



Prevention of trafficking in persons in Central and Eastern Europe
Prewencja handlu ludzmi w Europie Srodkowej i Wschodniej
Предотвращение торговли людьми в Центральной и Восточной Европе
Prevenca obchodu s lidmi ve Střední a Východní Evropě
Prevenција trgovine ljudima u Centralnoj i Istočnoj Evropi
Запобігання торгівлі людьми в країнах Центральної та Східної Європи
Prevenirea traficului de fiinte umane in Europa Centrala si de Vest
Превенция на трафика на хора в Централна и Източна Европа
Превенција од трговија со луѓе во Централна и Источна Европа
Preventie van mensenhandel in Centraal en Oost Europa

Amsterdam, May 2020

Letter in support of Prof. Corinne Dettmeijer - Vermeulen, candidate for the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the Committee of Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

La Strada International would like to provide its strong support for the candidacy of Prof. Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen for the Committee of Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

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. The platform aims to prevent human trafficking and to protect and realise trafficked persons' rights by providing access to adequate assistance and support and by information and knowledge exchange, capacity building and cooperation. Via monitoring and advocacy La Strada International further works on ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of European Anti-Trafficking policies and regulations. La Strada International represents 25 member organisations in 22 European countries.

Ms. Corinne Dettmeijer – Vermeulen has taken much efforts to ensure that trafficking of persons and sexual violence and exploitation of children received more political attention both in the Netherlands and at broader European level. As Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children (2006 – 2017) she reported independently on all aspects of these crimes, while providing the Dutch government and other international governmental bodies with clear recommendations for effective and sustainable policies and measures.

During her mandate as National Rapporteur, she was a close partner of La Strada International, several of its members and other civil society actors. She engaged civil society – like other relevant stakeholders - in her work and included their input in her recommendations. Together we have highlighted gaps and raised awareness for the need for clear strategies to change the situation of trafficked persons and those at risk at national and international fora.

Her profound knowledge and expertise in the field of legal rights – due to her legal educational background and having worked as both a public prosecutor and juvenile judge - makes her a good spokesperson for the promotion of fundamental human rights and women rights. She promoted the rights of trafficked and exploited persons by stressing the need for adequate interpretation of - and compliance with - human trafficking legislation and human rights law, while supporting the revision of legislation and adoption of new legal measures, both in the Netherlands and abroad.

She has been essential in raising awareness for the need for adequate protection and support for trafficked persons and for speaking out against all severe forms of human trafficking, including its root causes like gender-based discrimination and structural inequality and the feminisation of

poverty, as women and girls continue to be in particular vulnerable for trafficking, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation. She was one of the first to advocate for a closer connection between national protection (asylum and human trafficking) support procedures and raised attention for the vulnerability of (female) migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees for trafficking and other forms of (sexual and labour) exploitation in the context of migration, for which CEDAW currently is developing a General Recommendation.

The protective measures, La Strada International and our members have been advocating for, like the need for the provision of a reflection and recovery period, unconditional support, adequate basic, medical and legal support, witness protection and access to remedies including compensation – are issues she also committed to during her Rapporteurs' mandate and beyond. As a legal professional, she has been trying to engage the legal sector more and promoting the further specialisation and training of legal professionals including lawyers, prosecutors and judges. She also called for engagement and training of all other relevant actors, responsible for the identification and referral of trafficked persons, like medical and educational staff, but also municipalities and financial institutions.

The fact that the Netherlands was the first country who appointed an independent Rapporteur, made her also a strong promoter of independent monitoring and adequate evaluation mechanisms. Acknowledging the lacking evidence and data, she has been committed to enhancing the collection, dissemination and exchange of comprehensive data; and analysing the data with the objective of developing a strategic response, using measurable indicators. She and her team produced numerous and critical reports on trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children for the Dutch government, which were used by civil society and other stakeholders on the ground, but also provided valid input to the European Commission, OSCE, Council of Europe and different UN bodies. This expertise is very valid for a CEDAW member and the monitoring of women rights in general.

Thanks to her recommendations, significant improvements have been realised for victims - she made over 200 recommendations to the Dutch government, of which more than 80% have been adopted. As Vice-President of the Committee to determine victimhood – one of the many different national and international task forces and advisory boards she served - she also directly supported presumed victims of trafficking – with a 'second chance' to be acknowledged for their victimhood and to receive access to justice. This is why we would like to strongly recommend her as candidate for the upcoming elections. Her demonstrated commitment and dedication, her critical voice and competence in the field covered by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, make her an ideal candidate for the CEDAW committee.

Yours sincerely,



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