Project Description

Study on Trafficking Resilience and Vulnerability en route to Europe (STRIVE)

Duration
1 October 2017 – 31 March 2019 (18 months)

Implementing Agency
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Donor
US Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP)

Background and Justification
The STRIVE project is an 18-month research project on trafficking in persons (TIP) along the migrant and refugee routes to the EU during the period 2015-2017, as well as on vulnerabilities to trafficking and factors of resilience to trafficking. The geographical scope of the research is Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia and Serbia, the main transit countries and countries of first arrival in the EU along the Western Balkan route, with field research also conducted in Germany, the most important country of destination, and Italy, the country of first arrival in the EU along the Central Mediterranean route.

The main research question of the STRIVE study is: what is the incidence of trafficking and what are the vulnerabilities and factors of resilience to trafficking among people making the irregular migration journey to Europe? The affected populations who will be covered in the study are children (both unaccompanied and travelling with their families) and adults from non-EU countries who take the journey by sea and/or overland through the Western Balkans and the Central Mediterranean to Europe.

The most important migration routes for irregular entry into the EU in 2015 and 2016 were: (a) the Eastern Mediterranean Route (Turkey>Greece; Turkey>Bulgaria) followed by the Western Balkan Route (Greece>Macedonia; Serbia>Croatia; Serbia>Hungary); and (b) the Central Mediterranean Route (by sea to Italy). Despite a recent reduction in the numbers of people travelling along these routes, hundreds of thousands of people are still vulnerable to trafficking, or have already been trafficked. Frontline service providers are still struggling to respond, and asylum applicants and migrants often intend only to swiftly transit through these countries, meaning that little attention is being paid to identifying trafficking and vulnerabilities to trafficking. In general, little is known about the factors that make some people more resilient to trafficking in this context, while others are more vulnerable. In light of the above, the STRIVE research will serve as a call for more and better action to respond to trafficking and vulnerability to trafficking in the countries under study, throughout the EU and beyond.
Objectives

The overall goal of the project is to provide more and better knowledge of trafficking in persons in the context of irregular migratory routes to Europe, in order to inform actions to prevent further cases of trafficking, identify and protect victims and prosecute perpetrators.

Objective 1: To increase the reliability of data and provide the knowledge base to inform actions to address trafficking and vulnerability to trafficking among asylum applicants and migrants en route to Europe.

Objective 2: To significantly improve policy and operational responses in the countries under study in the areas of trafficking prevention, protection and prosecution, based on the research findings and recommendations.

Activities

I. Preparatory phase (October-December 2017)
   - Desk Research & Development of Methodology and Research Instruments;
   - Research Training Workshop with Country Researchers (CRs) in Skopje to finalise working definitions and research methodology;
   - Preparation of STRIVE Dissemination Methodology

II. Field Research Phase (January-July 2018)
   - Literature Review & Mapping of Stakeholders and Potential Informants;
   - Interviews with key informants and affected people
   - Research Workshop with CRs in Belgrade to discuss preliminary findings of country-level and regional research;
   - Composition of Preliminary Country Reports; Peer Review of the Reports.

III. Analysis Phase (August-December 2018)
   - Analysis of Research Findings, Composition of Final Study & Recommendations;
   - Peer review of draft Study;
   - Final Research Workshop with CRs in Sofia to validate the draft Study and obtain any additional or missing input or information;
   - Finalisation of the Study and Recommendations.

IV. Dissemination Phase (January- March 2019)
   - Formatting and Printing of the Study;
   - Distribution of the Study in line with the STRIVE dissemination strategy;
   - International Stakeholder Conference and Study Launch in Athens;
   - Webinar/On-line Conference to present and discuss the study at international level.

Contact

Melita Gruevska Graham  
Project Manager  
melita.gruevska-graham@icmpd.org

Dr Claire Healy  
Research Coordinator  
claire.healy@icmpd.org