

Safe migration hotline operation

La Strada Belarus hotline has been providing consultations for groups-at-risk for 11 years and in total received more than **16,300** phone calls. Its services available daily free-of-charge **12 hours per day** from 8 a.m. till 8 p.m. Part-time staff includes **7** consultants with university diplomas in social work, which allow maintaining high level of services. La Strada hotline has both toll-free number for calls throughout Belarus, and land-based number for phone calls from abroad. **Anti-trafficking/safe migration hotline** provides counselling on the following issues:

- risks of being trafficked,
- 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.

In addition, hotline provides not only information regarding safe migration, but also acts as a **help-line** for victims of trafficking in human being and domestic violence.

In order to provide citizens with safe migration and human trafficking information, and facilitate access to advise, La Strada Belarus has started operation of the special **three-digit number phone line – 113**. The number has been assigned by the government as national anti-trafficking hotline in the frames of the 3rd National Action Programme against THB. Operation of national hotline 113 has started in May 2011 and is being done in cooperation with the NGO “Business Women’s Club”, where La Strada is responsible for hotline administration in 3 regions of the country and capital Minsk, and Business Women’s Club – for other 3 regions. In August 2011 the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between two organisations aimed at development of common Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs). Common decision was taken that in 2011-2013 La Strada will take a lead in collecting joint statistic and its analysis and building-up common evaluation system. Further partners agreed and developed a concept of promotion campaign (images, messages, channels, etc.) for hotline 113, which will start in second half of 2012.

Original La Strada hotline toll-free number (8-801-100-8-801) will be used for national hotline on domestic violence, which is planned to start in May 2012 with the financial support of UNFPA and UN Trust Fund against violence against women.

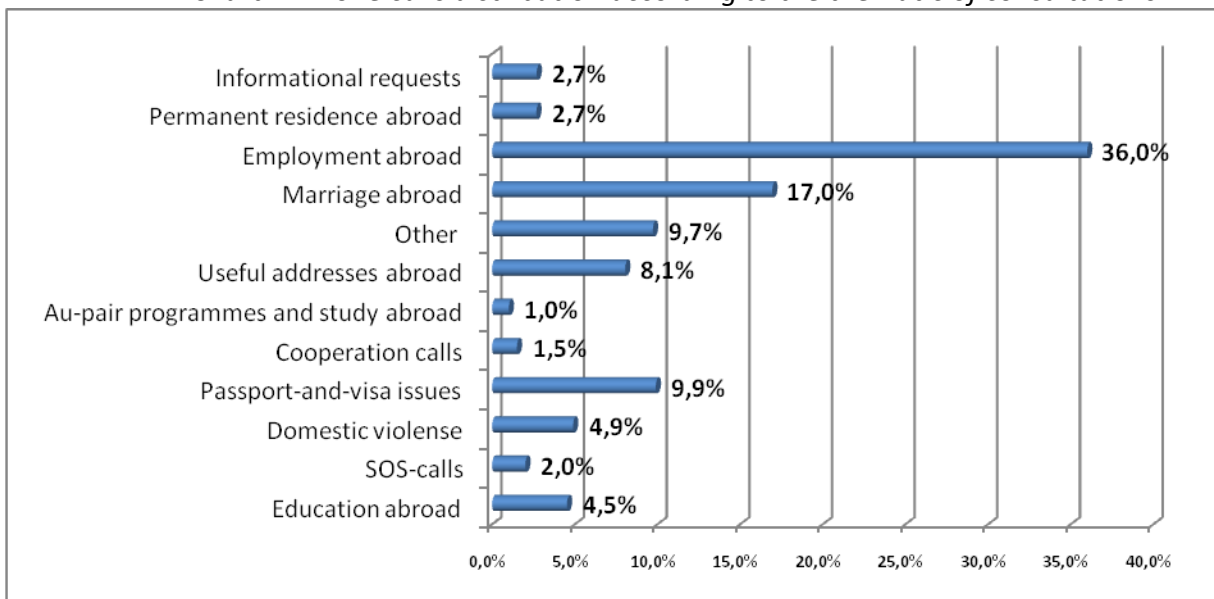
Besides providing prevention counselling national 113 hotline serves the aim of identification of trafficking trends and patterns (recruitment methods, channels, forms of exploitation, etc.), which provides evidence-based guidelines for shaping focus of counter-trafficking strategies.

In 2011 La Strada Belarus hotline has received **596 calls**. There are certain changes in the structure of calls over the last years:

- increase in number of calls regarding **employment abroad**: in 2011 – 36% of calls, in 2008 – 24,5% (*Chart 1.*). This data immediately reflects increase in labour migration as consequence of financial crisis in Belarus in 2011. Moreover, 52% of hotline clients

search for work abroad via firms in Russia, Ukraine and other countries, while intermediary services might contribute to risks of trafficking;

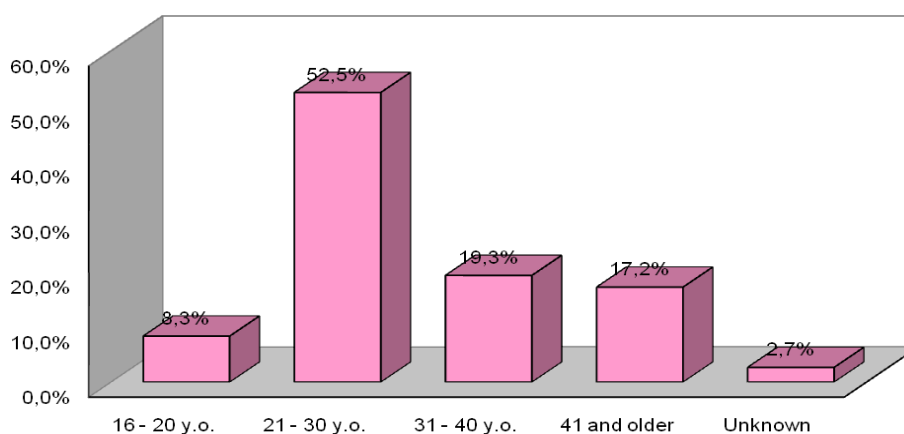
Chart 1. Phone calls distribution according to the thematic of consultations



- the number of hotline clients who were provided with information about **“rules how to get residence permit abroad”** was increased by 3 times in 2011;
- increase in the category **“information obtained through Internet”**: in 2011 – 28,0%, in 2003 – 4,2 %;
- **the number of requests from men** increased: in 2011 – 30,1%, in 2009 – 20%. La Strada hotline noticed the increase of phone calls from men about labour exploitation, thus it is recognise other than sexual exploitation forms of trafficking.

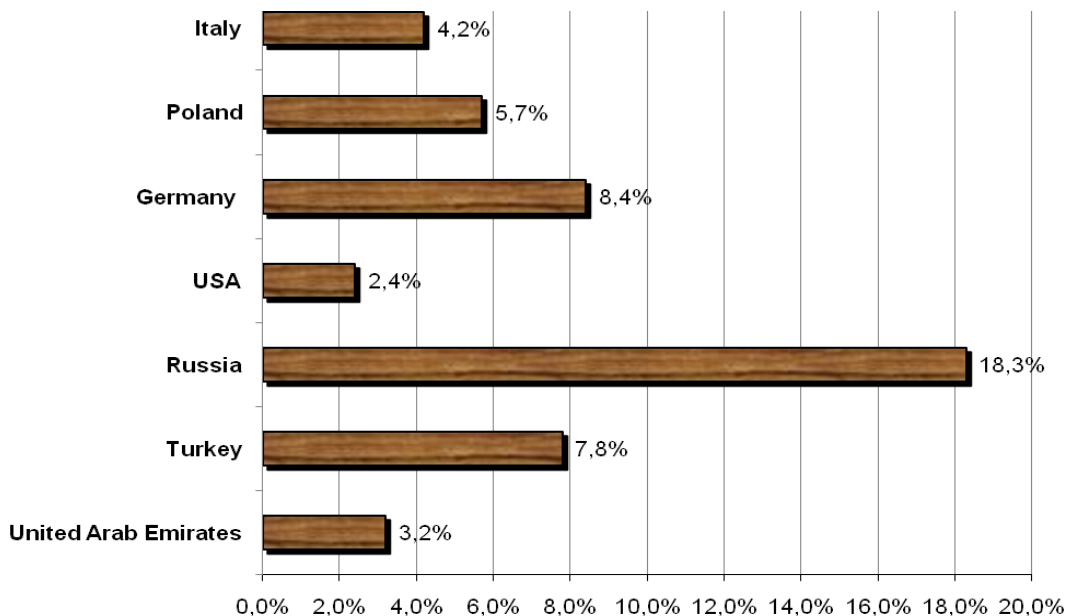
Inquiries from regions of Belarus remained static during years – inhabitants of Minsk area and Minsk are traditionally active here – 75,5%. The overwhelming majority of clients are of 21-30 years old (*Chart 2.*). La Strada gets about 2% of direct calls from survivors of trafficking or from their relatives in 2011. The appropriate assistance and referral have been organized in each and every case.

Chart 2. Phone calls distribution according to the age of clients



The geography of migration covers **103** countries, including some exotic and remote places for Belarus, such as Yemen, Burkina Faso, Mali, Peru, Jordan, and Oman. The seven leading countries of destination in 2011 were Russia, Germany, the USA, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Italy and Poland (*Chart 3.*).

Chart 3. Phone calls distribution according to the countries of destination



It is possible to determine two categories of destination countries in regard to purpose of travelling. The first one is connected to labour migration (Russian Federation, Turkey, UAE, Great Britain), the second – to concluding marriages and studies abroad (Germany, France, Italy). This categorization contributes to elaboration of targeted prevention strategies and campaigns.

In order to ensure the provision of high level counselling services the electronic hotline database was regularly updated and filled in with new information. Database currently includes social, legal, cultural, religious and other relevant information about **103** countries of destination. As part of constant staff capacity building activity and hotline staff management, 11 staff meetings took place: on counselling quality control, supervision with a psychologist, 2 written examinations and seminar for exchange of information with the stakeholders. The hotline manager has overall responsibility for proper performance of activity and its monitoring. Analysis of hotline statistics on the countries of destination, age of clients, sources of information, and thematic is reflected in the press-releases and distributed among stakeholders and interested parties on the project – governmental bodies, including law-enforcement, NGOs and international organisations, educational institutions and mass-media, etc.

As new number of 113 hotline has started operation in May 2011, the awareness about it is low as well as number of calls received so far. Thus, significant financial resources are needed for promotion of hotline 113 services. Moreover, hotline 113 experiences some technical problems with technical quality of communication. For this reason at the end of 2011 the joint national promotion strategy for united national 113 hotline was developed in cooperation with the partner NGO running hotline in other regions. Detailed strategy, concepts, design, images, messages and PR-products have been discussed and validated during 2 working groups with partners from NGOs, IOM and government agencies. PR-products were elaborated taking into

account channels of spreading information and gender peculiarities. 2 focus groups with actual and potential migrants were conducted to effectively reach the target audience. Elaborated PR-products of the joint hotline 113 will be used in promotion campaign in 2012-2013.

Annual Internet Campaign "Safe Migration"

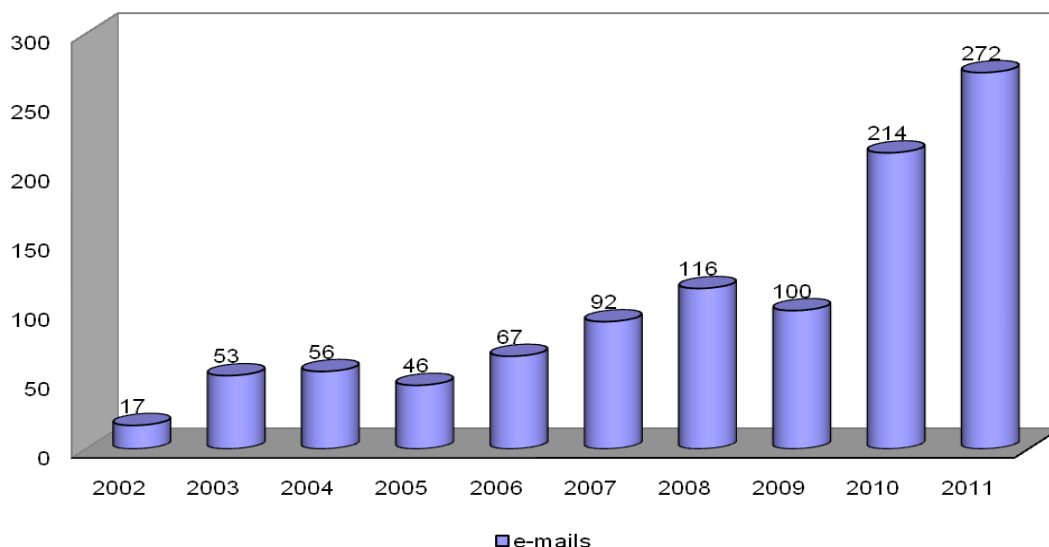
Internet remains to be one of the most important channels for obtaining information about job, study and marriage opportunities abroad for Belarusian citizens (28% of all people who reached hotline in 2011 used Internet as an informational channel).

Internet Campaign "Safe migration" is aimed at raising awareness about regulated migration abroad: legal opportunities for work, marriage, study and tourism. Core messages of the Campaign contain the information about rules of safe migration and rights and obligations of migrants, while La Strada does not encourage migrants neither discourage them from migration.

Internet promotion campaign in 2011 was elaborated based on evaluation of the previous years' results, hotline and e-mail statistics. The new focus of the Campaign was on development cooperation with private companies working in migration domain. Campaign was supported by several private companies: Information Advice Centre "Unvers", Marital Agency "Gimenez", employment company "Youth Centre of Students Detached Forces", Fashion studio of Sergei Nagorny, analytical portal "Next day of your country". Within the project course cooperation with business partners have been strengthened and can be evaluated positively. Additionally, national NGO "Batskaushchyna" uniting Belarus Diasporas abroad joined the Campaign and thus strengthen the network of support organisations in other countries.

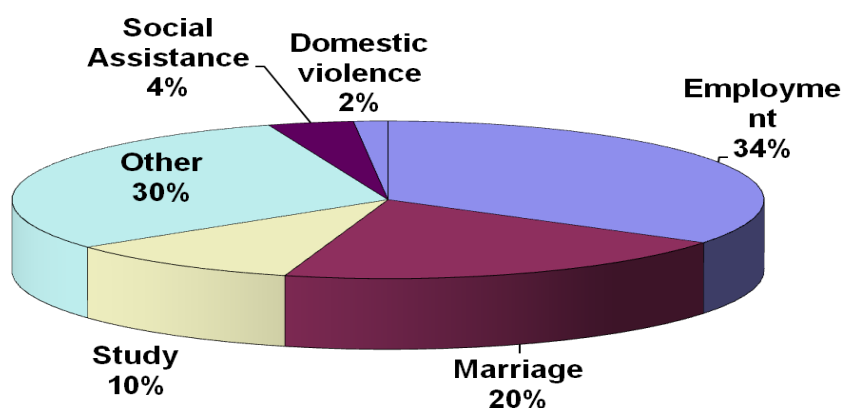
In the frames of the Campaign new banners have been developed and placed in Internet (Yandex.ru, Googl.ru, Mamba.ru) as well as 86 articles on migration and counter-trafficking thematic – on the sites of Information agencies (Belapan.by, Interfax.by, etc.) and 21 articles on La Strada website. As central part of the Campaign **new version of the webpage www.lastrada.by** was designed targeting potential migrants. Through its website La Strada promotes its unique expertise as being a national resource on safe migration issues: the information is updated twice a week with relevant national and international migration news, legislation and regulation developments. This new approach proofed its effectiveness – number of website visitors increased in 2.3 times as compared to 2010 (from 36,137 to 81,324 visits). Moreover, Campaign has resulted in increasing number of e-mail consultations. La Strada experience shows that **e-mail counselling** is popular and accessible both for people residing in Belarus and those staying abroad. While in 2008-2009 the total quantity of requests composed around **100 e-mails**, in 2011 it almost tripled and equals **to 272**. Total e-mail requests since 2002 are 1033 (*Chart 4.*)

*Chart 4. Progressive growth of e-mails during 2002 - 2011
Total number of e-mails: 1033*



In 2011 e-mail statistics has been analysed according to gender, age, place of residence, thematic, country of destination, etc. The ratio of male and female clients was 31:69. The main request as previous years was information about employment abroad (*Chart 5.*)

Chart 5. Thematic of e-mail counselling



The analysis of e-mail requests reflected in the press-releases and distributed among stakeholders and all interested parties on the project – governmental bodies, including law-enforcement, NGOs, IOs, educational institutions, mass-media etc.

Provision of assistance to the trafficked persons

La Strada Belarus provides social assistance based on direct approach of clients and through referrals from other institutions. In 2011 **25 (presumable) trafficked persons and their relatives have been assisted.**

Direct assistance to victims of trafficking was provided for 13 people. 12 from them were female and 1 – male. Informational and emotional support in search for missing persons, safe returning to Belarus and court procedures were provided to 12 victims of trafficking and their relatives.

Chart 6. Type of assistance

<i>No</i>	<i>Type of assistance</i>	<i>Number of THB clients</i>
1	Direct assistance to victims (based on needs assessment and individual rehabilitation plan)	13
2	<i>including accommodation in shelter, together with underage children</i>	6
3	Informational and emotional assistance in search for missing persons, safe returning to Belarus and court procedures (via hotline)	12
	Total:	25

Consequently, the types of exploitation are as following:

Chart 7. Type of exploitation

<i>No</i>	<i>Type of exploitation</i>	<i>Number of THB clients</i>
1	Sexual, including porno-production	8
2	Labour	2
3	Mixed	3
	Total	13

La Strada rehabilitation and reintegration programme includes the following services:

- meeting the survivors upon arrival from the destination countries,
- assistance in returning home (to the previous place of residence) – covering local travel costs,
- accommodation of safe place/shelter facilities,
- facilitation of the vocational trainings, continuing/completing secondary education, re-qualification and employment,
- facilitation of the voluntary medical check up,
- referral to other organizations/specialists for provision of psychological, legal, medical, humanitarian and other kinds of assistance,
- information counselling about criminal proceedings, court trials/hearings, and claiming a compensation from offenders.

Additionally, each client can get a humanitarian-aid kit (upon request) that helps to cover emergency needs (hygienic items, towel, hairbrush etc.)

All services are provided free-of-charge. Monitoring of the reintegration of survivors is envisaged during the project implementation. Social workers file in the organisational database to describe progress with clients.

Chart 8. Types of assistance provided to victims of trafficking

<i>Rendered assistance</i>	<i>Number of THB clients</i>
Meeting at the airport, railway station, bus station	6
Accommodation in shelter	6 adults + 1 child
Psychological assistance	10
Medical aid and examination	4 adults + 1 child
Local travel (in Belarus) expenses	6
First aid kits	4
Referrals and mediation with police	7
Informational and emotional support, counselling	13
Legal aid	2

Vocational training	2
Informational and emotional assistance in search for missing persons, safe returning to Belarus and justice procedure direct to suffered people and their relatives via hotline	12

After the first meeting with a client social worker arranges for emergency medical or psychological aid and other services based on identified crisis needs and the level of the psycho-emotional state. At this stage the social worker most often plays the leading role in relations with clients, thus shaping the reintegration programme. Approximately in a week or two, after the victim passes the first stage of adaptation to the changed life conditions, the social worker together with the client make changes/adjustments to the reintegration programme, defining what has been done so far. One-three months later, after receiving the necessary medical, psychological, legal and other aid, the client together with the social worker reconsiders the previous reintegration programme to analyze what else has to be done. At this stage the victim is ready to solve her personal, interpersonal, family or other type of social problems independently. Thus, the acquired knowledge and skills are used to cope with new problem situations.

Trainer's network to prevent human trafficking

Since 2004 there are NGO and GO network that are entitled to providing prevention lectures for at risks groups on trafficking prevention. In 2009 in order to expand and strengthened approach in trafficking prevention 20 experienced trainers from NGO sector and GO were selected and trained on related to trafficking issues - domestic violence, gender inequality, labour rights and employment. As a follow up, trainers were encouraged to elaborate own modules of 5 trainings each. In 2011 members of La Strada network conducted over 341 trainings for more than 1 605 participants. Trainers use interactive methodic, applicable to the informing about risks of being trafficked, hotline services, domestic violence, gender quality, labour rights.

For assessment of trainers' efficiency, monitoring & evaluation system was introduced. Trainings were designed for gender-balanced audience, gender composition was 45% boys and 55% girls in 2011. Analysis of the questionnaires allows to see the challenges and positive changes in professionalism of trainers:

- young people are good re-translation channel. Participants of the trainings spread information further in 2011 – to 10,257 people, meaning that each participant in average spread the information to 10 persons. It strongly supports the necessity and actuality of the trainings for youth audience and increased motivation of trainers.
- Interviews which trainers conducted in three months after trainings shows participants reported that 86,6% had changed attitude to problems and victims of DV and VoTs and 75,6 % had used getting knowledge and new behaviour model in their life.
- feedback from trainers shows the need in systematic thematic support of trainers' network, supervision and mentoring.

Promotion of compensation issues

It is acknowledged that trafficked persons are entitled to compensation. However, prosecution of offenders does not automatically bring justice to victims. Although Belarus has legal provisions for victims of crime to claim compensation for material and non-material damages, in practise, it remains one of the weak rights of trafficked persons when it comes to accessibility and the actual receipt of a compensation payment by a victim.

In order to test actual court procedures regarding access of trafficked persons to compensation 4 court verdicts have been analysed by external expert with the purposes to study how law-enforcement practice in provision of compensation to VoT has been progressed. As a result legal analytical report was prepared with further recommendations based on new conclusions and finding of 2009 research. Main conclusion of the analysis in regard to insufficient amount of awarded compensation and difficulty in its actual receiving by VoT, need to be further studied. Inspired by analysis results and in order to improve VoTs' access to compensation information La Strada elaborated a leaflet describing role of VoT in court procedures (rights and obligations) and detailed procedures on compensation claiming. The leaflet was designed as a material that has long-lasting effect, with clear and simple language, taking into consideration the needs of trafficking survivors of both genders. The leaflets are being spread throughout regional NGO-service providers' network and state social centres that work directly with VoTs.

For consolidation efforts at the regional level on systematic and sustainable access to compensation for victims of trafficking the regional workshop "Compensation for trafficked persons: the experience of Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine" was held 10th June, 2011. NGOs and IOs representatives, lawyers, prosecutors, police officers, judges, researches, media representatives (from 5 countries) took part at this event. The workshop was addressed to developing and strengthening dialogue between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on the issue of access to justice and compensations for VoTs and promotion of efforts and initiatives at the regional level Participants introduced (presented) and discussed best models of legislation, legal practice and know-how experience of compensation schemes, legal practice on assets confiscation, strategies for advocacy rights of VoTs on compensation, etc.

As a follow-up, book "Compensation for victims of human trafficking: the experience of Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine" was published for promotion results of the International workshop among legal community, NGOs, IOs, GOs representatives.

Round tables for promotion of safe migration issue

Three thematic round tables region/country-focused and type-of-migration-focused have been conducted in November-December 2011. In order to ensure La Strada hotline and website promotion, special information cards were published and distributed during the events and will be distributed further among partners and potential migrants.

In order to attract attention of bigger number of national media, press-centre of the weekly newspaper "Arguments and facts" (AIF) was invited for partnership. AIF (www.aif.by) is the most popular printed media in Belarus (over 100,000 copies weekly) and Russia. In the frames of cooperation with La Strada AIF provided access to journalists network, professional facilitation of the events and its premise.

The first event "Labour migration to EC and Russia: possibilities and risks for the Belarusians» was conducted on the 24th of November, 2011 and dedicated to two topics:

- labour migration to Russia, explaining new rules for employment for Customs Union's citizens;
- to labour exploitation case in the Czech Republic (EU), where Belarus citizens have been exploited without payment.

The second event "Education and exchange programmes in USA and EC: possibilities, difficulties, realities" (December 7, 2011) was focused on study migration and exchange programmes that are offered for Belarus students: Work and Travel (USA) and Au-pairs (EC).

The 3rd round table “How and why Belarusian women choose Middle East and European men” (December 13, 2011) was dedicated to marital migration.

As result 29 articles in newspapers and Internet were published, 10 radio programmes broadcasted.