

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **“MODERN FORCED LABOUR: ASSISTING THE VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING” – NEW PROJECT LAUNCHED BY THE GERMAN INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

*Berlin.* At the beginning of June 2008, the German Institute for Human rights launched a three-year project entitled “Modern forced labour: Assisting the victims of human trafficking”. Today, obtaining appropriate payment and compensation for the victims of human trafficking and forced labour is exceedingly difficult. The project is aiming to provide financial support in selected cases in order to help victims to pursue their claims through the courts and at the relevant authorities. Seminars and conferences will be also held to raise awareness and train professionals in this field.

The Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” is providing financial support of EUR 200,000 each year. The project follows from a study “Human trafficking in Germany: Strengthening the human rights of the victims” produced by the German Institute for Human Rights. The study also contains recommendations for policymakers on the treatment of victims of forced labour and human trafficking.

*“Only few victims currently receive any compensation, and the amounts awarded are much lower than what they are entitled to,”* explained Heiner Bielefeldt, Director of the German Institute for Human Rights when the study was presented. Under established human rights conventions, states are obliged to ensure that all people can exercise their rights. *“In Germany, the voices of the victims of human trafficking are generally only heard when they testify against the perpetrators. Their own claims are often ignored. We have to bring about a change in people’s thinking,”* said the human rights expert.

Those affected have the right to claim damages from the perpetrators and in certain cases also under victim compensation law. In practice, few actually press their claims. Many victims are largely unaware of their rights, and the fact that they are often not recognised as victims or are deported as illegal immigrants often means their claims are not pursued.

*“It is not sufficient simply to prosecute the perpetrators,” says Dr Martin Salm, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Foundation. “We want justice for the victims and we aim to help them press their legitimate claims successfully against the perpetrators. For this we also need to provide professional advice and financial support to those acting on their behalf.”*

Among the further specific recommendations made by the study are to examine current residency and work regulations and to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

### **THE STUDY:**

**Petra Follmar-Otto / Heike Rabe:** Menschenhandel in Deutschland. Die Menschenrechte der Betroffenen stärken (Human trafficking in Germany: Strengthening the human rights of the victims; German only). German Institute for Human Rights, Berlin, June 2009, ISBN 978-3-937714-78-3

Link to the Study (PDF): [http://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publikationen/Studie/studie\\_menschenhandel\\_in\\_deutschland.pdf](http://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Publikationen/Studie/studie_menschenhandel_in_deutschland.pdf)

### **INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT:**

[www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de](http://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de)

[www.stiftung-evz.de](http://www.stiftung-evz.de)

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