

Statement following the Roundtable Conference on the Social Aspects of trafficking 31 October 2006

On 31 October 2006 the Ministers for Social Affairs in the Nordic Countries and the Baltic Sea Countries met to discuss the social aspects of trafficking.

It was the first time where the Ministers for Social Affairs in the Nordic Countries had the opportunity to meet their colleagues from the Baltic Sea Countries to discuss the social impact of trafficking in human beings in the particular context of trafficking related to prostitution. In the meeting Ministers benefited from the experiences made by The Council of the Baltic States and The Nordic Dimension Partnership.

The Ministers had an in-depth discussion of the subject and there was a common understanding that fundamentally trafficking in human beings is a problem that not only stems from the social situation in the country of origin, but also gives rise to social imbalances in the country to which they have been trafficked. For the victims ending up in a country not of their own, being abused and not knowing their rights, trafficking is a social disaster.

Human trafficking is a cross-board problem that needs cross-board solution. Each member state deals with the consequences in their own territory, but with a cross-border problem like this, it is absolutely essential, that member states communicate, coordinate and engage in mutual learning.

We all have responsibility, be it the countries of origin or the recipient countries, for combating these intolerable offences against socially vulnerable persons, especially young women and children. Therefore, there is a need for more offensive, integrated and cross-sectoral efforts with a view of preventing and combating the social causes of trafficking.

On this background the ministers found it necessary to:

- Assist each other in finding ways of eradicating the social causes lying behind trafficking
- Develop projects on a bilateral or multilateral basis regarding prevention and awareness-raising based on a cross sectoral approach including cooperation with the NGO sector
- Invite the Nordic Council of Ministers to take stock of the situation on a regular basis and discuss further initiatives in this field