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**“Fight against Trafficking needs to address widespread complicity of society”**

**Visit of Christian Anti-Trafficking Network in Greece underlines responsibility of different actors in combating trafficking**

Representatives of Churches and Church-related organisations from Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy and Romania visited Greece from 19th to 22nd June 2003 in the context of the project “Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking in Women (CAT)”.

The visit was an occasion to examine how Greece is a country of transit and destination in the global context of trafficking in women. Participants of the visit learnt from researchers how in the last decade Greece has become one of the main countries of destination and transit for trafficked women from neighbouring Balkan countries and the ex-USSR. They also learnt how widespread trafficking of women into forced prostitution had become – often reaching rural areas where prostitution had previously not been known.

The visit was also an occasion to meet with representatives of organisations, which are trying to fight trafficking in Greece. They expressed strong hopes that Greek authorities would finally make resources available for assistance to victims of trafficking when implementing the Greek anti-trafficking law of 2001. So far assistance to victims of trafficking in Greece is very minimal and exclusively relies on voluntary initiatives by NGOs. In public perception, trafficking was mainly seen as a part of irregular migration and victims of trafficking rather perceived as criminals than as persons in need.

Representatives of different organisations underlined the need to combat widespread complicity of society. On the one hand, police, border guards, courts and other public authorities were called to take appropriate measures against trafficking and combat corruption. On the other hand, the side of the “demand” for trafficked women deserved more attention: without the high number of clients using the services of women and children trafficked into prostitution, trafficking would stop to be a major business. In a summary of their findings, the researchers of the Reintegration Centre for Migrant Workers (the Greek CAT partner) concluded: “In order to break the spiral of trafficking it is important to intervene towards all parties

involved: “traffickers, women and clients!”.

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