

**Highlights of
the 20th Conference
of the Alliance against
Trafficking in Persons**

Ending Impunity
Delivering Justice through
Prosecuting Trafficking
in Human Beings

20-22 July 2020
Vienna, Austria and
via teleconference



Disclaimer

The recommendations, statements and positions set out in the following summary have been drafted by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) based on the ideas and suggestions that were raised during the event and informed by the panel discussions. They do not necessarily reflect the position of each individual panellist or the position of their respective organizations. The views, opinions, conclusions and other information expressed in this document are not necessarily endorsed by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Acknowledgements

The OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings thank all the panellists and speakers who agreed to share their expertise in the course of the three days of the conference. Each of the experts, practitioners and survivors offered unique insights for participating States to step up efforts to prosecute offenders and eradicate human trafficking at the national, regional and international levels. The video messages from survivors and victims of trafficking in human beings also reminded the audience of the importance of listening to them, including them in the development of anti-trafficking responses, and taking action to address the impunity that all exploiters too often benefit from.

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Preface

Reflections from the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

The Alliance against Trafficking in Persons is a platform for advocacy and co-operation that includes international and civil society organizations and is co-ordinated by the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The Alliance was launched in 2004 to combine the efforts of all its partners and improve synergies behind the common goal of preventing and combating human trafficking.

Identifying effective ways to improve the prosecution of trafficking in human beings (THB) and deliver justice to victims was the focus of the 20th High-Level Alliance Conference against Trafficking in Persons. During three days, State representatives, survivors of trafficking in human beings, international and non-governmental organizations and academic experts discussed challenges and opportunities to enhance the investigation and prosecution of trafficking in human beings in the OSCE region.

These discussions were important to highlight a number of promising policies and practices, including the **establishment of specialized and dedicated anti-trafficking units and multi-agency co-operation** to navigate complex cases and produce stronger evidence leading to more successful prosecutions. We also discussed the need for **greater co-operation between law enforcement agencies, financial investigators and financial institutions** to identify traffickers and victims, support prosecutions and assist courts in confiscating illicit funds and compensating victims. **Greater synergies and cross-border collaboration** can help resolve evidentiary and jurisdictional issues within a case, as well as maximize shared expertise.

Throughout the conference, we heard about States' obligations **to uphold, protect and promote the rights of victims of trafficking in human beings**, including by implementing the non-punishment principle for

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Combating Trafficking
in Human Beings



the victims' involvement in unlawful activities where they have been compelled to do so. States are urged to prevent re-victimization and re-traumatization, including through co-operation with victims' counsellors throughout the identification, exit, recovery and reintegration processes. Another key take-away from the Conference was that victims too often bear the burden of justice and many cases are left unattended because victims are not seen, heard or believed. This Conference was an opportunity to stop and listen to those voices, and remind ourselves that **victims should always be our primary consideration**. Boys, girls, men and women should have an equal voice because all victims count regardless of their gender, age, background or story. For this to become a reality, anti-trafficking actors across sectors need to have access to **regular, specialized and sustainable training programmes** in order to be able to detect situations of exploitation and properly support victims.

Most of the elements necessary to improve the prosecution of THB which were highlighted throughout the Conference exist on paper in the form of OSCE commitments. Guidance and political consensus on what needs to be done has already been outlined in the 2003 OSCE Action Plan, its addenda and Ministerial Council decisions to tackle this issue through a set of clear and far-reaching strategies and tactics¹. Many participating States have legislation and action plans to combat trafficking in human beings. However, the full implementation of these commitments is lacking with the result that this grave human rights and security issue continues to undermine the rule of law in our societies, the safety of our citizens, and the dignity of the most vulnerable among them.

Now that we have identified the central challenges and opportunities in this area, where do we go from here? As part of our effort to support participating States in turning commitments into durable action, I want to offer the following framework for action:

¹ These include, for example, the criminalization of all forms of human trafficking with penalties proportionate to the serious nature of the crime. They also include provisions for effective access to justice for victims as well as victimless prosecution by encouraging investigators and prosecutors to build cases without relying exclusively on victim testimony. The establishment of specialized units, the strengthening of cross-border and multi-agency co-operation, the use of tools like financial investigations are all elements already identified in the OSCE decisions as crucial ingredients in the fight against THB.

➔ First, **we need champions and high-level leadership** on this topic to elevate THB as an uncontested priority, backed up with significant investment and political will on the ground. Addressing systemic problems is a global challenge; expectations for immediate political gains must be managed to accommodate the reality of long-term returns on investment in the area of prosecution which can take years. That is why I have urged participating States to make a **declaration of political will** that would elevate the Prosecution pillar and all related sectors (labour, immigration, social services, etc.) by setting concrete goals towards tripling the number of prosecutions of THB cases. My Office stands ready to support political and anti-trafficking authorities in designing and implementing effective strategies to prosecute traffickers and deliver justice to more victims.

➔ Second, while robust international, regional and national legal frameworks are in place, **some legal adjustments might be required**, for example, to address the lack of mechanisms to hold the whole THB chain accountable, including users, facilitators, and legal entities which benefit from loopholes. Other legal improvements could also focus on ensuring the admissibility and use in court proceedings of digital evidence or on the expansion of the labour inspectorate's mandate to allow further and more successful investigations. Moreover,

the harmonization of anti-trafficking legislation could also facilitate joint investigations across jurisdictions. In line with my mandate to provide and facilitate advice and technical assistance in the field of legislation, my Office closely collaborates with the Legislative Support Unit at Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and OSCE field operations to offer sound and coherent recommendations to participating States across the region.

➔ Passing a law however is not enough; we must **build the capacities of law enforcement, prosecutors and judges** to be more effective. The OSCE is a unique regional platform to exchange good investigative and operative practices, strengthen capacity building and training efforts across sectors including financial, cyber, labour, migration, border police and social services. I am dedicating special efforts to support the judiciary in their important role to protect victims' rights and guarantee consistent application of law and appropriate sentences based on the seriousness of the crime.

➔ Participating States must also **avail of new technology tools and proactive methods** to detect both offenders and victims. Information and communication technologies are often underutilized by criminal justice practitioners and my Office has been advocating and providing guidance on ways to leverage the potential of technol-

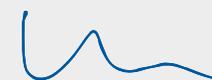
ogy to combat trafficking in human beings. Solutions are sometimes as simple as using videoconference technology to facilitate court proceedings in times of a COVID-19 pandemic. My Office also offers expert advice on alternative and more sophisticated avenues for identifying perpetrators, such as conducting financial investigations following the money trail left by traffickers.

➔ **Successful strategies require good data.** That is why research is a fundamental piece to inform the development of policies and practical guidance and enhance THB investigations and prosecutions, as well as to improve victims' assistance. However, there are **research gaps that we need to fill** in order to improve our policy responses to the crime and help investigators and prosecutors work smarter to end impunity for criminals who believe they will never face prosecution. This includes for example further research on perpetrators, to understand who they are and how they operate.

➔ Last but not least, States must offer **more support and protection to victims** who come forward. Strong national referral mechanisms for the identification and protection of victims have the potential to lead to better engagement and co-operation, and eventually contribute not only to better outcomes for victims but also to better prosecutions and accountability for traffick-

ers. That is why my Office will continue to support the voices of victims and survivors, including through contribution to the work of ODIHR on the dissemination of a revised National Referral Mechanism (NRM) handbook and on the inclusion of victims' and survivors' inputs into anti-trafficking efforts. When victims of trafficking are supported, listened to and empowered, they can offer unique guidance not only in policy discussions, but in law-enforcement operations on the ground as well.

I am convinced that prosecuting traffickers alone is not the end of trafficking in human beings, but it is a crucial step toward ending it. As a former prosecutor, I have listened to victims describe the harm they experienced, heard their feelings of helplessness, and their pleas for justice. It is not enough, however, to listen to victims and survivors. Words must be followed by actions. We hope that these highlights and recommendations will serve as a source for further reflection and exchange and will lead to decisive actions in each and every participating State to make prosecution a more utilized and effective tool for combating human trafficking.



Valiant Richey

Introduction

The 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings calls on participating States to criminalise human trafficking, to form effective law enforcement and criminal justice responses to the crime, to co-operate with other participating States to this effect, and to guarantee assistance to and protection of witnesses and victims in the criminal justice system. The sum effect of these measures should entail that perpetrators of human trafficking are prosecuted and convicted, and that victims are accorded the justice and support they are entitled to.

Despite a robust legal framework on combating trafficking in human beings in the OSCE region, only a small number of victims of trafficking receive justice and remedy for the harm they endured. Data collected over the past three years shows a decline in the number of prosecution cases while the number of identified victims has risen. Consequently, there is a large and growing disparity between a high number of estimated victims², a much lower number of identified victims³, and an extremely low rate of prosecutions and convictions⁴.

In this context, the 20th High-Level Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons entitled “Ending Impunity: Delivering justice through prosecuting trafficking in human beings” was held to shed light on prosecution efforts as a cornerstone for ending trafficking in human beings. The year 2020 also marked 20 years since the adoption of the first OSCE Ministerial Council Decision on *Enhancing the OSCE's efforts to combat trafficking in human trafficking* (MC(8)/1) as well as the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime i.e. the “Palermo Protocol”. The Conference was therefore an opportune occasion to emphasise the obligations as related to prosecution, as well as to take stock of progress made over the last two decades.

The event gathered a record number of attendees for an Alliance Conference. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held both online and in-person. The blended format accommodated more than 700 regis-

² Estimated by the ILO to be 24.9 million (Source: Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage, Geneva, September 2017).

³ UNODC reported data on 63,251 identified victims of trafficking from 106 national governments between 2014 and 2016 (Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016, New York, 2016). In 2016, UNODC produced data on more than 24,000 identified victims of trafficking from 97 governments, a peak compared to the previous years (Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018, New York, 2018).

⁴ The 2020 U.S. Trafficking in Persons Report shows a 42% decrease in prosecutions between 2015 and 2019 within Europe (Western Europe, South-eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus), despite the number of trafficking victims identified within the area increasing by over 56%. Data within the report also shows that between 2015 and 2019, Europe averaged nearly 1,500 convictions per year, despite identifying over 13,500 victims per annum.



tered participants from 67 countries, including 53 participating States and 5 Partners for Co-operation, representing a large spectrum of national and international stakeholders working directly or indirectly on combating trafficking in human beings: 243 participants representing state institutions; 393 from international and non-governmental organizations; and 94 from academia and business circles. The panellists of the event included prominent experts, practitioners and survivors from 24 countries from across the OSCE region, as well as from Partners for Co-operation and international organizations, sharing views and suggestions on the best ways to end impunity and deliver justice to victims.

Throughout the conference, the panel presentations highlighted promising practices as well as the need for full implementation of existing OSCE commitments and recommendations. Discussions focused on a number of challenges and opportunities to make investigation, prosecution and adjudication of THB crimes more effective while ensuring the protection and restoration of victims' rights.

In addition, two side-events were held online on the margins of the Alliance conference. One was organized by the OSCE Transna-

tional Threats Department's Strategic Police Matters Unit in collaboration with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues. It explored community policing as an effective way to build cohesive and resilient societies to prevent and combat human trafficking. The second event was organized by the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and UN Women, and presented the findings of a recent policy survey on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on human trafficking, and recommendations on how to mitigate those challenges.

As in previous years, the Alliance sought to engage the public through the use of the hashtag #CTHB20 on a variety of social media platforms. A social media campaign was launched to raise public awareness of the Conference, its focus on prosecution and to introduce the speakers. In addition to 92 tweets from the @osce_cthb account (amounting to 310,863 impressions and 7,844 engagements), a total of 31 posts were created and distributed on OSCE social media channels. The posts gained significant traction online, reaching more than 363,176 people, generating over 4,000 engagements and 35,485 video views.

Mr. Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings opened the conference, presenting the scope of the discussions. Opening remarks and keynote addresses were delivered by **Ms. Coco Berthmann**, survivor and founder of the Coco Berthmann Scholarship Fund Ending Human Trafficking, **Mr. Sandër Lleshaj**, Minister of Interior and representative of the OSCE Chairmanship of Albania, **Ms. Ghada Waly**, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), **Ms. Katarzyna Gardapkhadze**, First Deputy Director of the OSCE ODIHR, **Ms. Tanzila Narbaeva**, Chairperson of the Senate of the Parliament of Uzbekistan and Chairperson of the National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and **Mr. Olivier Onidi**, Deputy Director General of the Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs at the European Commission and Anti-Trafficking Coordinator.

At the opening session, speakers described the **widening gap between the magnitude of the crime and the scale of the response**⁵ and underlined the urgent need to deliver justice to victims. Although many countries now have legislation and action plans to combat trafficking in human beings, impunity remains widespread across the

OSCE region. There are an estimated 25 million victims of human trafficking globally and the overall number of identified victims is on the rise, while just a little more than 11,000 traffickers were prosecuted in 2019 - roughly one **prosecution for every 2,154 victims**⁶. Keynote speakers highlighted the need for perpetrators to understand that their actions and crimes would be punished to the full extent of the law. If perpetrators do not face a credible risk of being convicted and sentenced proportionally to the seriousness of their crimes, there will be **nothing deterring them from further offending**. All speakers concurred that the lack of prosecution for trafficking cases was a challenge that was affecting all OSCE participating States, without exception. For this reason, Albania had included combating trafficking in human beings as one of its main priorities for its OSCE 2020 Chairpersonship.

Speakers highlighted the **need for a holistic approach**, addressing factors that drive supply and demand of the THB business model as well as using all available means to hold perpetrators accountable: from making best use of technology and implementing our laws, to following the money to ensure that the crime does not pay. Confiscation of property, revenue and assets generated by, or used for criminal activities was under-

⁵ The 2020 U.S. Trafficking in Persons Report indicates that since 2015 there has been a 42% decline in the number of prosecutions for human trafficking in Europe and a staggering 61% decline in prosecutions of trafficking for labour exploitation.

⁶ According to the U.S. Trafficking in Persons report, 2020

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scored as a crucial strategy as it directly discourages criminals and can be instrumental in compensating victims and supporting their rehabilitation.

In terms of **legal developments**, speakers underscored the need to bring national criminal laws in line with the Palermo Protocol, as well as to develop anti-trafficking laws further, including to better tackle labour exploitation. They also referred to the need to modernize the legislation in an effort to address technology-facilitated human trafficking and provide comprehensive needs-based assistance to victims of trafficking. In addition, the role of Supreme Courts was highlighted in that they can ensure consistent jurisprudence and

adequate understanding and interpretation of anti-trafficking provisions by judges and other criminal justice actors. In this regard, reference was made to the 2019 conference organized by the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan and the OSCE in co-operation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which successfully highlighted the role of Supreme Courts in clarifying the categorization of trafficking crimes, procedures for examining evidence and approaches to constitutional and procedural rights of participants in criminal proceedings, in particular children.

Training of law enforcement officials and the judiciary is key to ensuring knowledge of best national and international practices and

sharing lessons learned. UNODC and other international organizations have worked to facilitate multi-agency co-operation and improve knowledge about trafficking trends. The OSCE's support for the implementation of comprehensive and fully functional National Referral Mechanisms has also been essential in facilitating the victim-centred work of the criminal justice sector and other relevant actors, ensuring that victims' protection and prosecution efforts are mutually reinforcing.

Speakers also mentioned the impact of the COVID-19 crisis which has further increased vulnerabilities as a result of school closures

and a rise in unemployment mostly affecting women and young people, precluding a rise in trafficking in human beings. Rising poverty and fewer opportunities in the COVID-19 economic downturn threaten to leave many more people at the mercy of human traffickers. Speakers encouraged the audience to learn from past economic recessions and anticipate future challenges, not only in terms of prevention and protection but in terms of prosecution efforts. Governments will need to increase their efforts to prevent exploitation in wake of the COVID-19 crisis, to identify and support trafficking victims, and bring perpetrators to justice.



Panel 1

The scope and nature of the problem

Panel 1 provided a general overview of the state of affairs and the multitude of factors contributing to the low rates of prosecution witnessed in the OSCE region. Those factors included the lack of specialized knowledge, insufficient use of technology and innovation, lack of co-ordination, and limited political will. The panel was moderated by **Ms. Kristiina Kangaspunta**, Chief of Crime Research Section, UNODC. **Ms. Camelia Stoina**, Chief Prosecutor of International Cooperation Service, Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism, General Prosecutor's Office, Romania, **Mr. Oleg Zatelepin**, Judge of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, Member of the Judicial Collegium for Criminal Cases, **Ms. Marija Andjelković**, CEO of Astra, Serbia and **Ms. Hilary Axam**, Director, Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, Criminal Section, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice, United States featured as panel speakers. The panel discussion was also preceded by testimonies from victims **Ivan and Mikhail**⁷ sharing their journey through labour exploitation and expectations towards justice.

UNODC presented concerning data, showing that the THB conviction rate is far below other crimes and is as low as those of far rarer crimes in Europe such as homicide,

around 3 convictions for every 100,000 inhabitants. While the Palermo Protocol introduced important changes and provided a solid legal basis for prosecuting human trafficking crimes, the number of convictions in some countries has fallen by two-thirds in the past five years, leaving an increased number of victims without justice.

Panellists presented challenges and factors leading to low prosecution and conviction rates across the OSCE region. The first category of challenges related to **the elusiveness of the crime and the modus operandi of perpetrators**. Traffickers are able to avoid justice and detection by constantly and rapidly adapting their methods to conceal their crimes, using hidden means such as crypto-currency, encrypted communications, anonymous or fake online profiles for recruiting victims or selling services. This constant adaptation requires anti-trafficking actors to double their efforts and outsmart the traffickers' methods of subjugation and control on victims, including through collaboration with tech and Internet providers to identify criminals operating in the virtual world.

The **data gap** about perpetrators is also an impediment to the development of effective prosecution strategies. Beyond gender and

sometimes race, little is known about the perpetrators. Data is also missing to understand why approximately three quarters of the offenders prosecuted in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are females while in Western and Southern Europe and in Central and South Eastern Europe three quarters of offenders are males⁸.

The **complexity, cross-border and cross-cutting nature of the crime** also creates evidential issues. Often, collecting evidence in multiple countries requires overcoming cooperation challenges and disparities in legal systems. Panellists also highlighted the need for high-level inter-agency commitment, streamlined co-ordination and consensus-building around best practices to develop joint multidisciplinary strategies covering, inter alia, financial, terrorism, narcotics, border security crimes.

Evidence in trafficking cases is often elusive as it involves deception, manipulation, intimidation, trauma and psychological coercion, which are difficult to prove but deeply impede victims' ability to co-operate with authorities in prosecuting cases. The lack of implementation of a **victim-centred approach** was highlighted as a factor of low prosecution rates. Concerns related to victims' data and privacy protection and the weak imple-



See related video at
<https://www.osce.org/cthb/458086>

mentation of the non-punishment principle, the lack of access to legal representation in court, and lack of successful compensation procedures were highlighted as elements feeding into victims' fear to report and low trust in the system. Although there are laws aimed at ensuring victim protection, provisions are not always fully implemented. An example was provided from South Eastern Europe where the current statute allows granting a victim the status of vulnerable witness, but a recent legal analysis of trafficking judgments shows that in reality only one third of victims are granted this status⁹.

Panellists also deplored the phenomenon of double victimization as a result of the **absence of restoration of victims' rights** when perpetrators are not identified, prosecuted and convicted. An analysis of court practice also shows that in many cases prosecutors decide to **reclassify trafficking as prostitution-related crimes, thereby leading to minor sentences**. According to a study carried out by Astra, half of the THB cases in court ended up with settlements with traffickers, out of which 87% were reclassified as mediation in prostitution and all traffickers got suspended sentences. The impact of such statistics is devastating on victims, not only morally but also financially as compensation is rarely part of such

⁷ Names have been changed to protect their privacy.

⁸ UNODC Research data, Share of prosecutions by sex in 2018

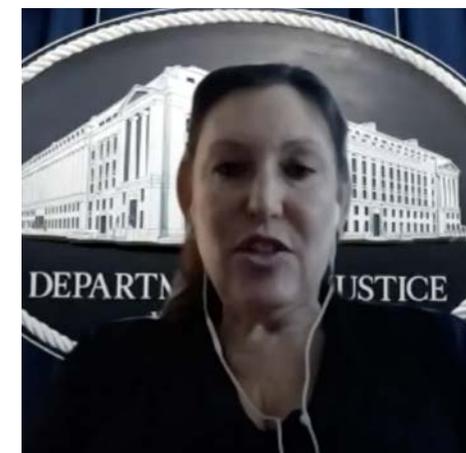
⁹ Human Trafficking Victims in Criminal Proceedings: Analysis of Judicial Practice for 2019 for the Crimes of Mediation in Prostitution, Trafficking in Human Beings and Trafficking in Minors for Adoption. ASTRA. 2020. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T8nMxvpcAObeVjB9Bc6MNPaz0GOY-tbb/view>

settlements. Panellists concurred that more needs to be done across the OSCE region to promote victims' trust in the justice system and raise awareness about the impact of justice (or lack thereof) on victims' lives. The absence of prosecution also impedes victims' access to assistance in countries where the formal identification of victims and referral for assistance can only be done through criminal justice actors.

In addition, speakers highlighted challenges inherent to **the complex wording of trafficking in human beings in criminal laws**, the failure to monitor their implementation and, as a result, the lack of information for legislators and policy-makers to address the practical challenges encountered by police, investigators, prosecutors and judges. Specific legal provisions are not enough if not applied consistently, thereby emphasizing the need for extended training and dissemination of specialized knowledge. Supreme Courts can also play a leading role in providing guidance which is essential to avoid inconsistent implementation of the law and ensure maximum protection and justice for the victims of trafficking crimes.

Last but not least, the **lack of political will and lack of resources** were identified as significant obstacles to the development of an effective prosecutorial response to trafficking. Building political will is a complex matter. The sectors of society that are the most vulnerable to trafficking such as migrants, indigenous communities and other minority groups, individuals with criminal history, individuals with dependencies, those living in acute poverty and homelessness, are also the ones that lack a political voice. Furthermore, politicians' expectations for rapid electoral gains must integrate the reality of long-term returns on investment in the area of prosecution which can take years.

Some other challenges were highlighted during the panel discussions. These included the duration of proceedings due to **lengthy investigations and protracted trials**, the lack of harmonized measures in place to discourage demand fuelling all forms of THB, as well as the **under-utilization of financial investigations tools** to prosecute traffickers and users.



Panel 2

Working smarter to enhance investigations and prosecutions

Panel 2 featured innovative measures and promising practices that investigators and prosecutors could adopt to overcome the obstacles – including those highlighted in Panel 1 – to investigating and prosecuting trafficking in human beings. The discussion focused on concrete and practical ways to work not only harder but smarter in prosecuting all trafficking offenders. This panel was moderated by **Mr. Kevin Hyland**, former United Kingdom Anti-Slavery Commissioner and member of the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) from Ireland. **Mr. Barry Koch**, Commissioner, Financial Sector Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking/ the Liechtenstein Initiative from the United States, **Mrs. Ivanka Kotorova**, Chair of the EUROJUST Anti-Trafficking in Human Beings Sub-Group and National Member for Bulgaria, **Mr. Aliaksandr Tsyganok**, Deputy Head of the Department for Investigation of Crimes against Persons and Public Security, Main Investigation Department of the Central Office of the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus and **Ms. Rahel Gershuni**, Independent expert from Israel featured as panel speakers.

Mr. Sean Wheeler, founder of Starfish Ministries and sex trafficking survivor opened this panel by advocating for the **involvement of male undercover agents** to identify male victims of sexual exploitation and give all victims an equal voice opportunity. The panel continued with various insights from practi-

tioners and experts on the use of proactive methods in investigating various forms of trafficking in human beings. The panelists delved into the use of special investigative techniques, including the use of financial investigations to identify both perpetrators and victims and covert operations to detect and investigate complex elements of the crime. The discussions also focused on the difficulty yet necessity to understand the consent and vulnerability concepts in the context of THB cases.

The panel highlighted that **using financial data and records** to prosecute traffickers is an effective weapon in the fight against trafficking in human beings. This data can be helpful in identifying victims, proving coercion, corroborating victim testimonies and serving as a basis for asset forfeitures. The importance of **international and regional co-operation between law enforcement, prosecutors and judges**, including through international platforms such as EUROJUST was also highlighted as an effective method to dismantle transnational organized criminal groups' operations.

Although international co-operation and special investigative techniques are being successfully applied in several jurisdictions, their use is not sufficiently widespread and maximized to a level that it could address the low prosecution and conviction rates. Investigators, prosecutors and judges often heavily rely on victims without understanding

their vulnerabilities and seldom resort to other ways to investigate and prosecute a case. In view to address these pitfalls, the panelists highlighted the following practices and recommendations:

1 The narratives of suspicious transaction or activity reports can serve to highlight the traffickers' motives, identify co-conspirators, and identify victims. In addition, financial records can be used to pursue other criminal charges that may not require victim testimonies such as tax evasions and money laundering. **Periodic risk assessments for financial institutions to evaluate their exposure to THB** may also result in additional controls and more suspicious reports that are filed with authorities and used to initiate cases. Performing THB **risk assessments for areas at higher risks**, such as in the hospitality, tourism, adult entertainment and extractive industries and terrorism funding, is also a way to gather further financial intelligence to identify and prosecute trafficking cases.

2 Sting or covert operations are a way to collect evidence while minimizing the reliance of the investigation on the victim's testimony

and avoid re-victimization. An example of a successful dismantlement of a recruitment network was presented, demonstrating the efficiency of combining phone tapping, online surveillance, and financial tracing. The use of controlled delivery methods¹⁰ also results in strong evidence of the criminal activity when risks are well assessed, co-operation among stakeholders is well-established and when victims are provided with adequate protection and support.

3 Asset forfeiture is a powerful disrupter of the trafficking business model. In some OSCE participating States, civil assets forfeiture does not require a conviction of the perpetrator. This serves a good opportunity to seize illicit assets, both tangible and intangible¹¹, with or without a conviction. Forfeited assets of traffickers and their accomplices can be used to fund victim support services and empowerment strategies. The "Confiscated Assets Used for Social Experimentations" (CAUSE) initiative in South Eastern Europe was highlighted as a good model to re-assign confiscated assets and support the establishment of social enterprises by civil society organizations, enabling victims to reintegrate into society.

 See related video at <https://www.osce.org/cthb/458083>

4 The absence of **harmonized regulations in the area of crypto-currencies and the dark web** creates opportunities for anonymity and impunity for criminal activities. Global minimum standards would help regulate and monitor suspicious and at-risk operations. Advertisement of persons for sale or trafficked services on the open and dark web could also be identified through regular information-sharing channels between law enforcement and financial institutions.

5 The **establishment of Joint Investigative Teams (JITs)** offers unique advantages to facilitate transnational criminal investigations based on a legal agreement. Speakers also shared examples of successful cross-border investigations for large-scale cases carried out simultaneously in different countries, with technical and financial support from EUROJUST¹².

6 While innovative methods for gathering evidence are encouraged, the victim's testimony can be found at the center of trafficking investigations as a key piece of evidence. In those instances, prosecutors and judges are challenged to identify the strength of the case amid weaknesses resulting from the victim's behavior, sometimes changing and contradicting statements. They must make an effort to **understand the context and individual circumstances**, including pre-existing and conditioned vulnerabilities, and **set up additional victim-friendly procedures**, such as remote video testimony and the provision of comprehensive legal and psychological support to the victim.

7 The **involvement of expert witnesses in trafficking cases**, such as psychologists, social workers, victim assistance specialists, is very helpful for judges to understand why victims might change their stories or might be reluctant to testify. Experts, and in particular survivors leaders who have been through this experience, can help explain unfamiliar language, including slang used in electronic communications between the trafficker and the victim.

Recommendations for participating States

1. Leverage financial intelligence to prosecute THB cases and ensure that illicit assets are seized and used to support victims;
2. Develop strategies to collect diverse sources of evidence through the broad and proactive use of special investigative techniques, including sting or covert operations;
3. Consider measures to limit online opportunities for criminal activity associated with trafficking in human beings;
4. Establish joint investigative teams (JITs) to facilitate judicial co-operation and transnational criminal investigations;
5. Continuously train judges and prosecutors in understanding specific aspects of human trafficking crimes, including changing modus operandi of traffickers and the victim's pre-existing and conditioned vulnerabilities;
6. Ensure a gender-sensitive and trauma-informed approach to investigations and prosecutions, in particular to ensure the identification of and assistance to all victims, including male victims of sexual exploitation.



¹² Action against human trafficking and pimping in Romania and Spain, February 2020: <http://eurojust.europa.eu/press/PressReleases/Pages/2020/2020-02-24.aspx>, Rapid action via Eurojust leads to arrest of 10 human traffickers, May 2020: <http://www.eurojust.europa.eu/press/PressReleases/Pages/2020/2020-05-18.aspx>

Panel 3

Victim-centred approaches to investigations and prosecutions

In panel 3, panellists discussed the effective application of the victim-centred and trauma-informed approaches to investigation and prosecution. Discussions focused on how to uphold and support human rights while fostering victims' safety and security. Victims are often left traumatised from their experiences, and this can be compounded by participation in difficult and lengthy criminal justice procedures, reducing the willingness of victims to report trafficking in human beings.

This panel was moderated by **Mr. Chris Toth**, Executive Director of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) in the United States and member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Prosecutors. Among the panel speakers featured **Dr. Maia Rusakova**, Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology of the St. Petersburg State University and Executive Director of Stellit, ECPAT International Regional Board Representative for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, **Sister Gabriella Bottani**, Co-ordinator and 2019 U.S. TIP Report Heroes Award Winner, Talitha Kum International, **Ms. Pam Bowen**, Senior Policy Advisor at the Crown Prosecution Service of the United Kingdom and **Mr. Wanchai Roujanavong**, Senior Consultant Prosecutor from Thailand.

The panel opened with a video address by **Ms. Karly Church**, a human trafficking crisis intervention counsellor with Victim Services in Canada and a sex trafficking survivor. She described how traumatic the court process can be for victims, facing their abusers, recalling their stories, and receiving pressure from defense lawyers to discredit them. Much of the burden is on the victims. In this context, she underlined **the importance of support to victims** to prepare them for an often long, difficult and unpredictable process. A victim-centred approach to investigating and prosecuting trafficking is essential to ensure that victims enjoy safety, protection, access to support services to heal the trauma and an adequate compensation and reparation for the suffered damages.

Panelists highlighted the **vulnerabilities of the victims which play a role in their interactions with the criminal justice system**. Drug addiction, mental health problems, criminal records, history of domestic violence, migration status, social marginalization are weaknesses that are exploited as a fertile ground to derail the prosecution process. Multiple interviews and confrontation with the traffickers can aggravate the already serious trauma resulting from the trafficking experience. Child victims have additional special needs which must be addressed simultaneously through the **provision of specialized age-sensitive services**.

 See related video at <https://www.osce.org/cthb/458824>

In the context of prosecution, **expectations on the victims are high**. Victims may feel that it is never enough to prove their victimhood. Not only do they have to show the scars, describe places, give names, and recount their stories, they also have to deal with the bureaucratic legal procedures and prove their innocence for other crimes, such as violations of immigration laws, labour laws or other criminal code provisions. They are also faced with attitudes and prejudice resulting from structural and cultural asymmetrical relationships between employee and employer, woman and man, adult and child, national and foreigner, rich and poor.

Victims are expected to co-operate with the investigation and provide compelling testimonies. A study that was led in a Western European country to establish the reasons why THB prosecution cases were either successful or unsuccessful, showed that investigations often **rely too heavily on evidence** provided by the victim rather than the motivations of the defendant. Investigation and prosecution can take years, during which victims disengage from criminal proceedings because of the **delays and lack of sustained support**. The same study revealed that proactive investigations where evidence is built up before any victim reporting or identification is often the best approach with the best outcomes.



“Victimless” approaches to prosecution, which alleviate the need to solely or primarily rely on victims' testimony, allow victims to avoid having to go through the trauma of recalling their experiences in court. Such approaches also foster stronger cases that are less dependent on victim co-operation and less susceptible to deterioration due to inconsistent statements, victim intimidation or fading memory. Cases are built around evidence gathered proactively and with less disruption of the victims.

With a view to put in place the necessary safeguards, a few elements are worthy of particular consideration. For example, whilst victims' compensation is possible in such cases, it might be more difficult to award compensation and issue reparation orders when victims have not been formally identified as such in criminal proceedings and where the compensation system is dependent on the victims' participation in the criminal justice process. Victimless prosecution might also result in more lenient sentences when the judge cannot see first-hand victim vulnerabilities and hear impactful statements that would highlight the physical and psychological trauma the offences have had on them. On the other hand, thanks to victimless prosecution strategies, victims are not re-traumatized as they don't have to provide evidence. Investigators are able to **relieve the burden of proving the case from the victim and gather diverse sources of evidence** leading to prison sentences for the perpetrators and assets confiscation. Victimless prosecution strategies are most effective in cases involving the use of technology including cases where criminal actions leave a digital trace, such as trafficking for sexual exploitation on adult services websites.

In this regard, panellists shared the following observations and recommendations:

① It is important to **switch the burden away from the victims and hold the whole trafficking chain responsible for the crime**: those who recruit, who exploit and who earn from the exploitation. Trafficking in human beings is an extremely lucrative business involving a number of actors who benefit directly or indirectly from the exploitation of another human being.

② Efforts to build a **trustful relationship between the victim and law enforcement** that is stronger than fear, threats and shame, will allow for victims' resilience. Sometimes small signs of attention can mean a lot to victims so that they feel listened, believed and supported. In addition, appropriate and functioning referral mechanisms for victim assistance and partnerships with service providers to respond to the referrals are essential to create a supportive and protective environment for the victims. **Empowerment of victims** is also key to generate trust in the system and reclaim their lives and independence. The **establishment of survivors committees** are essential to inform victim-centered policies and effective strategies.

③ As shown through the example of a high-profile prosecution case in Thailand which resulted in the conviction of 62 offenders, receiving sentences between 11 and 50 years of imprisonment, the co-operation of victims is of great importance. **Providing full assistance and protection** to the victims and meeting their needs, both prior to and during their engagement with criminal justice stakeholders, is key to ensure better co-operation and better outcomes. Without early victim assistance, sustainable long-term support and perspectives for inclusion into society, there is no successful prosecution.

④ A gender-sensitive approach is another crucial aspect, particularly in **addressing victims' specific psycho-social and physical needs** throughout the investigation and prosecution process. Recalling that women and girls form the vast majority of identified victims of trafficking, men and boys should not be forgotten and should be supported in the process of acceptance of their condition as victim.

⑤ **Training on the application of victim-centred approaches** is key to sometimes unlearn rigid competencies and practices, in particular with regard to victims' consent, the non-punishment principle, gender or minority stereotyping. This is not only a matter of offering training sessions, but also a meaningful commitment to changing the organizational culture to mainstream victim-centred approaches through the work of the concerned institution.

⑥ The criminal justice system can take important **steps to relieve the burden of proving the case from the victim**. This includes the following:

- a. With the **establishment of specialized units**, cases can be referred to prosecutors who have specialized experience in dealing with these complex cases.
- b. **Early investigative involvement of prosecutors** to advise on the evidence needed to build the cases, lines of enquiry and early liaison with authorities abroad is also critical; when police and prosecutors work closely in building the cases, they can build case strategies without relying on the victim.
- c. **Greater reliance on technology** to investigate and prosecute also helps minimize the burden on the victims and speed up the investigation, for example by using artificial intelligence to sift through huge volumes of digital material or covert surveillance techniques to collect evidence. Collaboration with Internet service providers can be useful to obtain intelligence and evidence. For example, law enforcement use "data wash" tools to identify potential victims and websites provide police

with details of those who are posting profiles, with email addresses, mobile phone numbers and credit card details to be able to trace them.

- d. As mentioned earlier, financial investigations can be vital to prove the motive and the deliberate exploitation of victims for gain. **Greater emphasis on the traffickers' motives and financial gains** also leads to greater opportunities to identify and confiscate assets for the purpose of compensation.

Recommendations for participating States

1. Devise strategies and tools to hold the whole trafficking chain responsible for THB crimes;
2. Build trust between law enforcement, victims and the community at large and develop mechanisms to ensure victims' empowerment and participation in the design of anti-trafficking responses;
3. Provide full assistance and protection for victims, with particular attention to their gender- and age-specific needs;
4. Enhance the application of victim-centred approaches through dedicated trainings;
5. Establish specialized prosecutorial units, promote early investigative involvement of prosecutors, and increase reliance on technology and financial intelligence, in order to relieve victims from the prosecution burden.

Panel 4

Recommendations for the way forward

The last panel outlined recommendations on how laws and policies can best contribute to improving the rate and effectiveness of prosecutions by overcoming the challenges raised in previous panels. This panel was moderated by **Mr. Valiant Richey**, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. **Dr. Myria Vassiliadou**, former European Union Anti-Trafficking Coordinator and Independent Expert from Cyprus, **Mr. Farrukh Raufov**, Deputy Head of Preliminary Investigation Department from Tajikistan, **Ms. Beatriz Sanchez Alvarez**, Prosecutor from Spain, **Mr. Sergiu Russu**, Head of the Anti-Trafficking Section within the General Prosecutor's Office from Moldova, featured as panel speakers.

Panel 4 began with a video from **Ms. Kyra Doubek**, Executive Director at the Washington Trafficking Prevention in the United States, and a survivor of trafficking. Ms. Doubek stressed the need for actors within the criminal justice system to **take into account the life experiences and current financial, mental and emotional obstacles of trafficking victims when dispensing justice**. She explained the financial strain court proceedings can place on victims, and the impact that it can have on the recidivism of victims back into trafficking situations.

Prior to addressing their own guidance on the way forward, speakers highlighted some of

the key challenges facing the effective implementation of current prosecution efforts. In particular, panellists raised the broad culture of impunity for traffickers, emphasizing the need for anti-trafficking efforts to **target the entire trafficking chain**, moving beyond the victims and the traffickers themselves to include those who facilitate the exploitation of victims and those whose businesses profit off of that exploitation. This chain is often international, and thus requires **a high degree of cross-border and inter-agency co-operation to be effectively stymied. International co-operation** however is often hindered by a lack of co-ordination and trust, bureaucratic processes, and differences in political will to identify and prosecute traffickers and their accomplices.

The **economic motivations behind trafficking in human beings** were raised as another area in need of attention. Noting that while the presence of vulnerabilities makes individuals more susceptible to trafficking, vulnerabilities themselves are not the cause of exploitation: the demand for goods or services provided by victims is a pull factor that creates the financial incentive for trafficking to take place.

Panellists underscored that the challenges to combating impunity and improving the prosecution of THB are often not legal, but are instead related to a lack of **political will**, which limits the implementation of existing anti-traf-



ficking efforts and the resources dedicated to it. The lack of **harmonization of legislation**, including within national jurisdictions, serves as an additional impediment to the effective implementation of counter-trafficking efforts, creating challenges to the sharing of expertise across the criminal justice system even when political will exists. The lack of knowledge on THB within sectors of the criminal justice system was further recognized as a continuing obstacle to effective prosecutions, with limited training for members of the judiciary of particular concern.



See related video at <https://www.osce.org/cthb/458827>

Acknowledging these challenges, a series of recommendations were presented as a way forward in countering the impunity enjoyed by traffickers:

1 Speakers raised the need to **ratify and fully implement the existing international and regional instruments** to combat THB, while expressing caution over the creation of any new legal instruments or tools. This included using existing commitments to discourage demand, and, for some participating States, the need to criminalize the use of services from victims of THB, noting the challenge posed by the demand that fosters trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

2 **Specialized units** should be established for the prosecution of THB crimes, to help solidify knowledge within one department which can then co-ordinate, monitor, and provide assistance in the prosecution of THB cases. Additional resources within the criminal justice system should be provided to **appropriately train actors on how to identify, investigate and prosecute THB crimes**, with special attention to training for judges and prosecutors. States should also actively train and educate actors from adjacent sectors, such as labour inspectorates and tax collectors, on how to identify THB victims and those who are profiting off their services.

3 The **use of joint investigative teams** should be expanded to include close partnership among countries of destination, transit and origin. Employing bilateral agreements, formalizing methods of co-operation and the assistance of international actors such as INTERPOL, EUROPOL and EUROJUST will improve the investigation and prosecution of THB cases that involve the movement of victims or money across borders.

4 Methods of **intergovernmental co-operation** are critical for the handling of THB cases across borders and enabling information sharing between the police, prosecutors and members of the judiciary. Establishing close co-operation with centralized authorities enables the quick granting of mutual legal assistance with the aim of expediting legal requests and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles. Governments should work to streamline the system of transmission of requests for international co-operation and transfer of procedures, conduct systematic bilateral meetings between countries of origin, transit and destination, and periodically evaluate multilateral efforts to adjust the international THB response.

5 THB investigations should be expanded to include new methods of uncovering the crime. **The use of financial investigations** to identify traffickers and uncover assets for victim compensation can be a highly effective tool in helping to prosecute THB crimes. Similarly, law enforcement should be trained on how to **use digital technologies** to investigate THB-related offences and identify traffickers who are using the Internet to recruit and sell the services of victims.

6 **National Referral Mechanisms** must be implemented with stable sources of funding for victim support services in order to embed key components of victim protection within the prosecutorial response.

7 **National and international mechanisms for financial compensation** of victims of trafficking without any discrimination should also be established to help protect identified victims, thereby contributing to making the victim whole and reducing the risk of re-trafficking.

8 **Training on THB should include the gender dynamic of the crime**, both in terms of the perpetrators and the victims. Raising awareness amongst frontline responders, investigators and civil society organizations on what signs to look for to spot men and boys who might be victims of trafficking would avoid limiting the prosecution of THB offences to only those which impact women and girls.

9 States should also **address the systemic discrimination faced by minority groups**, including indigenous persons, so as to prevent their re-victimization and provide access to services in their native language so to ensure their understanding and increase trust.

10 States should consider **leveraging existing national co-ordination mechanisms** to allow for appropriate information sharing amongst relevant actors, enabling joint efforts to prosecute THB crimes and promoting a uniform understanding of how to implement existing THB legislation. It should encompass actors from law enforcement, prosecution authorities and the judiciary, as well as include anti-corruption, border and victim assistance units, as their specialized knowledge can help identify instances of THB. These groups should meet on a regular schedule, and be given the mandate to create counter-THB objectives for each.

11 To help stimulate the development of new tools and methods of combating THB, private companies, civil society and academia should be encouraged to **collect and analyse data on relevant aspects of human trafficking with the aim of formulating new solutions** that can be shared with public institutions involved in prosecuting these acts.

Recommendations for participating States

1. Ratify and fully implement the existing international and regional instruments to combat trafficking in human beings;
2. Address the demand and financial profits that incentivize trafficking, including through the criminalization of the use of goods and services provided by victims of THB;
3. Establish specialized units made of actors appropriately trained and equipped with diverse expertise to detect, investigate and prosecute THB crimes;
4. Engage in cross-border and inter-agency co-operation to address the complex and transnational nature of THB crimes, in particular through the creation of joint investigative teams;
5. Leverage the use of technology and financial investigations in order to detect and prosecute THB crimes without solely relying on the victim's testimony;
6. Strengthen National Referral Mechanisms and promote integration of key components of victim protection within the criminal justice response;
7. Establish national and international mechanisms for financial compensation of victims of trafficking without any discrimination;
8. Promote training on gender-sensitive approaches to the identification, investigation and prosecution of THB crimes;
9. Address the systematic discrimination faced by minority groups to prevent and respond to their victimization;
10. Encourage private companies, civil society and academia to collect and analyse relevant THB data and propose new ways to support the prosecution of THB crimes.

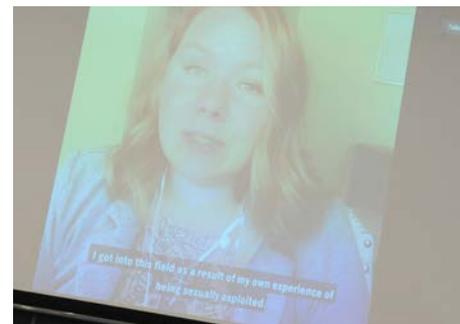
Closing remarks

Closing remarks were delivered by **Ambassador Igli Hasani**, Permanent Representative of Albania to the OSCE and Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council (hereafter the Chairperson) and **Mr. Valiant Richey**, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (hereafter the Special Representative). Both speakers noted that widespread impunity for THB continues to be a grave concern for the rule of law, security and safety in the region. They underlined the inherent and utmost responsibility for the OSCE to support participating States in replacing a culture of impunity with a culture of justice. The video address by **Ms. Malaika Oringo**, Founder of the “Footprint to Freedom Foundation” in the Netherlands highlighted the need to include victims and survivors’ voices to inform the design and implementation of anti-trafficking strategies with a view to ensuring that all their needs are met.

The Special Representative warned that, without targeted action, the health, social and economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic could become a human trafficking crisis through an exacerbation of vulnerabilities. The Chairperson also recalled that while 2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Palermo Protocol, the first robust international framework for combating trafficking in human beings, too few traffickers had been brought to justice in comparison with victim estimates.

That is why the Chairperson and the Special Representative jointly called on participating States to set a concrete goal of **tripling the number of THB prosecution cases within the next three years**. With this call, the OSCE intends to engage in a “fiercer pursuit” of trafficking and launch a renewed push to increase the number and improve the quality of prosecutions, also sending a strong message to those who might consider getting involved in trafficking of human beings in the future. While recognizing the monumental challenge to bring justice to the millions of trafficked victims, the Special Representative and the Chairperson highlighted the plethora of **good policies and practices that are still awaiting to be replicated, implemented and backed up by investment and political will** to bring about their full potential and put an end to trafficking in human beings.

The Special Representative offered his Office’s support and technical assistance to the 57 participating States in responding to the call for action and in designing and implementing effective strategies to prosecute traffickers and deliver justice to victims. The Chairperson on the other hand confirmed that it would continue prioritizing the issue and lend its full support to the work of the Executive structures to make a difference on the ground.



Online side events

Two side-events were organized on the margins of the 20th OSCE Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons Conference. The first side-event was organized by the OSCE Transnational Threats Department's Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), in collaboration with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues. The event focused on leveraging the potential of community policing as an effective way to build cohesive and resilient societies to prevent and combat human trafficking.

Ambassador Alena Kupchyna, OSCE Co-ordinator of the Transnational Threats Department pointed out that THB flourishes in those socioeconomic environments where traffickers can display their intimidating power, taking full advantage of the lack of trust between the public and the police. The panellists devoted special attention to ways in which community policing can contribute to building trust between law enforcement and civil society as well as to understanding the community fabric dynamics in order to identify groups at risk of trafficking and protect the most vulnerable to trafficking. In that respect, **Dr. Fernand de Varennes**, United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues, noted with concern that individuals and groups in vulnerable situations, such as women and youth, including those with minority backgrounds, are particularly at risk of being tar-

geted by traffickers; however, there is little analysis and disaggregated data to explore THB through the lens of minority vulnerability and their susceptibility to trafficking. Further efforts should be made to produce more effective, minority-tailored prevention and protection policies.

While there is no best practice in tailoring measures to combating the trafficking of minority groups, the Panel identified a number of special policing teams that have been established in certain European countries in order to liaise with minority groups, and effectively build trust with police forces. Additionally, the Panel stressed the importance of community co-operation on the ground, which helps not only to identify and provide assistance to victims, but also to gradually build trust and secure co-operation with vulnerable populations with a view to prosecuting large-scale trafficking networks in the long run.

In conclusion, panellists concurred that developing and implementing comprehensive minority integration policies, focusing on meaningful social, political and economic participation, as well as multi-agency co-operation of all sectors of government and civil society, are key in building lasting and mutual trust between minority populations and law enforcement, thus providing for effective policing and prosecution of traffickers.

The second side-event was organized by ODIHR and UN Women to present the findings and recommendations from a recent policy survey on **“Addressing the Emerging Human Trafficking Trends and Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic”**. To open the webinar, Ms Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, First Deputy Director and Acting Director of ODIHR, highlighted that OSCE participating States that have National Referral Mechanisms (NRM) or equivalent systems tend to have more accessible rehabilitation and reintegration services for victims of trafficking. She also added that resourcing of anti-trafficking NGOs during and after COVID-19 is critical.

Ms Tatiana Kotlyarenko, ODIHR Adviser on Anti-Trafficking Issues presented the key findings and recommendations resulting from the survey of non-governmental anti-trafficking stakeholders and survivors of trafficking¹³. It found that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic heightened the vulnerability of certain groups, notably women and children. It also impacted the ability of participating States to effectively respond to THB particularly in the areas of identification procedures and social services. Compared to the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic, victims and survivors had difficulty in accessing almost all services; they reported lack of access to basic needs, including food and water, safe accommodation, lack of access to COVID-19 testing, access to

education and employment. It was emphasized that while traffickers have been able to quickly adapt their activities to the online sphere during the COVID-19 pandemic, government agencies and civil society had difficulty doing so. The panellists also noted an increase of online sexual exploitation of children via social media platforms and gaming sites as a particularly concerning trend.

The panel of experts featured **Congressman Christopher H. Smith**, Special Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on Human Trafficking Issues, **Ambassador Per-Anders Sunesson**, Swedish Ambassador at Large for Combating Trafficking in Persons, **Ms. Dalia Leinarte**, Chair of CEDAW Committee for General Recommendations Trafficking of Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration, **Mr. Kevin Hyland**, former United Kingdom Anti-Slavery Commissioner and Member of Council of Europe GRETA, and **Ms. Shandra Woworuntu**, Founder and Vice-President of Mentari and survivor leader. It was recalled that THB is a financially motivated crime, which generates over USD 150 billion each year, warranting investment in measures that threaten the income of traffickers. Educating young people about the detrimental effects of human trafficking and transforming harmful masculinities was also suggested as a means to reduce demand fostering THB, in particular for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

¹³ The survey gathered responses from frontline stakeholders in 103 countries as well as survivors of trafficking from 41 States. Consult the report here: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/a/458434_1.pdf (last visited on 30 September 2020)

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"When rule of law is threatened, the security and safety of all citizens especially the most vulnerable, is at stake. Criminal investigation and legal punishment of the perpetrators of crimes of trafficking in human beings are of paramount importance." @SanderLleshaj #CTHB20

 Albanian OSCE Chairmanship 2020 @ALMissionVienna



#CTHB20

Marija Andjelkovic, CEO, @Astra_Beograd, Serbia: "Prosecution will lead to a higher rate of convictions, and therefore greater trust in the system" #CTHB20 @osce Have a question for the speakers?

 OSCE Anti-Trafficking @osce_cthb



#CTHB20

"We have to do everything for victims that we can, to convince them to cooperate in investigations" - Wanchai Roujanavong, Senior Consultant Prosecutor, Thailand #CTHB20

 OSCE Anti-Trafficking @osce_cthb



"Cases of trafficking are particularly complex because of the victims' seemingly unreasonable behavior. In order to prepare a case, prosecutors need to dig deep to uncover the case amid the weaknesses"

Rahel Gershui
 Former National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator at Israel and Ambassador to the UN, OSCE & Int'l Organizations in Vienna

Now, on the 2nd panel of the @osce_cthb 20th #CTHB20 former National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator Rahel Gershui on "the weaknesses of victim behaviour in #HumanTrafficking cases". Follow ...

 Israel at UN, OSCE & Int'l Organizations in Vienna @ILMissionVienna



#CTHB20

Barry Koch
 Cryptocurrency regulations around the world are inconsistent, creating anonymity opportunity for criminals. There's a need for common minimum standards" - Barry Koch, Financial Sector Commission/Modern ...

 OSCE Anti-Trafficking @osce_cthb



#CTHB20

"Confiscation combined with conviction does not only deliver justice, but also it sends the right message to those aspire to enter this crime" - Sander Lleshaj, Minister of Interior Repr. of the @osce Chairmanship, Albania, at the ...

 OSCE Anti-Trafficking @osce_cthb



Ivanka Kotorova
 Chair of the Eurojust Anti-#HumanTrafficking sub-group will take part in the 20th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons #CTHB20, sharing best practices innovative measures to improve prosecution of ...

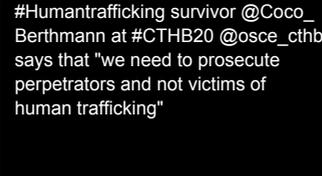
 Eurojust @Eurojust



#CTHB20

Coco Berthmann
 RT @osce_cthb: Coco Berthmann opening the Alliance #CTHB20. Live stream on <https://t.co/T0DtRk7alf>. "My name is c' Coco Berthmann, and statistically I should not be speaking to you. I should be a drug addict, a ...

 Natacha Rajkovic @NatachaRaja



#Humantrafficking survivor @Coco_Berthmann at #CTHB20 @osce_cthb says that "we need to prosecute perpetrators and not victims of human trafficking"

 Francisa Sasseti @fransasseti

2/2 An effective law enforcement response transcends typical structures and silos... to mount an effective counter-human trafficking effort, it must be multi-disciplinary. - Hilary Axam, @DetofJustice ...

 TellFinder Alliance @TellFinder



#CTHB20

"Impunity persists because implicit or explicit bias, prejudice, stigmatization, gender stereotypes continue to negatively impact the detection identification of trafficked women and girls." Katarzyna Gardapkhadze @ OSCE #ODIHR First ...

 OSCE Anti-Trafficking @osce_cthb



#CTHB20

Pam Bowen
 Pam Bowen, Senior Police Advisor at the Crown Prosecution Service, UK: "Largely, cases rely too much on the testimony of the victim, rather than the perpetrator's motivation." #CTHB20 Have a question for the ...

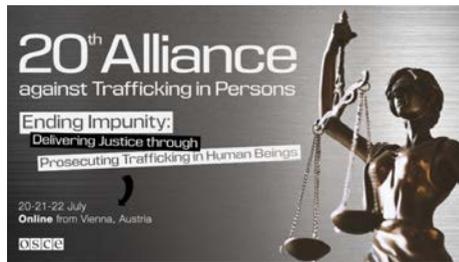
 OSCE Anti-Trafficking @osce_cthb



Fascinating panel and discussion on the importance of victim-centered investigations and prosecutions of #HumanTrafficking at the @osce_cthb Conference today! #CTHB20 We took the floor to introduce the #FLOW_TBH Investigation Tool: <https://t.co/hkkGyoVAPk>

 HEUNI @Heuni_institute

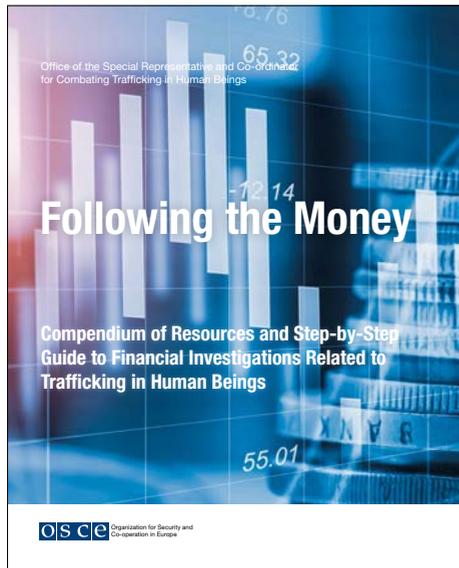
Learn more



The presentation

Download the presentations and watch all the sessions of the 20th Alliance against Trafficking in Persons Conference on our website:

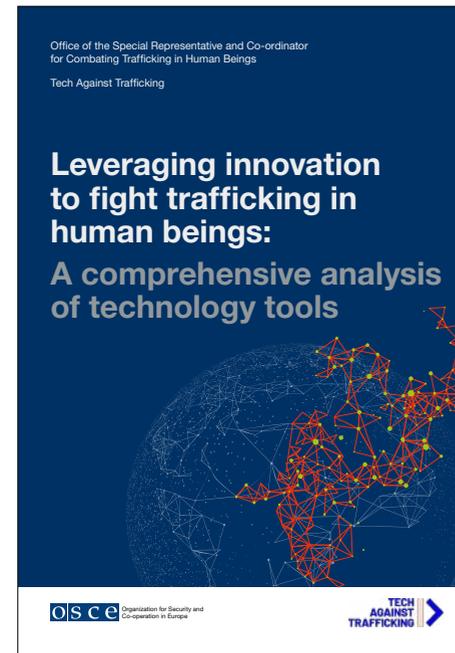
► <https://www.osce.org/event/alliance20>



Following the Money: Compendium of Resources and Step-by-step Guide to Financial Investigations Into Trafficking in Human Beings (OSCE: Vienna, 2019)

The paper aims to leverage off of the strengths and successes of established but disparate anti-THB financial investigatory practices, developed across the OSCE participating States, to raise awareness of the strategic value of financial investigations and the resources available, and to help create a more harmonised approach that can contribute to mainstreaming of financial investigations across the OSCE region.

► <https://www.osce.org/cthb/438323>



Leveraging innovation to fight trafficking in human beings: a comprehensive analysis of technology tools

(OSCE: Vienna, 2020)

The publication takes stock of technology tools and initiatives developed to combat trafficking in human beings in its different forms in the OSCE area and beyond. It also examines the ways technology can be misused to facilitate trafficking in human beings. It is the first known publication to conduct a global analysis of how different stakeholders, including law enforcement, civil society, businesses and academia can take advantage of technology to advance the fight against the human trafficking crime. The publication also provides recommendations to governments and organizations funding technology projects on how to maximize the value of technology-based solutions.

► <https://www.osce.org/cthb/455206>

Agenda of the Conference

Day 1: Monday 20 July

Welcoming Remarks

Mr. Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Opening Remarks

Mr. Sandër Lleshaj, Minister of Interior and representative of the OSCE Chairmanship, Albania

Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Ms. Katarzyna Gardaphkhadze, First Deputy Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Keynote Addresses

Ms. Tanzila Narbaeva, Chairperson of the Senate of the Parliament of Uzbekistan, Chairperson of the National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Mr. Olivier Onidi, Acting European Union Anti-Trafficking Coordinator

Panel 1 – The scope and nature of the problem

Moderator: Ms. Kristiina Kangaspunta, Chief of Crime Research Section, UNODC

Ms. Camelia Stoina, Chief Prosecutor of International Cooperation Service, Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism, General Prosecutor's Office, Romania

Mr. Oleg Zatelepin, Judge of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, Member of the Judicial Collegium for Criminal Cases

Ms. Marija Andjelković, CEO of Astra, Serbia

Ms. Hilary Axam, Director, Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, Criminal Section, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice, United States

Discussion

Day 2: Tuesday 21 July

Online side-event

Towards resilient and cohesive societies: community policing to prevent and combat human trafficking organized by the Transnational Threats Department/Strategic Police Matters Unit in collaboration with High Commissioner on National Minorities (via Webex)

Panel 2 – Working smarter to enhance investigations and prosecutions

Moderator: Mr. Kevin Hyland, Member of the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Ireland

Mr. Barry Koch, Commissioner, Financial Sector Commission on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking / the Liechtenstein Initiative, United States

Mrs. Ivanka Kotorova, Chair of the Eurojust Anti Trafficking in Human Beings Sub-Group and National Member for Bulgaria

Mr. Aliaksandr Tsyganok, Deputy Head of the Department for Investigation of Crimes against Persons and Public Security, Main Investigation Department of the Central Office of the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus

Ms. Rahel Gershuni, Independent expert, Israel

Discussion

Panel 3 – Victim-centred approaches to investigations and prosecutions

Moderator: Mr. Chris Toth, Executive director of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) and member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Prosecutors, United States

Dr. Maia Rusakova, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, St. Petersburg State University, Executive Director of Stelit, ECPAT International Regional Board Representative for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Russian Federation

Ms. Pam Bowen, Senior Policy Advisor at the Crown Prosecution Service, UK

Sister Gabriella Bottani, Co-ordinator and 2019 U.S. TIP Report Heroes Award Winner, Talitha Kum International, Italy

Mr. Wanchai Roujanavong, Senior Consultant Prosecutor, Thailand

Discussion

Online side-event

Presentation of Findings of the ODIHR and UN Women Policy Survey Reports and Recommendations "Addressing Emerging Human Trafficking Trends and Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic" organized by ODIHR and UN Women (via Zoom)

Day 3: Wednesday 22 July

Panel 4 – Recommendations for the way forward

Moderator: Mr. Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Dr. Myria Vassiliadou, Former EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, Independent Expert, Cyprus
Mr. Farrukh Raufov, Deputy Head of Preliminary Investigation Department, Tajikistan

Ms. Beatriz Sanchez Alvarez, Prosecutor, Spain

Mr. Sergiu Russu, Head of the Anti-Trafficking Section within the General Prosecutor's Office, Moldova

Discussion

Closing remarks

Mr. Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Amb. Igli Hasani, Permanent Representative of Albania to the OSCE and Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for stability, prosperity and democracy in 57 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

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