

FOKUS is a network of women's organisations in Norway.

A correct identification of victims of trafficking is a prerequisite for securing the necessary protection of victims as well as develop adequate measures to combat trafficking in persons. We are therefore greatly concerned with the fact that there is a gap between the number of victims identified by the NGOs and the official records, as reported to us by different women's organisations. It is alarming if victims are unable to access help due to flaws in the process of identification.

With respect to Norway, anyone can in principle identify a victim, not only the police. This has made it possible to establish a low threshold for accessing help for the victims of trafficking in women. The fact that access to services is not tied to a condition of cooperation with the police is crucial for reaching the victims with adequate help.

At a national level, there must be a close collaboration between NGOs, the police and different ministries. However, at the same time the division of labour between the different actors must be clarified. The victims of trafficking are in a very vulnerable position, and it's understandable that many don't trust the police. The NGOs have therefore an important role to play in the identification and protection of the victims. Good and predictable funding is necessary to enable the organisations to give the best possible support and the follow up of victims. It must be the national governments responsibility to secure such funding.

Several governments have launched national action plans on combating trafficking. However, women's organisations have drawn the attention to the fact that the adoption of the action plans is not necessarily followed by funding. An action plan is of no use if the measures detailed in the plan are far from implemented due to the lack of funding. The national governments must take responsibility and earmark funding for the implementation of the action plans.

Finally, it isn't possible to discuss protection of victims without addressing demand as a driving force behind trafficking. The national governments policies are of vital importance, for promoting change, and a lot of women's organisations celebrate the criminalisation of buyers in Norway. However, the nature of the problem calls for measures at a global level,

and how to address demand should form part of any discussion to how multilateral cooperation can prevent trafficking in persons.

Mildrid Mikkelsen, FOKUS- Forum for Women and Development, Norway

