia.

The Norwegian parliament was debating on November 7 the proposed legislation to criminalize the buying of sex and, as a result, one of the most eagerly anticipated presentations at the seminar was by the speaker from Norway.



Finnish MP Minna Sirnö having a presentation at the trafficking seminar in 2008

Synnøve Jahnsen, sociologist at Bergen University in Norway, gave the Norwegian perspective at the seminar. Synnøve Jahnsen also participated in the pan-Nordic study "Prostitution in the Nordic countries", which was initiated by the Nordic Gender Studies Institute (NIKK). The findings of the study were presented in October

at the project's culminating conference in Stockholm. The project lasted one year during which time data was collected on legislation, social measures, and the prevailing attitudes on prostitution in the Nordic countries. Synnøve Jahnsen researched two areas: one looked at how the media covered the public debate on criminalizing the buying of sexual services, and the other analyzed the discussions between sex buyers as they take place on the website www.sexhandel.no. That website is also part of Norway's anti-trafficking strategy.

Following is a synopsis of Synnøve Jahnsen's presentation at the Tallinn seminar. Greater attention to organized crime and the sexual exploitation of immigrants have forced many countries to review their laws which had for decades treated the buying of sex as social nuisance or "victimless crime".

NGO and Governmental Cooperation Across the South Caucasus to Develop a Joint Response to Trafficking in Women and Children (2007-2009)

Reet Laja, ENUT

ENUT is the lead organisation in the European Commission funded project "NGO and Governmental Cooperation Across the South Caucasus to Develop a Joint Response to Trafficking in Women and Children" whose activities concentrate on combating trafficking in the South Caucasus region. ENUT's partners in the project are women's organisations in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. Following activities are pursued to meet the goals: regular monitoring of the current trafficking situation in the South Caucasus, establishing a regional centre for combating trafficking, setting up working facilities, organizing topical seminars and conferences, conducting informational campaigns, setting up and supporting a network of shelters and hotlines.

In December 2008, ENUT invited the partners and representatives of respective state organisations from the three countries to Estonia, within the framework of the Open Estonia Foundation programme, in order for them to become familiar with Estonia's anti-trafficking activities. We visited Justice, Interior and Social Affairs Ministries which have a critical role in Estonia's activities to combat trafficking. The partners were surprised to learn that Estonia does not have specific laws on trafficking and they wondered whether Estonia's present laws are adequate to combat trafficking. They collected information on activities concerning anti-trafficking in children in the Estonian and Baltic Sea network. They placed great importance on meetings with practitioners, the head of the working group on anti-trafficking in the police crime unit, and the representative from the Immigration and Migration Office.

An example of a good experience in Estonia is the collaborative network of state and non-governmental organisations. Such collaboration is the aim of the project's partner countries. In addition to the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre,

meetings and visits were made with network members and non-governmental organisations in Tallinn and Tartu. A visit to NGO Lifeline Atoll, introducing its work with prostituted women and efforts to rehabilitate them in order for them to return to normal life, was of great interest to the visitors. The visitors received also a complete picture of Estonia's social welfare development and the current training programmes in the field.

Having an overview of the anti-trafficking activities in Estonia and the Nordic countries is helpful when compiling the training programmes foreseen in the European Commission project, and with the analysis of the findings of the research conducted in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Gender equality and women's organizations' activities in Azerbaijan

Kadri Aavik, ENUT



Experts from the South Caucasus region in Tallinn

Among the goals of the joint project was the advancement of gender equality in Azerbaijan, and the collaboration in Estonia of the two countries' women's organisations and the forming of their partnership.

During our trip, we visited several women's organisations, one gender issues information centre, the gender studies chair of Baku State University, and two women's crisis centres.

According to the 2007 USA trafficking report, Azerbaijan is both a country of origin and transit for trafficking of women and children. Azeri women and children are trafficked for sexual exploitation primarily to Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, but also to Iran, Pakistan and India. Trafficking victims from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Moldova are transited through Azerbaijan.

The laws in Azerbaijan do not prohibit prostitution, but pimping is against the law, and prostitution activities are subject to penalty if they occur in public places such as bars.

Although the number of people in the government funded trafficking victims' shelter increased in 2007, Azerbaijan lacks a system of identifying trafficking victims. Bad treatment of trafficking victims in the courtroom is a problem. It is necessary to provide

Combating trafficking and prostitution in Finland

Tanja Auvinen, NYTKIS

Finland has been combating trafficking since about the beginning of 2000 - adopting legislative changes and compiling action plans. To obtain funding for the battle against trafficking is a constant, endless problem as is the case with many other women's rights issues. However, Finland has raised the problem of trafficking also on the international arena, most recently as the chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) last year. Trafficking was one of its priorities, its basic theme. Eva Biaudet, OSCE's special commissioner to combat trafficking, has emphasized victims' protection and reduction of the demand for trafficking.

Trafficking is one of the largest and the fastest growing forms of criminal activity. Most of the victims of trafficking are women and children, who are also exploited in sex business. Global consensus has been reached regarding the criminalisation of trafficking, but in addition the buying of sex is criminalised in Sweden and Norway. It is not correct to approach trafficking and prostitution as completely separate issues. Traffickers, pimps, and sex buyers are active in the same market where millions of women have become prostitutes for a variety of reasons. The status of a prostituted person and the living conditions in that market have always been low.

In Sweden, the buying of sexual services was criminalised in 1999. A similar "Swedish model" became law in Norway on January 1, 2009. Last year thousands of people supporting the criminalisation of the buying of sex demonstrated on Women's Day in Denmark. In Finland, it has been forbidden since 2006 to buy sex from a trafficked or pimped victim. This year, Finland's Justice Ministry will evaluate the effectiveness of this law. There have been few adjudications due to the difficulty in determining trafficking victimisation, and the inability of the prosecutors and judges to differentiate between the criminal activities of traffickers and pimps.

Steps were taken in the right direction three years ago in Finland, but more has to be done. The time has come to criminalise sex buying completely in Finland and in Estonia. At the Tallinn seminar "Legislative Solutions to Stop Trafficking in Women" organized by ENUT in November, 2008, the participating members of parliament supported such legislation. Also, there is strong enough support in Finland to criminalise the buying of sex.

Last year Sofi Oksanen won the highly prized Finlandia literary award for her novel "Cleansing". One of the chief characters in the book is the Estoni-

an-born Zara who succeeds in fleeing from the traffickers, but only after having had to live through more bad experiences than many people experience in a lifetime. Zara was exploited also by Finnish "clients", the kind one can find on the ferries that run between Helsinki and Tallinn. Anybody who has come into contact with trafficking and prostitution issues knows that the fates of women described in "Cleansing" are in fact real and that Estonian women have had to sell sex to thousands of Finnish men. Is that the cooperation between our countries that we want to support; do we close our eyes to this activity? Do decision-makers, officials in Finland, know what Finnish men do in Tallinn? Are they at all interested in that? Are there courageous Finnish and Estonian politicians who will say that we've had enough?

Nobody should have to choose prostitution in order to survive economically. Earlier attempts to regulate prostitution used measures focusing on prostituted women and the buyers remained anonymous. But the engine generating prostitution and the sex industry is the ever increasing demand. Since the vast majority of sex buyers are men and the vast majority of suppliers are women, prostitution contributes to destructive power relations and re-enforces the opinion of women as commercial objects. Criminalisation of sex buying would, in the long-run, influence positively both attitudes and power relations between women and men, and their roles in society.

Criminalisation of sex buying would mean that we understand what are the prostitution associated, inequality supporting and human rights violating structures. We would also be signaling that we do not approve of them and that we do not support the selling of bodies under any circumstances.



Meeting between ENUT and NYTKIS in Helsinki in June 2008

In the spring of 2007, the Norwegian government submitted to the parliament draft legislation which aimed to prevent prostitution and trafficking and proposed penalizing the prostitutes' clients with six months of imprisonment. During the investigation, the police would be allowed to use force, place hidden video equipment in public places, and eavesdrop on telephone conversations.

Norway's decision to criminalize the buying of sex can be viewed as the result of three political conflicts: the issues of gender equality, organized crime, and public expectations and standards of behavior. Since 2003, the number of immigrants in prostitution had increased significantly in Norway. In 2003 there were two prostituted women from Nigeria in Norway and by 2006 the number was 400. The situation attracted great attention in the media. The apparent reason was due their African origins; the prostituted women were very conspicuous on the streets not only due to their appearance, but also due to their behavior which is much different from the natives'. The notion that prostitutes exist was accepted earlier in Oslo, and since they kept themselves to definite locations it was assumed to be under control. Nigerian prostitutes, not knowing the local norms, took over the sidewalks of the main street

and offered their services very aggressively. The number of Norwegians in favor of criminalizing the buying of sex grew significantly during the past four years: two-thirds of Oslo residents thought that prostitution is a problem and 60 percent of the residents thought that the solution could be prohibition against the buying of sex. From an analysis of the public discussions which led a majority to support the law one can conclude that in many instances the change in opinion was caused by the new situation and the decision in favor of the new law did not occur because buying of sex and supporting of organized crime are wrong, but also from a desire to find an effective means to solve the problem that had developed.

The Norwegian parliament passed in November 2008 the law which criminalizes the buying of sex (editor).

Denmark was represented at the seminar by Anne Sina, member of parliament and chairwoman

of Danish Social Democratic Party Gender Equality Network, who spoke about the trafficking situation in Denmark and the government's action plan to combat trafficking. Since 1999 prostitution is completely permitted, but prostitutes may not receive unemployment benefits, pension, etc. Being an agent for prostitution (pimping), renting of rooms to prostitutes, and operating brothels are prohibited. The buying of sex from a minor under the age of 18 is punishable crime. There are approximately 6000 prostitutes currently in Denmark and about 3000 of them are foreigners, largely victims of trafficking. According to a study, 14 percent of Danish men have used the services of a prostitute at least once. Effective 2002,



Norwegian sociologist Synnøve Jahnsen at the seminar in Tallinn in, December 2008

one can be imprisoned up to eight years for trafficking. The majority of trafficking victims in Denmark are from the Baltic states, eastern Europe, and Nigeria; a smaller number is from Thailand and South America. In 60 percent of the cases the women arrive on their own in Denmark knowing that they would be working in prostitution, but the conditions under which they are to work and to live differ considerably from those promised them. Practically all immigrant prostitutes live in Denmark illegally. Most of them are between the ages of 18-24 with children and they do not want to continue working as prostitutes. Between 2003 and 2005, seven trafficking cases were registered in Denmark and 14 persons

have been convicted of trafficking. In accordance with the government's action plan for the prevention of trafficking and assistance to victims, it plans to open three rehabilitation centres; all registered victims of trafficking will be offered to remain legally in Denmark for 100 days. At the end of her presentation, Anne Sina said that Denmark is faced with a serious dilemma - how to combat trafficking while at the same time accept prostitution, knowing that all trafficking victims are prostitutes? Anne Sina added that the situation is becoming only worse for the women, because symptoms are being addressed and not the problems themselves. Public discussions are held on what is good for women and ideological discussions center on the meaning of a liberal and free society. Politically leftist parties favor criminalization while those on the right are against it. It is certain that new debates will take place after Norway adopts the law, and Denmark will have to change her law in one way or another.

The seminar's third principal speaker was Gunilla S. Ekberg from Sweden. She is a Canadian-Swedish attorney and an international expert on human rights in the areas of gender equality and violence against women. She was appointed the co-director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International in 2007. Prior to that, Gunilla S. Ekberg served five and half years as the Swedish government's special adviser on trafficking, being responsible for drafting public and legislative policies. As an expert on trafficking, she works with UNDP and countries' parliamentary committees to develop measures for combating trafficking.

Sweden has already a 10-year experience with combating trafficking via demand reduction. Since 1999, Sweden has had a law that criminalizes the buy of sex. Presently, the Swedish government is evaluating the effects of that law and the report should be released in the spring of 2010.

Gunilla S. Ekberg emphasized in her speech that we ourselves must determine in what kind of society we want to live and where do we want to go. When speaking about demand for prostitution, we are speaking about political visions and goals. It can not be said that prostitution is unavoidable, because men need it or women choose that activity. We either accept, or do not, the buying or selling of human beings. Prostitution is violence against women and it is necessary to change attitudes in society, because the basic reasons for prostitution are hidden in women's socio-economic conditions. Most of the women working as prostitutes in the Nordic countries are immigrants; very few are native to the Nordic countries. The law that criminalized the buying of sex, effective in 1999, was the work of the women's movement. The law is a political statement which establishes norms for behavior. It states that anybody who buys sex will be penalized by either a fine or imprisonment. Also, attempts to buy sex are punishable. The implementa-

tion of such a law requires political will – the government has to show that it is a priority. It is necessary to train specialists who work with the law, so that prostitutes are no longer treated as criminals, and resources have to be allocated to the police in order for the activity to be their priority. In the bigger picture, combating violence against women is critical in order to change stereotypes.

The second half of the seminar consisted of panel discussions. Brit Tammiste, adviser in the Justice Ministry, Eha Reitelmann, member of the Board of the Association of Estonian Women's Shelters, Eda Mölder, member of the Board of the NGO Lifeline, Leena Ruusuvoori, General Secretary of the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations, Nino Okribelashvili, Director of the Georgian Social Workers School, and Vladimir Orlov, member of Velikij Novgorod municipal government,

participated in the first panel discussion. The discussion was moderated by Kristiina Luht, chief specialist at Estonia's Social Affairs Ministry Gender Equality Department. The discussion analyzed the current collaborative relationship between the government and NGOs in the efforts to combat trafficking and deliberated the direction in which this relationship should continue. Brit Tammiste explained what legal measures have been implemented in Estonia to combat trafficking and what is planned for the future. Eda Mölder mentioned NGOs dependence on outside financial decisions and the neutrality of NGOs as partnership problems, and she considered mutual trust, strong networks, good information, listening to the partner as the bases for good partnerships. Nino Okribelashvili gave an overview of public awareness

raising about trafficking, and the establishment of shelters for trafficking victims and crisis hotlines networks in the North Caucasus region.

The seminar ended with a panel consisting of Estonian and Finnish parliamentarians who discussed legislative solutions for stopping trafficking in Estonia and the Nordic countries. The discussion was moderated by Marianne Mikko, member of the European Parliament. Aleksei Lotman, member of European Union Affairs Committee, and Urmas Reinsalu, member of Constitution Committee, were the participating Estonian parliamentarians.

In Urmas Reinsalu's opinion there is too little discussion in Estonia about universal humanist values. Trafficking should be prohibited. From a humanistic point of view the exploitation of a vulnerable victim of trafficking should be condemned by society. Also, from the same perspective demand would be a question of sex education. A correct dimension should be given to sexuality – its objective is not pleasure, but a part of marriage and love. Such education should begin within the family and this is lacking in our society. The third problem is the promotion of pornography in society and in this area the enforcement of laws is insufficient – also, the weak supervision over law enforcement.

Aleksei Lotman said that criminal statutes should apply when a person knowingly - or one who should have known – buys sex from a victim of trafficking. In other cases, it should be treated as misdemeanor.

Tanja Auvinen, representing Finland, explained the reasons why Finland did not adopt a law to criminalize the buying of sex, i.e., the Swedish law, and cited the strong lobby by sex workers organization to defeat the adoption of such a law.

The seminar received coverage in the broadcasts of Estonian Radio's Reporting Hour and The News.

As a result of this project's activities greater attention has been given in Estonia to the topics of trafficking and the criminalization of sex buying. Also, collaboration between Estonian and Finnish women's

organizations has become more effective and the anti-trafficking network has become larger.



Panel discussion, led by Kristiina Luht



Gunilla S. Ekberg, co-director of the International Coalition Against Trafficking in Women



The seminar "Legislative solutions to stop human trafficking" in Tallinn, November 2008