

CCME-Caritas Europa Press Release

12 September 2003

“ Re-Integration of victims of Trafficking needs lasting legal and financial commitment”

Hearing of Christian Anti-Trafficking Network in Rome underlines need for comprehensive re-integration measures in countries of origin and destination

Representatives of Churches and Church-related organisations from 14 European Countries are meeting in Rome from 11th to 14th September in the context of a workshop of the project “Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking in Women (CAT)”.

The workshop on 12th September started with a public hearing “Combating Trafficking in Human Being – the Italian Legislation – best practice for the European Union?”, hosted by the municipality of Rome. Representatives of the European Commission, the City of Rome, as well as NGOs from different parts of Europe discussed how victims of Trafficking could best be reintegrated after escaping from the slave-like conditions under which they are held.

Particular attention was given to the Italian legislation, which foresees the possibility of granting of residence titles and social integration for victims of Trafficking. It was confirmed that this legislation had proved hugely successful, where it was implemented. A representative of the EU Commission reported how other EU member states were currently considering similar provisions in their legislation. In the view of Italian NGOs, practice however showed that the good legislation was often not implemented – due to a lack of knowledge (e.g. among police officials) or due to insufficient funding for integration measures. Concern was also expressed about the new law proposal on prostitution which could be rather discriminative towards victims of trafficking and jeopardise the positive results of the current Italian legislation.

Representatives of NGOs from several countries underlined that re-integration of victims also posed a massive challenge for social assistance in countries of origin. Returning victims often needed psychological, medical and socio-professional counselling for years before they could be re-integrated successfully. Current re-integration measures could only provide insufficient assistance due to a lack of resources in countries of origin. Returning victims of Trafficking had in many cases suffered from further traumatising and re-trafficking after return.

Participants of the hearing supported EU considerations in EU institutions that EU programmes such as the European Structural funds could in the future provide funding for direct assistance. “Re-integration of victims of Trafficking needs lasting legal and financial commitment. We count on European institutions to support us in this field” commented Dr. Annemarie Dupré, moderator of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe.

For further information please contact Torsten Moritz at CCME, Tel. + 32 2 234 68 00

The CAT (Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking in Women) Project is funded by the European Commission STOP Programme. The views expressed and information provided by the project and the partners involved do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the European Commission and do in no way fall under the responsibility of the European Commission