



Project Summary

Understanding Public Knowledge and Attitudes towards Trafficking in Human Beings: A Cross-National Study Dr Kiril Sharapov

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Location: Centre for Policy Studies, Central European University <http://cps.ceu.hu/> and www.ceu.hu

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Summary

This 24-month project will:

- Research, evaluate, and disseminate a broader understanding of how Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) is understood by the general public in countries of the enlarged EU and its neighbour states
- Assess the influence of socio-economic, demographic and attitudinal factors on public knowledge and understanding of THB by situating the analysis within socio-economic and political contexts of the countries of origin, transit and destination for THB.

Data for the project will be collected using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including omnibus-powered face-to-face surveys of nationally representative samples of adults in Ukraine, Hungary and the UK, focus groups and qualitative semi-structured interviews.

Rationale

Recent policy documents emphasise the paucity of research into THB and the lack of reliable statistical data impeding evidence-based decision-making. The 2009 Report on THB by the UK Home Affairs Committee notes the lack of data on the scale and incidence of THB and acknowledges that public awareness of THB has been low in the UK (UK House of Commons 2009: 20, 66). In 2009, the International Labour Organisation set out a broader agenda to encourage researchers to investigate how much people know about THB, what governments and institutions can do to encourage change in the way people think and respond to THB, and enable people to move from awareness to real understanding, and then to rejection and reporting (ILO 2009). This research has a significant potential to contribute towards the achievement of this agenda.

The focus of investigation

The project will investigate public knowledge and attitudes towards THB, what factors influence such knowledge, and the extent to which public attitudes influence or are influenced by anti-trafficking policies in the three case-study countries: Ukraine, Hungary and the United Kingdom. These countries have been selected to represent the key phases of THB: supply, transit, and demand. The research will generate and disseminate to a range of stakeholders comparative evidence of prevailing attitudes within the cultural, ideological and socio-economic contexts representative of these three stages. It will establish baselines to enable further mapping of the links between poor public understanding of THB, the role of the media in shaping public opinion, increasing demand for and supply of THB, and often inadequate and inefficient anti-trafficking policies.

Methodology

The research, dissemination and international networking activities will address the following six objectives:

- a. Identify and critically assess current legislation, policies and strategies on THB in case-study countries. Methodology: Desk based research and comparative policy analysis
- b. Generate quantitative and qualitative data on public knowledge and attitudes towards THB. Methodology: cross-national surveys, focus groups, qualitative interviews and analysis.
- c. Assess the role of printed media in shaping public opinion and policy-making processes in relation to THB. Methodology: printed media analysis.
- d. Assess and compare public knowledge of THB in UA, HU and UK. Methodology: Gender analysis, regression and policy frame analyses.
- e. In consultation with key stakeholders develop policy recommendations on increasing public awareness of THB. Various methods.
- f. Communicate and disseminate research materials, data, outcomes through a range of outreach activities; add the dimension of public attitudes to the growing literature on THB.

Results and outcomes

The research findings will directly assist in the development of context driven, targeted policies to raise public awareness of trafficking and its links to the factors of supply and demand.

In particular, the research will:

- a. Provide a comprehensive mapping of public opinion on THB in the UK, Hungary and Ukraine.
- b. Elaborate on how public opinion on THB is a function of individual demographic, socio-economic and attitudinal attributes, and of the discursive construction of national policies on gender equality, social justice and immigration.
- c. Identify what specific messages can be most effective in increasing public awareness of THB and make recommendations on delivering such messages to the general public
- d. Highlight the main gaps in knowledge on public understanding of THB and make recommendations regarding further data collection to remedy these gaps.

Call for cooperation

We are interested in setting up research links and cooperating with a range of agencies and institutions (governmental and NGOs) involved in research, policy-making or any other anti-trafficking initiatives, including those working in the area of public opinion and public policy.

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