

Narrative Report

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Thanks to the support received through this Graduate Travel/Research Grant I was able to travel to Helsinki, Finland and Tallinn, Estonia in November, 2010 to conduct interviews for my Master's thesis entitled "State Interest or Human Rights: Victim Assistance Programs for Human Trafficking Victims in Finland and Estonia."

The focus of my research was to identify how human trafficking policies developed in Finland and Estonia are being carried out in practice, as well as determining how these policies measure up against established European and other international standards. Furthermore, my intention was to expand the amount of empirical research being conducted in the field of human trafficking, which is why the interview process was so important. Overall, the primary aim of my project was to determine whether it is the consideration of the human rights and needs of trafficking victims or the interests of the State that provide the primary motivation in the development and delivery of victim assistance policies.

I carried out interviews with victim assistance service providers, Finland's National Rapporteur on human trafficking, human rights activists and government representatives. The material gained from these interviews was invaluable and offered important insights into the actual implementation of policy and the day-to-day experience of human trafficking victims in both countries.

The interviews conducted were crucial to completion of this research project and I am grateful to the Center for European Studies and the European Commission for enabling this process through this grant. I would also like to offer my sincerest appreciation to the Center for European Studies staff and Professor Joan DeBardeleben for all of their support during the research process.