

CZECH REPUBLIC (TIER 2)

The Czech Republic is a source, transit, and destination country for women from the former Soviet Union, China, and Vietnam trafficked to and through the Czech Republic for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Czech women are trafficked to Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. The Czech Republic is a transit and destination country for men and women trafficked from Ukraine, Belarus, China, Vietnam, India, and North Korea for the purposes of labor exploitation. IOM reported in 2005 that labor trafficking is a growing problem in the Czech Republic. Ethnic Roma women remain at the highest risk for trafficking within the country.

The Government of the Czech Republic does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The Czech Republic is placed on Tier 2 because of inadequate sentences for traffickers and concerns over forced labor. The North Korean (D.P.R.K.) regime provides contract labor for private industry in the Czech Republic. There are allegations that this labor is exploitative, specifically that the D.P.R.K. government keeps most of the wages paid to the North Korean workers and that workers' movement is controlled by D.P.R.K. government "minders." The Czech Government has conducted four investigations since 2004 and continues to investigate the North Korean workers' presence in the Czech Republic. To date, however, it has not confirmed that they enjoy freedom of movement away from D.P.R.K. government "minders" and are not subject to other coercive practices, such as the collection of a majority of the workers' salaries by D.P.R.K. officials. While concerns remain over efforts to combat forced labor and trafficking sentences, the government continued to provide excellent victim protection and assistance services as well as funding to all local NGOs with trafficking assistance programs. Law enforcement efforts also showed steady improvement. Several hundred police were trained in trafficking awareness and victim identification. The government should ensure that more convicted traffickers serve time in prison, and establish clear internal guidelines for police and prosecutors to successfully investigate and prosecute labor trafficking cases. The government should vigorously investigate all reports of suspected labor trafficking and regulate the practice of labor brokers that recruit guest workers to work in the Czech Republic. To this end, the government should implement recommendations made under the National Strategy to increase the number of police in the Organized Crime Unit. More labor inspectors should be given mandatory training on trafficking and on identifying labor trafficking victims.

Prosecution

The government demonstrated some progress in its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts over the past year. During the reporting period, police conducted 18 trafficking investigations, down from 30 in 2004. There were 12 trafficking prosecutions resulting in 20 convictions. This total is up from 12 convictions in 2004. Additionally, 52 traffickers were prosecuted and convicted of offenses relating to but not specifically for trafficking in 2005. Although the number of prosecutions increased, the majority of convicted traffickers continued to receive suspended sentences. During the reporting period, only eight traffickers received prison sentences; twelve convicted traffickers received suspended sentences. The government sponsored several trainings for prosecutors and judges to improve prosecutions and increase prescribed sentences during the reporting period. Although there were no reports of institutional involvement in trafficking by Czech Government agencies, NGOs reported allegations of individual cases of corruption within the Czech Alien and Border police. There were 90 convictions of police and border officers for corruption in 2005, though the Czech government could not confirm any cases related to trafficking.

Protection

The government demonstrated significant efforts to protect and assist victims. The government permanently funds a victim assistance program that provides comprehensive victim protection. Victims choosing to cooperate with authorities may receive temporary-stay visas and are provided with health care, financial support, housing, additional counseling, job-placement assistance for foreign victims, and vocational training for repatriated Czech victims. Upon completion of legal proceedings, victims may choose to apply for permanent residency in the Czech Republic. Two victims were granted permanent residency during the reporting period. Beginning in 2005, victims granted a temporary stay visa were allowed to receive work permits. During the reporting period, 17 victims enrolled in the victim assistance program. The government also funds an IOM repatriation program for victims from Georgia and Moldova.

Prevention

Prevention efforts were adequate during the reporting period. As part of its demand reduction program, the government funded a study of prostitution clients and the demand for sexual services in the country. The Foreign Ministry continued its anti-trafficking education programs and provided trafficking information to persons applying for Czech visas in countries identified as sources of trafficking. In addition, consular officers received a new instructional manual on trafficking and some consular officers

were provided training to identify potential victims. The government carefully monitored migration patterns for evidence of trafficking.