



STOP

**SEX TRAFFICKING
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**



SEX TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN POLAND

What is child trafficking?

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.

UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime

A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

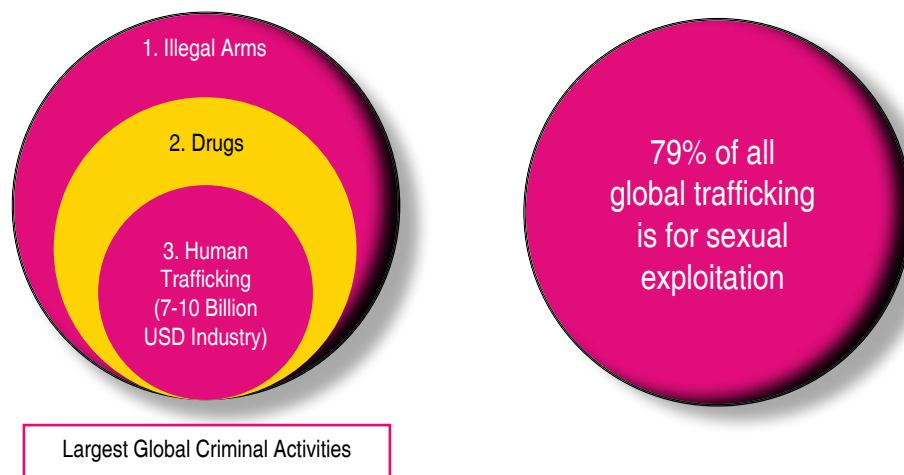
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

What's the problem?

GLOBAL SEX TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon fueled by the tremendous growth in the global sex market. Exploitation is driven by poverty, uneven development, official corruption, gender discrimination, harmful traditional and cultural practices, civil unrest, natural disasters and lack of political will to end it.

The number of child victims trafficked worldwide for sexual exploitation or cheap labour on an annual basis is 1.2 million.¹ Human trafficking, the third largest international crime, following illegal drugs and arms trafficking, is believed to be worth billions of dollars each year. Driving the trade is the demand for commercial sexual exploitation. Seventy-nine percent of all global trafficking is for sexual exploitation.²



CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING IN POLAND

The problem of child trafficking is not well understood in Poland.³ According to the National Public Prosecutor's Office, 686 victims of trafficking were identified by State authorities between 2003 and 2007, 48 of which were children.⁴ However, these figures only refer to cases where victims of trafficking were identified by authorities and organisations working on the issue, such as La Strada International, a network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in nine European countries working to prevent human trafficking, and the International Migration Organisation (IOM), which claims that the real numbers are much

higher.⁵ In contrast, police files for the years 2003 to 2007 obtained from the police database include only three cases of trafficked children, while the statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration show that between 2002 and 2007, 76 children were identified as victims of trafficking. These inconsistencies in the data related to child trafficking in Poland points to a need for increased knowledge on the issue. Furthermore, surveys conducted among police officers and border guards by Nobody's Children Foundation, show that while most respondents reported never having encountered a situation of suspected child trafficking, almost 70% of them had encountered situations where foreign children did not have ID documents or appeared to be under strong pressure exerted by an adult. These are signs that may indicate potential trafficking risks.⁶

Poland is at the crossroads of two commercial routes; the Balkan and the Russian trade route. As a result, trafficking occurs mainly along the major trucking roads between Poland and Germany, for example, between Warsaw and Berlin.⁷

Trafficking to, from, and through Poland occurs mainly for the purpose of sexual exploitation. However, cases of children trafficked for begging⁸ and for illegal adoption or criminal activities⁹ have also been reported in Poland.

Who gets trafficked?

According to police reports, females trafficked to Poland are generally 16 to 20 years old. Roma girls and ethnically Turkish Bulgarian minorities are disproportionately at risk of being trafficked and exploited in prostitution on highways.¹¹

The demand for sex drives child sex trafficking globally while poverty, domestic violence and abuse, discrimination and the desire for a better life makes children vulnerable. Children are especially vulnerable to being trafficked because they are often uneducated, easy to overpower and easy to convince that they must do what an adult tells them to do. Children may also be in a position where they believe they must help to support their families and may be sold or sent abroad by family members to do so. Street children, children whose family and community life has been disrupted and do not have someone to look out for them are all especially vulnerable to human trafficking.

Foreign children who enter Poland with a guardian – in many cases with fake documents - may be either unaccompanied (as they travel on their own) or separated from the accompanying adult when crossing the border. When identified at the border crossing, they are placed into intervention/care institutions but escape soon after, usually with help from their “guardians.” Little is known about what happens to the children after this. NGOs in Poland report that unaccompanied foreign children are at very high risk of being exploited in prostitution.¹² Among the 60 unaccompanied children who applied for refugee status in Poland who were interviewed by the Nobody's Children Foundation, eight were suspected of being removed illegally from their home countries (Ukraine and Vietnam). Physical violence and sexual exploitation related to these cases was also reported to the prosecutor's office.¹³

Children may be at greater risk of trafficking from places where they are less protected. This may be because the law is weak or not properly enforced, or because children are less aware of the risks of trafficking and are more easily deceived. Countries are considered:

- 'Sending' or 'origin' - from where children are sent;

- 'Transit' - where the children might be moved through and temporarily kept on the way to their final destination; and
- 'Receiving' or 'destination' - where the children finally end up.

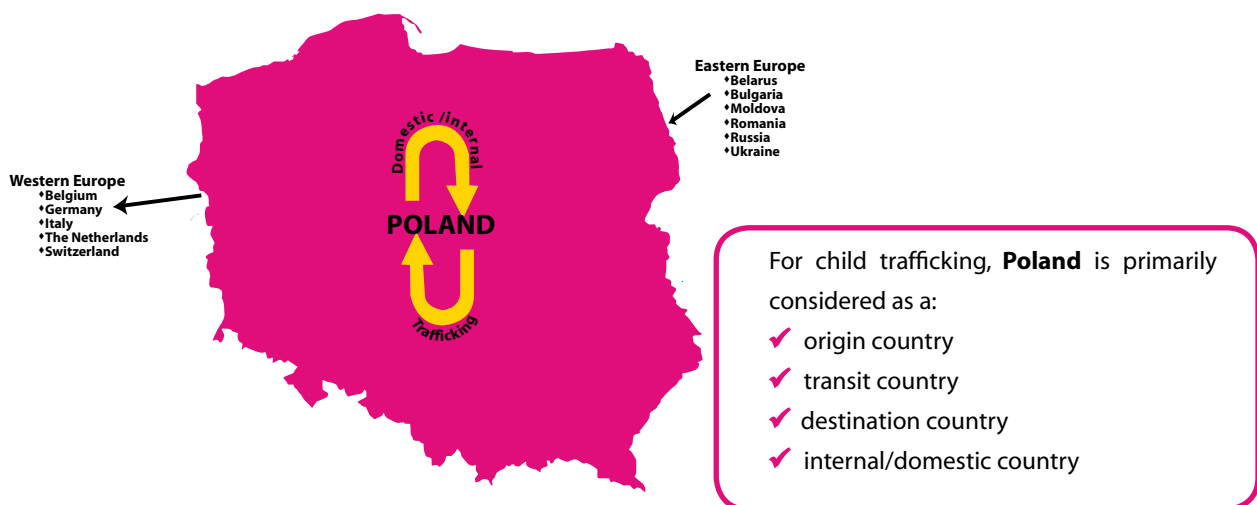
Depending on the reason for trafficking, some countries might be only sending, while others might be both sending and transit. Some countries can be all three. The Committee on the Rights of the Child noted that despite Poland's efforts in regional programmes to prevent trafficking and repatriate victims, it is still considered a country of origin, transit and destination for children trafficked for sexual exploitation.¹⁴

Children trafficked into Poland come primarily from Eastern European countries such as Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus, Moldova and Russia¹⁵ and may then be sold several times to other traffickers.¹⁶ Polish children are also trafficked to Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and other Western European countries. Polish girls are also trafficked internally, with the majority originating from the south east region of the country.¹⁷

The Polish State reports that children trafficked to and through Poland are very seldom detected as victims of trafficking. However, they may be identified as living illegally in Poland and be immediately deported to the border, which raises concerns for their protection. This example may also explain why there are very few prosecutions of trafficking offenders, as according to the government, the deportation of victims makes it impossible to collect potential evidence against the perpetrators.¹⁸

Girls trafficked from Eastern Europe usually come from low socio-economic backgrounds and are sometimes recruited through direct contact. They are lured into prostitution by false promises of employment or through arranged marriages, fraud and coercive measures. False documents are used to present trafficked minors as adults. Their identity papers are taken away from them and they are controlled through fear and intimidation, exploited in prostitution and obliged to have sex with a minimum number of men per day, or face being further raped and beaten.¹⁹

Both Polish repatriated victims of trafficking and foreigners trafficked into Poland, experience social exclusion, isolation, marginalisation and often stigmatisation. The majority of them are unable to access available assistance and services due to limited access to information.²⁰



CASE STUDIES

- “Anna” was 17 years old when she took a job advertised as a domestic helper at the cottage of an acquaintance in her home town of Szczecin in Poland. There she met Dzem, a Turkish man, and his Polish girlfriend, Olympia, who offered her similar work at their home in Berlin. When she arrived in Berlin, Dzem and Olympia said they were going to visit a friend and told Anna to put on an elegant dress and some make-up. They drove her to an old house where she was forced to have sex with a 60 year old man. She was locked inside the house until Dzem and Olympia came back to pick her up. Anna was severely beaten and her identity card was taken away when she protested vehemently that she wanted to return home. She was strictly guarded and forced into prostitution, having sex with five or six men per night. Eventually, Dzem and Olympia sold Anna and she was taken to a Swiss brothel near Zurich. The police raided the brothel and arrested the owners after being alerted by one of Anna’s ‘clients’. The police interrogation took about a month and Anna was repatriated to Poland. The police later arrested her original trafficker who was suspected of having trafficked at least 71 Polish women abroad.²¹
- A criminal ring that trafficked 20 young girls from Ukraine to Poland was uncovered in the Volyn region of Ukraine in May 2004. The girls were recruited in village bars and cafés with the help of acquaintances and mediators. They were promised well-paid jobs abroad, such as picking berries and agricultural work. When they arrived in Poland, the girls were forced into prostitution with 10 to 12 men per day. This trafficking network operated in 2003 and 2004.²²

Who creates demand?

Traffickers prey on children and young people to meet the sexual demands of paedophiles and people who pay for sex. Any person who patronises the commercial sex market may end up sexually exploiting a child. There is actually no common profile of perpetrators who sexually exploit children – they may be young, old, married, single; they come from all kinds of socio-economic backgrounds and work in all kinds of professions.

Young women victims of trafficking are also exploited in sex tourism which occurs mainly along the border between Germany and Poland. In particular, the Zielona province is known for receiving girls from Bulgaria and Ukraine for sexual exploitation. Many German tourists cross the border for this purpose, as well as tourists from Italy and Sweden. Some non-European countries are also known to have been involved in the sexual exploitation of young people.²³ There is also an increasing concern about the commercial sexual exploitation of boys by men visiting Poland from Denmark, Germany, and Sweden.²⁴

Who are the traffickers?

Traffickers can be a stranger or someone the child knows, such as a relative or a friend. Traffickers are often part of an organised criminal network that ‘recruits’ children and supplies them with fake identification. They may also pose as boyfriends or girlfriends in order to convince children to leave for a new life.

Traffickers in Poland either belong to large-scale organised criminal networks or smaller networks. The large-scale organised crime groups take absolute control of the trafficking process from recruitment and transport to the management of local brothels and street prostitutes. It is reported that ninety percent of all prostitution along Polish truck routes is controlled by foreign organised crime groups. A case from La Strada described a Russian network that established a travel agency in Romania to recruit girls to Poland.²⁵ Smaller networks of traffickers also manage recruitment and transportation of girls from one country and sell them into locally run brothels and prostitution rings abroad. The Polish organised crime groups mainly organise internal prostitution rings and obtain the girls from foreign traffickers, instead of recruiting them abroad. Once trafficked to Poland, or within the Schengen territory, the victims may be sold several times to different brothels or gangs in different cities or countries, or remain within one ring and be sexually exploited in different places.²⁶

In 2000, 22 out of the 198 cases of trafficking that were prosecuted involved victims who were minors.²⁷ However, none of the statistical data disaggregate the number of children and fail to distinguish trafficking for sexual purposes from other types of trafficking.²⁸

How can we stop the trafficking of children?

LAW AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- The Polish Government should amend the *Penal Code* to ensure that child trafficking for sexual purposes is specifically defined and that it encompasses all activities related to trafficking covered by the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, supplementing the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*.
- Specialised training on victim identification and child-friendly procedures must be provided for border police and all professionals working with children, particularly prosecutors, judges and those who assist children during the jurisdiction process.
- The Government must vigorously investigate, prosecute and convict all child trafficking offenders, and in particular law enforcement officials who are complicit in the trafficking process.
- Combating child trafficking for sexual purposes requires more systematic integrated efforts and coordination between all departments. Poland needs to review and include robust components on child trafficking for sexual purposes in the National Programme for Combating and Preventing Human Trafficking to ensure prevention, identification and protection of victims.

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Poland	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Recommendations for Poland
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1991	Initial Report – 1994 Second Report – 1999	The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) develop a national plan of action on commercial sexual exploitation of children, as agreed at the first and second World Congresses against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm in

International Conventions/Laws	Date of Ratification by Poland	Date of Reports Submitted	UN Committee Recommendations for Poland
		Third and fourth periodic report due 7 July 2008, but has not yet been submitted	1996 and Yokohama in 2001, respectively; (b) ensure that all persons under 18 involved in prostitution and the production of pornographic materials are not criminalised and enjoy full protection; (c) train law enforcement officials, social workers and prosecutors on how to receive, monitor, investigate and prosecute complaints in a child-sensitive manner; and (d) ensure that all victims of trafficking and forced prostitution have access to appropriate recovery and reintegration programmes and services.
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	2005	Initial Report- 2007	N/A
The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women & Children	2003	N/A	N/A
ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	2002	N/A	N/A
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	2005	Ratified in Nov. 2008 and entered into force in March 2009	N/A

PREVENTION OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND VICTIM PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

- Further research on child trafficking for sexual exploitation needs to be conducted to enhance understanding about characteristics and trends of trafficking in the country in order to foster appropriate action to eliminate the issue.
- Develop referral and identification mechanisms for trafficked children and ensure that they receive appropriate and specialised care and repatriation assistance delivered by well-trained professionals.
- Psychosocial and legal services for victims of trafficking need to be adequately established across the country to provide support for both foreign and domestic child victims seeking assistance.
- Specific measures for the protection, care and assistance of unaccompanied minors need to be effectively implemented, including the systematic appointment of a legal guardian and the placement of the child in a foster family or in a specialised care institution, as outlined in the legal regulations.
- The Government must improve prevention and child protection measures and initiatives to combat child trafficking, by collaborating with origin countries of child victims to establish consistent referral mechanisms, sharing best practices and lessons learned and strengthening border control. The issue of internal trafficking should also be investigated further.

TO REPORT A SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING, CONTACT:

- The Hotline for Children and Youth: 116 111
- **Nobody's Children Foundation** is an NGO working to protect children from abuse and provide help for abused children, their families, and caregivers. The Foundation offers psychological, medical, and legal help to victims of abuse and their caregivers. It has dealt with the problem of child victims of human trafficking and unaccompanied children since 2004. Within the programme, the Foundation has undertaken research, education, and media activities, and conducted interviews of unaccompanied child refugees. It also acts to improve the situation for children participating as witnesses in legal procedures. Tel./ Fax: (004822) 616 02 68, (004822) 616 03 14, e-mail: fdn@fdn.pl, website: www.fdn.pl

MORE INFORMATION

- Nobody's Children Foundation is the coordinating organisation of the Polish Network against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, ECPAT Affiliate in Poland: www.fdn.pl
- ECPAT International: www.ecpat.net
- The Body Shop and ECPAT Stop Trafficking of Children and Young People Campaign : www.thebodyshop.com/stop

Endnotes

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NOTES



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