

Enhancing Transnational Cooperation on Trafficking Cases in South-Eastern Europe (TRM-II)

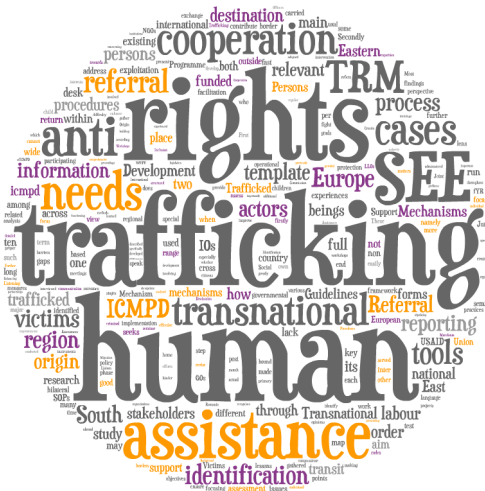
Final Seminar

Capacity Building for Combating Trafficking for Labour Exploitation

Project Kick-off

28-29 February 2012, Bucharest, Romania

SEMINAR CONCLUSIONS



On 28 and 29 February 2012, over a hundred participants from across Europe, including representatives from 19 countries within South-Eastern Europe and the European Union, gathered in Bucharest, Romania to officially bring to a close the project *Enhancing Transnational Cooperation on Trafficking Cases in South-Eastern Europe (TRM-II)*, funded by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and implemented by ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development). After five years of implementation of the TRM programme, the participants came together to share their experiences, discuss the challenges they overcame on their way to implementing the TRM and outline their vision for the future of transnational cooperation in the field of combating trafficking in human beings.





The Final Transnational Seminar, co-hosted by the **Romanian Ministry of Administration and Interior**, was opened by Mr Catalin Necula from the Ministry of Administration and Interior of Romania, Mr Peter Widemann, ICMPD Director General, and Ms Cathy Cozzarelli, Vulnerable Groups and Anti-trafficking Advisor and Bureau Gender Advisor, USAID. The OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ms Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, delivered a key note speech.

The objectives of the seminar were threefold: 1) to reflect upon five years of TRM implementation and recapitulate the main achievements and lessons learned; 2) to put forward and discuss broader issues related to transnational cooperation against trafficking in human beings and 3) to launch a new project on trafficking for labour exploitation.

Actively participating in the one-and-a-half day discussions, the seminar attendees **highlighted the key achievements** of the TRM-II project and provided recommendations for further transnational cooperation on counter-trafficking issues. Focusing on emerging trends in human trafficking, the participating anti-trafficking experts and practitioners discussed and shared good practices on efficient ways of transnational cooperation that respect the human rights of trafficked persons.

Ms Cathy Cozzarelli from USAID offered the seminar participants a different perspective on the achievements of the TRM programme. Pointing to a number of instances where the TRM programme has been mentioned by the US State Department and USAID as an example of good practice and hailed a success in regional programming, Ms Cozzarelli expressed her satisfaction with the work done and encouraged the participants to continue their work with the same spirit of cooperation. Referring to the priorities of the US government in fighting human trafficking, she emphasized **the importance of regional approaches that foster the building and maintaining of relationships across and beyond national borders.**

In her speech, the Special representative of the OSCE, Ms Maria-Grazia Giammarinaro, focused on labour exploitation and expressed her approval of the **imminent cooperation of ICMPD and OSCE** in the new project on capacity building for combating trafficking for labour exploitation. She emphasized that currently, and despite all efforts, international cooperation in matters of human trafficking remains a weak point. Linking the phenomenon of labour exploitation to economic trends and outlooks, Ms Giammarinaro shared her thoughts on the features of labour exploitation and **voiced a common concern about the capacity of relevant authorities to identify and adequately assist** persons trafficked for labour exploitation. She thus urged practitioners in the field to regard migrant workers first and foremost as human beings, as workers, **and focus on their exploitation**, rather than to look for trafficking elements and focus on the victim status. According to Ms Giammarinaro, this broader approach to exploitation could help identify more cases of exploitation than what we have seen to date.

Facts and figures about the five years of TRM implementation were presented by Ms Elisa Trossero, ICMPD's anti-trafficking Programme Manager, who reminded participants of the scope and outreach of the TRM project. Over 2000 professionals met on over 60 occasions to shape the TRM into what it is at this point – a model for transnational cooperation, a model that offers harmonized standards and streamlined approaches to victim protection. The sought after and ongoing **geographical expansion of the TRM** model, comes as a logical step in the development and fostering of transnational cooperation.

Type of activity	Number of events	Number of participants +/-
National workshops	14	400
Transnational workshops	7	210
National trainings	23	800
Transnational trainings	2	70
Study visits	7	50
NGCs meetings	8	10/15 each
Regional seminars	6	700
TOTAL	67	2245

In the discussion moderated by **Ms Marketa von Hagen**, representatives of the countries involved with the TRM programme, reflected upon 5 years of TRM implementation. Praise was expressed for the TRM model and the strides taken to facilitate transnational cooperation. Appreciation for the participatory approach applied by the TRM, recognition that the TRM standard operating procedures filled a gap in the provision of assistance measures for trafficked persons across borders were only some of the comments shared by the representatives of each TRM country.

During the discussion a number of remaining challenges were also brought forward. Recognising that a **clear distinction between countries of destination, transit and origin barely exists any longer**, the lack of participation of (Western) EU countries was mentioned as a gap. Naturally one of the recommendations provided was to expand the TRM to other regions in Europe and beyond, and to incorporate a broader network of skilled and trained professionals to work on the issues. A **more definite and outspoken political commitment** to adhere to the TRM standards was requested – in the form of a memorandum of understanding or other similar agreement which would make the TRM SOPs binding. The **continuous and regular update** and development of the SOPs was expressed to be a priority for all participants.



Viewpoints from a wide range of anti-trafficking stakeholders and practitioners as to their experiences on cross-border cooperation were further introduced with the presentation of the draft Assessment Report on Enhancing Transnational Cooperation on Trafficking Cases in SEE. In addition, an overview of international, regional, and bilateral instruments, mechanisms and tools relevant to transnational cooperation in trafficking cases in SEE was discussed. During this session, it was once again reiterated that all SEE countries have enacted anti-trafficking legislation, implemented National Action Plans, developed NRMs, and tested TRM guidelines over the last decade.

Following the presentation of the draft Assessment Report, the participants had the opportunity to learn more about the anti-trafficking international mechanisms and instruments, including the most recent EU regulations. **Ms Fadela Novak** from UNHCR presented the UN Joint Commentary on the EU Directive and pointed out the importance of taking the human rights based approach into consideration when interpreting and implementing legislation and the TRM SOPs. She highlighted that the **rights of the victim should be at the centre** of every anti-trafficking related action taken. Following on from Ms Novak, **Mr Gert Bogers** from the EU Coordinator's Office provided an update on other EU anti-trafficking initiatives and informed the participants about current efforts of the Union to establish an anti-trafficking strategy, expected to be launched in May this year. Furthermore he emphasised the **importance of the external dimension of the EU's anti-trafficking action** initiatives, stressing that trafficking in human beings is a cross-border illegal activity and therefore an important area for cooperation between the EU and third countries.

On the second day of the seminar, the first panel discussion laid the foundation for talks about emerging forms of trafficking. Four experts gave presentations on the topics of domestic servitude, child begging, baby selling and trafficking for labour exploitation. **Mr Berlan Pars Alan**, Head of Migration Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey described **domestic servitude as an invisible form of exploitation** and provided an overview of the challenges involved in identifying, investigating and prosecuting such cases. Mr Alan pointed out that domestic work is one of the least protected labour sectors and emphasized the importance of greater regulation of domestic work as a critical step in preventing trafficking for this purpose. **Ms Milica Đorđević**, Director of the Center for the Integration of Youth from Serbia provided an overview of the phenomenon of child begging and gave insights from the perception of both child and adult. Moreover, she pointed out that much more needs to be done to **improve the institutional response towards child begging**. **Mr Georgi Karakolev**, Chief Inspector at the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria emphasized the advantages of using Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) by sharing the investigation of a baby selling case. With regard to transnational cooperation, he pointed out the **need for the rapid exchange of information and intelligence** between all actors involved and the importance of gaining mutual trust between countries. Mr Karakolev also

explained the need for legislative changes to reflect the changes of the modus operandi of the traffickers. During the last presentation of this panel, **Mr Peter Van Hauwermeiren**, Director of the Directorate Social Inspectorate within the Ministry of Social Security in Belgium, gave a short overview of the Belgian situation and legislation concerning trafficking in human beings. He also presented a case of trafficking for labour exploitation between Germany and Belgium to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses that appeared in the transnational cooperation between the countries in this case. Namely, that cooperation was much better at the central level and between the institutions responsible for investigation than at the local level.



The last session of Day Two set the floor for the introduction of the new **ICMPD regional project on Capacity Building for Combating Trafficking for Labour Exploitation**, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented in cooperation with the OSCE SR office. This project is a spin-off of the TRM-II project and aims to address outstanding gaps in the capacity of different national stakeholders to handle cases of trafficking for labour exploitation. Along with the introduction of the project, an overview of the short assessment questionnaires sent to all project participants was presented. Key points stood out: **low numbers** of identified victims of trafficking for labour exploitation, **self-perception** of sending vs. receiving countries; lack of understanding of **internal EU trafficking**. Given the rising interest in the issue of labour exploitation, all participants declared their willingness to take part in this new initiative, **utilizing and expanding the established TRM infrastructure** of contacts and platform for cooperation.

The seminar as a whole was marked by the active participation of representatives of all present institutions, thus creating an **atmosphere of dialogue and understanding**. It was appreciated that new actors have joined the original TRM project participants, bringing in new perspectives, outlining different challenges and proposing alternative ways to approaching them. Taking into account the active discussions and exchanges of experience and expertise, it is expected that the seminar will be a step forward in improving cooperation between countries of origin, destination and transit with a view to further streamlining the process of providing effective assistance, support and protection to trafficked persons.

ICMPD thanks USAID for their support, as well as the National Anti-trafficking Coordinators, the prosecutors, the law enforcement officers, the judges, and the representatives of civil society from South-Eastern Europe and several European Union countries, who actively contributed to improving and enhancing transnational cooperation.

You can now watch the TRM video on the Spotlight Section of our homepage: <http://www.icmpd.org/> and on our YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/ICMPD>.