



# Platform News

niwep@btconnect.com

December 2010

## Targeting the Sex Buyer

This is the opening remarks to a new report entitled 'The Swedish Example: Stopping Prostitution and Trafficking where it all begins' starts with following introduction:

*'He could be your neighbour, even your best friend. Or perhaps he is a colleague at work, or someone you talked to at a party last weekend. He appears to live a normal life—he's married, has children, a good job—in other words, he's a regular guy. But he also buys sexual services and thereby supports the market for sexual exploitation, prostitution and trafficking and under Swedish law he is a criminal.'*

In Sweden the law focuses on these men rather than on the young girls and women they exploit. Why? Human trafficking involves primarily women and children who are being exploited for sexual purposes and it is taking place the world over. The thinking behind the law is that it is the demand for sexual services that maintains prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes. The legal approach to this problem is often referred to as "the Swedish example."

The full report can be found at

<http://www.si.se/upload/Human%20Trafficking/Targeting%20the%20sex%20buyer.pdf>

## The Commission Appoints Anti-Trafficking Coordinator

*On the 14 December the European Commission decided to appoint Ms Myria*

*Vassiliadou to the position of European Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. At the same time, the European Parliament voted in favour of the Directive against trafficking in human beings that the Commission proposed in March.*

## Supporting Local Women

Canadians Jeanne Sarson's and her colleague Linda MacDonald have been working 18 years on the issue of women being tortured including through human trafficking and who have contact with well over 1,500 women and sadly the stories have much in common. Parents, or other adults who have access to them from childhood trick them into believing that torture and trafficking is what all little girls live with.

*"These adults lie, distort reality and condition the children who grow up to be women (if they survive the torture) into no win trapped ordeals with a goal of keeping them captive adults. This is another form of modern day slavery still not recognized"* said Jeanne and Linda *"and this torture applies in Canada and other industrialised countries."*

## European Commission failing in its duty to implement Council and Parliament's call for Strategy to combat violence against women, says EWL

For women's rights advocates who attended a high-level conference on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women last week, initial disappointment at the lack of concrete outcomes of the two-day event at the Hilton Hotel in Brussels has given way to concern that the European Commission may fail to implement EU commitments to develop a comprehensive Strategy to tackle widespread gender-based violence.

In the aftermath of the conference, the European Women's Lobby (EWL), has written to the Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, questioning the vague language used by Commission representatives at the event. The EWL is demanding immediate and full implementation of Council Conclusions from March 2010 calling on the Commission to devise a European Strategy including legal instruments for preventing and combating violence against women.

According to the UN, approximately 60% of women are vic-

tims of physical violence at least once in their lives. In Europe, an estimated one in five women falls victim to domestic violence, costing EU Member States as much as 16 billion Euros every year, or one million Euros every half hour.

To date, the EU has no binding legislation in place to deal with what activists highlight is the most pervasive human rights abuse within its borders. In November 2009, the European Parliament passed a Resolution calling for a Directive and an Action Plan on violence against women. The Council of the EU backed this position in March 2010, issuing Conclusions calling on the Commission to devise a Strategy on violence against women and consider additional legal instruments.

On the same date, the Commission launched a Women's Charter which included a promise to 'put in place a comprehensive and effective policy framework to combat gender-based violence', and in an April Communication on cooperation in

the field of justice and home affairs, duly committed to the elaboration of a Strategy followed by an Action Plan, with a time-frame of 2011-2012. In September, the new EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men included the adoption of an EU-wide Strategy on combating violence against women in its provisions for 2010-2015.

Since then, however, the European executive has seemed to be back-peddling on these commitments, omitting mention of work on violence against women from the Commission's 2011 Work Programme and avoiding any reference whatsoever to the Strategy in the Belgian Presidency conference dedicated to this theme.

**Rada Boric, EWL Executive Committee Member — “if the Commission fails to start work on a Strategy to eradicate violence against women over the coming months, it will not only be going back on its own commitments, but also transgressing from the role allocated to it by the European Treaties: ‘Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union.’ “**

## Participation in the Labour Market in the EU27 in 2009

### Nearly one women in five aged 25-54 outside the labour market— half of them for family reasons

Over the last decade, the inactivity rate for women aged between 16 and 64 years in the EU 27 has fallen steadily, from 39.9% in 2000 to 35.7% in 2009, meaning that 5.0 million more women have entered the labour market. In contrast, in the inactivity rate for men aged 15 to 64 has decreased only slightly, from 22.8% in 2000 to 22.2% in 2009.

In spite of the economic crisis, the labour market participation of women in the **EU27** continued to increase between 2008 and 2009, at the inactivity rate of women aged 15–64 further declined from 36.1% to 35.7%. For the participation of men however a limited impact can be observed, as the rate for men aged 15 to 64 increased, even if slightly, for the first time since 2002, from 22.0% in 2008 to 22.2% in 2009.

Most affected seemed to be young men aged 15 to 24, who saw their inactivity rate rise from 52.1% in 2009 to 53.0% in 2009. The data coming from a report<sup>2</sup> issued by Eurostat the statistical office of the European Union focuses on people outside the labour market.

**Between 1% of prime working aged women in Denmark and 40% in Malta are outside the labour market due to**

#### **family responsibilities.**

In the **EU27** in 2009, the inactivity rate of women aged between 25 and 54 years was 22.1%, compared with 8.2% for men. Among the Member States, the lowest inactivity rates for women aged 25-54 were found in **Slovenia** (12.1%), **Sweden** (12.9%) and **Denmark** (13.0%), while **Malta** (51.1%), **Italy** (35.5%), **Romania** (29.4%) and **Greece** (29.0%) had the highest.

The period between the ages of 25 and 54 is the main working age, and also the age when families are started and children are raised. The main single reason for prime working aged women to be outside the labour market is therefore family responsibilities<sup>3</sup>. Among prime working aged women in the **EU27** in 2009, 10.1% stated they were outside the labour market due to family responsibilities, almost half of all women of this age outside the labour market.

The percentage mentioning family responsibilities varied greatly between Member States: **Denmark** (1.4%) had the lowest rate, followed by **Sweden** (1.8%) and **Slovenia** (3.6%).

At the other end of the scale, **Malta** (40.4%)

had by far the highest rate, followed by **Greece** (16.2%) and **Luxembourg** (15.6%).

#### **Around 60% of both younger and older women are outside the labour market**

Education and retirement explain the higher inactivity rates observed for the younger and older population. For women aged 15-24, the inactivity rate was 59.3% in the **EU27**, compared with 53.0% for men. Female inactivity rates within this age group were lowest in the **Netherlands** (28.1%) and **Denmark** (29.3%), and highest in **Hungary** (78.5%) and **Italy** (76.1%). National differences in the behaviour of students having or seeking a job largely explain those differences.

For women aged 55-64, the inactivity rate was 60.1% in the **EU27** in 2009, compared with 41.5% for men. The lowest female inactivity rates were recorded in **Sweden** (30.1%) and **Estonia** (33.9%), and the highest in **Malta** (87.9%) and **Poland** (76.8%).

## UN Women - Executive Board

The new UN Women entity has elected its Executive Board which is made up of representatives from 41 countries around the world and who serve on a rotating basis.

The 41 board members are selected on the following basis: 10 from Africa, 10 from Asia, 4 from Eastern Europe, 6 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 5 from Western Europe and 6 from contributing countries.

The current Executive Board, elected on 10 November 2010 <<http://www.unwomen.org/2010/11/united-nations-elects-executive-board-of-new-agency-for-womens-empowerment/>>



## EWL Seminar @ NIWEP

More than 80 per cent of our policy comes from the European Union. This is one of the reasons that NIWEP believes our membership of the European Women's Lobby is important. EWL has prepared a work plan for next year and a new strategic plan for 2011-2015. We would like to invite you to an informal seminar and discussion to see the EWL work relevant to us and how we might influence European policy and, so, women's lives here.

EWL will be working on financial security for women, women in public life and violence against women as well as many other areas so there is a great deal that matters to us. We will also be able to put the work into the context of the new post-Lisbon thinking in the EU.

We'll meet at the European Commission's offices at 74-76 Dublin Road (Shaftesbury Square end) at 7.00 PM on Tuesday 18 January 2011. Tea and Coffee will be provided.

## 55th CSW Session—2011

Next year's Commission on the Status of Women will be held in New York from the 22 February to the 4 March.

The priority theme to be examined is:

***Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.***

The review theme is

***The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child***

Northern Ireland Women's European Platform has submitted a statement to the Secretary General and can be found on the NIWEP website: [WWW.NIWEP.ORG.UK](http://WWW.NIWEP.ORG.UK)