

There are thousands of children in the world who are victims of child trafficking, prostitution and pornography, both in the North and in the South. Our country is unfortunately not an exception to this phenomenon.

A couple of years ago, the Federal Police conducted a study on Belgian offenders brought to court within the framework of the law of 1995 on extraterritoriality. The study concluded that more expertise and better access to the different industries involved in this phenomenon were necessary.

On **ECPAT Belgium's** initiative, this led to the creation of a working group having a broad range of partners from various parts of our society: Child Focus, Plan Belgium and ECPAT from the NGO's, the Belgian National Railway Company, FEBETRA, the Federation of Belgian Carriers, FTI from the private sector, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence from the government and finally the Trafficking in Human Beings Department of the Federal Police.

The working group gave the go-ahead in 2004 for a common public campaign Stopchildprostitution.be intended for all Belgians travelling abroad: tourists, businessmen, the army on a foreign mission, the embassy personnel, development-aid workers, bus and truck drivers. The message of the campaign ran like this: *"it is easy to ignore child prostitution abroad but if you want to save a kid, report ..."*.

However, the campaign is not free of engagement for the participating partners. Each partner has taken initiatives in its own circles.

The first common campaign consisted of a public campaign with thousands of posters and leaflets. Each partner distributed the leaflets and posters among its own ranks, as a result of which the posters were present in train stations, international lines such as the Thalys and the Eurostar, national and regional airports, Belgian embassies, police offices, tour operators and army barracks. The campaign was presented at *Flikkendag* in Ghent and at many tourism fairs. After the press conference, about five advertisements appeared in specialized magazines. A trilingual website and permanent phone number allow people to join the campaign and report any abuse.

The reaction to the campaign was overwhelming. A brief inquiry showed that 75% of the train passengers had noticed the posters in their station. Although it is dangerous to generalize these results, they are nonetheless revealing. The website has attracted about 15,000 visitors to this day, which can be considered a success. The posters are also available through the website and people still order posters regularly through this medium. The efforts made have definitely not passed unnoticed, which also resulted in an increase in the number of reports.

The publicity on lawsuits gives potential offenders a clear signal that they can not just get away with anything abroad. This is very important for the future. The campaign wishes to continue reinforcing this preventive signal.

The campaign is unique **in Europe**. At the presentation of the project during European and international meetings such as Interpol, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and many NGO meetings, this campaign was given a warm welcome and many countries showed their interest. The unique cooperation between NGO's on the one hand and the private sector on the other hand actively supported by the government is a one-off, even in Europe.