

## **THE NETHERLANDS (Tier 1)**

The Netherlands is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and girls trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. Trafficking for sexual exploitation is more prevalent than labor trafficking. Internally, women and girls are trafficked by "lover boys," young men who seduce young women and girls and force them into prostitution. Women and girls are trafficked to the Netherlands from Nigeria, Bulgaria, People's Republic of China (P.R.C.), Poland, and Romania for sexual exploitation. To a smaller extent, men are trafficked to the Netherlands from India, P.R.C., Bangladesh and Turkey for forced labor in ports, factories, restaurants, and as domestic workers.

The Government of the Netherlands fully complies with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The government continued strong efforts to address trafficking through law enforcement efforts, while reinforcing legal protections for victims and carrying out aggressive prevention campaigns. To further strengthen its anti-trafficking response, the government should reinforce its efforts to prosecute labor trafficking cases, provide specialized care to male trafficking victims, and conduct systematic screenings of the legalized prostitution sector for potential trafficking victims.

### **Prosecution**

The Government of the Netherlands continued to show substantial law enforcement efforts to combat trafficking. Since January 2005, the Netherlands has prohibited all forms of trafficking through Criminal Code Article 273. This statute prescribes penalties for any form of trafficking of 6 to 15 years' imprisonment and a fine of up to \$45,000; these penalties are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with those prescribed for forcible sexual assault. In 2005, the last year for which statistics are available, police investigated and referred 135 trafficking cases for prosecution. The government prosecuted 146 trafficking cases in 2005, obtaining convictions in 98 of the cases. However, the average prison sentence imposed was 25 months. The government failed to prosecute any labor trafficking cases in 2005, but is currently prosecuting four. In February 2007, the government dismantled two sex trafficking networks - a major international Turkish ring and a Romanian operation.

### **Protection**

The government demonstrated increased efforts to protect trafficking victims. The Dutch Foundation against Trafficking in Women (STV), the national reporting center for registration of and assistance to trafficking victims, registered 333 trafficking victims in the first eight months of 2006, compared to 261 victims in the same period of 2005. Local governments continued to fund the majority of private organizations and NGOs providing services to trafficking victims. However, neither the government nor NGOs provided shelters for male victims. The Netherlands encourages victims to assist in trafficking investigations and prosecutions. The government subsidizes the STV and funds NGOs to operate 15 regional and local networks through which civil society and the police provide care for victims. In early 2007, the government implemented new regulations to facilitate legal permanent residence for trafficking victims who assist with prosecutions. Trafficking victims who choose not to assist with a prosecution are eligible for a residence permit if they believe they will face hardship or retribution upon return to their country. Victims are not inappropriately incarcerated, fined, or penalized for unlawful acts as a direct result of being trafficked.

### **Prevention**

The Netherlands demonstrated strong trafficking awareness-raising efforts during the year. The government continued to fund a national awareness campaign to reduce sex trafficking, launched in January 2006. Administered by the country's anonymous crime reporting hotline, the campaign is largely responsible for the increase to 152 tips on sex trafficking cases received by the hotline in 2006 compared with 42 received in 2005. Throughout 2006, the government continued to fund information and education campaigns at schools to prevent youth prostitution. In 2007, the government launched a national campaign that warned female high school students about "lover boy" practices. The Ministry of Justice initiated a national assessment of the prostitution sector, including the extent of trafficking, as part of a report to Parliament on the impact of the lifting of the ban on brothels. It is due in April 2007.