



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes

Highlights of the Project Launch Event

17 June 2016 – Vicenza, Italy

Introduction

With approximately 150 participants attending, the high-level launch of the OSCE project “Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes” held at the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU) in Vicenza, Italy, provided a valuable opportunity to introduce the key objectives and most innovative features of this ambitious endeavour.

The participants, coming from the judiciary, law enforcement, civil society and academia, brought with them a wide range of expertise, reflecting the multi-disciplinary and cross-sectorial nature of the project. OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, OSCE executive structures, international partners, donors and media were also represented. The event was live streamed on the Italian Carabinieri’s portal¹.

The launch featured two panel discussions:

Session I: “Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes – Challenges and Perspectives”;

Session II: “The OSCE-Wide Simulation-Based Learning Initiative”.

The panel discussions explored the complex interconnection between trafficking in human beings (THB) and migration, identified the most pressing challenges and highlighted good practices in combating the crime of human trafficking along migration routes. They focused, on the one hand, on enhancing the criminal justice response to ensure the effective prosecution of traffickers and, on the other hand, on better preparing relevant authorities to identify victims and to ensure human rights-centred and efficient referral mechanisms.

Experts and participants unanimously stressed the need for more systematic and targeted capacity building to enable the development of more effective multi-disciplinary approaches. Uniting multiple

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhkFqKCvBI8>

actors from the criminal justice sector and civil society can lay the foundation for high-impact work in the field of combating trafficking in human beings (THB).

Opening Remarks

The opening remarks were delivered by OSCE Secretary General, **Lamberto Zannier**, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament, **Laura Boldrini**, General Commander of the Carabinieri, **Tullio Del Sette**, Undersecretary of State for Defence of the Government of the Italian Republic, **Domenico Rossi**, the Republic of Albania's Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator, **Elona Gjebrea-Hoxha** and Police Colonel **Detlef Karioth**, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to Italy. The OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ambassador **Madina Jarbussynova**, moderated the session and briefly illustrated the key objectives of the project. She highlighted its aim of strengthening the ability of selected practitioners from participating States and Partners for Co-operation to promptly identify THB victims and conduct proactive and human rights-compliant investigations. An important result of the project will be the development of a new capacity building methodology, providing participating States with a pragmatic framework to enhance their training and promote multi-agency co-ordination in combating THB.

All opening speakers stressed the strategic importance of this OSCE project for promoting a multi-disciplinary, cross-sectorial perspective and human rights-based response to the current challenges. The contribution of the Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows (IWG), established under the German OSCE Chairmanship and chaired by Swiss Ambassador Claude Wild, was also acknowledged. The speakers welcomed the new collaboration between the OSCE, the Italian Carabinieri and CoESPU on this project. They also stressed the necessity of creating synergies within and among states in investigating THB. The importance of increasing the capacities of national authorities to identify victims of trafficking among mixed migration flows, as well as to make a more systematic use of financial investigations, was repeatedly emphasized. Finally, several speakers underlined that this project will enhance international co-operation in criminal justice matters and that it should become a model for future simulation-based learning initiatives in the OSCE area.

Session I: Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes – Challenges and Perspectives

Ambassador Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Co-ordinator on Combating Human Trafficking in the Republic of Austria's Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, **Anastasija Ileska**, State Secretary of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, **Angelika Molnar**, EUROPOL Project Manager, **Duco van Heel**, FRONTEX Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinator, **Sarah Elliott**, UNHCR Associate Legal Specialist and **Sebastian Boel Byth**, UNODC Associate Expert, participated in the first session, which was moderated by Marco Bonabello, OSCE Senior Co-ordination Adviser.

All participants stressed the need for increased awareness of, co-operation on and training in combating human trafficking along migration routes. The OSCE simulation-based initiative was welcomed as an innovative capacity building effort fostering synergies among key national stakeholders at a time of unprecedented need.

Key highlights from the panel discussion:

- *Inadequate cross-border co-operation in fighting THB and limited knowledge of the complexity and transnational nature of the crime constitute fundamental challenges to the effective fight against impunity of traffickers. There is an increasing need for specialization, tailored capacity building and bringing together all relevant frontline actors from countries of origin, transit and destination along migration routes.*
- *Current regulatory frameworks, including national referral mechanisms, should be reconsidered and existing protocols for the identification and protection of victims of trafficking updated, keeping in mind lessons learned in the context of the current crisis.*
- *It is difficult to ensure gender balance within police ranks, which is needed in order to reach out to potential women victims. Raising awareness on the gender impact of THB is essential.*
- *There is a need to increase the use of financial investigations to systematically trace, seize and confiscate traffickers' illegal gains, compensate victims and finance further investigations.*
- *Information available and shared at the national and international levels remains scarce. This is due to poor data exchange between countries of origin, transit and destination, inadequate horizontal co-operation mechanisms between competent national services and diverging national jurisdictions and legislations. Against this backdrop, avenues and mechanisms for a more systematic and strategic exchange of information at all levels should be promoted.*
- *While new ways of providing displaced persons with safe complementary pathways should be developed, the ratification and implementation of existing relevant international and domestic legal frameworks to counter THB remain of utmost importance.*

Session II: The OSCE-Wide Simulation-Based Learning Initiative

Panellists in this session included **Alberto Perduca**, Criminal Justice Expert, **Marco Bufo**, Civil Society Expert, and **Pierpaolo Sinconi**, CoESPU Expert. Alberto Andreani, OSCE Programme Officer, moderated the discussion, which focused on the key learning objectives and main features of the simulation-based learning initiative:

- *The first of the three simulation-based exercises planned within the project will take place from 14 to 18 November 2016. The five-day exercise will include two days of theory and learning methodology and three days of practical simulation.*

- *The training will take advantage of the simulation environment at the CoESPU premises and in the territory of the Veneto Region.*
- *The live exercise will be open to financial investigators, forensics, law enforcement agencies, police, judiciary and NGOs, with the aim of creating synergies among organizations and institutions.*
- *Participants will work in teams and be exposed to a series of scenarios and real time events to be handled and solved.*
- *Financial investigation will be thoroughly covered as a key training component focusing on building strong evidence and confiscating illegal gains.*
- *Due to the different existing jurisdictions among participating States, a criminal and procedural code (based on UN models) was specifically developed for the training simulation.*
- *A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system will also be embedded in all phases of the project to gather feedback on the methodology and to elaborate results and recommendations.*
- *A handbook will be developed to provide a step-by-step guide to states on how to design and conduct innovative simulation-based training exercises on THB crimes, thereby promoting the sustainability of the project activities.*
- *A call for participation will be issued over the month of July 2016. OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation are encouraged to forward the call to interested experts for the first simulation, to be held at the CoESPU from 14 to 18 November 2016.*

Closing Remarks

Ambassador Jarbussynova, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, **General Nardone**, former Director of CoESPU, and **Colonel Darius Gallegos**, Deputy Director of CoESPU, closed the one-day event, stressing the strategic importance of the partnership between CoESPU and the OSCE. In light of the discussions conducted throughout the event, they asserted the added value of this project, which is expected to substantially contribute to the OSCE's objective of promoting effective criminal justice responses and a human rights-based approach to addressing the appalling crime of human trafficking along migration routes.