



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
Ministry of Interior
Deputy Minister of Interior
National Coordinator on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings

**MEASURES AND ACTION TAKEN TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN
ALBANIA**

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

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Introduction

The Albanian National Coordinator on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings thanks you for granting this opportunity to address here on the efforts of the Albanian government in combating trafficking in human beings.

Albania greatly appreciates the assistance the OSCE has given us to combat organized crime and trafficking in persons. In particular, we would like to thank you for the help and support you have given us through programs and projects in the anti-trafficking area.

The Office of the National Coordinator

The Office of the National Coordinator on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings was established in November 2005. It is the first time that Albania has had an office with an exclusive anti-trafficking mandate reflecting the importance with which the Government takes this problem. The Office of the National Coordinator is the central point for coordinating the anti-trafficking efforts of the different government ministries both at a national and international level.

The Office has a broad political mandate and importantly a high degree of autonomy enabling it to take any initiative which it deems necessary in the fight against human trafficking. Its autonomy derives from an order of the Prime Minister.

The Office of the National Coordinator has the following duties:

- Monitors the activity of the institutions tasked with the implementation of the National Strategy of Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Coordinates the activity with these institutions in execution of duties assigned by the National Strategy of Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Gathers from institutions included in the Strategy, and from other public sources, data on matters of fight against trafficking in human beings and processes them;

- Manages the database of information related to the fight against trafficking in human beings and submits comprehensive reports to the State (Inter-ministerial) Committee of Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Proposes amendments and improvements to the systems and mechanisms of National Strategy of Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings;
- Promotes the increase of transparency of the activity of state institutions, involved in the fight against trafficking in human beings, with the objective of increasing awareness in this area, by cooperating with other institutions and civil society for such matters.

Monitoring and Reporting

Our Office prepares periodic reports on the situation of trafficking in human beings in the country. Currently we have presented our third report. The report is an official document which serves to all domestic and foreign actors to identify results and problems thus, the report is a useful instrument for improving activities performed by state and independent institutions and for increasing awareness among domestic and foreign actors about the situation of the trafficking in human beings in our country.

The report focuses on three main areas, defined by the National Strategy for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2005 – 2007, i.e. prevention, criminal investigations, prosecution, and protection and assistance to victims.

In the course of the year, the Office of National Anti-trafficking Coordinator monitors the activity of state institutions involved in the fight against trafficking. The monitoring is carried out by meetings organised with representatives of state and independent institutions – specialists of the area in these institutions. The ministries and institutions defined submit on a quarterly basis or on request, to the Deputy Minister of Interior for matters of fight against

trafficking, a comprehensive progress report, in the context of the action plan and statistical indicators and duties assigned by the State Committee of Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings. Independent institutions and other institutions, included in the strategy, are invited to present such reports.

Also, in performing its function, this Office periodically officially requires information from the governmental institutions on the execution of the objectives defined in the National and statistical data on arrests, detentions, sentences, the number of victims protected and assisted in centres.

The sources of information are:

- The Sector for the Fight against Illegal Trafficking in the Ministry of Interior;
- Ministry of Justice – Directorate of the Organisation of Judiciary;
- General Prosecutor’s Office – Directorate for the Fight against Organised Crime;
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities;
- Ministry of Education and Science;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Ministry of Health;
- State Intelligence Service;
- Ministry of Defence;
- National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking (NRCVT)
- Shelters managed by NGOs.

The collected information is categorised on the basis of the three main above areas and is then analysed.

Focus of Albania's Anti-Trafficking Efforts

Albania has followed a three pronged approach to combating trafficking in human beings as set out in its National Strategy: prevention, protection and reintegration of victims and witnesses of justice, and prosecution of trafficking and trafficking related crimes.

As you will no doubt be aware, Albania has ratified the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its two additional protocols as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. A witness protection law has been drafted guaranteeing the legal and physical protection of victims of trafficking. In relation to this, we are intending to introduce video-conferencing facilities to the Serious Crime Court in due course.

The Parliament has passed a law on organized crime which provides for the compensation of victims of trafficking from the criminal proceeds amassed by the traffickers. A law has been drafted, but not yet passed, regarding the provision of temporary residence permits to foreign victims of trafficking in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention.

In 2006 the Office of the National Coordinator on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings has predominantly focused on:

- I. The establishment of national referral structures for victims of trafficking both at central and local levels.
- II. Better management of Albania's borders and preventing illegal migration.
- III. Preventing internal trafficking of children and women.
- IV. Improving victim identification.
- V. Increasing prevention activities.
- VI. Increasing awareness of the people who work with assistance services.

In addition, we have instigated the drafting of new legislation on trafficking and trafficking related offences and we have taken steps to improve international cooperation on these issues.

The Establishment of the National Referral Structures for Victims of Trafficking both at Central and Local Levels

a) Central Level

The Government has established a national referral structure for victims of trafficking at central and local levels. The referral structure at the central level is known as the Responsible Authority. The police, social services and consular section are involved. They each have individual and shared duties. Once it is fully operational it will coordinate the referral process for initial assistance, protection and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking throughout the country. It is intended that the Responsible Authority will be activated as a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for cases of victims of trafficking, at national and local levels. The aim of the NRM is to identify and protect every victim of trafficking.

b) Local Level

At the local level, Local Anti-trafficking Committees have been established by an order of the Prime Minister. These committees are chaired by the regional Prefect, and their members include the Mayor, directors of the regional State Social Services, Employment Office, Police, State Informative Service, Education and Public Health Directorates.

They are intended to capitalize on the knowledge of the local community. These Committees have been set up to assist the law enforcement agencies to identify victims and potential victims of trafficking and provide them with immediate protection and support.

In addition to identifying, referring and protecting victims of trafficking, the Local Committees are also tasked with monitoring the trafficking situation in their region and identifying any measures that it may be necessary to take to combat this crime. For example, many Local Committees run preventative campaigns in cooperation with the police, prosecutor's office and social services to remove children from the streets and register them in schools. To underline the importance of the Local Committees, the National Coordinator has personally participated in awareness campaigns in schools where law enforcement personnel have discussed the dangers of trafficking with students in order to raise their awareness and understanding and thereby ultimately reduce the chances that they will fall prey to traffickers.

Internal Trafficking of Children and Women

The Office of the National Coordinator on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings is currently focusing its attention on internal trafficking of women and children. To this end a number of measures have been taken:

- The project “Second Chance” has been launched. It is run by the Ministry of Education and Science to encourage the education structures to readmit children who have dropped out of school as a result of their family situation.
- A Joint Operational Regulation for Tourism Agencies that prohibits the sexual exploitation of women and children on hotel premises has been agreed with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports. The regulation was the product of negotiations between the Ministries of Interior, Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports and OSCE - presence in Albania.
- In addition, new provisions in the Criminal Code on the exploitation of children for forced labor and the sale of children (Articles 128/c and 128/ç) have been proposed together with a new socio-educational package-deal of assistance for these children and their families in the form of employment, education and other kinds of aid.

Improving victim identification

The Office has undertaken a number of steps in order to improve victim identification.

These include:

- The establishment of the Responsible Authority and Local Anti-Trafficking Committees as explained above in section 4.
- A database within the Responsible Authority, where representatives of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Centers of Protection of Victims of Trafficking will record all cases of victims returned, referred, handled and protected in Albania and abroad is almost complete.

- A “Help line” – a 24-hour, country-wide, toll-free telephone line for reporting cases of trafficking and to provide individuals with information on safe migration.
- The establishment of direct contacts between representatives of regional committees in the border regions of Albania with representatives with representatives of border regions in neighboring countries, in order to exchange information about Albanian children who are begging and Albanian girls who are being exploited in these countries. It is hoped that this contact will lead to the adoption of measures to combat cross border trafficking
- The establishment of prescreening procedures.
- The creation of a Transnational Referral Mechanism between the Balkan countries.

Prevention and Public Awareness Campaigns

The Office of the National Coordinator on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings has taken steps to prevent trafficking by raising public awareness of this crime. It maintains open communication lines with nongovernmental organizations that develop and run awareness campaigns directed at the public, targeting mostly women and children. For example, TV awareness campaigns have been launched and brochures produced by foreign and Albanian consular staff to inform the public about the risks, likelihood and causes of trafficking in persons.

In addition, at our instigation, an agreement has been signed with Ministry of Education and Science to include classes on trafficking in human beings in the school curriculum. Special classes have also been set up for children who have dropped out or do not attend school.

Increasing awareness of the people who work with assistance services

We recognize the importance of training law enforcement personnel on how to identify and handle victims of trafficking, protect and respect their rights, and provide for their safety. To this end we have organized training courses throughout the country on the nature of trafficking for members of the police, prosecutors’ offices and courts. The aim of this training is to increase their awareness about the special profile and special assistance that victims of trafficking need.

International Cooperation

International cooperation is vital to combat trafficking in human beings. In recognition of this, the Office of the National Coordinator on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings has taken a series of measures, the most of important of which is the Agreement with Greece on Protection and Assistance to Child Victims of Trafficking.

It was ratified by Albania in May 2006, and ratification is expected by the Greek Parliament soon. The ratification of this Agreement paves the way to undertake the identification and return of Albanian children residing in Greece to Albania.

11. Conclusion

I would like to thank you once again for inviting me to speak here today. If you have any questions, I am more than happy to answer them.