

2007 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
WORKING SESSION 12
Warsaw, 2 October 2007
STATEMENT
REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

The Republic of Croatia has aligned with EU Statement, but we would like to say a few sentences in our national capacity.

The Republic of Croatia has been an active participant, in numerous international initiatives aimed at combating the trafficking in human beings. At the III CoE Summit held in 2005 in Warsaw, the Croatian Prime Minister had signed the CoE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and it was ratified by the Croatian Parliament in June 2007.

The Republic of Croatia has recognized the importance of the human rights aspect of combating trafficking in HB and has established the national system that places the victim into the central position and focuses on the protection of her/his rights. There are 4 main elements of this approach:

- A person is identified as a victim of trafficking on the basis of his/her testimony (and is presumed to be a victim until proven otherwise)
- There is no precondition for achieving the status of the victim or to use the system of assistance and protection (as for ex. his/her testimony in the criminal proceedings)
- The victim is given protection and assistance according to the national system
- There is only voluntary repatriation

Protection of victims of trafficking in human beings is assured by the national referral system. This system includes:

- safe shelter (there are 2 national shelters – 1 for adults and 1 for children which are fully financed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia, and are run by NGOS + alternative shelter)
- Health care
- Psychological, social and legal assistance and protection
- voluntary repatriation and return, which is carried out by the Ministry of Interior and IOM.

In accordance with the Directive on residence permits for victims of human trafficking, the period of reflection can last up to 90 days. Within this period the victim will decide whether they want to accept the system of assistance and protection provided by the Republic of Croatia.

The preconditions for successful repatriation include: establishing contact with victim's family, responsible institutions and international organizations in the country of origin with the aim of ensuring safe return.

Protection of the data of victims of trafficking in human beings is one of the most important precondition in assuring her/his personal safety.

As part of the implementation of the national strategy to combat trafficking in HB, we organise trainings of many different groups such as police officers, diplomatic-consular staff, social workers, medical workers, judges, public prosecutors as well as the representatives of NGOs.

The Human Rights Office is responsible for running the CARDS 2004 project, with the Republic of Austria as the twinning partner. The purpose of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the national bodies included in the system of suppressing trafficking in persons and the best possible protection of victims of trafficking in persons.

Furthermore the Republic of Croatia is participating in two new regional projects of ICMPD: “Program to Support the Development of Transnational Referral Mechanisms (TRM) for Trafficked Persons in South-Eastern Europe“ and “Program for the Enhancement of Anti-trafficking Responses in South Eastern Europe – Data Collection and Information Management”..

In accordance with the National programme for the combating trafficking in HB 2005-2008, as well as provisions of others operative plans for each year, MFAEI is conducting education for diplomatic and consular staff. In the implementation of this project since the end of 2006 we fully cooperate with IOM and thank to the financial assistance and support of Norway such education is successfully carried out.

All activities related to the suppression of trafficking in human beings are regularly monitored and coordinated by the Governmental Human Rights Office, whose director is also the national coordinator for combating trafficking in human beings.