



LA STRADA INTERNATIONAL

European NGO PLATFORM AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

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La Strada International is a European NGO Platform against trafficking in human beings that works from a human rights perspective in support of trafficked persons. La Strada's primary goal is empowering trafficked persons, improving their position through promoting their universal rights, including the right to choose to emigrate and work abroad and be protected from violence and abuse.

Ambassador Christopher Yvon

Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe

Chair of the Committee of the Parties of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

Amsterdam, 12 October 2018

Dear Ambassador Christopher Yvon, and other members of the Committee of the Parties of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings,

We, representatives of European NGOs addressing the issue of human trafficking and providing direct support to trafficked persons, united in the La Strada International (LSI) NGO platform on trafficking in human beings, are addressing you today, in relation to the upcoming GRETA elections on 9 November 2018, to be held at your 23rd meeting in Strasbourg, France.

With this letter we want to express our support to GRETA remaining an effective body in monitoring States' implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. As we work for many years in the field and engage in direct support to trafficked persons as well as in advocacy to promote and protect their rights, we acknowledge the benefits of the Convention and feel strongly supported by the work of GRETA in raising awareness for remaining gaps and bottlenecks in practice.

GRETA's monitoring mechanism and standards have proven to be a unique, important and influential instrument in the protection of the rights of trafficked persons across Member States. The reports from the first and second evaluation rounds show that GRETA is a strong promoter and rapporteur of the human rights based approach to trafficking in human beings, which all members of the LSI NGO platform wholeheartedly support.

As for the upcoming elections of new members, in general we are pleased with the list of nominated candidates, which include representatives of national governments, law enforcement, the judiciary, academia as well as providers of social assistance and civil society representatives.

We are in particular happy with the nominated applicants from civil society, as we have been concerned about the limited representation of in particular NGO representatives in the last Expert Group. When we review the list of remaining GRETA members, we see that in particular women and representatives of organisations that directly support victims of human trafficking are missing.

We strongly believe that the Expert Group should comprise a multidisciplinary expertise and reflect a gender and geographical balance, as mentioned in the election procedure of GRETA members¹. The procedure rules also explicitly refer to the need for 'recognised competence in the fields of assistance and protection of victims'. A balanced and representative Expert Group comprising men and women; representatives of Western and Eastern Europe; and government and non-government actors; policy-makers and fieldworkers; academics and service providers, will ensure that all aspects of the fight against human trafficking and the support to victims are taken well into account.

To support you, the Members of the Committee of the Parties, in your voting, we would like to express our strong support for the following candidates from the following countries.

We list them in alphabetic order below:

1. [Ms. Anne Brandt Christensen](#) - Experienced lawyer with extensive NGO experience as chairperson of - and long term involved with - the Danish anti-trafficking NGO Hope Now, for which she directly provided assistance and legal support to hundreds of trafficked men and women, exploited in different industries. She is nominated by Denmark.
2. [Ms. Nathalie Martin](#) - Legal expert in Criminal Law and International and European Public Law as well as Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law with over 20 years of legal and operational experience on action against Human Trafficking, most Serious Forms of Exploitation as well as Gender Based Violence. Ms Martin has perfect knowledge of efficient criminal investigations and prosecutions, due to regularly assisting trafficked persons during legal procedures. She is currently GRETA Member with a two 2 years term and is nominated again by France.
3. [Ms. Julia Planitzer](#) – Researcher on human rights law, including human trafficking, from the Austrian based Boltzmann Institute, who has practical experience in cooperation with civil society organisations. Currently she is member of the Advisory board of LSI's project Justice at Last - European action for compensation for victims of crime. She is nominated by Austria.
4. [Ms. Ana Revenco](#) – Founder and Executive Director of La Strada Moldova, a human rights NGO that for over 20 years has strongly promoted the rights of women and children, in particular victims of human trafficking, gender based violence and commercial sexual exploitation of children. She is nominated by the Republic of Moldova.
5. [Ms. Conny Rijken](#) – Professor in human trafficking and globalisation at Intervict, Tilburg University, who has a long standing cooperation with Dutch and foreign NGOs, due to cooperation in numerous international research projects and publications on the issue of human trafficking. She is currently member of the Advisory board of the Dutch NGO Comensha/La Strada Netherlands. She is nominated by The Netherlands.
6. [Ms. Liliana Sorrentino](#) – Independent research consultant who worked for different International organisations including the OSCE, but also has extensive grass root level experience, having been directly involved in providing assistance to trafficked persons, refugees and migrants. She is currently member of La Strada International's board. She is nominated by Italy.
7. [Ms. Antoaneta Vassileva](#) – Expert on Human rights and Human Trafficking with more than 16 years of professional experience in both the Civil and State sector. As Former Secretary General of the Bulgarian National Commission for Trafficking in human Beings and

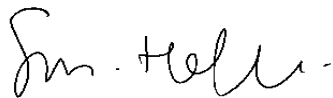
¹ Resolution CM/Res(2013)28 on rules on the election procedure of the members of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 24 October 2013).

Programme Coordinator of the Animus Association Foundation, she has been responsible for policy, prevention and direct assistance work. She is nominated by Bulgaria.

All of these nominated candidates are committed professionals with in-depth knowledge on the issue of human trafficking and experience in the field, with whom we have closely cooperated, and who have supported our work and a human rights based approach to trafficking in many different ways, over the last two decades.

We hope you will take note of this strong civil society support for these candidates, when voting for the next new GRETA members. It goes without saying that we are looking forward to continuing our close cooperation with the Council of Europe and the newly selected GRETA members in our common action against human trafficking.

Yours sincerely,



Suzanne Hoff
International Coordinator
La Strada International

This letter is supported by La Strada International's NGO Platform members:

Gender Perspectives (Belarus)	LEFÖ (Austria)
Animus Association (Bulgaria)	Living for Tomorrow (Estonia)
La Strada Czech Republic	Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
Open Gate (Macedonia)	Novi Put (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
La Strada Moldova	Pag-Asa (Belgium)
CoMensha (The Netherlands)	PICUM (International)
La Strada Poland	Pro Tukipiste (Finland)
La Strada Ukraine	Proyecto Esperanza (Spain)
Anti-Slavery International (UK)	FIZ (Switzerland)
ASTRA Anti-Trafficking Action (Serbia)	ALC (France)
Hope Now (Denmark)	ADPARE (Romania)
Human Resource Development Foundation (Turkey)	FairWork (Netherlands)
KOK (Germany)	Ban Ying (Germany)
	CCEM (France)