

*“Not for Sale – Joining Forces Against Trafficking in Human Beings”* – A Council of Europe – OSCE Conference. 17 – 18 February 2014. Vienna, Austria.

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Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, and Partners,

1. Today I would like to reflect on the **approach** that is taken when addressing the prevention of trafficking for labour exploitation, and share some thoughts on how it could be adjusted. I am speaking from my recent experience at ICMPD of running a capacity building project to combat trafficking for labour exploitation in 14 countries in Central and Southeastern Europe supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.
2. I believe that we need a **change of imagery**. Previous prevention initiatives addressing the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation have focused on awareness raising campaigns. They show powerful images of exploited, petrified women and girls in clearly vulnerable situations. But they have only presented one side of a multi-faceted problem, and as a result a skewed perception of the issue is communicated to policy makers, service providers and the general public. The ‘face of trafficking’ presented by labour exploitation is more complex and diverse: it can take place in various different environments; at first glance, indicators of vulnerability are not as apparent as those for other forms of exploitation; and the perpetrators and victims can be found in all sectors and at all levels of the modern European economy.
3. A **change of imagery** is needed to reflect the complexities of trafficking for labour exploitation as it is not a clear cut and absolute phenomenon. Instead it exists on a **‘continuum of exploitation’** within society, ranging from the unpaid apprentice through to the person kept in slave-like conditions. Shades of grey complicate the identification of victims. Additionally, terms such as ‘labour exploitation’, ‘forced labour’ and ‘trafficking for

labour exploitation' are used interchangeably, even though each situation requires a distinct policy and legal response.

4. This was aptly demonstrated last year in Germany when the news broke that foreign workers at **Amazon's** European Distribution Centre were subjected to poor living conditions, were not paid the promised wage and were kept under intrusive and constant surveillance by security contractors.<sup>1</sup> The exposé sparked debate about whether this was trafficking or a different form of exploitation, as well as wider considerations of the protections granted to labour migrants by immigration systems.
5. Faced with these challenges, **the question I ask you today** is how do we put in place effective prevention measures, when the established legal and policy responses lack clarity? Can we prevent trafficking for labour exploitation within the frameworks we currently have? My suggestion is that no, we cannot, and practitioners must begin to broaden their perspective, and diversify the imagery used. Prevention measures must address the systemic causes that allow exploitation to take place.
6. Trafficking for labour exploitation is part of a wider migration debate, and it is this wider debate that we must engage with when pursuing a **holistic approach to prevention**. Good examples of this already exist; the Not For Sale Campaign and International Labour Rights Forum have created a strategic tool called Free2Work<sup>2</sup>, aiming to develop consumer led regulation of supply chains. This tool allows consumers to scan the barcodes of products with a smart phone app to find out the likelihood that forced or cheap labour was used along the supply chain of that product. When we consider the economic and social vulnerabilities of many labour migrants we must acknowledge that they cannot be addressed only through awareness campaigns. Prevention activities must aim to develop

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<sup>1</sup> 'Amazon criticized over temp workers in Germany', *www.dw.de*, <http://www.dw.de/amazon-criticized-over-temp-workers-in-germany/a-16604526>, [accessed 13/2/2014]

'Amazon accused of neo-Nazi surveillance of seasonal workers in Germany', *International Trade Union Confederation*, <http://www.ituc-csi.org/amazon-accused-of-neo-nazi> [accessed 13/2/2014]

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.free2work.org/>

effective tools, such as Free2Work, that engage with the wider legal and societal debates concerning immigrant integration, consumer consciousness, corporate social responsibility, immigration policy and labour regulation, and wider market forces.

7. Let's focus on demand. **Demand** is often cited as fundamental to understanding the prevention of trafficking, yet until now relatively little research has been conducted to explore the impact of campaigns and policies targeting demand. Last month, ICMPD launched a research consortium funded by the EU Commission, tasked with investigating different approaches to addressing and reducing demand in anti-trafficking policies and efforts. This research will move beyond the narrow legal definitions and established policy frameworks, by considering **inter and multi-disciplinary approaches** to tackling demand. We plan to analyse the experiences of policy makers who have sought to steer demand in areas comparable to trafficking, such as demand in the illegal drug trade. We will also consider the distinctions in how demand is articulated in relation to different forms of trafficking. We will assess the impact that fair trade campaigns, CSR good practices, usage of social media have had on reducing demand, and catalogue current policy approaches in different EU countries. By addressing the issues that allow trafficking to happen within a **wider framework**, we hope to promote the development of new policy tools for prevention at a systemic level.

I wish to leave you with **two final thoughts**:

8. **Firstly**, an example of **how we can broaden our approach** and address human trafficking from a more **holistic perspective**. **Fair trade** campaigns have had considerable success in creating consumer driven regulation, outside of legal frameworks. The campaigns have typically focused more on fair pricing and sustainability and are currently only applicable to goods coming from developing countries. Yet they still offer an effective framework for preventing trafficking for labour exploitation. Why has a similar initiative not been set up for goods produced within the EU? Is it that difficult? What are the barriers? One possibility links back to my earlier comments about imagery; do we perceive trafficking for labour exploitation as an inherently foreign problem, which takes place countless steps down the

supply chain in developing countries prior to entering the EU? If so, **how can we change this?**

9. **Secondly, and finally**, an effective approach can only be achieved through effective **partnerships**. Often, actors with a key role to play in preventing trafficking are unaware of their potential influence. It is paramount that everyone with a role to play in the prevention of trafficking for labour exploitation is aware of both theirs and others' roles. **Communication networks** as well as **joint capacity building efforts** to institutionalize awareness must be established between government anti-trafficking authorities, employers and employers' confederations, trade unions, social services, labour inspectorates, and many others. This is the route to **effective partnerships**, and, ultimately, to an **effective approach** to prevent trafficking for labour exploitation, whatever specific form it may take. Thank you.