

Brdo Process Initiative

Meeting of the National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators in South Eastern Europe (NATC – SEE)

26 June 2014, Istanbul, Turkey

Meeting Report

On 26th June 2014, the **National Anti-Trafficking Coordinators (NATCs) from South - Eastern Europe (SEE)**, including representatives from the Turkish Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM), gathered in Istanbul to exchange information on key anti-trafficking (THB) activities in their respective countries. Under the auspices of the Brdo Process upon the initiative of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Slovenia, the meeting was **hosted by the Moldovan Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combating THB** in cooperation with ICMPD, as the Secretariat of the NATCs meeting, and the OSCE Mission to Moldova.

The **objectives of the meeting** were:

- To exchange information on **key anti-trafficking (THB) activities** in the SEE Region and in Turkey;
- To discuss the latest THB trends in the SEE and EU Region with a special focus on **national reporting and monitoring mechanisms**;
- To discuss the concept of “**children on the move**”.
- To discuss opportunities for **future joint actions** in the SEE Region and identify common objectives.

In summary, the main outcomes of the discussions during the meeting as well as the concrete follow up actions agreed are the following:

- Since October 2013, governments throughout the SEE region enforced **wide-ranging anti-trafficking instruments and made additional institutional changes** to adjust their responses to THB to newly emerging trends. It was evident that progress in their efforts to fight human trafficking is implemented on a continuous basis;
- **The NATCs or NRs from SEE countries (non-EU) to join the next National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanism Meeting (NREM)**, which will be organized in October 2014;
- **Contact details of the Department for Protection of Victims of THB from the Turkish DGMM were shared** and the Turkish representatives invited the SEE NATCs to contact them in order to strengthen cooperation on transnational trafficking cases;
- Inspired by Article 19 of the EU Directive on Preventing and Combating THB and Protecting its Victims (2011/36/EU), it was agreed that **it is of utmost importance to further strengthen national monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure an evidence-based response to THB**;
- ICMPD agreed to create **a link on the current ICMPD website** that will contain all information related to the NATC meetings in the framework of the Brdo process (meeting agenda, list of participants, meeting conclusions etc.);

- Common **challenges in the national child protection systems were identified**, which as agreed are instrumental in addressing the situation of children on the move: lack of comparable and reliable data collection; lack of identification and reception facilities of children on the move; need to develop further the cooperation, not only between countries of origin and destination, but also with transit countries.



Ms. Ecaterina Berejan, the Moldovan NATC, moderated the meeting and welcomed the participants. During the opening remarks, Mr Sandi Čurin, the NATC of the Republic of Slovenia, briefly presented the background of the NATCs meeting as an outcome of the Brdo Ministerial Conference held on 20 October 2010 in Brdo – Kranj, Slovenia, upon the initiative of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Slovenia. Ms. Melita Gruevska Graham, ICMPD representative, highlighted ICMPD’s commitment to support this initiative as the Secretariat of the NATCs meeting. Baring in mind the strong competence of ICMPD in the area of THB and the long-term cooperation with the SEE countries, ICMPD is proud to continue providing its services as Secretariat for this platform with the aim of exchanging expertise and further developing and improving transnational cooperation. On behalf of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ms. Aleksandra Vidojevic emphasized that the OSCE has continued its commitment towards supporting the countries of the SEE region in combating THB.

Each NATC presented the **latest THB developments** in their respective countries since October 2013, and shared good practices and relevant data on the latest trends related to their anti-trafficking activities. During this reporting period, governments throughout the SEE region enforced wide-ranging anti-trafficking instruments and made additional institutional changes to adjust their responses to THB to newly emerging trends. It was evident that progress in their efforts to fight human trafficking is implemented on a continuous basis. Namely, some countries have already completed evaluations of the implementation of their **multi-annual National Anti-trafficking Strategies and Action Plans** and, based on this, they are either in the process of, or already have adopted, new strategies and action plans for the following period. Other NATCs reported that their relevant **anti-trafficking bodies had undergone an institutional restructuring** related to changes in responsibilities and an expansion of competencies **to ensure a broader framework in the fight against THB and to protect trafficked persons.** Decentralisation of efforts through the establishment of local bodies and mobile teams was mentioned as a priority for some countries in

order to ensure **wider geographical coverage** throughout their territories. **Addressing prevention of THB with a focus on reducing demand** has also been a focus of some governments in the past period. Countries that have undergone the **first round of evaluation by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)** informed and discussed the recommendations received on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Finally, all participants mentioned their on-going efforts to **align their legislation and mechanisms with the EU Directive on Preventing and Combating THB and Protecting its Victims (2011/36/EU)**.

After a *tour-de-table* of the NATCs, Mr. Sandi Čurin informed participants of the outcomes of the **last National Rapporteurs and Equivalent Mechanism Meeting (NREM)**, chaired by the EU NATC, that took place in May 2014. During this meeting, the EU NATCs and National Rapporteurs (NRs) agreed that there is a need to further establish **cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors, especially for non-EU countries**. Therefore, a proposal was made to invite the **NATCs or NRs from SEE countries (non-EU) to join the next meeting of the NREM**, which will be organized in October 2014 (exact date tbc). Mr. Čurin, as a member of the NREM meetings, was tasked to liaise with the SEE representatives to seek their opinion on this matter. All NATCs agreed that such a gathering would be beneficial for everybody involved. It was decided that Mr. Čurin will further discuss this with the EU NATC and **ICMPD will support the organisation of the SEE countries' participation**.

The meeting benefited greatly from participation by representatives of the Department for Protection of Victims of THB from the Turkish DGMM. Mr. Umut Köprücü and Mr. Ebubekir Kurt presented the **current legal and institutional changes in the anti-trafficking response in Turkey**. The DGMM was established under the Ministry of Interior in accordance with the Turkish Law on Foreigners and International Protection enacted in April 2013. The DGMM is responsible for implementing Turkey's migration policies and strategies, ensuring coordination among relevant agencies and organisations and, alongside other stakeholders, is responsible for the protection of victims of human trafficking. The DGMM consists of 12 service units, among which the Department for Protection of Victims of THB is located. This department is responsible for the overall coordination of the anti-trafficking response in Turkey. Mr. Umut Köprücü and Mr. Ebubekir Kurt offered to share **contact details of the Department and invited the SEE NATCs to contact them in order to strengthen cooperation on transnational trafficking cases**, keeping in mind that Turkey appears to be a country of destination for people trafficked from SEE.

The NATCs shared their opinions and views on the establishment and implementation of mechanisms to assess THB trends, monitor the impact of anti-trafficking actions, gather statistics, as well as reporting mechanisms in their respective countries. This responsibility is inspired by Article 19 of the EU Directive on Preventing and Combating THB and Protecting its Victims (2011/36/EU). They all recognised the importance of the establishment of such national monitoring mechanisms and most reported that they have already appointed a body to collect data, analyse information and report on the implementation of the anti-trafficking policies and national action plans. Very few countries have nominated a specific person as a National Rapporteur however. Furthermore, the current national mechanisms differ in each country depending on the national legislation and institutional structures; nevertheless the SEE NATCs identified a number of common challenges in terms of independency and autonomy of the given mechanisms as well as certain confusion related to the main purpose of such mechanisms - as very often there is a lack of distinction between mechanisms aiming to coordinate the anti-trafficking response and those responsible for monitoring and reporting it. The main conclusion of the discussion was that **it is of utmost importance to further strengthen national monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure an evidence-based response to THB**. On the basis of statements made during discussions, most participants identified the need for more in-depth guidelines for the establishment of National Rapporteurs and equivalent mechanisms to better understand the provisions contained in the EU Directive.

As a follow-up of the conceptual idea for the creation of an **on-line platform for information exchange between SEE NATCs**, presented on the last NATC meeting in Sarajevo, Ms. Gruevska Graham reiterated ICMPD's readiness to host and administer such a platform on the existing ICMPD website. She once again explained the concept of the on-line platform and invited the

participants to reach an agreement about its scope. Specifically, the webpage should serve the offices of the SEE NATCs as a user-friendly environment to exchange ideas, share updates on current initiatives against THB, and function as a source for easy and efficient access to relevant documents (meeting conclusions, background documents, joint declarations etc.). All NATCs welcomed the idea of the establishment of such webpage. However, it was agreed to postpone full implementation to a later stage and to start with **a link on the current ICMPD website that will contain all information related to the NATC meetings in the framework of the Brdo process (meeting agenda, list of participants, meeting conclusions etc.)**. ICMPD agreed to create such link in the upcoming period prior to the next NATC meeting.

During the last session of the roundtable, the NATCs discussed **the concept of “children on the move”** and shared their experiences in addressing the protection needs of these children across the different phases of their journey, specifically in the area of asylum, irregular migration and THB. The participants identified common challenges in their **national child protection systems**, which they agreed are instrumental in addressing the situation of children on the move. Despite some improvements in data collection in the countries in the region, **lack of comparable and reliable data collection** continues to be an obstacle for drafting evidence-based policies that address the issues associated with children on the move. **Identification and reception of children on the move** was flagged as an issue that would require more attention by anti-trafficking stakeholders. Furthermore, all participants stressed the significance of **cooperation**, not only between countries of origin and destination, but also **with transit countries**.

In summary, Ms. Gruevska Graham presented the key meeting conclusions, emphasising once more the commitment of the SEE countries to work together, to learn from each other and to actively support the further development of transnational cooperation. The seminar was concluded by Ms. Berejan, who thanked the NATCs for their active participation in the meeting and invited the participants to propose the host country for the next NATC meeting that will take place in October/November 2014. Ms. Elona Hoxha, the Albanian NATC expressed her interest to host the next meeting in Albania, depending on funding availability. ICMPD will liaise closely with Ms. Hoxha on this matter and will inform the other NATCs accordingly.



Meeting of the National Anti-Trafficking Co-ordinators in South Eastern Europe
25-26 June 2014
Hotel Crowne Plaza Istanbul Harbiye, Turkey

No	Country	Surname	Name	Organization	Function
1	Albania	Hoxha	Elona	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Deputy Minister
2	Bulgaria	Aleksova	Gergana	National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings	Secretary General
3	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Rizvo	Samir	Ministry of Security	National Antitrafficking Co-ordinator BiH
4	Croatia	Sočanac	Branko	Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities	National Antitrafficking Coordinator, Head of Governmental Office for HR, Croatia
5	Macedonia	Kitanov	Sando	National Commission for fight against trafficking of human beings and illegal migration	Deputy National Co-ordinator
6	Macedonia	Gruevska-Graham	Melita	ICMPD	Project Manager Anti-Trafficking Programme
7	Moldova	Berejan	Ecaterina	Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for combating THB	Secretary of the National Committee
8	Moldova	Vechiu	Ala	Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for combating THB	Assistant on Social Issues

9	Moldova	Vidojevic	Aleksandra	OSCE Mission to Moldova	Anti-trafficking and Gender Programme
10	Moldova	Sasu	Valentin	OSCE Mission to Moldova	Anti-trafficking and Gender Programme
11	Moldova	Damian	Maria	OSCE Mission to Moldova	Anti-trafficking and Gender Programme
12	Moldova	Cantaragiu	Tatiana	OSCE Mission to Moldova	Anti-trafficking and Gender Programme
13	Montenegro	Zoran	Ulama	Office for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings	National Antitrafficking Co-ordinator Montenegro
14	Montenegro	Sukovic	Tijana	Office for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings	Independent Advisor
15	Serbia	Đjurašković	Mitar	Ministry of the Interior	National Antitrafficking Coordinator
16	Slovenia	Čurin	Sandi	Ministry of the Interior	National Antitrafficking Co-ordinator
17	Romania	Ungureanu	Romulus Nicolae	National Agency against Trafficking in persons	National Antitrafficking Co-ordinator, Director
18	Turkey	Semih Yıldız	Abdullah	Ministry of Interior DG MM, Department for Protection of THB Victims	Head of Unit for Fight Against THB and Protection of Victims
19	Turkey	Naz	Özer	Ministry of Interior, DG MM, Department for Protection of THB Victims	Head of Unit for Projects and Assistance
20	UK	Harvey	Steven	ICMPD	ICMPD Expert