



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

WORKING SESSION 14 AND 15:

**FOCUS IN IDENTIFICATION, ASSISTANCE AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE
FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING**

Statement by Senior Adviser Lars Sigurd Valvatne

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Warsaw, 8 October 2008

Madame Moderator,

Norway, being a rich country with strong purchasing power, is primarily a destination country for trafficking. The cases that have been exposed and prosecuted in Norway indicate that young women in particular have been exploited for the purpose of prostitution, although a small number of cases of human trafficking in forced labour or labour similar to slavery have been found.

Since 2003 the Government has developed national plans of action to structure the efforts in combating trafficking in human beings. The current plan was introduced in 2006, and runs through 2009. In January this year, Norway ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Madame Moderator,

One of the main challenges in combating human trafficking is to identify victims. It is crucial that relevant players have knowledge of human trafficking, how victims may be identified and of the situation in which the victims may find themselves.

The Norwegian Ministry of Justice has taken the initiative for the preparation of inter-disciplinary guidance material to help the public and voluntary services to identify victims. A list of indicators to identify victims of human trafficking who are working as prostitutes was published in earlier this year.

One of the main priorities of the Norwegian Government's programme is taking care of the victims. Norway seeks to ensure that victims are offered coordinated assistance and protection services, adapted to the situation and needs of the individual. Access to health services and social assistance are fundamental elements in a coherent follow-up programme.

A significant number of those identified as possible victims of trafficking could be considered illegal aliens. They may have entered the country illegally, have false identity documents, or their visa may have expired. In such cases a reflection period may be granted for the possible victim to decide whether or not to report on the traffickers. This means that a temporary residence and work permit for up to six months is granted. A further temporary work permit for up to one year is possible if the person has broken away from her traffickers and a police investigation has been initiated against the perpetrators.

Madame Moderator,

Victims of human trafficking in Norway have primarily been identified in connection with prostitution. The authorities therefore supports non-governmental organisations working among prostitutes in our major cities, thereby establishing contact with female and male prostitutes. The aim of such outreach activities is to provide information on the services available and to offer help and assistance.

Ensuring safe accommodation and individual follow-up for victims of human trafficking are important elements. Since 2005, the Ministry of Justice has financed the ROSA project run by the Crisis Centre Secretariat, which offers safe houses, follow-up and information to female victims of human trafficking. Last year 37 women were placed in safe houses by the project.

Madame Moderator,

In many cases, giving evidence against the perpetrators of human trafficking imposes a great strain on the victims. They have been exposed to serious mental and physical strains both before and after they came to Norway, and a court case may feel like another instance of abuse. It is therefore important that they are given legal support.

Up to five hours of free legal aid is granted for possible victims to consider whether to report a case or not. Victims of trafficking involved in a court case have a further right to free legal assistance during the investigation stage and throughout the court proceedings.