

Safe migration hotline operation

The operation of the national infoline 113 has been started in May 2011. Now it functions in cooperation with the NGO “Business Women’s Club” (Brest). In this partnership, La Strada and Business Women’s Club share spheres of responsibility based on principle of the geographical division of the country. Having 6 administrative regions in Belarus, La Strada has taken 3 of them (Vitebsk, Mogilev and Minsk regions), and receives incoming calls only from these regions, including the capital of Belarus – Minsk. The NGO “Business Women’s Club” administrates the rest 3 three regions (Brest, Grodno, and Gomel regions).

Infoline’s services are available daily free-of-charge **12 hours daily** from 8 a.m. till 8 p.m. In order to prevent people from unsafe migration, national infoline 113 provides counselling on the following issues:

- risks of being trafficked,
- critical situations abroad (labor exploitation, domestic violence abroad, the loss of documents, repatriation, etc.)
- rules of safe migration and behaviour abroad,
- working abroad legally,
- studying abroad,
- participation in Au-Pair programmes,
- marriage and divorce procedures with foreigners,
- children’s rights,
- contacts of Belarusian embassies in the countries of destination, international organizations, NGOs and religious organizations abroad etc.

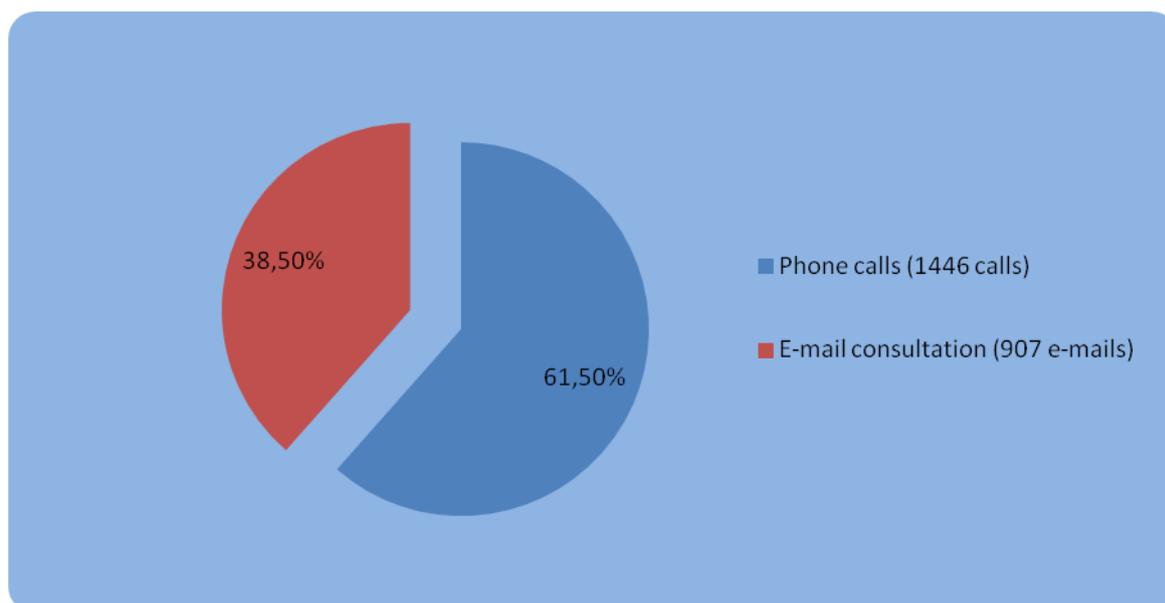
Infoline provides clients not only with information regarding safe migration, but also acts as a **help-line** for victims of trafficking in human being, for people in extraordinary situations abroad, which require urgent reaction and immediate assistance.

Besides providing prevention counselling national hotline 113 serves the aim of identification of trafficking trends and patterns (recruitment methods, channels, forms of exploitation, etc.), which provides evidence-based guidelines for shaping focus of counter-trafficking strategies.

In 2013 national hotline 113 received **2404** calls, where **1393** calls were registered by La Strada Belarus. In comparison with the previous 2012 year the number of calls received in 2013 increased on 54%. Gender-disaggregated data on all categories of phone calls, allowing identifying gender-specific trends and adjusting hotline counselling was collected. Through centralised data collection and administration La Strada Belarus contributed to better analyses of the data and dissemination of comparable statistics (presented in the form of reports, tables, charts, info-graphics, etc.) to interested anti-trafficking stakeholders. The infoline data is instrumental for policy making at the national level.

La Strada Belarus has got 2 353 requests from citizens via e-mails and hotline 113. E-mail consultations constituted almost two fifth of all received calls (see Diagram 1). So this trend shows that the Internet and Internet technologies play a very important role in the infoline services’ availability among people. In comparison to 2012 the amount of e-mail requests in 2013 have doubled.

Diagram 1. Ration of phone calls and e-mails consultations in 2013



In 2013 1504 women and 849 men obtained consultations through phone calls and e-mails (see Diagram 2). The main request from men and women was information about safe employment abroad (32% of all the incoming calls), passport-and-visa issues (18% of all the incoming calls), and marriages abroad (see Diagram 3).

The number of calls from men concerning employment abroad exceeds in 1,5 those from women (in 2012 it exceeded in 2 times), but calls from women about marriages abroad exceed in 12 times those from men. It is interesting that amount of calls from women about passport-and-visa issues also exceeds those from men.

So in comparison to 2012, in 2013 the percentage of women interested in working abroad increased on more than 10%, but the percentage of women planning to get married abroad and in general to go abroad stayed the same.

Diagram 2. Number of women and men that have been consulted in 2013

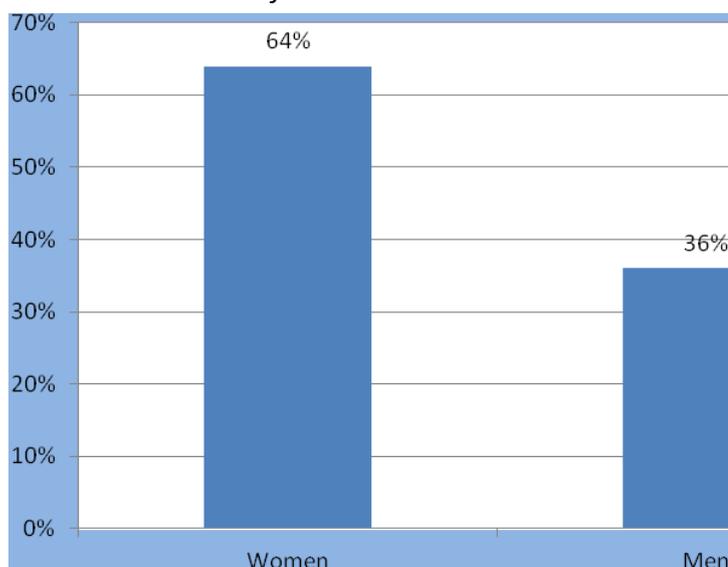
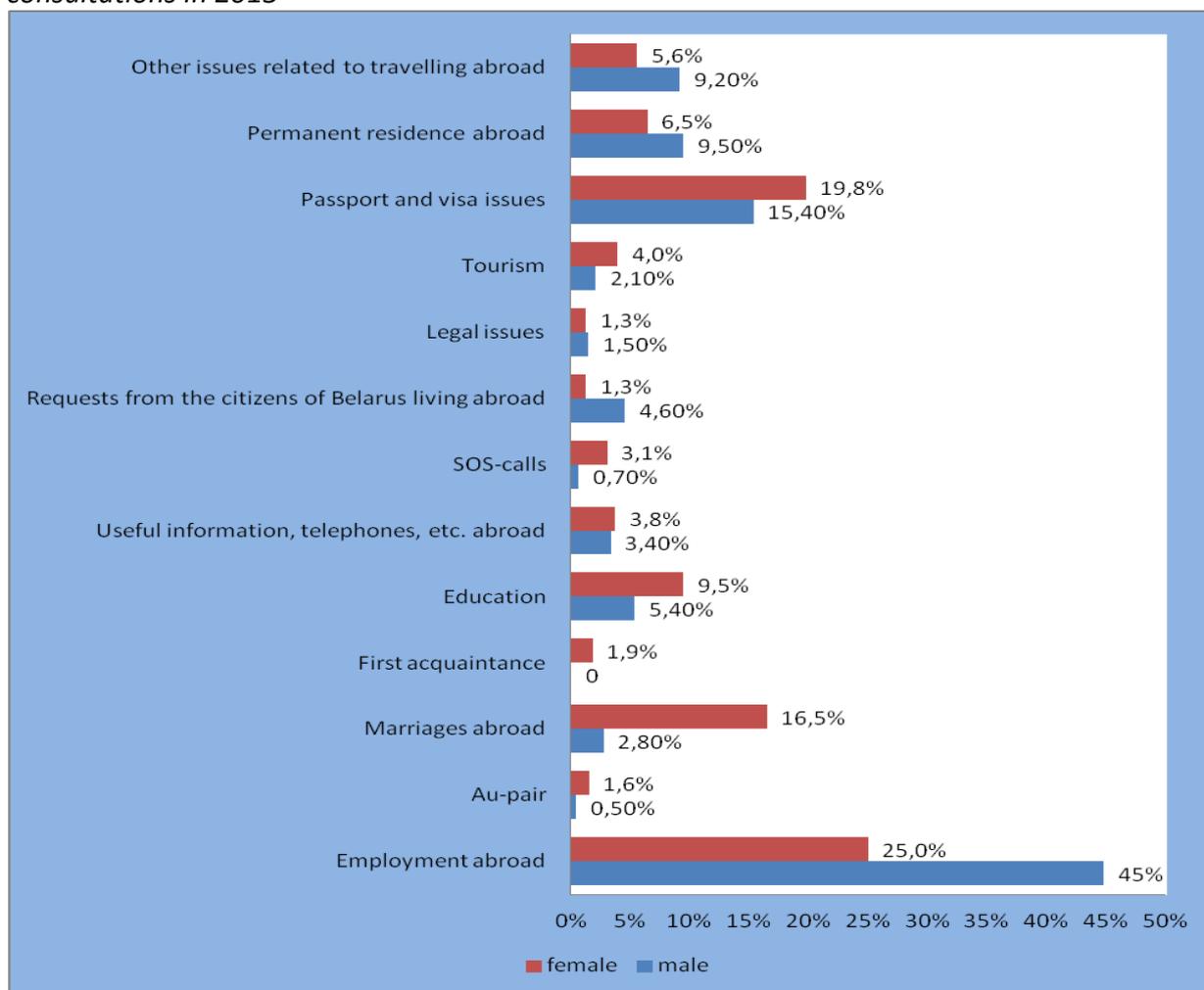


Diagram 3. Distribution of phone calls and e-mails consultations according to the thematic of consultations in 2013



The geography of migration covered more than 90 countries in 2013, including some exotic and remote places, such as Antigua, Bolivia, Cameroon, Panama, Burkina Faso, Jordan, and Oman.

According to gender-disaggregated data the most popular counties for men are Russia (37% of all requests from men) and Poland (7% of all requests got from men). For women Russia is also the most requested destination (15% of all women’s requests), as well as Turkey and Germany. 9% of requests were connected to Germany and Turkey accordingly. It can be mentioned that Turkey is much more popular destination point for women than for men (it was registered 10 times more calls from women than from men). The same can be observed regarding Germany (3 times more) and Italy (3 times more). Men are not defined with the country of destination in 2 times more often than women.

However in general the most popular country to travel to is Russia, both for women and men – 22% of all registered calls and e-mails. To sum up, it can be pointed out top 5 most popular countries of destination. They are: Russia (22% of all requests both from men and women), Poland (6%), Germany (7%), Turkey (7%), and Ukraine (4%).

As a part of constant staff capacity building and hotline staff management, 12 staff meetings took place: on counselling quality control, 2 written examinations, meetings with representatives of foreign embassies located in Minsk, a psychologist and other specialists.

The main achievement of 2013 was elaboration and signing the Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) between two NGOs responsible for national coverage of 113 infoline – La Strada Belarus and Business Women’s club. SOPs would contribute further to harmonisation of data collection and registration systems, defining best practices and common standards for services on the basis of principle of shared responsibility.

New informational and educational campaign “Take your decision with open eyes”

New informational and educational campaign “Take your decision with open eyes”_for promotion of infoline 113 services was launched on 18 October, 2013 – the annual European Anti-trafficking Day. The campaign has been prepared in close partnership with the Ministry of Interior of Belarus and Business women’s club. The plots of the 3 video clips were based on the real and most typical situations that Belarusian migrants face before travelling abroad with various purposes. The main attribute of all video-clips was the blindfold on the potential migrants’ eyes. The symbol is well-known to Belarusians as a sign of fraud, as a sign that a person pins faith on someone’s words. The main characters take off the blindfold by making a call to the infoline 113. The promo campaign was supported by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 2013 La Strada received about **4,6 %** of direct calls and e-mails from people who had got in crisis situations abroad. The quantity of cases increased more than 3 times in comparison to 2012. The appropriate assistance and referral have been organized in each and every case. However the analysis showed the need for improving the registration of such cases and its referrals to specialists on social work for further case management. As a solution, the internal referral procedures were adjusted, describing referral algorithm of a case to La Strada specialist on social work, infoline manager, and other responsible staff, that can be involved into providing assistance to client. Moreover, the questionnaires for infoline consultants were elaborated for improving the data collection on crisis situations. 3 trainings were held in 2013 for infoline staff on responding to crisis situations. As a result, the information collection was improved, as well as the responding and monitoring system of each crisis case. As well, the statistics collecting was improved providing grounds for better analysis, for dissemination of comparable statistics (presented in the form of reports, tables, charts, etc.) to interested anti-trafficking stakeholders, to prepare recommendation on legislation amendment based on clients’ needs.

Main lesson learnt in 2013 regards the necessity of more effective and targeted work with state structures in Belarus. In the course of preparation of the informational campaign the main risk was associated with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), whose support for successful campaign coverage is crucial, but who could possibly withdraw its positive decision on the aims of the campaign (its content, image, format etc.). To minimize the risk, the working group consisting of main La Strada partners and official of the Ministry was organized. The involvement of the MIA representative starting from the stage of scenarios selection for campaign, allow getting the necessary further support. The MIA’s support provides the recognition of La Strada advertisement as a social one and subsequently facilitates its free placement on TV. It contributes to the sustainability of the informational campaign, and allows holding it regardless the financial means for advertisement in the projects.

Provision of assistance to the trafficked persons

In the reporting period **17 (presumable) trafficked persons and their relatives** have been assisted. All clients were female. All services were provided free-of-charge and included 10 basic types of services.

Table 3. Types of assistance provided to trafficked persons

Rendered assistance	Number of THB clients
Meeting at the airport, railway station, bus station	4
Accommodation in shelter	1
Psychological assistance	6
Medical aid and examination	4
Local travel (in Belarus) expenses	4
First aid kits	2
Referrals and mediation with police	10
Counselling	17
Legal aid	2
Informational and emotional assistance in search for missing persons, safe returning to Belarus and justice procedure (for suffered people and their relatives)	14

Regular **monitoring** of cases serves for evaluation of efficiency of social assistance rendered. La Strada elaborated monitoring system that allows observing life changes of trafficked persons.

Main problem for rendering assistance to the trafficked persons is the absence of formalized National Referral Mechanism (NRM). In January 2013 LS Belarus has submitted its recommendations on relevant legislation improvement to the national anti-trafficking coordination body – Ministry of Internal Affairs. One of the principal issues raised in the recommendations was the elaboration of legal act stipulating NRM functioning. Moreover, the elaboration of inter-agency recommendations on NRM is a part of the current National anti-trafficking action plan (2013-2015). It is envisaged that NRM elaboration will take place in 2014.

Advocacy and lobby activities

The main focus of **advocacy and lobby activities** was linked to the ratification by Belarus of the **CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings** in 2013. During the years 2013-2014 the national legislation should be harmonized in accordance with the Convention, in particular, some amendments are expected in the Criminal Code. Gender Perspectives/LS Belarus used that opportunity by drafting recommendations on legislation improvement aimed at protection of victims' rights. The recommendations were submitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They have been elaborated based on the legislation and law enforcement practice analysis, actual needs and evidences from the survivors, inonline statistics' analysis on migration trends.

As far as GRETA is a very important and influential mechanism in the protection of the rights of trafficked persons, GP started the communication process with La Strada offices in the countries that passed GRETA monitoring, on the capacity building possibilities.

The work on inclusion of the social services for the survivors of domestic violence and trafficking into **Social Contracting System** served another important focus **for lobby work**. In 2013 the adoption of amendments to the Law "On Social Services for Citizens" was enacted. For realization of this law in practice, the Regulation on tender procedure of state social contract and Regulation on procedures and terms of granting the subsidies to NGOs for rendering social services and social projects realization were developed. Local state budgets had to reserve money for social services only for forthcoming 2014. In spring 2013 the documents describing the social services needed for survivors were prepared by Gender Perspectives and submitted to Minsk city administration for further inclusion them into state social contracting system. However, the issue of domestic

violence has not been prioritized as the subject for local (rayons) budgets, thus, state authorities were not able to allocate the subsequent grants for NGOs. Therefore, that forms the lobbying task for 2014.