

## ACTIVITIES

**ENUT's Administrative Director, Ilvi Jõe-Cannon, spoke at "Women's Europe" conference in Oslo, Norway, on March 5.**

The conference was organised by the European Movement in Norway and other speakers were Lone Dybkjaer, Member of European Parliament for Denmark's Liberal Party, who spoke on women's life and equality in the European Union, Erna Solberg, Norwegian Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, who asked the question whether Norway is being sidelined in Europe, and Meylene Westerlund Panke, Social Democratic member of Sweden's parliament, talked about Sweden's 10 years in the European Union.

Ilvi-Jõe-Cannon was asked to speak on Estonian women under the rubric of new women in the European Union. Her presentation is posted on ENUT's home page: [www.enut.ee](http://www.enut.ee)

**Räni Hong from the US at ENUT April 21.**

On a two-day visit to Estonia, Räni Hong visited ENUT and gave a talk, "Did you sell me?" at Tallinn Pedagogical University on April 21. As a child in India, she became a victim of trafficking. She is active in Shared Hope International ([www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org)) to bring an end to trafficking.

Räni Hong's presentation was organised by the US Embassy and ENUT.

**Essay contest on the question "Prostitution - is it a matter of supply or demand?"**

ENUT asks young people between the ages of 16 and 23 to write about the different aspects of prostitution.

The essay should contain no more than 3000 letters (size 12), or be a maximum of three pages in length, 1.5 space between lines.

May 3 is the deadline for submission of the essay, which should be sent to: [esseekonkurss@hotmail.com](mailto:esseekonkurss@hotmail.com)

The winners will be announced at the Narva-Jõesuu seminar on trafficking in women in May. Books are the prizes given to winners and the winning texts will be posted on ENUT website.

The Nordic Council of Ministers supports the essay contest. For more information, please contact Kersti Järve at 58 031 535.

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## ENUT NEWS 2/04

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### From the Editor

This issue of ENUT News contains reports on further activities involving prostitution and trafficking in human beings. Marion Pajumets summarises the report "Prostitution – a social problem?". The report contains the results of studies conducted last spring of the opinion makers in the three Baltic countries and north-western Russia. Attitudes held by a society towards prostitution are a reflection of its development. In another article, the same author writes about the socio-economic context of sex business and media's accountability, which were topics at a seminar held for journalists. Eha Reitemann writes about the constructive joint seminar for youth workers and teachers held by ENUT and *Living for Tomorrow*. Educators and youth workers play a significant role in the prevention of trafficking in human beings.

Katri Tammekand describes the efforts of the members of Tallinn Pedagogical University Social Sciences Department and university students to break another myth, which is a barrier for women to develop freely and which justifies violence against women. The seminar "He loves you when he hits you" was reinforced by the Ugala Theatre players' production of "The Vagina Monologues".

Naturally, we give an overview of ENUT's major activities and information about the activities of the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable (EWAR), the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and others. Women's organisations have been busy during this spring at several fronts. On one hand, we follow the activities of EWL in Brussels while learning about lobbying, and on the other, we lobby the parliament at home for legislation to combat prostitution. The adoption of gender equality law after years of working toward that goal marks the beginning of a new epoch and Eha Reitemann writes about that.

On the last pages of the issue you can read about our new staff members and in-house activities. ENUT library has declared, for the benefit of borrowers, the month of May to be free of fines when the books are returned.

Good reading!

## Prostitution - a natural phenomenon or a social problem? Attitudes of Baltic states' and north-western Russian opinion leaders.

Marion Pajumets  
Sociologist at ENUT

The report on the study conducted in our region, "Prostitution - a social problem?" has now reached the public. Last spring, opinion leaders in the three Baltic states and north-western Russia were interviewed in order to find out their thoughts on the subject, and what kinds of prostitution policies they consider necessary. Discussions were held with a total of 60 opinion leaders in the form of semi-structured interviews. Among them were leading politicians, prominent state and third sector officials, media representatives, analysts, and businessmen. The project was directed by the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre and the Equality Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

### Prostitution policy as indicator of a country's direction

Prostitution exists everywhere on earth. It is not a question of whether it exists or not in a country, but what kind of prostitution policy does a country have. That gives an indication what kind of a country it is. We wanted to find out if opinion leaders, as public opinion makers, support security and gender equality or elitism and unmitigated capitalism. In other words, is the direction toward a state of solidarity, encompassing all its people, or will the result be a state governed by extremely liberal economic policies. Positions on prostitution policies - but not exclusively - help to provide answers to these questions.

In addition to the historic domestic influences prostitution policies contain international messages. In the realm of a nation's image, the country has two choices. Either it tells the world that in the eyes of the state women are commodities and export items, or that women are human beings and in the eyes of the state they are valued as humans and not as commercial objects.

### "Good" and "bad" sex business

Some of the interviewees thought that commercialisation of sex is a negative phenomenon and the government should combat it. They stressed that commodification of human relations is always humiliating and prostitution constitutes violence against

women. How is that? Because behind it lies economic and political inequality between women and men - an unjust division of resources that has evolved historically. It need not be a question of not having a choice, but an absence of choices, and the fact that violent forms of relating to women have become embedded in the social structure.

A large part of the opinion leaders did not regard sex business as damaging to human dignity. They thought that in principle that "good" and "free choice" prostitution is possible. In their opinion, the buying and selling of sex is an agreement between equal partners, which is comparable to ordinary business transactions. They considered prostitution to be a problem when disease, violence against the prostitute, recruitment of minors, corruption of state officials, organised crime become part of the activity. At the same time, it must be admitted that despite the possibility of having "good sex business", those who supported "the mutual agreement model" admitted that in their home country sex business is a problem, because the measures applied to date have not been able to prevent the appearance of the "bad" features.

### Human rights and the government's role in its protection

Just as opinions differed about the nature of prostitution so did the opinion leaders' thoughts differ on human rights with respect to prostitution. The opinion leaders who considered prostitution a problem felt that sex business deeply harms the dignity and human rights of the sex seller. They emphasised that the government must assist financially the less fortunate so that nobody has to sell her body in order to survive. But a considerable number of the opinion leaders looked altogether differently at human rights and the role of government. They said that every adult person has the inalienable right to decide for herself whether to sell her body or not. According to this opinion, sex business is a freely entered agreement between the buyer and the seller, a transaction belonging in the private sector.

### Justifying the sex buyer

It is very evident that it would not be possible to sell sex if there were no buyer. There has been very little discussion about the buyer. How did the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and north-western Russian opinion leaders see the role of the buyer in the sex business? On the whole, they did not see a problem with buying another person's body. A man's behaviour and choices were often seen as biologically determined. Man was primarily seen as a physical being who is basically not

## ENUT's General Meeting

Ilvi Jõe-Cannon  
ENUT Board Member

The General Meeting was held on April 14, at ENUT. The financial report for 2003 showed that ENUT's projects (including those in which ENUT was a partner), both the completed and those extending into 2004, exceeded one million Estonian *kroon*. Among the projects were "Development of Women's Information Centre, Regional Training Sessions on Gender Equality, and Trafficking in Women and Children", funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Nordic and Baltic Campaign Against Trafficking in Humans", funded by Nordic Council of Ministers, "Baltic



General meeting of ENUT members

Women's Information Centre", funded by Nordic Council of Ministers, "Combating Trafficking in Women", funded by US State Department, "Replacing, Updating and Reorganizing ENUT's IT and Improving Service to the Public", funded by Canadian Embassy, "Ariadne's Clew", supported by Open Estonia

## News from the library

Marju Järve  
ENUT Librarian

The library got thirty-three new readers in March and April and acquired a number of new books. We had not been able to purchase new books for some time, but thanks to a project funded by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, which included a generous amount for the purchase of books, we were able to add some recent scholarly publications to our library. The lecturers of the gender studies minor, designed by ENUT, and the programme's co-ordinator, Tiina Raitviir, helped the librarian to compile the list of books for purchase. The books cover a broad spectrum of gender studies literature, including the fields of psychology, art, economics, religion, linguistics, media, sociology, and history.

For more information about these books, please turn to our website: <http://www.enut.ee/enut.php?id=17>



Marju Järve, ENUT

The same Norwegian funded project made it possible for ENUT to subscribe to two feminist journals: Journal of Women's Studies Quarterly, published by Women's Press, New York, and NORA, Nordic Journal of Women's Studies. The Quarterly subscription is for three years, and NORA is for two years.

The first issues of Journal of Women's Studies Quarterly and NORA have arrived and are available to our readers.

## He loves you when he hits you – a myth in need of abandonment

*Katri Tammekand  
Centre of Social Programs*

Tallinn Pedagogical University (TPÜ) Social Sciences Department and its Student Council held a conference, “He loves you when he hits you?! Violence among couples in Estonia” on March 8. Experts led the discussions on the causes and effects of domestic violence and the players of Ugala Theater performed “The Vagina Monologues”. The conference was organised as a result of the many myths about violence against women. Lack of knowledge and myths justify and re-enforce violent behaviour.



*Performance of “The Vagina Monologues” by Ugala theatre*

myths that assert a victim can avoid violence by acting “correctly” generally consider violence an internal family problem. Actually, a variety of studies shows that causes are to be found in the social setting. Traditions, values and cultural norms in a society contribute to violence.

Regarding the effects of violence, the individual and social can be separated. On the whole, it affects the mental and physical health of the person and mostly of women and children. The results of violence most measurable are injuries of different severity, terminated pregnancies, and death. It is more difficult to measure such results as mental depression, sense of hopelessness, apathy and so on. When looking at violence against women in a broader context, it is clear that it creates financial burdens to the health care system, criminal justice administration, and social institutions operations.

It is important to be aware that domestic violence is not only a family’s internal matter. Since violence between spouses is tied to social circumstances and its effects have a negative impact, it is important to see the problem in a broader context and not only as an individual matter when looking for solutions.

For more information on the conference, please look at ENUT’s website: <http://www.enut.ee/enut.php?id=182>

The first myth is expressed in the title of the article – he loves you when he hits you. In addition to justifying such violent behaviour, the statement makes reference to its Slavic origin. However, studies show that violence among couples is found in all societies, both rich and poor, both Estonian and Russian.

Another common myth is that a woman provokes the man and causes the man to become violent. Actually, studies show that in families where violence occurs the victim tries to behave in a way that pleases the man and rarely starts an argument. A violent husband finds an excuse for striking his partner or becomes mentally abusive for the slightest reason. The

## About ENUT personnel

Sociologist Marion Pajumets went on maternity leave in April. Prior to her departure, she finished her research on prostitution in the Baltic states and north-western Russia, a project funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The report was presented on March 10. Marion was also in charge of ENUT’s public relations in the trafficking in human beings project, funded by the US State Department and the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.

As of March 1, we have Triin Kurro as the information secretary. She is a student at Tallinn Pedagogical University. One of ENUT’s missions is to give university students the opportunity to acquire practical knowledge on gender issues and over the years,

a significant number of young people have gone on to assume responsible positions in society.

Marju Järve continues to work as the librarian at ENUT. She is graduating this spring with a degree in psychology and she plans to start studying for her Master’s in the fall. She will continue to work at ENUT, acquiring new knowledge by assuming responsibilities in other projects. Selve Ringmaa continues to be affiliated with ENUT by being the editor and lay-out designer of ENUT News. Eha Reitelmann heads the project to combat trafficking in women and she continues her work with women’s organisations across the country. Acting Director Ilvi Jõe-Cannon was recently elected to ENUT’s Board of Trustees, leaving the question of her successor to be settled.

free to make choices, because his body makes the decisions for him. It was very common for sex business to be discussed without ever mentioning the buyer. Such an attitude left an impression for the interviewers that the interviewed considered prostitutes to be acting alone or with each other.

Principally the north-western Russian opinion leaders stood passionately in defence of the man’s traditional and biological right to buy sex.

It should be noted that normalisation of the purchase of sex at the same time when prostitution is generally considered a problem shows society’s hypocrisy.

## Prostitution policy options

How was Estonia’s prostitution, policy which prohibits procuring of sex while ignoring the matter of buying and selling, seen? The opinion leaders of our neighbouring countries often did not know what Estonia’s policy is, and Estonians themselves often regarded it as government trying to avoid addressing the policy issue.



*Presentation of the research results on March 10, 2004  
Ülle-Marike Papp, Ministry of Social Affairs; Thomas Alslev Christiansen, Nordic Council of Ministers; Estonian Minister of Social Affairs Marko Pomerants; Marion Pajumets, ENUT*

Opinion leaders were quite reluctant to prohibit the activities of all parties, arguing that prostitution is the world’s oldest business which has never been banned anywhere. In addition, it was thought that criminalising does not bring an end to prostitution, but forces it to go deeper underground in which case it would be harder for the police to control it, and the prostitutes would fall victim even more to the will of the pimps and buyers.

The opinion leaders who saw in prostitution harm to the dignity of the person supported the so-called Swedish model, which punishes the sex buyer in

addition to the procurer. They commented at the same time that the adoption of such a law in their homeland is extremely unlikely. They thought that politicians are not interested in it, because it is contrary to their views. Majority of the opinion leaders did not think highly of the law in Sweden in 1999. They emphasised that the law would force prostitution underground just as would the case if all the parties were deemed to be involved in a criminal act. In addition, many of them considered Sweden’s law to be one-sided, because both parties to the transaction should be held accountable.

It is noteworthy that legalisation of sex business received the most support, and a country’s religious heritage or current prostitution policy did not have any particular effect. The opinion leaders were quite unanimous in their logic: prostitution exists and, therefore, the government needs to recognise it, and, as a consequence, the government is obliged to regulate it. By favouring the legalisation of sex business, they hoped to bring child prostitution, organised crime, and communicable diseases under control.

It should be pointed out that whereas the opinion leaders in the neighbouring countries occasionally expressed hope that by legalising sex business the state would get a good sum of money, not one Estonian opinion leader advanced such a cynical idea last spring. Estonians talked more about prevention of problems and social damage than about the financial gain to be realised. They said that prostitution should be declared to be work, and as work it should be extended the standards applicable to work and social security, starting with health care and finishing with pension benefits. They also thought that if sex business were subject to laws regulating businesses, violence against prostitutes would be reduced and the society would not attach labels to prostitutes.

## Compliance with the law

Looking at additional differences among the attitudes of opinion leaders in the participating countries, it should be mentioned that Lithuanian and north-western Russian representatives frequently had pessimistic positions on legal reform, maintaining that you can change laws but they will not affect reality very much. They said that behind the declared ideal values the officials would continue to be corrupt and organised crime would operate unimpeded.

The Estonian and Latvian opinion leaders had greater appreciation for the laws, including some possible changes in them, and attributed greater compliance with them by their country’s institutions and people.

**How to continue...**

It must be emphasised that not many interviewees saw a connection between traditional gender roles, gender segregation on the labour market, and prostitution and trafficking in persons. They tended to separate prostitution from its social, political and economic context. For example, they spoke of trafficking in persons as cruel injustice and violence, but regarded prostitution as a free woman's free choice. And it went often unnoticed that trafficking in persons needs new women and children to be supplied for prostitution.

Therefore, future discussions about prostitution must look at all its ramifications, and see the connections between the apparently separate social and economic features.

It is also essential in any future discussions to analyse the actual experiences in the countries that have legalised sex business. Those Baltic and north-western Russian opinion leaders with rosy ideas about subjecting prostitution to the same legal requirements as businesses are not sufficiently informed about the situation in such countries as Holland, or the Victoria province in Australia. In these countries, both legal and illegal prostitution increased manifold and mostly at the expense of minors and immigrants. Along with the quantum leap the previously radical "branches of

service" became routine in sex business. The ever increasing competition did not allow the prostitute to refuse new services, even if her health were to be endangered.

The study sought to learn opinion leaders attitudes toward prostitution and prostitution policies and based on the findings, one cannot say that the studied region's countries are moving toward societies marked by solidarity and respect for human rights. It is quite evident that part of the situation is due to the legacy of the former regime. As a rule, the opinion leaders did not present their arguments in terms of human dignity or human rights. They did not take such consideration very seriously. Even when the discussion included human rights it tended to be interpreted as a right to sell one's body.

By ignoring human rights discourse, the proponents justify society in which a person manages by himself and the state has no responsibilities towards him. It is still necessary for the countries that recently adopted market economies to learn to think that a human being is not a thing among material objects. We have to become accustomed to the idea that the value in a person is not commercial but human, and that the state has to protect that value.

The report of the study is accessible at [http://www.enut.ee/lisa/raport\[1\]\[1\].inglise.pdf](http://www.enut.ee/lisa/raport[1][1].inglise.pdf)

**European Women's Lobby (EWL) Board Meeting**

*Reet Laja, EWAR Chairwoman*

The Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable (EWAR) was invited to attend EWL Board meeting, held on January 31-February 1, 2004, in Brussels. The Estonian Women's Network for Collaboration will be invited to the May meeting.

I represented EWAR at the January meeting and would like to report on its proceedings. The report on the discussions and decisions made at the October 9, 2003 EWL Assembly was presented. The Assembly was considered a complete success. It decided to accept Bulgaria, Latvia and Hungary as full members of EWL. Two organisations from Estonia – Women's Network for Collaboration and EWAR – were accepted as associate members. In order for Estonia to have full membership, the two named organisations must come to an agreement on Estonian representation for EWL.

The meeting discussed preparations for EWL Assembly in 2004. Members can start submitting in March items for the agenda. Every item must have at least one member country's endorsement. The items

must be realistic, clearly stated, and in compliance with EWL objectives and positions.

EWL's document to the 48<sup>th</sup> session (March 1-12, 2004) of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women "Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building" was adopted.



*Reet Laja, Chairwoman of EWAR*

position paper "Integrating a gender perspective into the EU Immigration Policy Framework" was also adopted.

The document "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality" was discussed in view of the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March. Also, the document "The role of the European Union in the Beijing + 10 process: Using the B+10 momentum to formulate the New EU

will do everything so that the present public discussion on prostitution does not become empty talk, and that sex business as a serious violation of human rights and a threat to the nation's security is placed forthwith on the parliament's agenda.

The second meeting of the representatives of EWAR member organisations took place on March 20, also in Tallinn. This time the



*EWAR report discussion on March 20, 2004 at ENUT*

discussions evolved around ideas for projects to submit to the Social Affairs Ministry's competition for projects meant for women's collaboration. Many EWAR member organisations submitted projects to the Ministry. ENUT submitted a project application which included women's organisations from 12 counties as partners.

As of April, 171 women's associations are members of EWAR. The latest member is Jõgevamaa Women's Associations Roundtable, which was founded in Põltsamaa on April 17. Four local organisations make up the Roundtable.

**EWL President Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel was in Estonia April 14-19.**

*Ilvi Jõe-Cannon  
ENUT Board Member*

EWL President Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel was in Estonia to meet with representatives of women's organisations and to participate in the IV Baltic Sea NGO Forum.

On April 14, Pres. La Rivière-Zijdel had a dinner meeting with representatives of the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable (EWAR) and the Estonian Women's Network for Collaboration, which hold associate memberships in EWL. The President expressed hope that soon Estonia will have co-ordination with full member status in EWL.



*Meeting in Tallinn on April 14, 2004. From left: Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel (EWL), Reet Laja (EWAR), Ilvi Jõe-Cannon (ENUT), Eha Reitelmann (ENUT), Kadri Jäätma (Estonian Women's Network for Collaboration)*

She emphasised that Estonia's co-ordination must be open to all women's organisations that want to participate in its activities, must include as many grassroots organisations as possible, and must be apolitical.

That means, Estonia cannot send politically active women to represent it on EWL Board and the General Assembly. At the same time, all women's political organisations must have the possibility to be part of the national co-ordination.

On April 16 and 17, Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel participated at the IV Baltic Sea NGO Forum in Pärnu, where she was a panel member in the workshop "NGOs for Supporting Social Inclusion". Ilvi-Jõe-Cannon, Acting Director, and Eha Reitelmann, Project leader at ENUT, attended that workshop. Since the organisers of the Forum did not have a word about gender equality in the final documents, Lydia drafted statements for inclusion and they were submitted collectively by EWL, EWAR and ENUT.

President la Rivière-Zijdel also gave good advice on how Estonian women's organisations can, in collaboration with EWL, strengthen the recently adopted weak gender equality law by Estonia's parliament.

On Saturday, April 17, Rea Raus, EWAR vice-chairman, participated at the Pärnu forum and introduced EWAR to the assembled.

Please visit the Gallery at ENUT's website [www.enut.ee](http://www.enut.ee) for more photos of Lydia's visit to Estonia.

## Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable's Activities

**Eha Reitelmann**  
Project leader

The Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable (EWAR) started the year with the annual conference of Estonian women's organisations on January 24 at Tallinn Pedagogical University. At the conference *Eesti Päevaleht* was declared the most gender sensitive newspaper in 2003 and a resolution on gender equality law was sent to the parliament.



*Estonian Women's Annual Conference January 24, 2004*

On the following day a seminar was held for representatives of EWAR member organisations. The Baltic-American Partnership Programme funded seminar discussed Estonia's Civil Society Development Concept and the Civil Society Code of Ethics. Members of the recently appointed EWAR Steering Committee also held their first meeting and drafted a programme of activity. EWAR voted to support Estonian Women Entrepreneurs Association's letter to the government, which outlined steps for supporting women's businesses.

Many EWAR member organisations wrote in March letters to members of parliament, urging them to review the statutes

of prostitution and to make combating it more effective. In this instance Järva maa Women's Roundtable (Leili Pruun, co-ordinator) was especially active. Its member



*EWAR seminar on January 25, 2004 From left: Reet Laja (Chair of EWAR), Ebon Kram (Swedish Women's Lobby), Ilvi Jõe-Cannon and Eha Reitelmann (ENUT), Tiitu Laan (Tartu Roundtable), Tiitu Reimann (Võru Roundtable)*

organisations sent over thirty letters to the parliament. Together, EWAR members sent almost 70 letters.

On March 17, EWAR sent letters to all the factions in the parliament, identifying prostitution as a significant domestic and international problem that has to be placed on the parliament's agenda without delay. In the letter, EWAR stated that the proliferation of prostitution in Estonia is not only a socio-economic problem, which is especially demeaning to women's human rights, but it is also a sign of expanding organised crime, which endangers the country's internal security. EWAR made references



*EWAR and NOKS discussing their cooperation plans January 25, 2004 From left: Julia Kovalenko, Ebon Kram, Eha Reitelmann, Tiitu Laan, Ilvi Jõe-Cannon*

to the international conventions to which Estonia is a signatory and, therefore, making her obliged to use all measures, including economic and legislative, for the prevention of trafficking in women and the exploitation of women for

prostitution. EWAR emphasised that one of the reasons for prostitution is gender inequality, which places women into a disadvantaged position economically. The government must combat the underlying causes for prostitution and trafficking.

EWAR maintains that the way to rein in prostitution is by adopting a comprehensive plan of action, which includes effective punishment for procurers, prohibition of sex buying, prevention of turning to prostitution for economic reasons, and a rehabilitation programme for prostitutes. EWAR hopes that political leaders in the parliament

Framework Strategy for Gender Equality 2006-2010" was discussed. The participants at the Assembly were informed that the governments of the UN member states have been sent questionnaires on compliance with the Beijing Platform (1995) and the decisions adopted at the Special Session of the General Assembly (2000), and they were asked to react to the governments' reports. The deadline for the government's report is April 30, 2004.

Also discussed were the documents "Women's sexual rights in Europe" and "EU Daphne for 2004".

The draft legislation "Council Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services" continues to need the support of EWL members.

### Coverage of prostitution in the media – what the seminar emphasised

*Marion Pajumets*

On February 18, ENUT held a seminar on prostitution coverage in the media. It was supported by US State Department, Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Finnish Embassy in Tallinn, Finnish Institute and Radisson SAS Hotel. The uniqueness of this seminar was that the influence of media and journalistic practices were discussed with the journalists themselves. The number of those wanting to attend the all-day seminar was large and, unfortunately, not all of them could be accommodated. The country's largest dailies, weeklies, and evening papers, county newspapers, women's magazines, radio, and Russian language media were represented.



*Seminar for journalists at Radisson SAS*

### Placing sex business in the socio-economic context

While drafting the seminar's programme we considered it essential to place prostitution and trafficking in the larger social and economic context, devoid of glamour. In his address to the seminar, US Ambassador Joseph De Thomas also referred to actual picture, "We also need to give an honest portrayal of the sex industry. We need to be clear that the romanticized, Hollywood image of prostitution does not exist. Pretty Women is a movie. It is fiction. The reality is squalid. The reality is of women, boys and

EWL's activities, budget and solicitation for additional funds were analysed. A special committee was set up to look for additional funds. Member countries can make contributions to EWL, in addition to paying the dues, by translating at their own expense EWL publications into their native language, sending at their own expensive interns to help with the work at EWL secretariat, contributing materially to the posting of the website for combating violence against women, and by ordering at-cost training from the EWL secretariat. Anyone can make personal contributions to EWL.

For more information, please contact ENUT or EWAR chairman

For EWL News, please go to EWL website [www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org) link: EWL NewFlash

girls entrapped by drug addiction and alcoholism, poverty, poor choices and fraud. It is a world of dirty basement rooms, violence and disease."

In order to provide a broader understanding of sex business we started with the basics. Sociologist Ivi Proos from the Estonian Open Society Institute explained how Estonian women's and men's positions in politics and business indirectly influence prostitution

and trafficking. Barbi Pilvre, who is in charge of *Eesti Express's* supplement on cultural life and a media lecturer at the University of Tartu, gave an overview of the strategies used in Estonian media to sexualise women comprehensively and to diminish their stature. Her

presentation was complemented by Piret Räni, who showed via slides how women are depicted by Estonia's ad world. Sociologist Iris Pettai from the Estonian Open Society Institute and Kristiina Luht, the national co-ordinator for the Nordic Council of Ministers' anti-trafficking in women campaign, showed via a wealth of examples why the subject is a form of violence against women. As comparison to the situation in Estonia, sociologist Reet Nurmi, who has been studying prostitution for many years and assisted prostitutes, gave an overview of how Finnish media has approached the subject. The seminar was brought to a conclusion by

sociologist Katri Eespere from the Equality Bureau of the Social Affairs Ministry. She spoke about the possible ways sex business could be covered by the media in the future and she gave some guidelines on how victims of sex business could be interviewed.

### Emphasis on accountability of the media

The general theme of the seminar was that media does not only reflect reality, it also reproduces it. It was emphasised that journalism is not a by-stander and neutral recorder of social phenomena, but an involved institution that also forms opinion and attitudes. We discussed with the journalists how news, reports, and photos create in people and politicians attitudes about trafficking, prostitution, sex sellers, procurers and buyers. Such knowledge about their everyday work is



Speakers: Piret Rääni (Pubas Rõõm), Ilvi Jõe-Cannon and Marion Pajumets (ENUT), Kristiina Luht

a prerequisite to developing in the journalists a sense of social accountability. To date Estonian media has acted in a rather unreasoned and contrary manner. Those instances are not few where an edition contains on one page a story about trafficking in humans as violation of human rights, enumerating the problems of organised crime, but the back pages are full of sex ads.

The Estonian media's reporting has far too often normalised trafficking and commodification of women, and written of sex selling as one of the liberal choices in a world full of opportunities. On one hand, the depictions designed to sell newsprint do not reflect the real situation for most of Estonia's prostitutes. And on the other hand, they subconsciously support sex business.

We finished the seminar with the view that time has arrived for Estonian journalism as a whole and every edition individually to decide whether to go with the development of a society that respects human dignity or to be an agent for sex business.

toward trafficking and prostitution. The seminar also gave advice to the youth workers on how to treat these subjects when working with young people.

The seminar was the fourth in a series of seminars held at the Tallinn Pedagogical University. Instructors were Kristiina Luht and Katri Eespere from the Equality Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and Sirle Blumberg from *Living for Tomorrow*, an NGO that provides sex education to young people. Additional speakers were sociologist Marion Pajumets from the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre and Enrik Luts from the Police Department.

The seminar was supported by the US Department of State, the Foreign Ministry of Norway, and Tallinn Pedagogical University.

### Estonia's gender equality saga reaches an end

Eha Reitemann

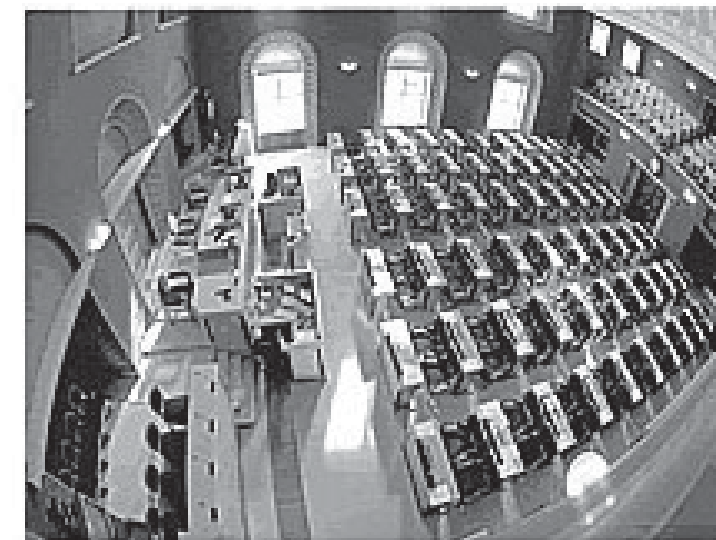
The Estonian women's organisations have demanded for years the adoption of gender equality legislation. Again this year, their annual conference sent on January 24 a letter to the parliament's leadership, recommending the inclusion of a list of items in the gender equality bill.

The recommendations were:

1. Law must have a separate definition for gender discriminating advertisement besides the improprieties in advertising in the present law.
2. Establishment of an institution that contains a mechanism which would bring an end to discrimination by a private entity. Without it a person is not guaranteed equal legal protection against violation of her/his rights by either public or private entities.
3. The statute must contain a minimum amount of compensation for a victim of gender discrimination. Recommendation: 10 times the minimum monthly wage set by law.
4. A person must be able to be compensated for any kind of gender discrimination and not only when it occurs in place of employment or education.
5. The bill lacks an enforcement mechanism and, therefore, a legally binding state office needs to be included either in the form of gender commissioner or ombudsman.
6. Representatives of women's organisations must be included in Gender Equality Council.

Glancing back at history, we see that the women's organisations annual conference in 2003 sent a letter to the parliament, urging the members to pass the gender equality bill that was before them at the time.

No doubt, the unanimous passage of the bill finally on April 7 is a major step forward considering that less than a year ago, there was still an attempt to push through the parliament a general anti-



Riigikogu passed the Gender Equality Bill on April 7, 2004

discrimination bill. However, the law is not the kind women's organisations hoped to have. Very little remains of the draft that was drawn by specialists and thoroughly worked through by different parties.

Definitions of indirect discrimination and sexual harassment, also paragraphs on burden of proof do not conform to EU legislation. For example, our legislators did not want to recognise that customs can be discriminating albeit last spring the Estonian public saw the gender discriminating practices of an Arab airline company who came to Estonia to recruit stewardesses. The paragraph on sexual harassment is even more absurd as a consequence of the legislators adding, at the last minute, the word "wilful" in front of commission and/or omission.

The recommendations made by the women's annual conference were largely omitted from the law. It does not include a definition of gender discriminatory advertisement, a minimum amount for compensation, and not a word about the composition of Gender Equality Council.

Unfortunately, the law does not give equal legal protection to everybody against discrimination by either

public or private entities. And we do not have a single institution obliged to order cease and desist discrimination by a private entity. The Legal Chancellor has the authority to supervise equal treatment in the public sector. Gender Equality Commissioner can submit only an opinion to the Chancellor as to whether discrimination has occurred.

The law lacks an effective mechanism that would see if and how the

law is implemented in state, local and employer levels. Although supervision is assigned to both the Social Affairs Ministry and the Gender Equality Commissioner, it is not clear what happens if, for example, a local government ignores the gender equality law.

Women's organisations have an important role in this sphere. They have to take the implementation of the long awaited law under their surveillance and to remind the officials of their responsibilities.