

*“Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children in the Baltic Sea Region”  
A programme implemented by the  
Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk,  
Council of the Baltic Sea States*



### Situation paper:

Level of protection, care, psychological, medical and social assistance as well as short or long term placements available for children victims of trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region

**A paper based on input from professionals with experiences in working with children at risk in the Baltic Sea Region and from the discussion at the expert meeting: “Building Competence and Capacity on Care, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children Victims of Trafficking in the Baltic Sea Region”, Kiev on 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2005.**

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## **Introduction**

Several actors, both NGOs and governments, working to provide care for children victims of trafficking have identified the obvious lack of services. The gaps identified relate to the fact that there is no adequate care in any country in the co-operation for girls or boys who return to their country of origin after having been trafficked. This gap creates difficulties for children who now have to fend for themselves when and if they return to their country of origin.

Numerous cases of girls show that they receive no support in their home country after their return. The girls or boys affected in this way are at high risk of being recruited again into trafficking as other alternatives of survival are missing. The lack of resources in the countries of origin also have a bearing on the host countries' possibility of offering safety for girls or boys they want to involve as witnesses in criminal proceedings.

Experiences, so far, show that young persons victims of trafficking often chose to go back on their own and that authorities in the host countries, however well meaning, have no information on what happens to them once they have returned. In some cases, the lack of resources for returning children stops countries from assisting them in the return, since most countries do not send children back without being certain that there is someone there to care for them after they have returned. This is obviously a concern, since for many children and young persons a return to the country of origin proves to be the best possibility for the future.

Similarly, there is no capacity in the host countries to care for the needs of these children and young persons. Existing resources are not adequate to care for the multitude of needs that must be considered: safety concerns, police co-operation, paper work (in order for the young person to receive temporary or other permits to reside in the host country), medical needs, psychological needs and the obvious need to co-operate with colleagues in the country of origin. Even though the young person will need the services of an institution, the problem seems to be that the difficulties, as well as individual differences are so diverse that an institution needs to be built around each child. Some attempts at assistance exist, but the majority of these are too limited in view and cannot cater for the diverse problems these young persons present.

### ***The present document***

This document is based on information received from the network of experts in the Children at Risk cooperation in the eleven member countries of the CBSS and the neighbouring countries Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. The information received at the expert meeting in Kiev is also added to the document.

The document includes the organisations working in this field and their experiences, in order to create significant co-operation on possible establishment of any form of service. It also summarizes what is needed in terms of capacity and competence building in the different countries. The competence in the field is scarce since few professionals have adequate experiences.

The different memos from the network of professionals have been posted on the discussion forum of the Childcentre web site and are open to everyone who has access to the forum. A report from the expert meeting in Kiev will also be placed on the website.

The material in this report is gathered from the work of the National Co-ordinators in the different countries in the cooperation and from information received at the expert meeting in Kiev in April 2005. Personal interviews and meetings with a number of NGOs, ministry representatives and professionals in the countries involved have also been made. Information on some countries is used from the report published in 2004 by the ECPAT law enforcement group.<sup>1</sup>

The paper should continue to be considered as a non-official document.

The expert meeting has provided input into the formulation of how the co-operation on Children at Risk in the Region of the Baltic Sea States and neighbouring countries can assist in establishing rehabilitation and support mechanisms. Services will take into account the specific issues, which are important to consider when assisting girls or boys with experience of exploitation, sexual or other, and the streamlining of the support mechanisms in order to use existing resources in each country. The number of children discovered as victims of trafficking from any single country, or that are trafficked to any single country for the purpose of sexual exploitation is relatively low<sup>2</sup>.

We assume, however, that the number of girls or boys encountered will increase when adequate support measures will be in place, as this will enable victimised children to ask for assistance. Creating adequate measures is also a preventive action insofar as it will assist in preventing girls or boys from being re-trafficked. This will give communities more information about trafficking in children and thus raise public awareness, as well as the awareness among professionals in the field of child protection.

So far, all statistics concentrate on children that are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The cases of young persons and children trafficked for other forms of exploitation are not recognised in the statistics. These children are, however, vulnerable and in need of protection.

Through bilateral discussions with experts in the area of rehabilitation and support to children victims of exploitation and violence and through the discussion at the expert meeting in Kiev, the child experts in the cooperation on children at risk and in the neighbouring countries Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, have identified a number of issues that should be thoroughly considered in order to design programmes and projects of assistance for children victims of trafficking. Some of the issues raised are specific for individual countries but most of the topics are common to all.

Any assistance built for children and young persons that have been trafficked need to take the above into consideration. It is important to set up a dynamic organisation in each country, which will be able to respond to the cases of children appearing in the country and, which will also be able to access experts in other countries in order to make child friendly and ap-

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<sup>1</sup> See Joint East West Research on Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes in Europe: The Sending Countries (Edited by Muireann O'Briain, Anke van den Borne and Theo Noten).

<sup>2</sup> See Outcome of OPC questionnaire on Trafficking in Children 2004.  
<http://www.childcentre.info/projects/traffickin/dbaFile11622.doc>

propriate assessments. The coordination of the assistance is also a matter of importance. Since the number of assisted girls and boys in a country might not be numerous, the co-ordination will need to be the point of reference for the institutional learning (a place where experiences are collected).

In some countries it will be beneficial to tie the support and assistance to an already existing institution/centre run by the local municipality or by a NGO. This is important in order to avoid new and costly structures. Institutions that work with young persons, who have experienced abuse and/or violence, will likely also be able to handle some of the conflicting dynamics in force when assistance is offered. The existing institutions and centres will have to re-train for their new tasks and to continuously update their knowledge in relevant areas in order to respond in the best possible way.

Some of the themes identified throughout the region are listed below in four sections (A Protection of children, B Medical assistance, C Psychological assistance and D Institutional placement: short or long term).

## **Issues to consider**

### ***Theme A: Protection of children***

This is a double issue: Children need protection from traffickers. Some of the children may feel a pressure from the members of criminal networks, who may want to get at the young person in order to obstruct him/her from witnessing against traffickers. They may also want to get at the young person in order to re-traffic him or her. In some cases the trafficker may be a boyfriend and the attempts to get to the girl and persuade her to join him again may be in line with the young trafficked person's own ambitions.

The protection issues are different in the country of origin and in the host country. From the research and mapping in the region and the discussion at the expert meeting in Kiev, it seems that victims of trafficking fear what would happen to them if/when they return to their country of origin. However, it also shows that the security issues are not that present in their minds when they are still in the host country.

There is also another way to look at the issue of protection: Protecting a young person from his/her own chosen lifestyle. In many countries there is legislation in place, which considers situations when a child leads a life endangering his or her own well-being. Children engaged in selling sex would in most countries be considered leading that kind of a destructive life and would therefore be assisted or even forcibly assisted in changing the lifestyle.

However, in most countries this protective legislation is not applied for citizens from another country. The question is whether this is a violation of the CRC, the article on non-discrimination, and if it is possible to change this practice. What resources are there in place for a child to be put in forced care (for a short period of time) against his/her will? How is this applied? If a child is under non-consensual care, what are the restrictions on such care in different countries? What are the time limits? Which institutions have the right to have children in such care and what kinds of measures are involved? Would a child in your country immediately have a legal guardian appointed or if that kind of practice doesn't exist in the country?

**Denmark:** The regular centres caring for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, also host children victims of trafficking if they choose to apply for asylum. The Danish Red Cross runs these centres. Presently, all the unaccompanied children stay in the Danish Red Cross Centre “Gribskov”. Seeking asylum is the only way to stay on legally in Denmark. A special note should be made of the fact that 60% of the asylum-seeking children at the centre “Gribskov” disappear, 30% disappear within the first two weeks. The Red Cross handles all investigations into the child’s background and the tracing of family ties in the country of origin for both asylum-seeking children and for the children placed under forced care at secured/locked institutions.

It is difficult to protect the children in the centres as the centres have become well known recruitment places for traffickers. The criminal networks do not usually come to the centres, instead they contact the children through mobile phones. This makes protection even more cumbersome.

The police can decide to bring unaccompanied children under forced care in accordance with their illegal stay in Denmark referring to the legislation of foreigners without a residence permit. This legislation does not refer to the protection of the child from leading a destructive life. However, it refers to the authorities’ possibility to secure the child’s expulsion and return to the home country due to their illegal stay in Denmark.

There have been some problems with very young Romanian boys, who were staying illegally in Denmark earning money as pickpockets. In the case of young children below the age of 15, three accommodations have been established in a separate section of the secure institution “Sølager”. The Danish Red Cross collaborates with the institution and handles the investigations into the child’s background etc. - as mentioned above. Young persons between 15 to 18 years of age, residing illegally in Denmark, can be placed in secure institutions together with other young persons who are put into forced care because of juvenile delinquency.

The usual procedure for the police is to bring these children and young people to the Red Cross Centre for unaccompanied children. If the children run away from the centre, the police can place them under forced care and within 3 days bring them to court. The judge decides how long the child is going to stay in the secure institution (normally they can stay for a maximum of two months). In special cases the court can extend the stay for another two months. The Danish Red Cross has mentioned that they intend to focus especially on their efforts concerning repatriation in 2005. All unaccompanied children in Denmark immediately have a personal guardian appointed. The Danish Red Cross administrates this arrangement.

A new pattern has occurred regarding unaccompanied children coming to Denmark. Some of them arrive together with adults assumed to be their parents. Later it is revealed that there are no family ties at all. Instead these children could be at high risk of being victims of trafficking.

A new nationality of unaccompanied children has shown up in Denmark; Chinese children who are difficult to communicate with. They are rather taciturn and coordinate their explanations.

**Estonia:** In Estonia a child that has been trafficked may be placed as a first resort in a children’s shelter. This is done on the initiative of the child protection services or on the initiative of the child or the family. The home council of the child covers the cost of the place at the

shelter. The cost per day per child is approximately EEK 210. The child's legal guardian may at any time discontinue this placement (the Estonian authorities are presently looking at bringing this to court) and have the placement secured by a court order. If the child is then placed resting on the decision of the court, she or he can stay in care for a period of time. Some shelters are reasonably secure: children do not leave the shelter unattended, the doors are locked etc. Others are more open with little or no security from outside threats or ability to secure that the child stays in the shelter. In the more secure shelters, a staff member accompanies the children to school. The care and supervision in the shelters differ. Some shelters offer more protection than others, depending on the staff and financial situation.

Through a state programme, all police authorities are now staffed with victim support persons and these may serve as adult support persons for child victims, supporting them practically when visiting the gynaecologist, the psychologist or the social protection officer.

The Estonian National Contact Point will be notified by another country when and if a child victim of trafficking is found. The NCP can then co-ordinate the support given by the child protection services etc. The children's shelters need to become more aware of the problem of trafficking in order to know what to do when such cases appear. This is a national issue.

**Germany:** Unaccompanied children in Germany are cared for by centres, which are run by NGOs commissioned by the different federal states. In Germany, an unaccompanied person between 16 and 18 years of age is considered an adult. This naturally has consequences for the possibilities for the asylum system to care for children that have been trafficked, since the majority of these children are between 16 and 18 years of age. The German statistics on the matter from the BKA, the German Federal Police, claims that a bit less than 5% of the victims of trafficking that are discovered are below 18. This makes Germany the country in the region with the highest number of known child victims; Germany alone had about 60 child victims of trafficking during 2003. This is not counting those whose age was impossible to verify or naturally those that were never discovered by the police.

Unfortunately, in most cases the professional background of the officials in charge of the asylum-proceedings does not provide the necessary expertise to recognise a traumatised child or a case of trafficking in children.

The Refugio Centre, providing care and support for unaccompanied refugee children and refugee children coming together with their families to Germany believes that it would be useful to tie the provision for trafficked children to the institutions offering care for unaccompanied minor refugees.

Unaccompanied children are usually not detained during the process of investigation. This makes security issues very important as criminal networks try to recruit children from the centres. The centres are often in close contact with the police.

**Latvia:** About six NGOs have experiences working with children victims of trafficking. Municipalities monitor that children up to the age of 18 attend school. They also try to keep track of children registered in the municipality. Social centres are established in each municipality and social workers are connected to the schools. If a child disappears, it is possible to inform the social centre of the disappearance.

The Latvian legislation calls for a family court or a custody court to make the decision on out of the family placement of children. The Riga municipality uses the “Dardedze” shelter. The shelter can provide care for a limited time but has had children staying for more than a year. Regularly children should not be at the centre for more than two months.

Other municipalities run shelters or there are shelters or centres run by NGOs like the “Talsi centre”. “Talsi centre” cares for victims of trafficking, victims may stay for a period of up to 30 days. There is also a shelter for asylum seeking children in the Riga area. This shelter only provides basic care and accommodation and thus is not used to its potential. There is also a so called “prevention centre” which is more restrictive and “prison like”. Experience from the “Marta centre”, that has assisted women and some girls victims of trafficking, show that women and girls usually want assistance. In Latvia this assistance is given on an ad hoc basis with little or no co-ordination. The centre can put victims in contact with shelters and services. According to “Marta centre”, it is a bit easier to care for children since there are more shelters available for them.

From the year 2000, social rehabilitation is provided for children who have suffered from illegal actions. This social rehabilitation is directed towards ensuring services, financed from state budget, according to a place of residence or institutions for children who have suffered from illegal actions. Education/training could also be provided to specialists. In the framework of this state programme, it is possible to provide rehabilitation to children who have been trafficked. The assistance to children is being provided by adequate institutions (public organisations) receiving the task after yearly competition. The assistance given at the place of residence is provided by social workers in the municipalities and by psychologists and psychotherapists, who have undergone special educational programme approved by the Ministry of welfare.

A special Working Group at the Ministry of Welfare is trying to find measures to recognize victims of trafficking and four groups of different specialists are working in order to facilitate concrete activities.

Parents should be trained how to help their children behave safely. A “brave children program” is currently running.

**Lithuania:** In Lithuania centres run by NGOs take a considerable risk if they care for children below 18. If the child runs away or is exposed to dangers – it is the legal responsibility of the centre. In order to protect themselves, the centres that care for adult victims of trafficking do not provide services for children. For this to happen, a change in the responsibilities needs to occur. The Lithuanian expertise is certain that a form of a centre would need to be established to care for children victims of trafficking. Such a centre would, however, need to be fully staffed and legal difficulties would need to be solved regarding the responsibilities when having children in their care.

Out of home care for children can be decided by the Commission for children in the municipality or by a judge. At the moment this is not definitely settled but Lithuania is moving towards legislation where the decision should be taken at all times by the court. The risk the NGOs or other shelters run is if the child has no legal guardian, making the shelter more or less automatically responsible for the child in the guardian’s absence.

Shelters for victims of trafficking are in place in four places in Lithuania. These are all part of the government's previous plan against trafficking and concentrate on women victims of trafficking. Currently, the new tenders have not been verified and it is unclear if this will change the services provided. The existing centres are oriented mainly for adult women. Boys are usually omitted from the practices. The centres are run in four major cities (1) Vilnius: Missing Person's Families Support Centre, Caritas shelter, IOM-Vilnius (2) Kaunas: Caritas shelter, (3) Klaipėda Social and Psychological Support Centre, (4) Alytus Women Crisis Centre. NGO "Childhouse" is looking at contracting a number of families that could take in children, in the form of foster care, for a limited period of time. This will probably start functioning by May this year and may prove to be a useful way in assisting children victims of trafficking.

"Child House" is at present the only one working with children. IOM finds some cases through personal contacts (e.g., in police structures or shelters). Most of the services available (governmental and commercial, orphanage houses, NGOs, police and medical clinics) are not child friendly. The governmental agencies have started to buy services (psychological, medical, etc.) from the NGOs. The schools and gynaecologists are unfortunately very reluctant to report current cases.

The law includes several provisions that could protect children from traffickers. The child's name could be changed, their living place made unknown, etc. These tools have however not yet been used in a trafficking case in Lithuania. Instead children leaving institutions are totally unprotected. The situation is similar during the criminal investigation. In the court they sit in the same room as the pimps. It should be possible for the victim to give their testimony without the pimp present. Another problem is the risk that information on the child's identity etc. ends up in the wrong hands. This could be solved by making a specific person the responsible contact point in each case.

The lack of information from the country of destination on the kind of support the child has received in the host country is another obvious obstacle in trying to make an adequate decision on the protection measures needed. Another difficulty is the lack of follow up when the child has left one centre to go to another centre/place in the country.

The young victims are very reluctant to receive assistance. Instead it is common that they only want a place to stay for a short while. During their stay they often try to get money and passport making it possible for them to travel onwards when they have recovered. The children themselves do not usually want to talk about what has happened to them. A possibility to provide forced assistance to 15-17 year old children would help. It is also important to work with the staff at the centres. Often they are well informed of what has happened to the children, but too ashamed to tell anyone.

**Norway:** Children victims of trafficking should in theory be supported through the child protection system. If a child needs forced care for a period of time, the child protection system does have legal provisions to set such care in motion. Children can be placed under forced care or under restrictions for a period of time by care orders or involuntary placements for children and young people with severe behavioural problems. The county Social Welfare Boards has the authority to make such decisions.

Asylum seeking children can be put under forced care just like other children who live in Norway, but there are no special provisions for this group of children. Young persons who are victims of trafficking may be in need of safe places to stay in the form of emergency foster

homes with secret addresses or institutions. Given the marginal number of trafficked children so far, the responsibility for providing safe accommodation will be at the national level and not include a specific centre.

An independent group is working on recommendations for a training programme of professionals in the shelters to enhance the level of protection and also to train the staff to disclose the abuse. It is important to place also cultural mediators in the centres, facilitating the contacts with the children. Empowerment of the children is also an important tool making them able to protect themselves.

**Poland:** Centres are already working with unaccompanied young persons. Some of these fairly newly opened. The centres do not, however, provide forced care.

The Polish court may appoint a guardian only if parents of the child are dead, unknown or deprived of parental rights. The procedures of depriving the foreigners of their parental rights are very difficult to conduct in Poland, so in most cases of alien children they are provided only with a so called “legal guardian“. A legal guardian is appointed only to represent the child during the administrative, legal procedure.

In Poland, if a minor is caught in prostitution it is considered to be a symptom of youth demoralization. The Law on procedures applied in cases of minors regulates this issue. The case of a minor suspected to prostitute him/herself is reported to the Family Court. The judge may decide to place the minor in a special secure rehabilitation facility until the person turns 21 years old. These facilities receive minors who have been using alcohol, drugs, skipped school, or committed petty crimes. Although the centres are secure facilities, they are not prisons, so escapes happen pretty often.

Alien minors accused of committing petty crimes (i.e. stealing) might be placed in Police secure facility for 48 hours and should then be placed in rehabilitation centres. In practice alien minors are rarely placed in secure rehabilitation facilities. Most foreign minor prostitutes working in the street are turned to the Border Guards secure facility and prepared for deportation.

It is important to view trafficking of children in a broader perspective of protection and support to families at risk. The sharing of information is often too slow between the different actors involved, in particular as the children often need to be protected from criminal networks. Training of professionals how to protect the children would make a difference.

The difficulties could be overcome also by appointing the person(s) to be responsible for actions in this field. A task force could be established to coordinate the activities.

Poland faces three major challenges. 1) Develop good reintegration programs that could start immediately when the child comes to the centre with the aim to make it possible to communicate with the child in its own language as soon as possible. 2) Establish safe reception centres. Many of the children now disappearing are in the risk zone of being re-trafficked. 3) In the majority of the asylum cases start the family tracing process as soon as possible and not wait until the application has been rejected. This would most probably in the majority of the cases also be in the best interest of the child.

**Russian Federation:** There are federal legal acts in Russia that define actions for state and law enforcement agencies in case unaccompanied, neglected children and/or underage

law violators are found. Similar documents exist on the local level. There are different programmes (city/town, regional) in place directed to the prevention of child neglect, homelessness and underage law violations for the period of 2-3 years that are financed from the city budget. The financial situation in Moscow and St. Petersburg is regularly better than in other parts of the country. Resting on the above documents, there's a general scheme in case a child is found in a difficult life situation.

In Russia, a child detected by the authorities without documentation is taken into state custody provided she or he is without parents or a guardian. The child is firstly detected by the police, NGOs or international organisations and/or citizens. Then the child is taken to children's hospital (in the case of the city Moscow) or a shelter for medical examination, if found healthy enough, i.e. without any dangerous disease, the child will be placed in a social centre for children and teenagers, run by the municipality. In St Petersburg and in Moscow, the city districts run the centres. The crisis centres differ somewhat in the Russian Federation but mainly they provide basic protection and shelter for a short period of time during which it is decided what should happen to a child. The staff members at the shelters investigate where the child comes from, his/her status. What happens to the child depends on the child's origin. A child from the Russian Federation is usually sent to the region he or she comes from, while a child from another state is sent back to his/her country, provided that some form of an agreement could be made with the country of origin. The crisis centres do not provide forced placements in the shelters since these are under the jurisdiction of state agencies for social security of the population. Children often run away from the shelters, despite the inner security of these. Some shelters have developed their care and several shelters are aware of the fact that some of the children they care for have been trafficked to Russia. Besides that, official agencies, under the jurisdiction of which are the shelters, often claim that these children do not always go to the shelter they are provided with. They are either taken away while being inspected by the Ministry of Interior regarding the issue of underage law violator or when the child is undergoing examination in the hospital.

There are possibilities to have children under restrictions within the institutions working with children. For example, there are two organizations in St. Petersburg that work with children from other regions of Russia or from other countries. These are the orphanage "Fedor" and the "Centre of Temporary Detention of Minor Criminals" (CTDMC). Children can get medical help and psychological assistance there. But the main aim of the work is to get information about the origin of the child and to send him/her back to the region or country they come from.

There is a special working group which is accountable to the Duma of the Russian Federation that works with legal anti-trafficking documents focusing on how to prevent human trafficking. The main aspect of these documents is the protection of victims of trafficking, including the minors. This project does not only focus on sexual exploitation but also is trying to work out criteria for recognizing other forms of trafficking.

Taking into account Russian specifics, it is not often easier to protect children in big cities compared to protecting them in smaller cities or in the countryside. It is easier to hide the fact of trafficking from those who know the child in big cities. However, in small cities and in the countryside it is easier to establish a centre using work therapy, as well as other forms of therapy, for the purposes of rehabilitation of children.

However, the lack of competence is in general huge in the area of rehabilitation and protection of children in Russia. There are no mechanisms in place to protect children in orphanages and too little support after they have left the institution. Children are lost both through running away from orphanages, seeking better opportunities elsewhere or after having left the institution. It is important to balance their right to freedom with their need of protection. The situation became even more complicated after the legal act no. 122 came into force in January 2005, as well as after the new residential codex was enforced in March 2005. Since then the protection of the rights of those who left children homes and school-internats became much more difficult.

In some parts of the country families have been threatened by criminal networks to hand over their child. It happens frequently that pimps offer money to parents and it has been cases when parents have sold their child for a bottle of vodka. Girls are particularly vulnerable. It is common that pimps come to the centres and approach girls. Many of these girls at risk are neglected by their families. Nobody cares. The process to take a child away from an abusive family could be both very lengthy and cumbersome. The court procedure takes a long time. Usually these are families at risk, where parents are using alcohol and drugs, as well as those parents who themselves have left children homes and/or school-internats. Recently, the problem of rejecting their own child affected even the families with strong Muslim and patriarchal traditions not only in Russia, but also in the countries of CIS as Tadjhikistan, Uzbekistan, Kirgistan.

The sharing of information in individual cases is not secure enough, neither between the countries in the region nor within Russia. It is important to make improvements in this area. It is also important to follow up what happens to the child after it has left one shelter and moved to another or back to the family. It is also important to make contacts with the Ministry of Interior in order to secure protection of these families, as well as children in these families. At the moment there is no united information base regarding the facts of trafficking of minors. There is information base "Gritis" in the city of Moscow which gathers information about all children who appear in social shelters. There is also a separate base in the Ministry of Interior. Recently, federal information base is being created to gather information about children who were left out without their families or legal guardians in order to keep track of their future activities, as well as in case a foreign adoption occurs.

It is important to note that in the state system of social reintegration, rehabilitation and adaptation of children there are no specialised institutional units that would have specific focus on questions of trafficking in children. Only on the federal level in the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation in the section that works with revealing difficult crimes a post of a specialist who deals with crimes in the sphere of trafficking in children was created.

**Sweden:** According to the Social Services Act, each municipality is responsible for social services within its boundaries. The municipality is ultimately responsible for ensuring that a person staying within its boundaries receives the support and assistance he/she needs. Measures for children and young persons within the social services act are to be taken on a basis of an agreement with the young person concerned and/or his custodian. A care order can be made if a young person exposes his health or development to a palpable risk of injury through the abuse of addictive substances, criminal activity or some other socially degrading behaviour.

In Sweden, the institutions that have the right to keep young persons in custody resting on a care order are all run by the government agency SIS. The children discovered by the Swedish police as victims of trafficking have, however, only in one case been referred to youth centres, where Swedish troubled young persons are placed. Usually, the police offer the victims a place in the shelters that care for adult women or, if necessary, might even place them in the shelters without their consent. In the case of child victims of trafficking, they have, with one or two exceptions, disappeared (presumably back to their countries of origin without any support offered to them on their return).

Interviews, carried out at the institutions and shelters, all show that there is a need for restricting the movement of a young person, during the first phase, in order for him or her to take an informed decision on what to do with his or her situation. The example of at least one known case of a young girl, who left the centre after her boyfriend and procurer looked her up, has made the police and all other authorities and agencies involved wary of the fact that a young person is extremely vulnerable during the first week after being discovered.

In other cases of children victims of trafficking, the child has been advised to apply for asylum in order to gain a legal status in Sweden. If an asylum application has been made, the child falls under the jurisdiction of the Migration authorities. This is, however, a solution that does not secure access to the assessment or care, tailored for the child in question. Being an asylum seeker, however, is not an obstacle for a court ruling regarding the forced care or forced placement of the young person.

For a young person to be placed under restrictions, a court must rule that the young person's life style threatens his/her well-being and development. This will involve the SIS and one of their centres will need to develop expertise in the area of care for children victims of trafficking. The police welcome this initiative since the methods they use lately are not adequate and do not take specific difficulties of children into account. This is especially true when the police or the prosecutor want to use a child victim as a witness against the trafficker(s).

Actions in the field exist back to back with a "don't want to see" policy. The handling of the cases may be different in the capital compared to the regions. The majority of cases are revealed in the Stockholm region. In most of the cases the victim has expressed a wish to return home. Usually their wish is approved. However the work should be directed towards making the child stay at least for a while in Sweden before returning to the country of origin and in the meantime develop and intensify contacts with the social workers in the home country.

There is furthermore a problem of recognition: whether to recognize children as victims of trafficking or as illegal immigrants. This is also a question of who should "pay the bill". If recognized as an illegal immigrant, a child is sent back to the country of origin. If recognized as a victim of trafficking, a child must be cared for by the social service authorities, etc.

The police, the migration authorities and the municipalities are the main authorities in contact with children victims of trafficking and/or asylum seeking children. The appropriate legislation is in place. However, it is not always the case that the municipalities have enough knowledge or sufficient resources to deal with these cases.

An innocent view of children prevails in Sweden. The authorities often do not think that children could be involved in organised crime. This view often prevents authorities from taking proper measures to protect children from disappearing. It is therefore important to develop

specific ways in order to identify the protection needs of a child from the very beginning and to use the secure institutions to protect children from criminal networks.

**Belarus:** There is a centre in Belarus, that can offer accommodation shelter and over-night facilities for women and children, who are victims of domestic violence and trafficking. That Crisis Centre is administered by the NGO “Radislava” and is situated in Minsk. There is no centre dealing specifically with children victims of trafficking. Plans are in place to assist children and young persons victims of trafficking to return to Belarus through the network of social service institutions and specialists.

There are also possibilities to provide care for young persons victims of trafficking in the institutions that care for young offenders. These institutions make assessments regarding long-term assistance to the young offenders they regularly care for. They have no previous experience of assisting young persons victims of trafficking. Some assistance in repatriating children and women are implemented by the organisation “For the Children of Chernobyl Fund” at the Malinovka centre. La Strada Belarus assists trafficked persons by offering a range of services: emotional, medical, psychological, financial, juridical etc. including safe housing in the mini-shelter for two beds and possibility to stay there up to 2-3 weeks. The mini-shelter has been operating since May 2004. Specialists of public organisation “Children – Not for abuse” provide psychological help to children victims of trafficking in this shelter.

It is however difficult for La Strada to take care of children victims of trafficking since a governmental approval in each individual case is needed in order to be able to keep children in the centre.

There are at the moment no rehabilitation centres run by the authorities. The governmental centres in the regions are providing social services to the family as a whole. The national police authority runs special transit shelters for unaccompanied children. The children in these shelters originate from Belarus as well as from other, mostly CIS countries.

**Moldova:** There is no governmentally assisted institution or any re-integration programme responsible solely for fighting trafficking in children. Child trafficking is dealt by structures, which are concerned with the fight against human trafficking in general. In November 2001, the Government of the Republic of Moldova approved the nominal composition of a National Committee for fighting against trafficking in persons. Its obligation is to implement the National Plan of Action for fighting trafficking in humans.

A number of international organizations are partners to the implementation of the National Plan of Action for fighting human trafficking, including UNICEF, UNDP, IOM, OSCE, ILO, the Council of Europe, the EU, the SECI Centre, as well as Moldovan NGOs active in the field of fighting human trafficking.

Since 2002, several programmes were developed for trafficked victims, but only IOM, La Strada, Save the Children, and The Centre for the Prevention of Trafficking in Women, CPTW offer help to children victims. In September 2001, IOM established a Reception and Rehabilitation Centre for victims of trafficking in cooperation with the local health authorities. The Centre provides many services including medical examinations (tests and treatment, including HIV/AIDS tests), social and psychological support, group therapy, psychiatric support and vocational orientation.

Experts interviewed in Moldova point out that re-integration of children should mean family re-integration, not institutionalisation. However, there are no mechanisms in Moldova to prevent institutionalisation at this point. There are day care centres for children, but there are no professionals who would be able to set up the programmes suitable for trafficked children.

Traffickers look for the most vulnerable children. The best way of protection is to work in a preventive way with the families at risk. It is important not to supervise the children, instead to supplement the parental care. A combination of conditional financial support and social/physiological support and education could work.

It is of crucial importance to put the child in focus and to have an ongoing dialogue with the girl or boy both in the short term and the long term perspective. The children themselves often try to avoid the responsibility for their own lives. Some of them do not trust anyone and it will take a long time to convince them to put trust in others. Their expectation of the future life can sometimes be difficult to fulfil. It is important to make them aware of the reality. Sometimes they do not want to go back to the home community, instead their wish is to stay in a bigger city.

**Ukraine:** Experts stress the lack of national rehabilitation programmes for minor victims of trafficking. However, international and local organisations such as La Strada-Ukraine, the World of Women (Svit Zhinok), Hope Crisis Centre (Nadiya), IOM, and Winrock International have contributed to the establishment of rehabilitation centres available to all victims of sexual violence and exploitation.

Winrock International created 7 Crisis Centres “Women for Women” on the basis of 7 NGOs, which continue to work after the financing of Winrock International has finished. It is planned to open 5 more such centres this year. They are created by NGOs in cooperation with state structures and with the support of international organisations. These Centres provide services also for children victims of trafficking. Now these organizations are financially supported by IOM. Women for Women Centre of Donetsk regional League of business and professional women provides different services for women and children (see web-site [www.bpw.donetsk.ua](http://www.bpw.donetsk.ua)), especially for children. League conducts trainings, interactive discussions, and seminars at schools, children homes and boarding schools of the Donetsk region.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine is the responsible coordinator regarding care, rehabilitation and reintegration of children victims of trafficking. Special Committees are created in each municipality to support also victims of trafficking. Shelters are in place for homeless children, children of violence, etc, however, there is no specialized shelter for children victims of trafficking. Cooperation exists between the police and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the social workers and NGOs, etc. However the cooperation with the NGOs needs to be improved. The new programme on fighting trafficking includes a section focusing on children.

There is furthermore a plan to establish three support facilities particularly for children, but the financial resources are very limited. La Strada runs a hot line also available to children.

The institutions (orphanages, etc) often look like juvenile prisons. Children run away from them in high numbers. Approximately 20% of the children in the institutions choose to run away to live on the street in relative freedom compared to stay on in the institution.

More than half of the children returning to Ukraine do so without the authorities knowing what has happened to them abroad. This may in some cases lead to the child instead being recognized as homeless or as abused in other ways. There is an obvious need to improve the professional skills in taking care of the victims as well as to find measures on how to recognise children as victims of trafficking.

### ***Theme B: Medical assistance***

This is usually not a controversial issue. A child has a right to receive medical assistance and care. If a child is at higher risk of contracting any STI including HIV, TB or other communicable diseases, as could be the case with children that are victims of trafficking, this should be determined. The testing and the possible diagnosis, as well as treatment should be implemented. A possible centre needs, therefore, to have a close contact with specialised medical staff members, who deal with these tasks and possibly with other medical issues relevant for young persons. It is important that the medical personnel is well acquainted with young persons and specific difficulties, that may be present when examining and diagnosing young persons with difficult diseases, that may have a great impact on the young person's future. Within the Northern Dimension Partnership on Health and Social Well-Being, there are experts on STI with good contacts in all countries in the co-operation. We hope to draw on their expertise looking at how the health services, adapted to the specific situation for these children, can be implemented.

**Denmark:** The first medical examination is done at the local doctor or local health centre. Blood tests (HIV/AIDS) are sent to the hospital in the region for examination. TB requires an X-ray examination at the nearest hospital - tests are sent to The Danish Serum Institute for further examination.

**Estonia:** There is medical expertise regarding children at the children's hospital in Tallinn. It is, however, uncertain if they have experience in STI. They do know a lot about HIV, as all children that are under care for drug abuse, are tested at this hospital. There are also Youth Centres, where young persons may go to get advice regarding contraceptives etc. These youth centres and the gynaecologists working there may support with the medical expertise. The forensic expertise existing in some hospitals may be considered to be reliable as well as experienced paediatricians are well advanced in taking care of STI infections.

**Lithuania:** Lithuanian AIDS centre runs a Social disease department "Demetra", where girls at risk may come for check-ups and care of STI and HIV. NGO "Childhouse" has contacts with a designated centre (in order to assure continuity of services), that has expertise in the areas of STI and HIV and, that is also considered to be qualified in the treatment of children.

**Norway:** Pursuant to the Municipal Health Care Act, each municipality is in charge of providing necessary primary health care to any person who lives or temporarily resides in a municipality. This right includes emergency medical assistance and care, and to a certain extent medical examinations. Similar obligations apply to the County Municipalities regarding dental health care.

The regional health care authorities/hospitals provide specialist health services to persons who live or reside within the health region (there are five such regions). Every person has the

right to emergency medical help, irrespective of a residence permit or age. Apart from emergency services, the right to specialist medical services, pursuant to the Patients' Rights Act, is generally restricted to persons who either have a residence permit in Norway, or are otherwise connected to the Social Security system, or come from a nation with which Norway has signed a mutual agreement concerning specialist health services. These restrictions do not apply to persons below the age of 18 to the same extent as they do to adults. As a part of Norway's Plan of Action for Combating Trafficking in Women and Children, national health authorities are considering the needs for specifying which specialist health services trafficked children should be given.

There is expertise within the fields of communicable and sexually transmitted diseases in all health regions. Due to the "lack" of registered child trafficking cases, conclusions about the quality of provided medical assistance to these children would be premature.

**Poland:** There is a lack of procedures to follow in the area of medical examination and providing medical expertise to children in Poland. Even basic gynaecological examinations may be difficult to perform due to administrative difficulties. The STI expertise is not connected to work with young persons.

**Russian Federation:** In Russia, there are children hospitals, polyclinics and family dispensaries where a child victim receives the first medical examination. Only rarely it might be special sections in social shelters that provide medical examination. There are specialists who make medical examination of every child who comes to the centre or to the orphanage. They usually work in such institutions permanently. The child receives full medical examination. In case the child has any serious disease, he/she is directed to a specialised section of children's hospital or a specialised hospital, as for example, venereological follow-up care or a drug addiction clinic.

The main difficulties in social shelters occur if the child is not a citizen of the Russian Federation or if he is not registered in the city of Moscow. Another difficulty is that medical insurance in Russia implies that foreign citizens are charged for repeated medical services.

The main places where a child victim of trafficking can get medical help are institutions, which work with children for the period of their recognition until the moment he/she is sent back to the place of origin (such as the orphanage "Fedor" and the Centre of Temporary Detention of Minor Criminals (CTDMC) or, in difficult cases, it could be a special medical institution).

**Sweden:** A victim of trafficking has the right to have the same medical care as any other person under the age of 18 years. A court order according to the act of care of young persons is necessary in order to do a medical examination if the victim opposes to this. Medical expertise can be called for regarding assistance to children that have been sexually abused and/or exposed to other forms of violence and exploitation.

**Belarus:** The local NGO "Province" offers re-integration programmes for victims of trafficking trying to put them in private medical centres. First of all, it is anonymous and it is possible to avoid filling in lots of papers needed for the registration of a patient. The attitude of the staff is also much friendlier there. The NGO is trying not to spread out the information that the patients are victims of sexual exploitation. According to Belarusian experts, these efforts concern mainly women who are above 18. In the state medical centres gynaecologist can

receive minor clients only if parents are present. In the private institutions this is not always adhered to. However, all the cases, when a medical care is provided for an underage person, demand special attention.

The quality of the services and access to them differs from small town to the regional centre and capital. However, confidentiality is not always kept while using the services of state clinics. The services of private clinics are charged for, which demands NGOs to seek for funds. Governmental medical institutions provide services for free. There is some medical expertise developed for VOTs as a result of the implementation of IOM counter-trafficking (CT) projects in Belarus. For instance, some IOM NGO-partners have long lasting contractual relations with state and private medical centres, clinics and/or doctors, who provide medical services to the VOTs participating in IOM CT programme. Moreover, it is envisioned that the Rehabilitation Centre will be staffed with medical and psychological specialists who will be trained in provision for specific medical and psychological assistance to VOTs (including children) at the existing Rehab Centres in Kiev and/or Chisinau.

**Moldova:** The IOM Centre, established in 2001, provides many services including medical examinations (tests and treatment, including HIV/AIDS tests), social and psychological support, group therapy, psychiatric support and vocational orientation. The main experience is gathered from supporting adult women victims of trafficking, so the extent of work and experience, that is in place to care for young persons and children, is unknown. The IOM centre runs one shelter where the girls receive first-aid only for the first ten days of their return. For victims who need long-term rehabilitation, there is no specialized service.

Legal, medical and psychological assistance are also provided by other organizations, however, these are short-term since they are funded through short-term projects.

**Ukraine:** In Ukraine there is a network of non-governmental organizations (about 40), which have agreements or contracts with medical establishments (polyclinics, medical centres, hospitals, laboratories) about providing specialized medical assistance to trafficked persons. Specialists of these medical establishments are familiar with the problem of trafficking in human beings since they were specially trained on this issue. Assistance is provided to children as well as to adults.

### ***Theme C: Psychological assistance***

A number of difficult issues are involved when looking at assistance for children victims of trafficking. Areas that need to be developed further exist side by side with areas where knowledge and expertise is already in place. How does exploitation affect a young person? Overall, the knowledge on how children are affected psychologically due to exploitation is limited. Some experience exists but this is based on few cases and the knowledge has not been systematically organised nor is it in a form that can be communicated.

**Denmark:** Expertise is in place regarding assistance to children that have been sexually abused and/or exposed to other forms of violence and exploitation. NGOs, hospitals and child psychiatric centres are set. Some NGOs are also involved in directly assisting prostitute women and they also assist girls under the age of 18. There is an obvious gap when it comes to training of professionals in assisting children victims of trafficking.

**Estonia:** The Tallinn Child Support Centre and the Tartu Child Support Centre offer qualified and long-term support to children that have been abused. The Estonian government plan on starting two new rehabilitation centres for children and these may, as an additional task, give psychological support for children victims of trafficking. When in place these new centres, together with the already existing centres in Tartu and Tallinn, will cover all of Estonia. The staff members from these centres will be called upon when a case of child trafficking is discovered.

The extra capacity needed to care for children victims of trafficking in Estonia will soon be in place. The need for international contacts in order to have clear channels of contact is emphasised and so is the need for national training of the staff at the child institutions. The psychological, social and pedagogical staff would need international training.

In some cities in Estonia, notably Tallinn and Tartu, experts meet to discuss issues related to child protection and crimes against children. The professionals involved to coordinate assistance in cases of child victims of trafficking make use of those meetings.

In order to start the recovering process as soon as possible it is important to limit the interview(s) conducted by the investigator as much as possible and to record it on video. The child testimonial evidences should be admitted by the judge. There is furthermore an obvious lack of training of professionals in assisting children victims of trafficking.

**Finland:** The system of child psychiatry is reasonably well equipped to deal with cases of exploitation even if experiences mostly exist in relation to abuse and violence.

**Germany:** The Kinderschutz zentrum have knowledge and expertise in areas related to violence and sexual abuse of children. The centres, caring for unaccompanied refugee children, have some competence in assisting children. The general knowledge in these centres, when it comes to children that have been trafficked, is limited since the centres are only mandated to care for children up until the age of 16. After this, asylum seeking children are transferred to adult centres.

An assistance plan should be put together and follow each child. It should be concluded between the country of destination and the country of origin and in close cooperation with the child.

**Latvia:** The institutions in Latvia that wish to provide rehabilitation services to children who have experienced violence are competing with each other in order to get state financing. In this way the number of organizations is determined every year. For example, for the year 2004 the right to provide rehabilitation services at the expense of the state budget as a result of a competition according to the legal act on “procurements for the needs of the state and municipalities” received:

- The Centre against violence “Dardeze”;
- The non-profit organisation “Talsis Women and Children Crisis Centre”;
- Kraslava Social Rehabilitation Centre for Children “Musmajas”;
- Allazi Support Centre to families and children.

The above mentioned institutions received the rights to provide rehabilitation services also in the year 2005.

There is an obvious gap in the training of professionals assisting children victims of trafficking.

There is a place for a shelter in the “Talsis” centre for those who have experienced abuse and/or exploitation. The centre “Marta” provides this service in cooperation with another centre “Mucinieki”, which is under the jurisdiction of the Administration of the Ministry of Interior of Latvia dealing with the issues of citizenship and migration, as well as in cooperation with religious organisations.

Both centres “Talsi” and “Marta” expressed a common interest in extending their services to assist young persons victims of trafficking. They also expressed a common interest in extending their services to assist young persons victims of trafficking. Both centres have possibilities for in-patient treatment. The problem is the communication between authorities in the host countries, the centres and governmental agencies in Latvia. Marta centre provides some counselling for women and girls.

There is an obvious gap in training of professionals assisting children victims of trafficking.

**Lithuania:** The shelters in Lithuania, providing psychological assistance to young persons victims of trafficking, lack staff members who are permanently employed. A network of five organisations working with victims of trafficking is in place and some of the organisations have experience of psychological assistance. The personnel usually consist of volunteers, psychology students and dedicated persons, who stay at the shelters only temporarily since the resources are not sufficient to offer them a longer term employment. The psychological support needed is then only given in short periods.

NGO “Childhouse” in Vilnius provides psychological treatment to children that have been exploited. This project was made possible through a donation from Childhood Foundation in Sweden and will run for three years. The psychological assistance is given on an ambulatory basis but the team may also travel to other parts of Lithuania offering services to children suffering from sexual exploitation. Labour Exchange in Lithuania, which is a Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, trained their psychologists to provide short-term psychological aid to victims of trafficking. There is a need for more training of professionals in assisting children victims of trafficking.

**Norway:** Norway has a special Mental Health Care Act. Generally speaking the same basic provisions, which were mentioned under the heading “medical assistance”, apply to mental health services, including a universal obligation to provide emergency assistance. Since our experience with young persons trafficked to Norway is very limited, we cannot evaluate the quality of psychological assistance given to trafficked children.

Some of the mental health care trusts within the health regions, including in-patient and out-patient services, have highly skilled expertise regarding psychological assistance to traumatised children and young people. It is uncertain how well this expertise will function in relation to young persons who are victims of trafficking.

Further information in English about Mental Health Services in Norway, is available at the following web-site: <http://www.odin.no/hod/engelsk/news/048071-990040/dok-bn.html>

The training available for professionals assisting children victims of trafficking is not enough. It is important to build the training on research done in the trauma field. It is also important to provide guidelines to the local authorities giving services to children.

**Poland:** Expertise exists in Poland. Organisations, working with children in the street and under age prostitutes, have knowledge in assisting these children. The difficulty is to establish a centre that would be recognised and acknowledged as a resource by all actors. In Poland, the officials that meet with unaccompanied children and children from other countries do not have sufficient knowledge or training to recognise children that have been trafficked. This means that most of the children trafficked to Poland are not recognised and thus don't receive assistance even if they meet officials. The capacity of the few centres, assisting children victims of sexual abuse, are limited and cannot be extended to children victims of trafficking.

The training available for professionals assisting children victims of trafficking is not enough. The institutions providing psychological assistance are too few and the service is available only once a month. It is important with early intervention to be able to change a destructive life situation. Rehabilitation means cooperation between different assistance systems. There is no network of professionals in this field in Poland. Lobbying is often a NGO responsibility. These problems are both of a short and a long term nature.

**Russian Federation:** There are both governmental and non-governmental institutions that provide psychological help in Russia. Another difficulty is that all these institutions have different levels of accountability, as well as a different level of professionalism. Mainly all help is emergency assistance or short-term. It's difficult to perform long-term psychological rehabilitation.

Uneven experiences of assisting young persons prevail in Moscow and in St Petersburg. Specialists from NGOs usually give such assistance. The work of the psychologists, from special centres for children from other regions or from other countries, is aimed at getting information about the origin of the child. One of the problems is a lack of highly-skilled specialists and elaborated programs for psychological assistance to children who are victims of trafficking. Presently efforts are in place to organise expertise regarding professional and qualified psychological help to children victims of trafficking, as well as connect this expertise with shelters, crisis centres and other places, where children victims of trafficking may be found (for example, police stations). It also refers to the staff of interior affairs.

It is compulsory for all children found on the street to go through medical and psychological testing. There are three medical clinics and two psychiatric clinics and drug addiction dispensary in Moscow. After the testing, the children are directed to a shelter. Psychological rehabilitation requires time. In governmental transit shelters there is a lack of psychologists. Despite the requirement that minimum 4 psychologists should work with one hundred children, in most of the shelters there are only one to three psychologists.

The problem of discontinued psychological service often occurs when a boy or girl is transferred. The psychologist in the social shelter cannot continue and finish the work when the child is returned to the family or to a children's home, usually in another city. Also a child might get into the environment from which he/she already tried to run away. No one usually works with that environment. As a consequence, children often return to a destructive street life.

The psychological expertise is qualified in many of the centres, but only few of them work with children victims of trafficking. Mainly they are qualified working with children who have experienced domestic abuse. In Russia, medical-psychological-social centres, including “OZON” in the city of Moscow, have qualified expertise providing psychological help to children who have experienced violent behaviour. However, these institutions are under the jurisdiction of educational structures and thus accept only those children who are directed there by a city/town school.

In Russia, public organisations are usually privately financed and thus they are not closely enough cooperating with governmental institutions. This might downplay the good work done by the NGOs to help the child since only governmental institutions are capable of providing all constitutionally guaranteed rights to the child and protecting him/her not only during the period of stay in the institution but also providing further help in arranging his/her future life. It is important also to provide the regions with financial means when the children are returned to their home community.

**Sweden:** Girls with severely traumatising experiences of sexual exploitation have been the object of some institutions specifically working with young delinquent girls or girls with a history of drug abuse. Few institutions specialise in rehabilitating girls with experiences of sexual abuse and in some cases sexual exploitation. Some other institutions also have a very good knowledge in working with young boys and girls with an extremely difficult background. In assisting girls with experiences of severe exploitation or abuse, it has been found that they tend to avoid closer contacts with staff members for the first period of time. Many girls continuously run away from the institution, often to violent and highly exploitative contexts. The fact that these institutions do not have a legal possibility to restrain movements of the girls makes the situation more complicated. The police may bring the girls or boys back and the only attempt the institutions can make is to try to persuade them to stay in the institutions.

It is important to establish multi-professional teams of different field experts, maybe also to include experts from the country of origin.

**Belarus:** The YWCA gives assistance to victims of trafficking and their relatives. IOM is able to provide trafficked persons with services within its project ‘Combating trafficking in women in Belarus’. However, there is no specialized NGO, which provides re-integration and rehabilitation for children victims of trafficking. On the other hand, many NGOs in Belarus are able to help victims by putting them in contact with social service institutions and specialists.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, under the programme ‘Children of Belarus’ and ‘The National Action Plan on Maintenance of Gender Equality for the years of 2001-2005’, plans to establish a network of social service institutions providing medical, social, psychological, pedagogical, legal and other kinds of services. So far, 108 centres have been opened around the country, including 24 centres that provide legal and psychological services to families and children.

In the longer term, social service centres will be able to help to re-integrate victims of trafficking. The problem lies in the lack of expertise, quality of services and motivation of the

staff in the centres. In fact, these 24 centres deal with many diverse family problems. Human and technical capacities are often limited, payment is poor and motivation is low. Not all of the centres are aware of the existence of NGOs assisting victims of trafficking due to the lack of information, trust and hesitation to cooperate with NGOs.

In the case of children, there is also an issue of their adequate recognition – as victims or offenders. Children identified as the ones involved in prostitution could be placed in special institutions for young offenders and not recognised as victims of trafficking. However, children involved in prostitution are not considered guilty.

In regard to the centres, people working in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, inform that there are already 156 centres around the country. However, these centres don't seem to be prepared at the moment to provide assistance to the victims of trafficking. The specialists of these centres did not pass any special training in this regard.

The NGOs have a central role to play. It is important with experienced people taking care of the victims. International programmes are needed in order to improve the handling of these cases. Improved education and training of field experts would also make a difference.

Enhanced coordination on the national level is needed between the competent ministries and the NGOs in providing psychological assistance to victims. It is also important to build a database of psychological expertise in the neighbouring countries. The database would facilitate sharing of experiences and methods of treatment.

**Moldova:** Since 2002, several programmes were developed for trafficked victims, but only IOM, La Strada, Save the Children, and CPTW offer help to child victims. There is no government assisted re-integration programme. Since September 2001, IOM runs a Reception and Rehabilitation Centre for victims of trafficking in co-operation with the local health authorities. IOM also provides women with a reinstallation cash grant. The extent of the services, provided by the centre to young persons and children below 18, is unknown. There is little professional expertise in Moldova on how to assist children and young persons that have been exploited.

**Ukraine:** Concerning psychological assistance, all the mentioned organizations working with victims of trafficking have psychologists in their staff providing assistance to children as well as to adults. This encompasses, for example, forming or reviving basic feelings of trust and security towards the surrounding people, heightening self-appraisal, forming a certain attitude to the events happened in the past, making plans for future life.

It is essential to allocate money from the state budget to NGOs giving psychological and other forms of support to the victims. There is also a need to establish a network of professionals. At the moment there are too few psychologists and social workers working with children victims of trafficking.

### ***Theme D: Institutional placement: short term or long term***

The number of children that are victimised in trafficking is unknown. It is predicted that the number of children assisted in each country will remain low. In international literature and in the studies, the re-integration of victims of trafficking to their original social context has al-

ways been considered as vital. In some countries, this has proved to be extremely difficult due to the prejudices towards girls that have been abroad. The experience is that when young persons or children are sent back to their region of origin, the rate of re-trafficking is higher than if they would have stayed in some form of vocational training in a bigger city.

**Denmark:** It is difficult to answer the question whether a young person should be cared for a brief period of time or for a longer period. It depends on a concrete assessment in each case depending on the possibilities for support, care and security in the home country, and on the assessments made according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For the moment the government considers a thorough analysis of the field concerning all elements of trafficking as sexual exploitation, criminal and labour exploitations and efforts are made towards an appendix for the plan of action against trafficked women - an appendix especially concerning children. The establishment of a cross-ministerial group would safeguard efficient coordination between the different actors involved.

**Estonia:** The children's shelters and the Child institutions, together with psychological, medical and social expertise from the child support centres, would be able to individually assess when and if the child should return. The availability of work and schooling opportunities would be of great importance.

**Germany:** Recently there are no regulations considering co-operation between the German Youth Offices and equivalent organisations in the countries of origin. A child should be referred to a special institution if the asylum-proceedings reveal that he or she has experienced or might have experienced trafficking. A decision on the care of the child should be made depending on the expected duration of the child's stay in Germany. If it is likely that the child will stay only for a limited period of time, before he or she is transferred back to the country of origin, a central unit is recommended to turn to. If there is a chance of a longer stay, a smaller, decentralized institution situated at or near the place of residence of a child is preferable. In practice, children are deported as soon as a relative is willing to take care of the child. Some NGOs try to build cross border contacts (Solwodi, Kofiza, to mention a few). For the professionals, working with this group of children, lists with addresses and organisations/persons to contact in the countries of origin would be highly valuable and helpful.

**Latvia:** Marta centre assists young persons but there is no specific programme in place to do this in the centres. Social rehabilitation at the expense of state budget for children who have suffered from illegal actions amounts to 30 days. In the municipality where the child resides the child may receive up to 10 consultations, 45 minutes each. Victims of trafficking will be able to receive services according to a proposed project by the Cabinet of Ministers. The length of the assistance is not foreseen to exceed 6 months.

**Lithuania:** The issue of further assistance closer to the place of origin is underestimated in Lithuania and not given enough attention. This is due to two reasons: the problem of trafficking remains quite invisible across the country and there is a lack of mental health specialists outside Vilnius. Children are either placed by Child Protection Services in short-term residential care institutions with little assistance (only providing a place to stay), or sent back to their families with no further assistance or follow up.

Both NGO "Childhouse" and "The Missing Person's Support Centre" work with the community of origin. "Childhouse" has programmes in place, so they meet with responsible people

at schools or other persons who are important in assuring the young person's return in a safe and non-stigmatising way.

**Norway:** It is difficult to answer the question whether a young person should stay in the shelter for a very brief period of time or should be cared for a longer period. It depends on a concrete assessment in every case depending on the possibilities for support, care and security in the home country, and on assessments made according to the UN- Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Poland:** There is limited Polish experience in re-integration versus assisting children to re-settle somewhere else. Going back to the circumstances, which have led to being trafficked, may well lead to re-trafficking.

**Russian Federation:** In the Russian Federation, the re-integration of victims of trafficking is poorly developed for several reasons:

- 1) There is a recognition of victims of trafficking in the Russian Criminal Code articles 172.1 and 172.2 that also recognises the existence of victims of slave work. However, there is no special system of assistance or care for children who are victims of trafficking and their re-integration.
- 2) The main problem is the stereotype that a victim of trafficking is guilty in all that has happened to her/him.
- 3) Children from other countries or from little towns, who are recognised in Moscow or in St. Petersburg as victims of trafficking, are usually sent to the country or region they come from, usually without being recognised as victims and thus they are not entitled to participate in special programmes of re-integration.
- 4) There are several special programmes for children who are victims of trafficking from big Russian cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg) but those programs are not comprehensive and are usually related to one specific kind of care (for example, psychological assistance).

It is important to understand that it is vital for a child to go through the complete rehabilitation process either in the country of destination or in the country of origin taking into account the best interests of a child. Thus, the decision should be made in cooperation with all parties concerned. The child should not be sent back to the country of origin directly. The girl or boy should be able to benefit from close contacts between the country of destination and the country of origin. Placement within a foster family is often the best long-term solution. However, in Russia, unfortunately, there are still no legal acts regarding foster families. There is a need to solve the question of transfer in the process of rehabilitation between the country of destination and the country of origin since the aims and tasks of these rehabilitation programmes might differ.

**Sweden:** The institutional placement (long or short term) depends on the situation and the possibility to establish a good contact with the child who is a victim of trafficking. The experience we have, so far in Sweden from girls that have been involved in criminal cases of trafficking for sexual purposes, are that they want to go back to their home country as soon as possible. We know that in some of these cases the girls that returned home have been re-trafficked. To prevent this, it can be necessary to place the child in a secured place in order to make an assessment on the child's needs.

The law of young persons act gives the possibility to immediately take a young person into compulsory institutional care. The case shall be submitted to the county court within four weeks. During this time trained professionals can start establishing contact with the child, start to investigate the child's situation from all aspects and to get into contact with the authorities and NGOs in the country of origin that are responsible for rehabilitation and re-integration of the child.

Many children have a severe and difficult background with a multitude of problems. Some are victims and abusers at the same time. Time is crucial in offering an alternative life and more knowledge of well functioning methods of treatment and placement is needed. One year of rehabilitation is an absolute minimum. Short term treatment should at least be possible. This is seldom the case. Work to rebuild trust, self-confidence, etc. takes time.

**Belarus:** In the longer term, the social service centres, see above, will be able to help with the re-integration of victims of trafficking. The centres are established but there is a definite need for staff in the centres to be trained in assisting victims of trafficking and in having more contacts with NGOs that offer services. This training needs to be supported by the government.

**Moldova:** Re-integration of girls is reported to be very difficult. The society has big problems of accepting the returning victims. Several victims returning to Moldova do not come to the attention of the assisting authorities since they are not returned through the IOM, but are considered as illegal migrants.

There is a need for support services to help the children find work after the training, as well as follow up their progress for a time. There are few training centres for children who want to learn a profession and prefer to find a job in Moldova. Thirteen of the 60 trafficked children wanted to learn a profession on their release.

**Ukraine:** The Comprehensive Programme works not only at the national, but also at the regional level and is adapted to capacity and specific character of a certain region.

There are in all 19 centres for family assistance in the country and 4 additional medical centres, but no developed methodology on how to work with children victims of trafficking. Support to these victims must be developed. A regional network of contacts enabling the sharing of best practices on how to organise a well functioning support should also be established.