

## SUMMARY REPORT

### **Regional Expert Group Meeting: “Strengthening identification and protection of trafficked persons, especially for the purpose of forced criminality, including through training curricula in South Eastern Europe”**

**Hotel Rogner, Tirana, Albania**  
18-19 January 2023

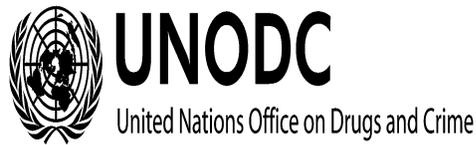
**Hybrid format with in-person and online attendance**

Implemented by UNODC in collaboration with the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons of Albania and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs of France

#### Welcoming remarks

**Ms. Romina Kuko, Deputy Minister of Interior, National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons of Albania** - welcomed the participants and thanked the organizers and other relevant counterparts for their continued support to the authorities of Albania in addressing human trafficking. She stated that Albania has recently approved the Strategy for organized crime in which the anti-trafficking issue is an important component as well as the National Action Plan for combating trafficking in persons. Ms. Kuko highlighted that the interventions are not enough only at a national level, as they should always be in coordination with the international component, especially on a regional level. Moreover, the interventions should be timely and be effectively supported by continued capacity-building activities. She underlined that combating human trafficking is complex, as this is a dynamic phenomenon that constantly changes its patterns and modus operandi and thus requires innovative coordinated regional responses by all stakeholders. Finally, she concluded that this Regional Expert Group Meeting (REGM) is an excellent opportunity for sharing knowledge and experience, improving cooperation and strengthening the overall response to human trafficking.

**H.E. Ms. Elisabeth Barsacq, Ambassador of France in Albania** - Welcomed the cooperation of France with Albania and UNODC in organizing this Regional Expert Group Meeting. She underscored the recently published report as a result of the initiative “Exploitation and Abuse: The Scale and Scope of Human Trafficking in South-Eastern Europe” which findings are used for the way forward in the response to trafficking in persons in the region. H.E. Ms. Elisabeth Barsacq recalled the activities supported by France on the topic, in line with the EU agenda. In this regard the EU Western Balkan summit held in December 2022 in Tirana is just another proof of our joint commitment to reinforce the efforts against trafficking in persons in the region. She highlighted that France’s priority is to strengthen the identification process of human trafficking as well as the protection system offered especially to the most vulnerable among the victims of human trafficking, including children. She underlined the importance of sharing experience, knowledge and systematic response to the trafficking in person and welcomed the contribution of the French



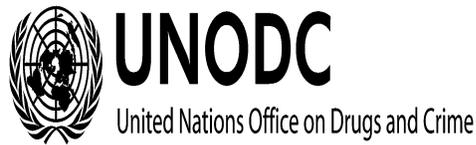
multidisciplinary group of panelists to the exchanges. Lastly, she stressed the importance of the cooperation and acknowledgment of all in the response to human trafficking, highlighting the role of civil society due to their provision of direct services as well as awareness-raising and capacity-building activities.

**Ms. Fiona McCluney, UN Resident Coordinator in Albania** - recalled the United Nations Trafficking in Person Protocol and its almost universal ratification by 178 countries in the world. However, at the same time she shared that the UNODC report on its implementation showed that the number of victims of trafficking remains unacceptably high, with a correspondingly low number of prosecutions in all countries, including in South and Southeastern Europe. Therefore, she called upon the participants of the conference to the importance of training criminal justice and law enforcement professionals and regular updates of training curricula that reflect new approaches to improve identification, investigation, prosecution and adjudication of trafficking in person cases. Additionally, Ms. McCluney acknowledged the efforts of the UNODC regional project U.N. Locking Impunity of Traffickers and Supporting Justice for Victims of Trafficking in Southeastern Europe aimed at strengthening the capacity of law enforcement authorities and criminal justice practitioners in the identification, investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases and protecting victims and enhancing cross-border criminal justice cooperation. She concluded her presentation by recommending the adoption of all appropriate legislative, policy, administrative and other measures to ensure effective implementation of the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking and empower law enforcement bodies to pay special attention to all kinds of indicators of criminal activity; the importance and necessity to adopt and adapt criminal procedures in order to prevent secondary victimization and re-traumatization, especially of child victims; and the importance of increasing the awareness of the existence of available international cooperation instruments and intensifying international cooperation to ensure victims' protection when the victim is trafficked across borders.

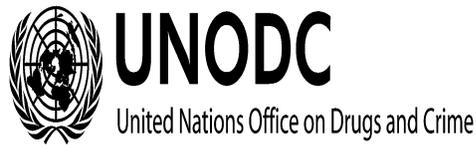
#### Session 1: Presentation of REGM concept, methodology and participants

**Mr. Davor Raus, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section, UNODC** - introduced the participants to the agenda and the concept of the REGM, appreciating the participation and the expertise of the panelist from the respective countries of Southeastern Europe, institutions, international regional organizations, civil society and academia. He drew attention to the fact that the first day will be focused on the criminal justice response to trafficking in persons for forced criminality and the international and regional organizations' perspective when it comes to forced criminality while the second day is dedicated to the national training institutions' experience in the issue and topic as well as the experiences of the NGOs.

#### Session 2: Perspective of international and regional organizations - International legal framework on addressing identification and protection of trafficked persons, especially for the purpose of forced criminality



**Ms. Petya Nestorova, Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (online)** - expressed her concerns in regard to child trafficking. Moreover, she highlighted the importance for stakeholders to also keep in mind that adults can be victims of human trafficking too, and that apart from sexual exploitation many other forms of exploitation exist where the *modi operandi* used by the perpetrators are changeable and progressive on a daily basis. When it comes to forced criminality, besides traditional forms such as pickpocketing, in recent years, there are evident cases of benefit fraud or bank fraud, credit fraud cases, drug production and smuggling. Ms. Nestorova provided the perspective of the Council of Europe Convention and EU Directive and provided further information on the implementation of these instruments. Moreover, she recalled that some EU members state as well as some non-EU member states have amended their criminal legislation to specifically include a reference to forced criminality as a form of exploitation and that some countries even go beyond leaving an open-ended list of purposes of exploitation in the national definition. GRETA encourages the authorities of all countries to ensure that trafficking for the purpose of forced criminality is adequately covered both in law and in practice. In relation to forced criminality, authorities should also take into account the importance of the aspect of the irrelevance of consent of the victim to the exploitation when any of the means are used. She noted that it is problematic that this aspect is not always specifically stated in national provisions which criminalized trafficking in human beings. Ms. Nestorova also expressed concern about the few statistics available regarding victims of trafficking for the purpose of criminality. In regard to this, she shared that in the UK an increase in the number of forced criminality cases has been observed, especially among children. Ms. Nestorova further presented several relevant cases. In Denmark there was the *Hornet's Nest* case, which concerned some 300 persons who were recruited in Romania and exploited for benefit and credit fraud in Denmark. They were placed in isolated houses in the countryside and were registered in the Danish personal identification system. 20 persons were convicted (Romanian defendants) in at least one case. In France there was a case concerning Romanian children exploited by their parents for theft. The children were being moved between France, Romania and other countries for exploitation purposes. 20 persons (among whom many parents) were convicted i.e. for child trafficking. In a relevant case from Bosnia and Herzegovina children were forced to beg and steal by family members. Evidence used at the trial included transcripts of communication between the defendants. In this case the parent and stepparent were convicted to 10 years by the Cantonal court in Tuzla in the human trafficking case of forcing children to beg and steal. In a Croatian case men and women were recruited on false pretences, they were hosted in rented houses and forced to work in illegal call centres where they were forced to pretend to be prosecutors/ judges calling persons in China and saying that they had info about them and asking for a bribe to drop charges. A similar *modus operandi* has been discovered in North Macedonia, Portugal and Montenegro. Lastly, Ms. Nestorova briefly spoke about the non-punishment principle which is of crucial importance for human trafficking for the purpose of forced criminality and is covered by the Article 26 of the CoE Convention which states that the parties must provide for the possibility of not imposing penalties upon victims of trafficking for their unlawful activities to the extent that they have been compelled to do so. 40 % of State Parties to the CoE Convention have implemented this through a specific criminal law provision. However, not all of these countries have adopted provisions that comply with the CoE



Convention – for example through limiting the scope. The criminalization of victims of human trafficking not only contravenes the obligation to provide services and assistance to victims, but it can also discourage victims from coming forward and cooperating with the authorities and in this way, it interferes with the obligation to investigate and prosecute those responsible for human trafficking. She recommended trainings for legal professionals focused on the implementation of the non-punishment provision in order to be effectively implemented by law enforcement agencies and prosecutors.

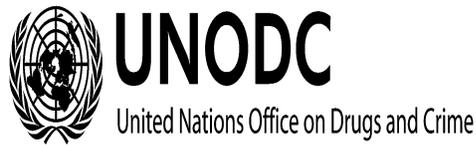
**Mr. Oleksandr Kyrylenko, Programme Officer, Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, OSCE** – shared that according to a recent OSCE *Survey of efforts to implement OSCE commitments and recommended actions to combat trafficking in human beings (THB)*,<sup>1</sup> there has been a considerable rise in the cases of THB for forced criminality in the OSCE region. This emerging trend also manifests itself in the profile of identified victims who, in 2020, constituted the third biggest group after the victims of THB for sexual exploitation and for labour exploitation. Against this backdrop, upholding the non-punishment principle for THB victims is paramount. To help States with the adoption and implementation of the principle, the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating THB (OSR/CTHB) developed *Policy and legislative recommendations towards the effective implementation of the non-punishment provision with regard to victims of trafficking*.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that most States have a provision in their legislation, its implementation is hindered by numerous challenges including restrictive interpretation, the tendency to narrow it down to sentencing considerations, misidentification of trafficking victims, addressing the cases when victims were forced to recruit and control others, as well as the credibility of a victim/witness testimony challenged in court. To address these challenges, it is recommended that States should adopt legislation to ensure practical and effective protection of victims' rights, including protection against unjust punishment. Such legislation inter alia should: include immunity from prosecution, detention and application of penalties; protect the right to non-punishment in bringing an appeal; ensure victims have no criminal record for having being suspected or prosecuted of a THB-related offence; not restrict victims' access to residency and/or labour rights. Guidance and training on the application of the non-punishment principle should be developed and widely disseminated among criminal justice practitioners.

**Mr. Roberto De Bernardi, Representative, UNICEF Albania** - Shared that UNICEF is dealing with the topic of trafficking in persons because of the special vulnerability of children - UNICEF mainly works on prevention and protection. He recalled that minors are often victims, both direct and indirect when family members are victims which puts children at risk of becoming or remaining poor, dropping out of school, sometimes getting involved in criminal activities etc. UNICEF has recently published a qualitative study of the experiences of survivors in accessing support and frontline professionals in providing economic reintegration support “Economic reintegration of trafficking survivors in Albania” and a qualitative study of the relationships

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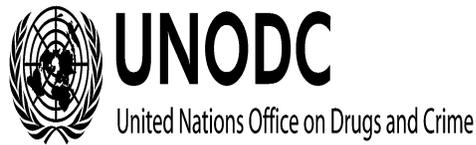
<sup>1</sup> Access the full report, through [clicking here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Access the full report, through [clicking here](#).



between trafficking victims and human traffickers in Albania “Trafficked by someone I know”. Mr. Di Bernardi commented that the publications have some limitations mainly because they are particularly focused on the situation in Albania. Still, he calls upon the participants to make use of the publications since some patterns may be considered relatively common to other countries in the region. Based on the findings of the publications, Mr. Di Bernardi shared the following conclusions: poor economic conditions and harmful social and gender norms are pushing factors for becoming victims of trafficking; stigmatization of the survivors is present and should be taken into consideration; young people often consider it a taboo to discuss mental health issues; in most cases the criminals are known to the victim and known within the community; some of the female traffickers who used to be a victim in the past, (are) turn(ed) into traffickers themselves; social media has an important role in the recruitment process; traffickers establish an intimate relationship with their victims and later on they exploit those relationships and the emotional attachment of the potential victim; traffickers use sexual, psychological and physical violence to force the potential victims into becoming victims of human trafficking; internal trafficking of children, girl and boys, is of concern with the increase of the tourism in Albania; victims engage in illegal activities such as selling drugs, drug smuggling. Lastly, Mr. Di Bernardi expressed his appreciation towards the authorities for the positive developments in the legislation which is now more sensitive to the victim’s rights.

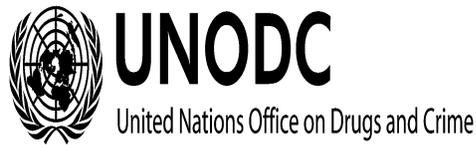
**Prof. Parosha Chandran, Professor, King's College London, UK (online)** - brought the most significant cases in the UK with regional and global leading influence on rights and on non-punishment. Prof. Chandran spoke on behalf of victims of trafficking and explained how the laws, policies and principles are absolutely critical to ensure protections for victims concerning not only the right to identification, but the right to the application of the non-punishment principle and how both of these aspects can actually encourage and enhance states activities in combating human trafficking. As timely identification and the correct implementation of the non-punishment principle will lead to more arrests, prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators. Prof. Chandran underlined the right to non-punishment for victims of trafficking who commit unlawful acts as a direct consequence of their trafficking situation and the fact that such victims should be treated as victims, not offenders. In 2008 she brought the first non-punishment case in the Courts of England, which was the case of R and O. This case is about a young Nigerian woman forced into sexual exploitation, who used a forged ID to escape the trafficking situation. She was then arrested, prosecuted and convicted for the unlawful use of a false identity document and put in prison for a term of eight months for a crime that she committed as a direct result of her trafficking. The fact that she was VoT was only taken into account as a mitigating circumstance. Prof. Chandran took the case to the court of appeal which quashed the lower court’s conviction – relying on the Council of Europe Convention and the preamble to Palermo protocol. After this they established in UK law the right to non-punishment for the protection of victims of human trafficking, which describes and reiterates the need to protect the human rights of victims of trafficking. Another important case brought in front of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in 2012 by Prof. Chandran is VCL and AN v. UK. This case is about Vietnamese children who had been prosecuted for cannabis cultivation and convicted with a sentence of 18 months detention and training order. Prof. Chandran represented the child in front of the UK Court of Appeal. The court however



refused to overturn the child's criminal conviction stating that 'he hadn't been trafficked enough', and that he had opportunities to escape - even though by that time there was a formal decision by national referral system recognising him as a victim of trafficking. Prof. Chandran lodged the case at the European Court of Human Rights, as a complaint against the UK. The Strasbourg Court unanimously ruled against the UK in the case in February 2021, finding that the human rights of the child called A.N. and another child called V.C.L., had been violated by the UK. Moreover, Prof. Chandran expressed that her recent cases and work on the topic have also led in recent times to the prosecution services and the police looking more carefully at the criminal enterprise known as 'county lines' in Britain. In these types of cases British kids - white English-born children - are being held and controlled by very dangerous drug trafficking gangs who are using them to transport drugs up across the UK. In 2021, they had the first prosecution of county lines cases. The children were so traumatized they could not give evidence. Therefore, the police used intelligence-led policing, which meant that the children did not have to give direct evidence. The children were often from care homes as well as children with disabilities and learning disorders. Prof. Chandran ended her presentation by saying that there is a need for careful identification regimes and well-functioning national referral mechanisms in order to adequately confront this severe type of crime.

### Session 3: Combating trafficking in persons, especially for the purpose of forced criminality - the perspective of international JHA agencies

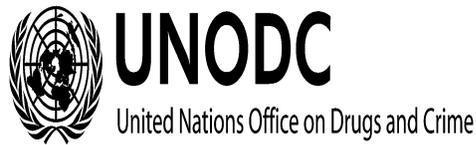
**Mr. Isaac Espinosa Delgado, Coordinator pro tempore, Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants Unit, INTERPOL General Secretariat** - Recounted that Interpol assists its 195 member countries in identifying, analysing, and responding to new criminal threats in order to target and disrupt international criminal networks. He presented the six pillars of the work of the Trafficking and Smuggling unit: transnational police cooperation and information sharing; operational and investigative support; intelligence gathering and crime analysis; specialized Interpol networks; capacity building and training and cross-sector collaboration and partnerships. He shared that forced criminality is a growing form of exploitation and is increasingly made possible by technology and has a fluid mode of operation (criminal organizations are getting more and more adaptive to law enforcement strategies). In regard to the trends in trafficking in persons, he provided an update on Central American migrants who are the main target in the framework of mixed migration flows, coerced into transportation of illicit drugs and other crimes by the cartels in the region and underlined that this group should be the main target for protection efforts in this region. Moreover, he pointed out that online Scams are on the rise particularly in South Eastern Asia where various cases are known of people who are lured by false job offers into situations of forced exploitation through online scams/ online fraud. In the beginning it was mostly seen in and around Cambodia/ Vietnam but since law enforcement in these countries have become more active in this field, the epicentre and countries of recruitment are expanding, e.g. to countries like Myanmar, Kenya, Ethiopia, and the Philippines. Mainly they recruit people who have some experience in information and communication technologies, so that they are particularly able to commit online scams/ online fraud. These victims are forced to long working hours without pay, deprived of their freedom, their documents are taken from them, and they face various forms of abuse and exploitation. Furthermore, Mr. Espinosa Delgado emphasized the need for more



discussion of the overall trend, but more specifically of actual cases in bilateral and multilateral meetings in order to encourage cooperation between countries and information exchange, since cooperation is still quite challenging for the furthering of the investigations.

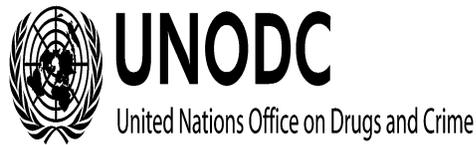
**Mr. Stylianos Bios, Judge, National Expert at EUROJUST, Greece** – presented that cross-border cases of trafficking in persons are complex and difficult to investigate and prosecute as they deal with different jurisdictions and thus Eurojust has been established to coordinate investigations and prosecutions of serious cross-border crime in Europe and beyond. He informed that there are different areas where EUROJUST can provide support in this regard, such as: gathering and sharing information, coordination with national law enforcement agencies to work closely together; to clarify legal systems and to decide jointly on the strategy to build a case; assisting swift cooperation; judiciary tools – swift warrants – investigation orders for confiscation of property, and assisting joint action days; localization of the victim – to identify, locate and support the victim; collaboration with third countries, sharing expertise on cases, participating in projects; Joint Investigative Teams (JIT); funding of JITs; etc. Moreover, he presented a complex case of an organized criminal group (OCG) originating in Lithuania which trafficked large quantities of heroin into Ireland and Northern Ireland. In addition, the OCG leader recruited and trafficked Lithuanian victims for the specific purpose of illegally selling heroin on the streets. A significant number of Lithuanian victims were found to be operating as street dealers in Ireland and Northern Ireland, mostly from vulnerable social backgrounds or were drug addicts. Proceeds from the criminal activity were laundered mainly by purchasing real estate. Eurojust coordinated the case from the very beginning, assisting in issuing mutual legal assistance requests and facilitating the real-time exchange of information, setting up and funding a JIT involving the authorities in Lithuania, Ireland and the United Kingdom taking into account the different jurisdictions. The criminal network responsible for drug trafficking, money laundering and trafficking in human beings was dismantled (18 suspects were arrested and various assets were seized, with an estimated overall value of EUR 700 000).

**Ms. Szonja Szabo, Specialist AP Phoenix, Europol** – European Migrant Smuggling Centre (online)- She explained that Europol is a European agency with the objective to support and strengthen the action by the competent authorities of the Member States and their mutual cooperation in preventing and also in combating organized crime, terrorism, and human trafficking. Countries are really keen on having close cooperation with each other in combatting these serious forms of crime. Moreover, Europol organizes action days throughout the whole year together with the countries focusing on different types of exploitation such as labour exploitation, child trafficking etc. She expressed that forced criminality is of concern since it is usually underreported which doesn't mean that the countries are not active in their investigation but rather that recognition of forced criminality is much more challenging than other forms of exploitation because this is a less visible form. She shared several characteristics and concerns in regard to investigations into this crime which are evident so far from the countries' experiences, such as: very strong family ties in which the victims in most of the cases do not perceive themselves as victims but as a member of a family; when the victims are engaged in forced begging some countries where the begging is an offense itself can consider it as a force criminality; the victims



and the suspects often share their nationalities and the ethnic ties; the criminal networks are very fluid and highly mobile and flexible that's why following them by the investigative activities is really challenging; usually they are small with just three maximum ten members in the OCG; the money laundering is not sophisticated, usually they spend the money on their own life and to maintain the family members at home; the suspects usually come from Eastern European countries (Eastern European organized crime groups have very strong family-based organization and block-based structure) Western Balkan countries, and also Vietnamese; male led organizations; violent treatment has been reported in the Western Balkan countries. Vietnamese organized crime groups (new structures ) where destination countries within Europe are the United Kingdom, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy and France; a new element in the forced criminality noticed in UK is 'baby farming' - victims of forced criminality (young girls) whoa are forced to deliver babies in their early age of 13-14 years and then these babies are also becoming victims; the victims are very reluctant to cooperate with the authorities because of the influence of the family; it's very hard to follow the money since it goes in cash back to the country of origin; In the end, she shared that it is very important that countries share information in the very early stage, just as intelligence, or as an investigation on a highly advanced level with the aim to assure a successful response to this form of organized crime.

**Mr. Adrian Petrescu, Operational Officer, SELEC (online)** - Mr. Adrian Petrescu, Operational Officer, SELEC (online)- explained that the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) is a law enforcement, treaty-based, international organization that brings together the resources and expertise of Police and Customs authorities that join synergies in combating more effectively trans-border organized crime in Southeast Europe. This organization supports investigations, facilitates the exchange of information (criminal intelligence, etc.) between stakeholders, and data collection and analysis. The organization provides operational support (joint investigations, regional operations, meetings, etc.) to State Members to enhance the coordination in preventing and combating crime, including transnational and organized crime. Moreover, he explained that forced criminality is at the nexus of exploitation and trafficking and presents law enforcement agencies with complicated challenges regarding detection and information exchange with foreign counterparts or relevant agencies. That was also the impetus for the dedication to a project that is currently ongoing in conjunction with Tilburg University in the Netherlands. The project IMOBEX has aimed to improve enforcement at the intersection of mobile banditry and exploitation looking to understand what is behind this kind of exploitation. The idea is to address the training needs and develop new investigation ways. Additionally, he expressed concerns about the lack of awareness of this kind of exploitation which leads to prejudice and probably to wrongdoing when dealing with the topic of trafficking for forced criminality. It is seen from the statistic that there is also a lack of attention for this kind of exploitation. Thus, he recommended that in the future more and more attention should be addressed to this kind of exploitation of trafficking. Additionally, from the experience of reviewed cases, it was noticed that there was a lack of collaboration between social protection, social services authorities in the country, and the police, as well as a lack of communication, which allowed criminals to seek and seize the opportunity to fraud social system benefits.

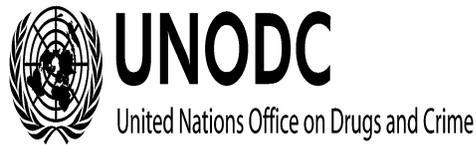


Session 4: Victim-centered approach to identification, investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons especially for the purpose of forced criminality in SEE – criminal justice and law enforcement perspective

**Ms. Mimoza Qyra, Head of the Antitrafficking Sector, Directorate of Anti Trafficking and Migration Policies, General Directorate for the Development of Migration and Asylum, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Albania** - highlights that the anti-trafficking efforts in Albania rely on four pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution, and coordination. They have made improvements in their legal framework to support these anti-trafficking efforts. The victims of trafficking receive free legal aid, health care, and educational facilities, and the government is currently implementing the Action Plan 20/21-2023 to make further amendments to their criminal code to improve the position of trafficking victims. Ms. Qyra mentioned a positive model established every year for a month-long series of activities for anti-trafficking efforts in the country. Mechanisms have been established to bring positive impact in this area.

**Mr. Ahmed Mesic, Prosecutor, Head of Section, Department for Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling, Special Department for Organized Crime, Economic Crime and Corruption, Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina** - informed that BiH is mainly tackling two forms of human trafficking, child exploitation through forced labor/ forced begging and sexual exploitation through forced marriages- involving mainly Roma population. In this regard, they have successfully mounted investigations and endured court decisions in multiple cases. Additionally, Mr. Mesic presented a complex case that was recently finalized with a guilty verdict providing sentences of 12 years, 5 years and two years. At the same, the illegally obtained profit was taken from the accused reaching a value of almost 400 000 EURO. The offenders were charged as organizers and members of an organized criminal group operating for the purpose of exploitation of victims (children and women) through forced criminality (robberies, thefts). The victims had an illegal status in the country of exploitation and were thus entirely controlled by the offenders, using threats as well as their position and dependency. A joint investigation was conducted as the case was operating in France and BiH and due to its complexity it took a 3-year period to do the investigation of the case.

**Ms. Dora Dimitrova, Police Officer, THB Unit, Ministry of Interior, Bulgaria (online)**-emphasized that Bulgaria is mainly a country of origin - Bulgarian victims are exploited in developed Western European countries. Mainly, the victims are unemployed, poor, have a low educational level, problematic families, children from institutions etc. When it comes to human trafficking for the purpose of “forced criminality”, usually it is noticed that they are engaged in forced transportation and drug selling, stealing, pickpocketing, and begging. In regards to challenges when dealing with this type of trafficking in persons, she highlighted the differences in national legislations (that certain acts are criminalised in some countries while it is legal in others - thus unification of legal provisions concerning not only THB as a crime but also acts which may carry a potential risk of THB (i.e. surrogacy) ); Close relationship of the victims with perpetrators; Criminal Procedure Code- the family member of the accused party and the individuals with whom he/she lives together may refuse to testify. Additionally, she shared some good practices identified

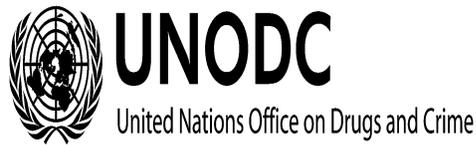


during their work such as the multidisciplinary approach of the relevant stakeholders, the Annual National Programme against trafficking in persons, cooperation with cyber and money laundering units, as well as the recently published EU-wide prevention campaign directed to victims of trafficking in human beings but on the other hand directed to clients of such services in order to raise their awareness for the crime, because sometimes clients are the first who notice signs of human trafficking.

**Mr. Alen Tahiri, Director, National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, Government of Croatia** - Recounted that the legal framework in Croatia enables the stakeholders to undertake a number of activities for identification, prosecution, and adjudication of traffickers as well as assistance and protection of the victims. He emphasized that the focus of all institutions is to provide a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach when dealing with victims of trafficking and thus a number of services are available to the victims such as psycho-social support, safety measures, data protection, special protection measures during court proceedings, compensation etc. The victims identified in Croatia for the purpose of forced criminality are mainly exploited in burglary and forced begging doing the crime in malls and commercial centres and similar surroundings. Harmonized work of all national and international institutions is of decisive importance for dealing and resolving this issue, while pointing out that CSOs should not be forgotten in the alliance's cooperation, bearing in mind the important role they play. He concluded with stating that it is important to have a regular capacity building of all involved stakeholders in order to have better performance in their work but at the same time it is needed to permanently work on the education of parents, teachers, children, experts and the entire public aimed to enhancing the prevention among the vulnerable population.

**Mr. Raphaël Girard, Police Commissioner, Deputy Head of the Brigade for the Protection of Minors in Paris, France** - Expressed that France is quite harmonized with EU laws which enables the institutions to undertake different activities to tackle the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. The main forms of exploitation of victims of trafficking in France are sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and exploitation for the purpose of forced criminality. It is noted that children are forced into begging, robbing and petty crime in urban and rural areas of France, mostly from ethnic minorities and coming from Bulgaria, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina but also from Africa. Different challenges are faced by the relevant authorities, such as the internet-facilitated trafficking in persons; the condemnation of these children by the public, seeing them as criminal offenders because the crimes they commit are quite visible; the children refuse/are afraid to cooperate with the police; hard to be identified as the indicators are not so visible; accommodating these children under the specialized structures etc. He highlighted that international cooperation is of key importance when it comes to children, especially involved in crimes, cooperation with NGOs as well as timely and right identification of the crime and the victims by the stakeholders.

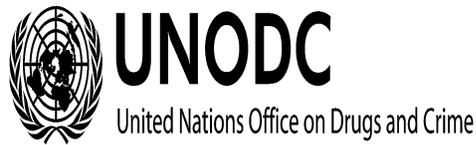
Session 4 (Part II): Victim-centered approach to identification, investigation and prosecution of trafficking in persons especially for the purpose of forced criminality in SEE – criminal justice and law enforcement perspective



**Mr. Dionysios Lampridis, Public Prosecutor, Public Prosecution Office, Greece** – expressed that due to its geographical position Greece is a passage for human trafficking networks. He gave an overview of the legal framework that is applied in practice, and he stated that the Prosecutor of First Instance is the only competent authority that can issue an identifying deed, and there is only one level of identification implemented. The identifying act may be performed both before and after the initiation of the prosecution and the Prosecutor of First Instance can grant victims of human trafficking a three-month recovery and reflection period. And finally, the Prosecutor of First Instance is the competent authority to refrain from prosecution against victims of human trafficking. Moreover, Greece has established appropriate measures for the protection, assistance and safety of the victims. In regard to the statistic of 2020, the biggest portion of identified victims are women (113 out of 167) from African countries (60), almost equal percent of the sexual exploitation (75) and forced begging (73) followed by 21 labour exploitation, 2 exploitation of criminal activities and 1 slavery. In regard minor victims mainly they are originating from Bulgaria (33), Greece (23), Romania (9), and (6) from Albania.

**Mr. Besim Kelmendi, Prosecutor, National coordinator for trafficking of Human beings, Office of the Chief State Prosecutor, Kosovo UNSCR 1244** - Elaborated on the stance of the Kosovo authorities on the issue of human trafficking. The importance of identification in this process is emphasized and several regulations and documents are mentioned to regulate the identification of trafficking victims. The State Prosecutor's Office has its own procedures and awareness-raising campaigns are organized to raise awareness of the issue. Mr. Kelmendi mentioned recent trends in trafficking activities in Kosovo, including forced labour and sexual exploitation. He highlighted the challenges faced by the State Prosecutor's Office, including cases where parents are involved in trafficking their children and victims wishing to return to their country of origin. Mr. Kelmendi notes that victims of trafficking are given the opportunity to provide a statement to a preliminary judge, and compensation from the state budget is available for victims. A special division within the State Prosecutor's Office provides free legal aid for victims of trafficking.

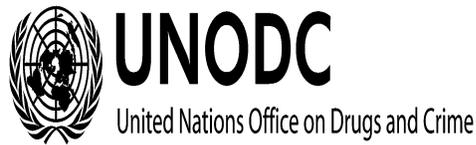
**Mr. Marko Brajovic, Assistant Head of the Department for the Suppression of the People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons and Illegal Migration, Ministry of Interior, Montenegro (online)** - focused on the efforts made by Montenegro in combating human trafficking. The country has established a coordinating body responsible for implementing and monitoring the national plan to prevent and combat human trafficking. The Ministry of Interior Affairs leads the work of this multidisciplinary team, which includes representatives from the public administration, judiciary, Ombudsman, and CSOs. The country has also established an operational team to process investigations into human trafficking, identify victims, and prevent further victimization. The Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs are among the representatives of this team. The border police have a specialised sector for human trafficking, and there is a mobile team for the prevention of human trafficking. These efforts have led to advances in criminal investigations and the identification of victims of human trafficking.



**Ms. Natasha Pop-Trajkova, Public Prosecutor, Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption, North Macedonia** – Highlighted that the Republic of North Macedonia has ratified all international conventions in the field of human trafficking and has a solid national legal framework for combating human trafficking and the protection of the victims right and there is a presence of well-established policy and operational structure. Moreover, she explained that the Criminal Code is in undergoing a revision with the aim of enhancing current provisions. However, the process is unfortunately quite slow. Additionally, she expressed concern about timely and effective prevention and that overcoming this problem requires a joint effort from all authorities including border control authorities both within the state and in international cooperation. In terms of statistics, she stated that until 2020, the most common type of exploitation was sexual exploitation, but with the large number of identified foreign victims discovered for labour exploitation after 2021, the trend of exploitation drastically changes, with labour exploitation as a more common form. The prevalent form of exploitation in 2022 was forced marriage; that is, 7 of the 8 recorded victims were exploited for the purpose of forced marriage and sexual exploitation. She emphasized that in 2021, two court decisions were issued in which the defendants were sentenced to 18 years in prison and 15 years for the crime of child trafficking.

**Mr. Iulian Merezeanu, Head of the Bureau, Bureau for Countering Trafficking in Human Beings - Service for Countering Trafficking in Persons within the Directorate for countering Organized Criminality, National Romanian Police (online)** - stated that Romania is a main source country for THB in the EU and has become an example of good practice in combating trafficking in human beings. The country has the largest number of joint investigation teams and has participated in 74 JITs dedicated to combating trafficking in human beings. Most of the cases are concerning sexual exploitation, 8% on labour exploitation, and 2% on forced begging and forced criminality. He presented a case of forced criminality which was initiated in 2016 in a city in Romania where a criminal group used their own children or children from accomplices for pickpocketing and shoplifting in crowded areas and public transportation. The investigation was carried out with the support of Eurojust and Europol and involved more than 40 possible victims in France. The investigation revealed that the criminal group was based on family and kinship relationships, and that the victims, who were mostly minors, considered this way of life as normal and did not identify themselves as victims. The investigation relied heavily on technical evidence as the victims were unable to provide statements.

**Ms. Ana Jizdan, Senior Prosecution Officer, Prosecution Section of the Center for Combating Human Trafficking of the National Investigation Inspectorate, General Police Inspectorate, Moldova** - shared a case of human trafficking which involves all kind of exploitation for criminal activities. The investigation started from a complaint by the victim who managed to escape the trafficker. The trafficker had forced the victim to work in a factory in Germany and then made her steal valuable items, which they planned to sell back in Moldova. The victim left the stolen items in plain view, hoping to be rescued, which helped the Center establish that she was a victim of exploitation. The suspect was arrested and is facing charges of human



trafficking for exploitation through forced labour and forced criminality. The case is currently in court, and Ms. Jizdan believes there is enough evidence to secure a conviction. Good practices were followed, including prompt action and cooperation with international police partners.

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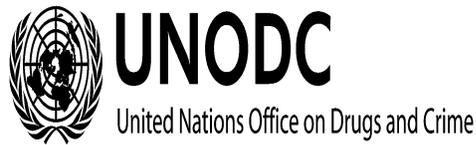
## Day Two – 19 January 2023

### Session 5: Recent research and analysis and contemporary approaches to address identification and protection of trafficking in persons, particularly for the purpose of forced criminality

**Ms. Heather Komenda, Migrant Protection and Assistance Specialist, IOM Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia** - focused on recent research and analysis related to human trafficking. The IOM dataset and the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative were discussed, which is a global hub that collects case data on human trafficking victims, with the aim of equipping the anti-trafficking community with reliable data. Ms. Komenda showed the number of cases collected globally and provided some snapshots of the demographics of victims. A new initiative, the Human Trafficking Case Data Standards, was launched to provide guidance to hotlines and service providers on how to collect human trafficking data. The use of synthetic data was also mentioned, which is a result of a partnership with Microsoft to create an algorithm that creates synthetic data while maintaining relationships between case records. Ms. Komenda concluded by mentioning the challenges in using this data to study forced criminality, as it is not included in the standard protocol for casework.

**Ms Geneviève Colas, Secours Catholique - Caritas France - Coordinator of the National Network of NGOs for the fight against THB, and member of the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings in France** - underlined the importance of international cooperation in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings. A recent study conducted in France showed that the majority of victims of trafficking identified for the purpose of committing crimes are men and boys, mainly from Morocco and Romania. The study also revealed that criminal gangs strategically recruit minors for less criminal liability and that victims are often exploited by their own family members or those from their country of origin. Ms. Colas stressed the need for statistics and research analysis at national and international level to fully understand the problem of human trafficking. In particular, she has carried out a study and taken action in cooperation with other organisations in Europe and the Middle East to address the growing number of young victims of trafficking.

**Mr. Thris Leito, Lead Researcher, CKM-Fier, Netherlands** - explained that the Center CKM-Fier provides care and assistance to victims of human trafficking and conducts research to combat human slavery. She noted that there is limited understanding of criminal exploitation in the Netherlands, and that the victimization of children and young persons being groomed and forced to commit drug-related crimes has been increasing. The study conducted by her team found that half of the 1637 frontline professionals surveyed had concerns of criminal exploitation, and most



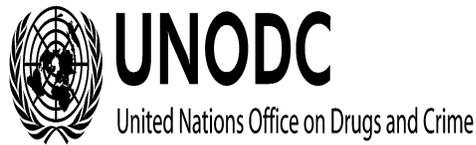
of them had seen multiple victims in the past two years. The study suggests there might be thousands of victims each year. The professionals face the challenge of victims being identified as criminals, and there is insufficient attention and priority for tackling criminal exploitation. Ms. Leito emphasized the need to identify victims and provide them with appropriate care and protection.

**Session 6: Exchange of experience and practice in the implementation of training curricula for criminal justice or law enforcement practitioners aimed for addressing the identification and protection of victims of TiP, especially for the purpose of forced criminality in SEE – national training institutes for criminal justice matters**

**Ms. Eda Gjoka, Lecture of criminal law and gender equality, Academy of Security, Albania** - provided information on the Academy of Security by highlighting that the Academy provides courses for formation, qualification, and training for both uniformed and civil servants. The Faculty of Security and Investigation teaches subjects related to gender equality, human rights, trafficking in human beings, and criminal law. The curriculum includes classes on key concepts of discrimination, gender inequality, and special investigative techniques. The students are also trained on how to handle victims of trafficking, gather evidence, and conduct interrogations. The ongoing training department provides annual trainings for the state police in collaboration with international partners and NGOs specializing in trafficking of human beings. The students are encouraged to apply their theoretical knowledge through case studies and essays.

**Ms. Sena Uzunovic, Judge, Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina** - highlighted the effectiveness of organizing mock trials and simulated trials where judges, prosecutors, and police officers receive training together. In Bosnia, there are four criminal laws, which were amended in 2006, with trafficking of human beings being considered an international crime at the state level. However, there have been problems with the police, prosecutors, and cantons having their own systems that do not always align. In one example, a case of trafficking was reclassified as another crime. Through training and education, Ms. Uzunovic highlights the importance of changing the mindset and attitudes towards trafficking and human rights violations. She describes a mock trial organized by the OSCE, where magistrates and police officers were brought together to participate in a simulated trial for trafficking of human beings. During the simulation, participants were given roles and tasks to conduct inquiries and present testimonies. Ms. Uzunovic was impressed by the enthusiasm and engagement of the participants, who continued to work together even after the official agenda for the day had ended.

**Ms. Kristina Bekavac, Director, Judicial Academy, Croatia** - Explained that the goal of the Academy is to provide professional training for judges, prosecutors, and other court officials. The Academy also collaborates with various stakeholders, including universities and bar associations, to provide ongoing training to ensure that judges and prosecutors make informed decisions based on knowledge and professionalism. The Academy focuses on the prevention of human trafficking and organizes workshops and seminars on the topic, including in collaboration with the Police Academy of Croatia. The Academy also participates in international organizations and trainings



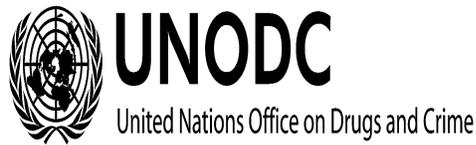
on the topic. The training programs of the Academy include the basics of criminal offenses related to human trafficking and the provisions that protect the victims. In conclusion she highlighted that the distinction between human trafficking and other criminal offenses is an important aspect of the training.

**Session 6 (Part II): Exchange of experience and practice in the implementation of training curricula for criminal justice or law enforcement practitioners aimed for addressing the identification and protection of victims of TiP, especially for the purpose of forced criminality in SEE – national training institutes for criminal justice matters**

**Mr. Stylianos Bios, Judge, National Expert at EUROJUST, on behalf of the National School of the Judiciary, Greece** - focused on the Hellenic Judiciary Academy, which is a school that trains judges and prosecutors. The school is located in Thessaloniki, Greece and has been active for 30 years. The training program includes a combination of theoretical training and practical experience in legal practice. Teachers focus on specific subjects and use real cases to help students understand complex legal issues. The training programs are divided into regular and extraordinary programs, with mandatory and optional training programs for active members of the judiciary. The compulsory training programs are divided into four cycles and must be completed within eight years. The teaching approach involves evaluating students and bringing their attention to real cases for discussion and analysis.

**Ms. Emmanuelle Laudic-Baron, Prosecutor, Project Manager, International Department, Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature, France** - discussed a training programme for French magistrates (prosecutors and judges) on the subject. The programme lasts 31 months and includes both generic and specialised training, 70% of which is internship (in courts, companies, associations, investigation services...). There is also a compulsory continuous training of at least 5 days per year for French magistrates: among the different themes mentioned: the fight against organised crime, unaccompanied minors or trafficking in human beings and pimping. The National School of Magistrates organises sessions and seminars on prostitution and trafficking in human beings, open to French and European participants. The courses can be individual or in groups and can include collaboration with organisations specialised in these issues, the police, as well as Eurojust and Europol. The aim is to provide magistrates with the necessary skills and understanding of organised crime and trafficking in human beings.

**Ms. Sebahate Sinani, Prosecutor, Office of the Chief State Prosecutor, Kosovo UNSCR 1244** - spoke about the role of the Justice Academy in Kosovo, which trains judges, prosecutors, legal professionals, and others. The newly appointed judges and prosecutors must attend a one-year training program, while active judges and prosecutors must attend 3 training events per year. The Academy provides training on trafficking in human beings and its modules focus on the differences between the criminal offense of trafficking and other offenses related to this criminal offense which is essentially different from human trafficking; the position of the victim of trafficking, financial investigation, early identification of victims compensation, and in particular regarding the legal provisions related to the non-prosecution and impunity of victims of trafficking. The purpose of



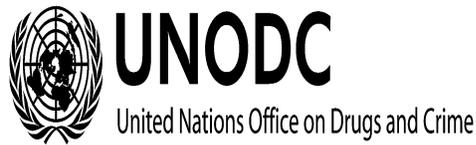
the training is to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to combat trafficking in human beings and apply relevant legal frameworks. The training is conducted by trainers who are experts in the field, additionally local NGOs also organize trainings on trafficking.

**Ms. Tatiana Ciaglic, Chief of Juridical Information Center, National Institute of Justice, Moldova** - highlighted that the Institute provides training and e-learning for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers in Moldova, which has a population of 2.5 million people and around 400 judges and 700 prosecutors. The training consists of three semesters, each ten months long, including theoretical training, practical simulations of processes, and internships. The Institute uses recommendations from experts and state agencies to develop its training curriculum, including training on trafficking in human beings, which is a major problem in Moldova with 202 recorded crimes in 2021. The Institute offers winter and summer schools with different approaches and learning objectives, with 45 judges and 62 prosecutors participating last year. The Institute also offers training to investigative officers and has a victim-centred approach, providing assistance and training to 335 adult and 19 minor victims of trafficking in human beings in 2021. This year, a new training on guaranteeing legal aid for victims will be introduced.

**Session 6 (Part III): Exchange of experience and practice in the implementation of training curricula for criminal justice or law enforcement practitioners aimed for addressing the identification and protection of victims of TiP, especially for the purpose of forced criminality in SEE – national training institutes for criminal justice matters**

**Ms. Marijana Radunovic, Head of the Police Training Department, Ministry of Interior, Montenegro** - presented the efforts made by the Ministry of Interior in Montenegro to combat trafficking in human beings. They focus on educating all law enforcement officials, including police officers, customs officers, and other stakeholders, with the aim of identifying and protecting victims of trafficking. They also have trained teachers in the prevention of trafficking of minors, and social workers, as well as judges and prosecutors in criminal topics related to trafficking. The education of police officers takes place at the police academy and is a requirement for recruitment. The Ministry of Interior also continuously trains management level officials on this topic and plans the training based on the needs indicated by the Police Directorate. She concluded that it is also important to raise public awareness on the issue.

**Ms. Suza Trajkovska, Head of the Training Center, Ministry of Interior, North Macedonia** - highlighted that the training centre for police officials provides a one-year basic training for police officers. The Centre also offers ongoing training on different topics and a specialized training on human trafficking and other crimes. The Centre also works with other organizations and institutions to identify and protect victims of human trafficking and has multiple programs in place to address related issues. Ms. Trajkovska mentions the theoretical research on human trafficking and the efforts to train police officers on the topic. She also mentions the collaboration with international organizations like the IOM, UNODC and the Montreal Centre to address issues related to the flow of migrants and human trafficking. Summing up, she recounts that there is a



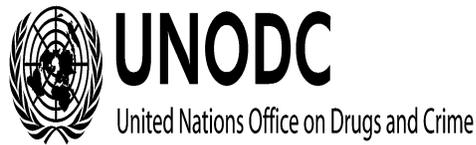
need for financing and resources to enhance the capacities of organizations dealing with human trafficking.

**Ms. Anja Mrkalj Kastelic, Senior Criminal Inspector, Criminal Police Directorate, Slovenia** - speaks from the perspective of being responsible for training police officers in Slovenia, Their training focuses on basic skills for front-line officers and specialized skills for criminal inspectors. Ms. Kastelic also mentioned that there is a shortage of training for judges and prosecutors. Further, she focused on a practical example of a case from 2018 in which a criminal group in Slovenia was running a call centre for fraud. The group consisted of a leader, who managed up to six subordinates, and victims of trafficking. She outlined the three-step process the group used to deceive and steal from victims. The group was operating in Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro and was eventually caught by the police. Two Slovenian citizen and four person from the area of China were brought before an investigating judge.

**Ms. Darja Šlibar, Head of the Specialised State Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Slovenia** - as the prosecutor in charge, she further elaborated on the Slovenian case from 2018. The case involved a criminal group that used over 60 teenage victims, mostly from Taiwan, for fraud and criminal activities. The group was operating from Taiwan but the victims were brought to Slovenia and kept isolated, under surveillance, and had their phones and money seized. In the end, six suspects were charged with trafficking of human beings, convicted, received prison sentences, and had their assets seized. The case was dealt with for the first time and considered human trafficking. There was a challenge in providing support and shelter for the victims, who were not criminally persecuted for fraud but only the traffickers were charged. The victims of fraud could not be established as the calls were transferred abroad and not in Slovenia.

### **Session 7: Civil society and international organizations experiences concerning the identification and protection of victims of TiP, especially for the purpose of forced criminality through prevention, protection and assistance**

**Ms. Merel Brouwer, Project manager/Researcher, La Strada International (LSI)** - spoke about the identification and protection of victims of forced criminality. The NGO is a European anti-trafficking network with 25 member organizations and 5 associate members in 24 countries. The members of the LSI network have seen an increase of trafficking for the purpose of criminal exploitation across Europe over the last years. Criminal exploitation is often deliberately combined with other types of exploitation to further control victims and to prevent them from seeking help and reporting to the police. These trafficking victims often find themselves prosecuted and punished for the unlawful acts they have been forced to commit by their trafficker. The main challenges include the low identification and lack of recognition of criminal exploitation by frontline professionals and the non-application of the non-punishment principle in practice. Ms. Brouwer highlighted that the low identification of victims of forced criminality is especially problematic as this results in the punishment and thus secondary victimization of the victim, and leaves the traffickers go unpunished. This punishment of the victim means a denial of access to justice for victims of trafficking, and it hinders the possibility for any type of recovery. Ms.

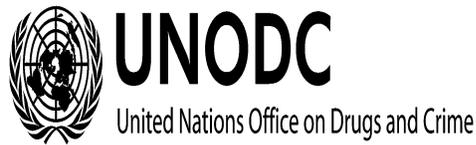


Brouwer underlined that when trafficking victims rather than the perpetrators are charged, prosecuted and punished, state authorities thus practically assist traffickers, thereby undermining the fight against trafficking in human beings. La Strada International is working to improve the application of the non-punishment principle and highlighted two good practices from Spain and Norway for improving the detection of forced criminality and the application of the non-punishment principle.

**Ms. Iva Pushkarova, Ass.Prof. PhD, Permanent Guest Professor, National Institute of Justice, Bulgaria** - explained that the National Institute for Justice is a central state institution that delivers professional training to members of the judiciary, police officers, lawyers, and others with a professional connection to the issue. The trainings are based on real-case scenarios and updated with predictions about future developments in the criminal network of human trafficking. Ms. Pushkarova explained the legal background of the criminal regimes against human trafficking in Bulgaria, where victims are not punished and have access to compensation for damages. She emphasized the importance of adapting to new developments in order to effectively address the issue of human trafficking.

**Ms. Abida Pehlic, President, Association “Novi put” – Bosna and Herzegovina** - discussed the challenges of combating human trafficking and the efforts of her CSO to prevent, educate, and provide direct services to victims for over 13 years. Their organization operates a counselling centre, helpline, and is part of anti-trafficking network. Despite their efforts, human trafficking remains a growing issue in the Western Balkans, especially in Bosnia & Herzegovina, which is vulnerable due to ethnic tensions and high migration. The country has been a source country for victims of trafficking for two decades and was downgraded to Tier 2 Watchlist for 3 consecutive years - only 30 victims were identified last year. Ms. Pehlic also highlighted the exploitation of Roma children and women in the region and noted the work of her NGO has given them insight into new trafficking trends. However, motivating victims to seek official help remains a challenge as they are often threatened, blackmailed, and afraid of prosecution with no compensation or guaranteed services once they leave safe houses.

**Ms. Jasmina D. Rajkovska, Director Open Gate/La Strada, North Macedonia** - introduced the NGO Open Gate/ La Strada and its three levels of operation: prevention, protection, and advocacy. Prevention involves raising awareness through training and lectures and operating a helpline. Protection includes a shelter for female trafficking victims and assistance for all victims. Advocacy includes advocating for victim rights and working with state institutions and NGOs for anti-trafficking coordination. The organization also provides legal services and was involved in creating a new law on compensation for crime victims. The organization works with state institutions, NGOs, and international organizations to build trust and coordinate anti-trafficking activities through the national commission and its secretariat and subgroup for child victims. According to Ms. Rajkovska, the key issue in combating human trafficking is the need for a multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach, which is achieved through a trustful cooperation among relevant anti-trafficking entities, including the creation of five mobile teams for proactive identification.



**Ms. Mariana Meshi, Executive Director, Different and Equal, Albania** - spoke about the efforts of the NGO Different and Equal in the anti-trafficking field, which includes reintegrating victims and providing outreach, prevention, capacity building, advocacy, and research. Despite a higher number of cases, only 10% of 112 identified potential victims/victims of trafficking have been exploited into forced criminality, and most were minor boys exploited for theft and drug distribution, but they are often treated as minors in conflict with the law (suspects) rather than trafficking victims. Ms. Meshi expressed concerns about the low identification of victims and the lack of capacity among institutions to recognize indicators of trafficking and called for UNODC to conduct simulation-based training, which could help in this regard. The mobile teams established by the NGO Different and Equal and National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters have been successful in identifying victims, but their financial sustainability is in jeopardy. She also highlighted the importance of the National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters, which addresses the needs of all victims in Albania. Ms. Meshi recommended developing specific indicators for different forms of exploitation and providing specific training, with UNODC as a potential supporting partner.

**Mr. Guillaume Lardanchet, Director, Hors La Rue, France** - highlighted that the organization Hors La Rue has a multidisciplinary team and uses innovative tools, including a mobile minibus for therapy workshops, to address the needs of the youth. They provide support and guidance to vulnerable youth, mostly minors who are foreign and have limited language skills. Further, Mr. Lardanchet shared that 90% of the minors they accompany are presumed to be victims of human trafficking and committing crimes, and the challenges faced by the organization are similar to those of organizations in other countries. He highlighted the story of a Roma girl named Mila, who was a famous thief in her marginalized community, and the organization's efforts to help her, despite her incarceration and giving birth to a child in prison. The main challenges that Mr. Lardanchet identifies include the youth fleeing from shelters and that the police and magistrates who are not familiar with these issues will not see these minors as victims.

## Conclusions and Closure of REGM

**Mr. Erwann Tor, Magistrate, Regional expert on « fight against trafficking in human beings and related crimes », Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations and the International Organisations in Vienna** - concluded the meeting by highlighting the challenges in identifying and providing protection to victims of human trafficking, especially those compelled to commit crime. Mr. Tor emphasized the importance of training and cooperation between public authorities, NGOs, international organizations, but also media, to increase recognition and services provided to victims. He discussed the principle of non-punishment and the need for a flexible approach to adapt to different situations. Mr. Tor also touched upon the need for victim compensation and the existing possibilities to provide such compensation. He concluded the meeting by mentioning the importance of a dedicated workshop related to child victims and their integration into the society.

