

# astra e - newsletter

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## Introduction

Aware of the fact that domestic and international public is not sufficiently familiar with the activities which are carried out in Serbia with a view to combating trafficking in human beings, we have decided to launch this newsletter. In the future, the newsletter will be released **on a quarterly basis**, to give an overview of all information and developments relating activities and actors in combating human trafficking. We hope it will be useful for all of us involved in anti-trafficking activities to see possible shortcomings and to draw attention to all areas in which additional efforts are needed.

Since this is the first issue, we considered that the best solution would be to present basic activities carried out thus far. Presented information are based on reports issued by NGOs, international organizations and state institutions, electronic correspondence, internet presentations and personal contacts.

In spite of our efforts, we are aware that we failed to include some information. We apologize in advance for similar oversights.

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## First Steps 1998-2000

Anti-trafficking activities in our country were scarce and uncoordinated at the beginning, when the first steps were made toward the recognition of the problem and search for mechanisms for its suppression.

### ***Year 1998***

- A group of Serbian activists attended an international seminar on trafficking in women, organized by NGO “La Strada” in Budapest.
- The movie “Bought and Sold” was translated into Serbian language. Videotapes with this movie were distributed to the majority of women’s NGOs in Serbia. Screenings were also organized in several schools and on local TV stations (women’s NGO activists dedicated to improving the position of women and combating violence against women).

### ***Year 1999***

- NGO Beosupport published a brochure addressing the problem of sexual exploitation and trafficking in youth.

### ***Year 2000***

- A group of women’s NGO activists from Serbia and Montenegro passed a training on sex trafficking in Driebergen, in the organization of STV La Strada, Netherlands.
- A survey was conducted in order to collect all available data on trafficking in women in Serbia and to see to what extent the citizens of our country were aware of the problem (NGO ASTRA).
- ASTRA network of women’s NGOs which covers the entire territory of Serbia was established. The Network gathers 10 NGOs, and representatives of these groups meet several times a year to exchange experiences and discuss further cooperation.

Soon, human trafficking stood out as a specific problem, and the activities focused on suppressing this phenomenon intensified and became better organized.

2001

### **February**

- A survey was conducted on the victims of human trafficking in the territory of Serbia. On eight locations, 58 women – trafficking victims were interviewed (NVO Beosupport).

### **April**

- Roundtable on human trafficking, with participation of the representatives of the Stability Pact, federal and republican ministries, local NGOs and international organizations (OSCE Mission in Belgrade and ODIHR).

### **May**

- Yugoslav Team for Combating Human Trafficking was established. It gathered together the representatives of all relevant federal and republican ministries, non-governmental and international organizations dealing with this problem.

### **June**

- FRY signed and ratified the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Convention) and two Protocols thereto.
- On the basis of information from ASTRA network of local NGOs, an analysis was made about the locations and number of bars/brothels in which foreign nationals were kept for the purpose of forced prostitution (NVO ASTRA).

### **July**

- Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs allowed State Federal Detention Center for illegal immigrants in Padinska Skela to be used as a temporary accommodation for women – trafficking victims, where they are waiting for documents and repatriation. The Center was managed by Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs and International Organization for Migrations (IOM), which organized repatriation of women and children – trafficking victims.

### **August**

- Assessment of HIV/AIDS risk in FRY (UNICEF).

### **October**

- Guidelines for National Referral Mechanism, which defines all actors that might come in contact with trafficking victims and refer them to adequate form of assistance - medical, psychological, legal assistance (OSCE Mission in cooperation with the Yugoslav team or Combating Human Trafficking).

### ***November***

- Working rules of shelter for women – victims of trafficking in Belgrade, which set standards for such facilities (OECD Mission in cooperation with IOM and Yugoslav Team for Combating Human Trafficking).
- Regional training on the reform of criminal legislation governing human trafficking on the Balkans.  
(Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in cooperation with the Council of Europe).

### ***December***

- Presentation of the work of the Yugoslav Team, its history and ongoing projects which were being implemented in the cooperation of governmental, non-governmental and international actors, at a roundtable in Bujanovac, which was open for media. (OSCE Mission in Belgrade).
- A survey on the notion of trafficking in women on the sample of 240 articles published in daily newspapers in the period 1998-2001 (NGO ASTRA).

2002

### ***January***

- Beginning of work on amending legislation which governs human trafficking. On the basis of the analysis of international documents, comparative regulations and domestic legislation, amendments to several laws of importance for combating human trafficking were proposed, e.g. Criminal Law, Criminal Proceedings Law, Law on Movement and Stay of Foreigners, etc. (NGO Victimology Society of Serbia).
- Training aimed at enhancing cooperation among police, social institutions and NGOs for the sake of building mechanisms for the protection of victims in FRY (OSCE Mission in Belgrade).

### ***February***

- The Shelter for Trafficking Victims opened in cooperation of the local NGO Counseling against Family Violence and IOM. It offers safe accommodation to the victims of trafficking, as well as medical, psychological and legal assistance. Until October 2004, 129 victims of trafficking were accommodated in the Shelter (NGO Counseling against Family Violence).
- ASTRA SOS hotline was started with a view to offering information, assistance and support to trafficking victims and their families. The hotline service (011 33 47 817) works Monday to Friday from 14:00 do 20:00. Until October 2004, a total of 1608 calls were received.
- The victim assistance project was started – it provides legal, psychological and medical assistance to the victims of trafficking, as well as the assistance through

institutions and court proceedings and reference to the Shelter. Until October 2004, the assistance was provided to 96 victims of trafficking (NGO ASTRA).

- A training for trainers under the title “Trafficking in Women – Modern Slavery” aimed at prevention, education and victim assistance for the representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO ASTRA).

### **March**

- The launch of the media campaign “Open Your Eyes” aimed at education and prevention of trafficking in women. The campaign ran simultaneously at national and local TV and radio stations, which were broadcasting three video clips and three radio jingles several times a day in prime time free of charge (Studio B, TV Pink, TV BK, TV B92, local stations and ANEM network); the campaign also included newspaper articles, press releases, posters, leaflets distributed in street actions, coasters, cups, etc. Besides Serbian, a certain number of leaflets were printed in Albanian, Hungarian and Roma language. ASTRA network actively supported the campaign, playing a significant role at a local level. The campaign continued through 2003. (NGO ASTRA).

### **April**

- Colonel Dušan Zlokas, Deputy Chief of Border Police Department for Foreigners and Administrative Issues, appointed as National Coordinator.
- A survey “Trafficking in Women – Our Reality or the Problem of Others” examining attitudes of high school pupils and students in Belgrade about trafficking in women (NGO ASTRA).
- Regional clearing point established for collecting information on human trafficking from various sources, including data on victims, actions undertaken against traffickers and situation in the region, with an aim to increase efficiency of victims protection efforts (IOM and ICMC – International Catholic Commission for Migrations).
- The Temida magazine focused on human trafficking in its latest issue (NGO Victimology Society of Serbia).

### **May**

- **National (Republican) Team for Combating Human Trafficking** established. The National Team gathers the same actors as the Yugoslav Team for Combating Human Trafficking; it accepted the Action Plan for combating human trafficking which had been adopted at the federal level, and worked out objectives in its Working Program, which include prevention measures, punishing of persons who participate in human trafficking and measures for human trafficking victims protection.

### **July**

- Special police teams for combating human trafficking formed within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.
- Training for law enforcement representatives, judiciary and NGOs (OECD and ODIHR).

### **September**

- A survey on human trafficking and migrations in the Republic of Serbia (IOM).

- Police operation «Mirage 2002», aimed at preventing smuggling and trafficking in human beings, especially women and children and their coercion into prostitution and other illicit activities (Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs).

### **October**

- First training for Mobile Team representatives and establishment of the Mobile Team coordination center within the Social Welfare Center in Belgrade (OSCE Mission in Belgrade).
- Beginning of the survey “Factors of Risk and Protection – Trafficking in Roma Women and Children » (CRS) .
- The first in a series of trainings/seminars “Trafficking in Women – Prevention, Education and Victim Assistance” for police, social welfare centers, judiciary and NGOs (NGO ASTRA with assistance by OSCE).

### **November**

- Regional conference of non-governmental organizations under the title “Creating the Network against Human Trafficking on the Balkans”, with the participation of more than 30 representatives of NGOs from the entire region (NGO ASTRA with OSCE support).
- Training/seminar “Trafficking in Women – prevention, Education and Victim Assistance” for police, social welfare centers, judiciary and NGOs (NGO ASTRA with assistance by OSCE).

### **December**

- Roundtable on “Finalization of Initiative for Creation of the National Plan for protection of Children and Youth against Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking” (NGO Beosupport).

2003

### **January**

- A survey on trafficking in women: the journalists collected IOM and NGOs’ reports and interviewed law enforcement and government representatives (FOMIN-Forum for media initiatives).

### **February**

- Appointment of Special Prosecutor whose competences include human trafficking cases. The Law on Organization and Competence of State Authorities in Suppressing Organized Crime was adopted, on which basis the following institutions were established: special prosecutor’s office, department for combating organized crime within the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs and special departments of the Belgrade District Court in charge of cases of organized crime on the territory of Serbia.

### **March**

- Conference “Liberalization of Visa Regime and Human Trafficking in the Region”, in cooperation with in SCG Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NGO Victimology Society of Serbia).

### **April**

- Basic training for the representatives of institutions and NGOs aimed at prevention, education and victim assistance (NGO ASTRA).
- The beginning of work of the Victimology Society of Serbia's info and victim assistance service aimed at providing all necessary information to the victims of criminality regarding their rights or other relevant agencies and institutions. This service is open every day from 10.00 to 15.00, telephone number 011 328 22 94.
- Education for young people on “Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking” (NGO Beosupport).
- Although SCG had been one of the signatories of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime signed in Palermo in 2000, trafficking in human beings was not recognized as a special criminal offence in our legislation until April 2003, when, after the latest amendments to the Criminal Law of the Republic of Serbia, article **111b. Trafficking in Human beings** was introduced:

*"(1) 1) A person who by force or threat, by misleading or keeping in delusion, by the abuse of authority, confidence, dependence relation or difficult conditions of another person: recruits, transports, transfers, delivers, sells, purchases, mediates in delivery or sale, harbors or holds another person for the purpose of acquiring some benefit, exploitation of his/her labor, pursuing a criminal activity, prostitution or begging, or using for pornographic purposes, depriving of a bodily part for the purpose of transplantation, or using in armed conflicts, shall be sentenced to a term between one and 10 years in prison.*

*(2) ) If the act from Paragraph 1 of this Article is perpetrated against several persons, by abduction, in the course of performing an official duty, within a criminal organization, in a specially cruel or in a specially humiliating way or if a severe bodily injury has occurred, the perpetrator shall be sentenced to a term of at least three years in prison. .*

*(3) If the act from Paragraph 1 of this Article is committed against a person who is under age, or if the damaged person dies, the perpetrator shall be sentenced to a term of at least five years in prison.*

*(4) For the act from paragraph 1 of this Article committed against a person who has not turned 14, the perpetrator shall be sentenced to a term prescribed for such an act even if no force, threat or any other of the stated ways has been used.*

### **May**

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia conducted the operation “Mirage 2003”.
- Action “LEDA” conducted on the territory of Serbia as the first operation focused exclusively on combating human trafficking at European level, and was carried out in

a coordinated action of Europol and interior ministries of EU Member States and SECI countries.

### **June**

- Four educational seminars which covered 46 social welfare center (director and one social worker from each center), all shelters for children without parents care, and Children and Youth Correctional Center from Belgrade, with an aim to make them acquainted with the problem of human trafficking. (OSCE Mission in Belgrade in cooperation with the Ministry for Social Affairs).
- Ratified agreement on cooperation for the sake of preventing and combating cross-border crime under which SECI Center in Budapest was established.
- A brochure “Human Trafficking –A Close Look” and documentary movie on trafficking in human beings (NGO Beosupport).
- Education for about 150 judges and prosecutors on human trafficking in the organization of Judicial Educational Center.

### **September**

- Survey “Consequences of Victimization on Specific Victims, Victims’ Needs and Possibilities of Rehabilitation” (NGO Victimology Society of Serbia, Faculty of Health Care and Social Professions, Dept. of Social Work and Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies, Oslo, Norway).
- A total of 174 workshops in primary and secondary schools in Serbia, first steps toward peer education for high school pupils (NGO ASTRA and NGOs - ASTRA network members).
- Roundtable «Trafficking in Women in the Balkans» (Institute for War and Peace Reporting).
- Awareness Building Meeting under the title “Trafficking in Human Beings in Serbia - Actual Situation and Problems” (NGO Victimology Society of Serbia and ASTRA).

### **November**

- More than 30,000 signatures gathered supporting the adoption of the National Plan against sexual abuse of children (NGO Beosupport).

### **December**

- Manual for journalists “*Trafficking in Women*” which gives a general overview of what trafficking in women is all about, the difference between trafficking and other phenomena it is usually confused with, and the most frequent prejudices this phenomenon arise. The Manual also addresses situation in Serbia, media presentation of trafficking in women in our country, relevant legislation, trafficking in children and the experiences of ASTRA SOS hotline. In conclusion, the Manual gives some recommendations to journalists, small glossary and the list of literature and internet addresses which may be useful for those who want to write about this topic. The Manual is published in Serbian and English language (NGO ASTRA).
- Within capacity building program for SEE countries, a seminar under the title “A Guide for Government Officials in Combating Human Trafficking” was held in Belgrade, where the attendants exchanged their experiences in fight against trafficking in human beings (NGO ASTRA and John Hopkins University).

- A series of workshops and traveling exhibitions aimed at informing and awareness raising regarding risks of trafficking in children (Roma Information Center, Save the Children UK).
- A training for young activists from Romania, Albania and Serbia on “Trafficking in Young People - Peer Support” (NGO Beosupport).
- A roundtable on the Memorandum of Understanding based on Guidelines for National Mechanism for Victim Identification and Assistance. (OSCE Mission).
- Capacities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia for combating human trafficking increased through the provision of necessary equipment and technical assistance, including expert advice to selected law enforcement authorities and strengthening special police forces for combating human trafficking (OSCE Mission in Belgrade).

2004

## January

- For the sake of efficiency, National Team set up four working groups:
  - Working group for combating trafficking in children:** coordinator-NGO Beosupport (e-mail: [bsteam@sezampro.yu](mailto:bsteam@sezampro.yu)); members: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia (web site: [www.mup.sr.gov.yu](http://www.mup.sr.gov.yu); e-mail: [ozs@mup.sr.gov.yu](mailto:ozs@mup.sr.gov.yu)), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro (web site: [www.mfa.gov.yu](http://www.mfa.gov.yu); e-mail: [jtatarac@smip.sv.gov.yu](mailto:jtatarac@smip.sv.gov.yu)); Ministry of Health (web site: [www.zdravlje.sr.gov.yu](http://www.zdravlje.sr.gov.yu)); Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy (web site: [www.minrzs.sr.gov.yu](http://www.minrzs.sr.gov.yu)); Ministry of Education and Sport (web site: [www.mps.sr.gov.yu](http://www.mps.sr.gov.yu)); NGO ASTRA ([www.astra.org.yu](http://www.astra.org.yu) [astranet@sezampro.yu](mailto:astranet@sezampro.yu)); Council for Children’s Rights; NGO Center for the Rights of the Child (web site [www.cpd.org.yu](http://www.cpd.org.yu); e-mail: [sladjana@cpd.org.yu](mailto:sladjana@cpd.org.yu)); NGO ATC (e-mail: [atc@beotel.yu](mailto:atc@beotel.yu)); UNICEF (web site: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org); e-mail: [sschwarz@unicef.org](mailto:sschwarz@unicef.org)); Save the Children UK (web site: [www.scfukbgd.org.yu](http://www.scfukbgd.org.yu); e-mail: [r.sekulovic@scfukbgd.org.yu](mailto:r.sekulovic@scfukbgd.org.yu)); Christian Children's Fund; observers – IOM (web site: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int); e-mail: [dkeserovic@iom.int](mailto:dkeserovic@iom.int)) and OSCE (web site: [www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org); e-mail: [Madis.Vainomaa@oesce.org](mailto:Madis.Vainomaa@oesce.org)).
  - Working group for prevention and education:** coordinator - NGO ASTRA; members: Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Ministry of Health; Beosupport; observers -IOM and OSCE.
  - Working group for victim assistance and protection:** coordinator - Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy; Ministry of Foreign Affairs SCG; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Ministry of Health; NGO Victimology Society of Serbia; NGO ASTRA; NGO Counseling against Family Violence; observers- OSCE and IOM.
  - Working group for law enforcement:** coordinator: Ministry of Justice (web site: [www.mpravde.sr.gov.yu](http://www.mpravde.sr.gov.yu); e-mail: [apopovic@mpravde.sr.gov.yu](mailto:apopovic@mpravde.sr.gov.yu)); members: Supreme Court of Serbia; Republican Public Prosecutor; Ministry of Internal Affairs; Ministry

of Finance – Prevention of Money Laundering, (web site: [www.mfin.sr.gov.yu](http://www.mfin.sr.gov.yu); e-mail: [ljspasojevic@fcplm.org.yu](mailto:ljspasojevic@fcplm.org.yu)); Victimology Society of Serbia (web site: [www.vds.org.yu](http://www.vds.org.yu); e-mail: [vds@eunet.yu](mailto:vds@eunet.yu)); observers – OECD and IOM.

- In cooperation with EBART- media documentation, the analysis of media coverage of the problems of human trafficking, violence against children, prostitution, migrations, pornography, social policy and legislation for 2004 (NGO ASTRA).
- End of the trial to the trafficker Milivoje Zarubica and his gang, although he was not prosecuted under article 111b, but for criminal offences *mediation in practicing prostitution, illicit border crossing*, etc. NGOs ASTRA and Victimology Society of Serbia, and OSCE attended the trial and gave support to the victims/witnesses.

### **February**

- Serbian Government adopted National Action Plan for Children, defining the program of key measures that have to be undertaken in the interest of children, which included all relevant areas of children's rights and policy, such as: children poverty reduction, education and better health for all children, development of the system of children protection against abuse, negligence, exploitation and violence. (UNICEF)
- Mobile Team established as an agency for coordination of assistance to the victims of human trafficking within Children and Youth Correctional Center (NGOs Counseling against Family Violence and ASTRA, Coordinator and Assistant of the Mobile Team, OSCE Mission and Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy).

### **March**

- Beginning of work of the Agency for Coordination of Assistance to the Victims of Human Trafficking, within which Mobile Team works. The main purpose of the Team is to identify and provide all kinds of assistance to trafficking victims and to ensure that secondary traumatization of victims is avoided. Members of the Mobile Team are representatives of the Agency for Coordination of Assistance to the Trafficking Victims, NGO Counseling against Family Violence and NGO ASTRA. They are available 24 hours a day and their competence extends over the whole territory of Serbia. Mobile Team assisted to **21** victim of trafficking.
- Basic training on human trafficking for NGOs and institutions (NGO ASTRA)
- A roundtable relating the book "Protection of Children against Human Trafficking - Prospects of Joint Efforts" (Save the Children UK).
- Lectures on human trafficking and the role of NGOs in combating human trafficking at the Higher School of Internal Affairs. Lectures were attended by more than 300 students (NGO ASTRA and Belgrade PD).

### **April**

- Study visit of the Mobile Team to Hanover – studying mechanisms for combating human trafficking and model of cooperation of NGO and GO sector in identification and assistance to the victims of human trafficking (in the organization of OSCE Mission in Belgrade).
- Beginning of the implementation of the project "Enhancement of the Implementation Strategies for National Anti-Trafficking Action Plans in SAP countries", aimed at enhancing the existing structures in combating human. (NGO Victimology Society of

Serbia, NGO Women's Room from Croatia and ICMPD-International Center for Migration Policy Development).

- Screening of the movie "Ljilja Forever" and seminar on trafficking in human beings in the Balkans (Swedish Embassy ICVA/CIS).

### **May**

- Training for 20 medical doctors from ten border towns in Serbia (NGO ASTRA in cooperation with the Institute for Forensic Medicine).

### **June**

- Shelter for domestic nationals – trafficking victim "Temporary Home" opened, in which four local girls have been accommodated so far (NVO Atina).
- Roundtable «One year after the introduction of human trafficking as specific criminal offence in Serbia – experiences and problems in implementation» (OSCE Mission in Serbia and Montenegro, NGO Victimology Society of Serbia and Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia).
- Promotion of the Temida magazine which in this issue covered the topic "Victims and Organized Crime" (NGO Victimology Society of Serbia).
- Promotion of the book *Human Trafficking in Serbia*. The objective of this survey was to gather more detailed information on dimensions, forms and characteristics of this phenomenon in Serbia, awareness of experts regarding this problem, and response of state authorities (in particular, police, prosecution, courts and social welfare centers) and local and international NGOs (Victimology Society of Serbia and OSCE Mission).
- Training for the representatives of special police forces for combating human trafficking on the basis of ICMPD manual (OSCE Mission in cooperation with the Higher School of Internal Affairs and ASTRA).

### **July**

- Study visit of the Mobile Team to Moldova - studying mechanisms for combating human trafficking and model of cooperation of NGO and GO sector in identification and assistance to the victims of human trafficking, and reintegration and prevention programs (in the organization of OSCE Mission in Belgrade).
- Beginning of the implementation of the project «Advocacy for legal changes regarding trafficking in people in Serbia» aimed at analyzing the existing legislation governing human trafficking, in particular petty offence regulations, its amendments and law proposals to the Serbian government (NGO Victimology Society of Serbia).
- Serbian Minister of Internal Affairs issued the Instruction on conditions for approving temporary residence to foreign nationals - trafficking victims, which enables the approval of temporary residence of three months, up to one year, under conditions which are in full conformity with international standards (Ministry of Internal Affairs of Serbia).
- The campaign "Stop to Exploitation and Human Trafficking" ran during the EXIT Festival, which included workshops and distribution of promotional materials to the visitors of the festival (MTV, "Sida", USAID and Freedom House and NGO ATC).
- Shadow report on trafficking in human beings in Serbia for the UN Human Rights Committee, Geneva (NGO ASTRA).

### **August**

- Awareness raising campaign on trafficking in human beings “Be Careful”, which includes TV clips, radio jingle, leaflets, school conferences (NGO Beosupport with assistance of IOM).
- Within the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia, in the course of 2004, working groups have been formed for judicial reform, which completed the text of new criminal law, law on protection of actors in criminal proceedings, law on judiciary for youth. These texts were sent for opinions and suggestions to relevant international organizations in our country, Supreme Court of Serbia and other judiciary subjects (Ministry of Justice).
- Prevention campaign «Stop to Exploitation and Human Trafficking - Valkana Beach» within the music festival, Rijeka, Croatia (NGO ASTRA, NGO La strada, NGO Women’s Room and MTV).
- Beginning of the trial to the Pančevo group before special department of the Belgrade District Court for criminal offence human trafficking under article 111b, which for the first time refer directly to the case of sex trafficking.

### ***September***

- On the basis of instructions from July, Colonel Dušan Zlokas, Deputy Chief of Border Police Department for foreigners and administrative issues, issued Instructions for the procedure of approving temporary residence to foreign nationals trafficking victims.
- Seminar “Establishing Mechanisms of Temporary Residence Permit for Victims/Witnesses of Human Trafficking in the Balkans”, Macedonia (IOM).

## Impresum

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