

For a better protection of victims of trafficking in women!

Trafficking in women represents a serious violation of human rights. It happens every day – also in Switzerland. Women are recruited by false promises, they are forced to pay high fees to recruiters to be exploited later, mainly in prostitution. The causes of trafficking in women include poverty in the countries of origin, demand for cheap labour and sexual services in the countries of destination as well as restrictive immigration laws.

Trafficking in women is a modern day form of slavery. However, the traffickers often enjoy impunity while victims hardly get protection or have rights. This has to change.

More rights, more protection

Victims of trafficking coming to Switzerland in most cases do not have a residence or a work permit. If they get in contact with authorities, they are threatened with punishment and deportation. In order to obtain temporary protection they would have to testify in penal proceedings – which may imply the risk of vengeance from traffickers. According to the migration laws in Switzerland migrants in individual cases of extreme hardship can be provided with a residence permit but cantons very rarely apply this provision. Hence women who are victims of a crime are not sufficiently protected.

We demand:

- ***the right for victims of trafficking to get a residence permit – in any canton and regardless of their testimony in the penal proceedings;***
- ***that the cantons fully use their powers and already existing possibilities to grant a residence permit to victims of trafficking.***

More knowledge on the issue by authorities

The possibility that a victim of human trafficking be recognized as a victim, taken seriously and protected depends first of all on the canton where she gets in contact with the authorities. Moreover, in very few cantons police, justice and migration authorities are sensitised and trained in the issue of trafficking in women. Only a few among them communicate with each other and with specialized centres, for example within the framework of so called «Roundtables Against Human Trafficking». Knowledge and exchange of information, however, play a fundamental role to provide victims of trafficking with the necessary psychological, medical, legal and material assistance.

We demand:

- ***the provision of regular continued training of police, justice and migration authorities in human trafficking and the obligation of the latter to cooperate with the specialized centres and to engage specialists in human trafficking;***
- ***the adoption and implementation of national standards ensuring the necessary protection, the same rights and opportunities to victims in all cantons.***

More specific support to victims

Victims of trafficking in women are traumatised and threatened. They need judicial protection, a safe place to stay, they need to be accompanied and assisted by specialists. Regardless of the fact that the number of cases is increasing, there exists only one specialized centre so far – the Makasi project of the FIZ (Women Information Centre) in Zurich. Its financing is not assured. In each region in Switzerland access to specialized assistance is required.

We demand:

- ***a safe place to stay, specialized consultation and assistance to victims of trafficking have to be guaranteed.***

More awareness

More and more often, clients of prostitution identify victims of trafficking in women and direct them towards the counselling centre. The awareness-raising of men and the public at large can considerably improve the protection of victims.

We demand:

- ***more and improved awareness-raising and sensitisation of the public at large.***

Positive examples

Two examples from abroad prove that it is possible to work towards a solution of the problem of human trafficking while entirely respecting human rights:

→ **Italy**: victims of human trafficking obtain a right of residence simply after giving a credible description of their situation. This right is not subject to any obligation to testify. However, victims have the possibility to testify under more suitable conditions. Fears that this possibility to stay in Italy might be abused have not been confirmed.

→ **The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005)** puts the protection of victims at its centre stage and demands of its State Parties to adopt protective measures: for example, the right of victims to be protected is not subject to an obligation to testify in the penal procedure. The authorities have to cooperate with non-governmental organisations and specialized centres.

We demand:

- ***ratification of this Convention by Switzerland as soon as possible and application of all improvements contained therein at all levels.***