
Estonia (TIER 2)

Estonia is a source country for the trafficking of women to Norway, the United Kingdom, and Finland for the purpose of forced prostitution. Estonian men were trafficked within the country for forced labor, specifically forced criminal acts and to Ukraine for forced labor in the construction industry.

The Government of Estonia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. During the reporting period, Estonia took steps to improve victim assistance by approving a new victim identification model in January 2009 and demonstrated good coordination with regional counterparts on victim identification and repatriation. The government again increased its anti-trafficking budget) from \$181,000 to \$200,000) and focused 75 percent of this funding on victim assistance. Although the Ministry of Justice reviewed the present criminal code and trafficking definition the government did not amend the present criminal code to prohibit all forms of trafficking.

Recommendations for Estonia: Draft a trafficking-specific criminal statute that incorporates a definition of trafficking in persons in conformity with the UN TIP Protocol; implement the approved plan to establish formal procedures for identifying victims among vulnerable populations; and maintain efforts to train police to identify potential victims and refer them for assistance.

Prosecution

The Government of Estonia demonstrated adequate law enforcement efforts during the reporting period. Estonian law does not prohibit all forms of trafficking, though the criminal code does prohibit enslavement, abduction, procurement for prostitution, labor fraud, and a number of other trafficking-related crimes. The penalties prescribed for such acts range from 5 to 15 years' imprisonment, which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with penalties prescribed for other grave crimes, such as sexual assault.

During the reporting period, authorities conducted two trafficking investigations, compared to two investigations in 2007. Both traffickers convicted in 2008 were sentenced to time in prison; one for 18 months and one for 12 months, compared to sentences ranging from one to three years' imprisonment for the traffickers convicted in 2007. Over the year, the government extradited three Estonian nationals charged with human trafficking to Finland and law enforcement officials regularly exchanged information with counterparts from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, the United Kingdom, and Poland. In 2008, Estonian law enforcement officials also formed an information and best practice exchange network with Bulgaria, Sweden, and Romania.

Protection

Estonia continued to improve its victim assistance efforts during the reporting period. In 2008, the government provided approximately \$150,000 in funding for trafficking victim assistance (an increase from \$135,750 allocated in 2007) including some funding for three trafficking-specific NGO-run shelters that provided assistance to 55 victims of trafficking in 2008. Three victims were repatriated during the reporting period compared to six in 2007; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) paid for the repatriation cost for one victim in 2008 and provided all three victims of trafficking in Estonia with information about services and assistance available to victims of trafficking within Estonia. The Ministry of Social Affairs contributed \$5,000 to IOM for a victim assistance handbook for medical workers and others responsible for victim care. Foreign victims are eligible to apply for temporary residency for the duration of criminal investigations and legal proceedings; no victims applied for residency in 2008. Estonian authorities did not penalize victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of their being trafficked. Estonia encourages trafficking victims to participate in trafficking investigations and prosecutions. In January 2009, Estonian authorities approved a plan to establish formal procedures for identifying victims among vulnerable populations, such as women arrested for prostitution violations; however, the plan had not yet been implemented at the time of this report.

Prevention

The Government of Estonia sustained trafficking prevention efforts in 2008. At least 21 police officers received trafficking prevention and victim assistance training provided by several government ministries and NGOs; however, no border guard officials received trafficking training in 2008. The government funded trafficking awareness seminars for approximately 441 schoolchildren from 39 schools and 129 adults and children from 10 orphanages. The MFA disseminated trafficking-related materials to participants at Estonia's annual tourism fair, attended by more than 23,000 people. The government did not conduct a public awareness campaign to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts.
