

The Finnish National Rapporteur

This text is largely based on the report on the ECPAT UK information on the Finnish National Rapporteur at: <http://www.ecpat.org.uk/content/finnish-national-rapporteur>

Two European countries, Finland and the Netherlands, have appointed an independent National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings.

Background

The [Ombudsman for Minorities](#) in Finland was given the role of National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings in 2009. The current post holder is Eva Biaudet (pictured).



The amendments made to the Act on the Ombudsman for Minorities and the National Discrimination Tribunal concerning the Ombudsman's role as the Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings were based on the *Revised National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*, adopted by the Finnish Government in June 2008.

The Ombudsman for Minorities is an independent and autonomous authority located administratively within the Ministry of the Interior.

Role of the National Rapporteur

The National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings analyses and evaluates the implementation of legislation and activities to combat trafficking in human beings, and issues recommendations to make the Finnish Government's action against human trafficking more effective.

The main duties of the National Rapporteur, as set out in the Act on the Ombudsman for Minorities and the National Discrimination Tribunal, are to:

- monitor phenomena relating to human trafficking, the fulfillment of international obligations and the effectiveness of national legislation;
- issue proposals, recommendations, statements, opinions and advice relevant to the fight against



human trafficking and to the realization of the rights of victims;

- keep in contact with international organizations on human trafficking issues;
- provide legal advice to and assist victims of trafficking as necessary;
- report annually to the Government and every four years to Parliament on human trafficking and related phenomena.

The Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings also provides training in human trafficking issues to such groups as prosecutors, police officers, border guardsmen, occupational safety and health inspectors, court personnel and professionals of the social and health care sector.

In her capacity as the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, the Ombudsman has the right, notwithstanding the secrecy provisions, to obtain information not only from authorities but also from producers of services and support measures for victims of trafficking and from beneficiaries of state aid intended for combating human trafficking. Personal data on an individual victim is available to the Ombudsman only in cases where access to this information is vital in order to perform the reporting duty.

How the Finnish National Rapporteur has made a difference

Mobilizing the resources of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings is particularly important because, as yet, there is no human trafficking coordinator or other similar government-level actor in Finland to assume responsibility for promoting action against trafficking and directing it at the operational level.

The Employment and Equality Committee in the Finnish Parliament considers that the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings can play a significant role in promoting action against human trafficking by closely liaising with the authorities and third-sector actors, by collecting reliable data and by bringing up problems and development needs. In the final analysis, responsibility for action against trafficking in human beings rests with the Government, but through her studies, international contacts and development proposals, an independent Rapporteur monitoring anti-trafficking action can help the Government comprehend the phenomenon and point the way to action.

During her time in office from 2009 - 2010, the first National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, Johanna Suurpää, successfully laid the foundation for extensive, sustainable and human rights-centered working practice that could promote the implementation of trafficking victims' rights and other action against trafficking in human beings. This was achieved, for example, by collecting and analyzing the necessary data on the status of action against trafficking in human beings, by networking with parties involved in this action at home and abroad, by working with customers and by taking part in training the authorities.

The National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings has extensive monitoring rights: she reports not only on actual human trafficking offences (trafficking in human beings and aggravated trafficking), but also on phenomena and offences closely related to human trafficking (in particular, extortionate industrial discrimination, aggravated procuring and aggravated arrangement of illegal



immigration). Thanks to this wide perspective, the Rapporteur's reporting on human trafficking has helped to clarify the boundaries between various phenomena and offence categories, and thus has also facilitated the identification of trafficking victims in a greater number of cases.

Independence, autonomy and transparency are vital requirements for discharging the duties associated with reporting on trafficking in human beings. The independence and autonomy of the Rapporteur have enhanced confidence in and the credibility of the role and support the post holder's ability to analyze the status of action against trafficking in human beings and put forward proposals for developing this action as a player outside the Government.

