

PRESS RELEASE

CHURCHES ALERT TO SEX TRAFFICKING ACROSS EUROPE

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4 October 2007

HOME SECRETARY URGED TO BACK CHASTE'S CAMPAIGN TO END EXPLOITATION

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has been urged to reconsider legislation surrounding the use of prostituted sex following yesterday's launch of Operation Pentameter 2 – a nationwide police raids on brothels.

Dr Carrie Pemberton, Chief Executive of CHASTE, a charity working towards achieving zero tolerance to sex trafficking in the UK, was an adviser on this latest high profile police operation and believes that the government should now review its laws to fight against trafficking for sexual exploitation.

CHASTE announced:

"We welcome the pro-active efforts of police which led to the release of 84 trafficked women during Operation Pentameter in March 2006. One year on from the opening of the UK Human Trafficking Centre we are now eager for the success this month of the more extensive Pentameter 2 in releasing many women currently being held as slaves for sexual exploitation. CHASTE has worked closely with police in an advisory capacity to ensure the sensitive treatment of survivors and the police have been equipped with over 500 mini iPods containing messages of advice and reassurance in ten different languages – a solution that is proving invaluable in helping to gain the trust of women in the early stages of police rescue.

Dr Pemberton also highlighted today's laws in Sweden which could be a role model for the UK which focus on reducing demand, and which the Home Secretary yesterday at the launch of Pentameter 2 indicated she would be interested in exploring.

"In 1999, Sweden passed some innovative legislation from which we could learn a great deal. This legislation which highlights the responsibility of those seeking 'pay-as-you-go sex' and makes the presence of demand the key arena for legislative and cultural change, has had an excellent result year on year in Sweden in reducing the presence of women being trafficked into the country, and the numbers of young Swedish women being recruited into the sex industry there.

"In Britain we know that two out of three of those caught in our own vice industry were recruited before their 18th birthday. These young women, as well as those who are trafficked, raped, tortured and psychologically brutalised, are the reason why we need to push for new legislation in the UK.

"We are delighted to see that the Home Secretary is considering exploring this very live option for improvement which has already taken place in pioneering Sweden."

Dr Pemberton, founder of CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking in Europe), gave Mrs Smith a copy of the charity's latest publication entitled '*Not for Sale: Raising Awareness: Ending Exploitation*'.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

1. Further information is available from Dr Pemberton on 0845 456 9335 or 07879 622 925
2. CHASTE is the interdenominational forum for the development of engaged response to the misery of human trafficking in the form of sexual exploitation. Initiated by Revd Dr Carrie Pemberton in 2003, the charity now works to develop co-operation across European churches for the prevention of sex trafficking. CHASTE works closely with the UKHTC and Operation Pentameter to identify potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and to provide

safety for survivors.

3. CHASTE is working to:

1. Form supportive networks with churches and faith communities in countries of origin and destination
2. Develop a network of safe housing to secure the safety of women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation
3. Provide training for immigration and police personnel, chaplaincy teams and churches
4. Research the moral and socio-economic conditions that result in trafficking with a view to promoting cultural and legislative change
5. Address Demand.