

## TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

### Human Rights, Slavery and the Victim's Perspective – Panel at the Conference *Democracy and Human Rights in Multiethnic Societies*

Simona Zavratnik Zimic (Koper)

#### General information:

The eighth international seminar is organized in co-operation with the Dept. of Comparative Politics and the Rokkan Centre, Univ. of Bergen, Norway, and supported by the Project *The Politics of Democratic and Welfare Development in South Eastern Europe: A Network for Research and Education*, backed by the Center for International Univ. Cooperation and the Norwegian Research Council, Oslo.

Date: July 11-15, 2005.

Location: Cultural House, Konjic, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Although there is no set deadline for the submission of papers, we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

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Transport and accommodation information is available at the Institute's web site: <http://www.rokkan.uib.no/bihdemocracy/>

Trafficking in human beings and more precisely its very core, sex trafficking, raises a variety of questions for the policy arena, the research agenda and, above all, for everyday life experiences of those involved most directly – the victims of trafficking. This phenomenon, with a long historical legacy and broad geographical scope, has become more and more topical in the contemporary world, where the globalisation of migration movements and the feminisation of migration are two figures that frame the social context. In describing the nature of sex trafficking with the help of the key concepts – quite an extensive list, in accordance with the complexity of the issue – at least the following subjects must be named: women in migration, human rights, slavery, globalisation, the nation state, borders, security, criminality, morality, vulnerability and, after all, the victim.

Trafficking in human beings, if we use the most common description in recent literature and policy debates, is a phenomenon that involves a variety of areas and diverse aspects; however, at the same time, its multidimensional extensiveness contributes to an often unfocused perspective. Fact is that the most vulnerable persons are the most affected, if excluded from the centre of policing. The perspective of the victim should clearly represent the central reference in any (anti-)trafficking discussion. However, it seems that this perspective could easily be neglected in favour of more prevailing themes, such as the discourse on migration management through successful border control and sovereignty of nation-states, the stereotypical linkage between criminality and migration, the general discourse on what is called »illegal immigration as a threat« to states etc. In dominant labelling practices – we can easily find proof in media reporting – the women victims of trafficking are consistently criminalised: as migrants, therefore foreigners, they cross state boundaries; as workers in the sex industry they cross the borders of mainstream morality. As a rule, the image of the victim has become subordinate to the image of criminal.

This workshop aims to give an overview of up-to-date research, policies and practices in a variety of countries and the international community. The perspective of the victim and along with it, the centrality of human rights, will be explored in order to produce innovative frames in which we can go beyond the ideological discussion on trafficking in human beings, especially trafficking in women with reference to sex industry.

During this workshop the recent publication of the *Peace Institute* from Ljubljana (Slovenia) will be introduced briefly – *Women in Migration and Vulnerability for Trafficking in Human Beings*, ed. by S. Zavratnik Zimic (in print). This edition offers fifteen short papers that cover a variety of interdisciplinary encounters and experiences with trafficking in women, among them an historical overview, debates on human rights approaches, an analysis of media reporting, and innovative recommendations for more effective addressing the issue. The book also includes a series of case studies covering experiences with countries of source and transition in particular but also receiving countries in and around Europe.

#### Papers:

Simona Zavratnik Zimic: Sex Trafficking. The State, Security, Criminality, Morality – and the Victim