

Executive summary

This publication contains the main results achieved by the Development Partnerships (DPs) of *Headway – Improving Social Intervention Systems for Victims of Trafficking*, a transnational project carried out within the EQUAL Community Initiative of the European Union. The DPs of six European countries (Estonia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal) worked together for more than two years to conduct a multi-activity project aimed at the development of tools and standards to improve and strengthen support measures for trafficked persons and monitor – at local, national and European level – trafficking in human beings and the services provided to victims.

In order to accomplish the project goals the national DPs carried out 10 distinct activities. The outcomes of most of the activities are presented in this publication and are briefly described below.

Comparative analysis of trafficking studies

In Chapter One the main findings of *Activity 1 “Overview on the phenomenon of human traffic at national level”* are discussed. In this activity the Headway partners carried out research to provide a synopsis of, on the one hand, the types of studies of trafficking undertaken in the partner countries and, on the other hand, of the key features of this phenomenon as it occurs in Estonia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal. The 71 studies selected represent a significant sample of publications issued in the partner countries between 1999 and 2006 on the forms of trafficking of people for exploitation in the sex trade, in the labour market, through begging, bride mail order, illegal activities (e.g. theft and other petty crimes or drug dealing), selling of organs for transplants and illegal international adoptions.

The total number of publications reviewed per country differs. This is the result of several national factors, such as the role of the participating countries on the trafficking scene; the level of awareness and commitment of local, regional or national institutions, governments and the private social sector to anti-trafficking issues; the researchers’ interest in the issues related to trafficking; the level of public awareness and the type of dominant public discourse on the subject; the existence or lack of comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation; the functioning or lack of wide-spread support schemes for trafficked persons; the amount of financial resources allocated for research in this field; the lack of proper qualitative and quantitative methodological tools to investigate different forms of trafficking; the reliability of currently available data; and limitations in budget and available human resources preventing some transnational partners from carrying out this activity.

The data collected clearly underline a generally increasing interest in the topic of trafficking in all partner countries within the examined period. As a matter of fact, the overall number of publications issued in 2005 was more than seven times higher than that published in 2000. The selected literature mainly focused on trafficking for sexual exploitation. Many of the works reviewed describe the systems of recruitment, transportation and exploitation of trafficked people from their place of origin to their final destination, also providing some details about their personal and social profiles before and after the trafficking experience. The channels and methods of recruitment have changed throughout the years. Nowadays, women trafficked to be sexually exploited are generally recruited by a person they trust, or else they themselves directly contact the recruiter, which can also be a travel or employment agency. Women are generally promised good jobs in the country of destination, such as waitress, factory worker, bartender, nurse, childminder or dancer. More often than in the past, they are also openly offered work as prostitutes, stripteasers or call girls, but they are not properly informed about the real working and living conditions they will face (e.g. abuse, exploitation, restriction of freedom etc.). In the last few years, traffickers have started to establish “negotiated” forms of exploitation in order to better gain the trust and “loyalty” of victims.

Only a few studies investigated the phenomenon of trafficking for labour exploitation, begging, illegal activities (e.g. petty crimes or drug dealing), illegal international adoptions or the sale of organs. They pointed out the need for better scrutiny of the links between migration policies, labour exploitation and trafficking. The authors argue that the increasing deregulation and informality of many sectors of the labour market increase the vulnerability of migrants, who easily become cheap, disposable and highly exploitable workers. Thus, policies based on accessible legal and safe migration schemes, rigorous labour standards and managed migration programmes are crucial in order to prevent exploitation and trafficking, both in the formal and informal sectors. According to the studies, restrictive migration policies negatively affect the labour market and the working and living conditions of migrants (trafficked or not) who actually contribute to the economic growth of the host countries.

In most cases the selected research was highly descriptive. It rarely investigated the different aspects of trafficking from a deconstructive point of view, which would assess the ideological, cultural, and political approaches adopted to study the phenomenon. As a matter of fact, different approaches and conceptualisations of the same phenomenon can produce different methods of data gathering, processing and analysis, frequently to the detriment of the knowledge of trafficking.

Legal aspects: prosecution of traffickers and protection of victims

Chapter Two presents the main findings of *Activity 2 “Collection of the national legislation against human traffic and related provisions implemented in the partner countries”*, through which the

partnership gathered and analysed current anti-trafficking legislation in order to identify the strengths and the gaps of the national frameworks supporting trafficked persons and fighting the trafficking phenomena. Considering that the majority of identified trafficking cases are for the purpose of sexual exploitation and that such cases, therefore, may be mistaken for “mere” prostitution, it was agreed that the legal provisions concerning prostitution should be assessed as well.

The analysis highlighted the great discrepancies prevailing among the partner countries. In some countries trafficking in human beings is a crime in itself, while in others it is punished through other legal provisions (e.g. exploitation for prostitution or slavery). Moreover, not all national legislation punishes trafficking for all kinds of exploitation as envisaged in the Palermo Protocol. Some, in fact, only have trafficking for sexual exploitation set down in their criminal codes, or have separate legal provisions for trafficking for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation or organ transplant. There is also a great disparity in the issuing of short-term residence permits that allow victims to live in the country of destination legally, and to have their civil, social, and human rights respected and granted. Currently only the Estonian, German, Polish, Portuguese and Italian laws provide for short-term permits for trafficked persons but, with the exception of Italy, such permits are conditional on co-operation with the appropriate authorities and, eventually, testifying in court. The time allowed for reflection on this is different in Poland (two months), Germany (one month), Estonia (one to two months) and soon in Portugal (up to two months); in Italy an informal reflection period exists as the result of a collaboration established by law between NGOs and local authorities on the one hand and law enforcement agencies on the other, while in Lithuania no time is given for reflection.

Apart from Portugal – which is currently discussing the possibility of extending the protection awarded to victims of domestic violence (namely shelters and the promotion of personal, professional and social skills) to victims of trafficking – all other countries have support measures that specifically address trafficked persons, even though not all of them provide comprehensive and structured schemes. The wide range of protection and assistance includes shelters, psychological support, health care services, legal counselling and assistance, education, vocational guidance and training, and support for entering the labour market. These services are mostly provided by specialised NGOs and/or local authorities to which trafficked persons are referred, especially in Germany, Italy and Poland.

Access to compensation still seems to be a rather problematic area for trafficked persons. Even though in most countries victims are entitled to compensation, in practice they are unable to fulfil all the necessary requirements. As regards the use of assets confiscated from traffickers, only in Italy are the seized proceeds and possessions transferred into a single fund to support the anti-trafficking measures foreseen by law.

As far as prevention is concerned, all countries implement *ad hoc* programmes or special measures that provide for awareness-raising campaigns, hotlines, observatories, collection of statistical data, educational programmes, international meetings, action research or

training for a wide range of key players (law enforcement officials, prosecutors, social workers, journalists, health professionals, teachers etc.).

Illustrations of good practice

Chapter Three presents 31 examples of good practice in the area of protection of trafficked people and prevention of trafficking in human beings in the six partner countries. Developed through *Activity 3 “Exchange of good practices aimed at trafficked persons”*, the aim of this work was and is to promote the exchange of practical working experiences and to share the operational methodologies and achievements of counter-trafficking agencies in providing support, overcoming obstacles and facing the challenges they encounter during their daily work with trafficked persons.

The practices have been selected according to the following definition developed by the partners: *“‘good practice’ refers to any leading experience in the field “prevention of human trafficking” and “protection of trafficked persons”. ‘Good practice’ is not a stable concept but a practical example which could provide useful learning experiences, encourage the exchange of ideas and feedback, and motivate for self-reflection.”* Using a set of specific criteria, the project partners selected and categorised a wide range of activities from three main areas of social intervention: prevention; assistance and socio-economic inclusion; and professional development. It should be noted that these categories of intervention are interrelated and complement each other. As a result, many of the practices presented fall into more than one category.

The practices are described through a specially developed chart, that serves as a working tool to present the following features: the geographical area of intervention; the target group addressed; the objectives set; the activities carried out; the working methods and tools employed; the resources required; the results achieved; the learning experience gained; the feasibility of transferability; the mainstreaming achieved; and the contact details of the service providers. Finally, the practices are preceded by a brief analysis of the information gathered, which points out the trends identified in the three categories of intervention, highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the practices and shows up potential obstacles to their implementation in other geographical areas.

From data gathering to monitoring

Chapter Four contains the main findings of *Activity 4 “Development of a model to monitor the phenomenon”*. The Headway partners collected information on the main characteristics of (comprehensive or partial) monitoring systems (or at least data sources) of the trafficking phenomena and support schemes in their own countries and in other selected ones, with a view to drawing up recommendations on how to improve the analysed systems or how to put in place a monitoring system where one did not already exist.

All countries provide mechanisms of support to victims of trafficking in human beings, although in different ways and through differently developed schemes, which mainly operate on the national level, though in the case of Italy, Portugal and Germany they operate both at national and local level. In most cases, the service providers are NGOs (including religious organisations) and public bodies (central state administration and regional or local authorities) and, with the exception of Lithuania and Portugal, they work within an established legal framework. Even if different forms of exploitation are addressed (e.g. labour exploitation, begging and forced marriage; begging and child trafficking etc.), the predominant form of trafficking covered is for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The comparative analysis of the information gathered by support schemes provided an opportunity to examine and compare existing monitoring systems in the selected countries in order to describe and comment the utilised items, and to formulate relevant suggestions for clearing up identified problem areas. The analysis starts by pointing out the need for a crucial distinction between information systems and monitoring. The first requires the means to store information about phenomena, policies, and interventions, their context and progress; the second is a process of data analysis that requires the design of different sets of indicators. This is the starting tool for assessing interventions and policies, and for informing policy networks about their dynamics. As a matter of fact, most of the systems analysed are more similar to information than to monitoring systems.

Big differences between countries have been registered with regard to the indicators and items employed, even though all the scrutinised systems collect information on trafficked persons. This certainly reflects the existence of local and/or national support schemes for victims in all participating countries. However, the data gathered are generally neither homogeneous nor processed in a sufficiently coherent manner to permit the creation of specific indicators or the issuing of regular reports. In contrast, information on criminal organisations is not available or even collected in any of the countries investigated. The comparative analysis has clearly brought to light that data on trafficking are available in most countries, but they are either only gathered and processed informally or they are formally stored but not processed and analysed at all.

The assessment has once more underscored the key relevance of developing and sharing analytical tools to establish an efficient monitoring system. In order to substantiate this statement, the Headway partners listed the elements that should make up a monitoring system, providing examples of specific indicators that should be taken into consideration (context indicators, process indicators, result or output indicators, impact indicators, efficiency indicators). Finally, a proposal is presented to design and implement a European model of monitoring trafficking in human beings.

The Headway on-line database

Chapter Five describes the main characteristics and the functioning of the Headway database, which is the main outcome of *Activity 5 “Development of a model to map out the organisations/services and mapping-out”* and *Activity 6 “Online transnational database of the services available to trafficked persons”*. The Headway database is a transnational database of organisations and institutions working on trafficking and is intended to be a tool that facilitates contacts between them and any other interested bodies. Its main objectives are:

- To facilitate rapid identification of and contact between institutions and organisations active in the anti-trafficking sector:
 - in different countries of the European Union and in non-EU countries;
 - between different kinds of organisations (NGOs, local authorities, central state institutions, universities etc.);
 - working on different forms of trafficking (sexual exploitation, forced labour, begging, illegal activities, trafficking in organs, international illegal adoptions, bride mail order);
 - addressing different target groups (male minors, female minors, men, women, transgender people, communities, social and health workers, educators, teachers, law enforcement officers and judiciary personnel);
 - undertaking different types of activities (e.g. low threshold services, assistance, research, training, project planning and management etc.).
- To facilitate exchange of information about organisations, projects and activities concerned with trafficking;
- To encourage networking and co-operation among organisations working against trafficking.

Among the activities conducted in the field of trafficking are assistance, prevention, networking, partnership building, advocacy, research and media work. The database is expected to strengthen and facilitate these activities.

The information contained in the Headway database is public and users are not requested to use passwords nor is their access restricted by any other means. Users can search the Headway database using the following criteria: country, form of exploitation, type of activity or target group. In addition, they can search the database using keywords. As a result of their search, users will be given a list of organisations corresponding to the chosen search criteria, their location and legal status. The names of the listed organisations are clickable, making it possible to access the complete entry of each organisation (e.g. contact details, description of type of activity conducted, the target groups of their activities).

Project evaluation

Chapter Six presents the main findings of the project evaluation performed by an external professional, specifically hired to assess the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the Headway activities (*Activity 10 “External and internal evaluation”*¹). The project has been assessed as relevant, since it managed to meet the needs identified by the partners. In fact, as a result of the activities they carried out, the project partners contributed to the improvement of some of the operational tools supporting trafficked people and to the orientation of policies in the area of anti-trafficking. The Headway Project can be considered a positive attempt to collect, analyse and systematise a wide range of tools and practices developed and implemented at national and European level in the area of counter-trafficking. Also, the obstacles encountered and the solutions adopted offer significant contributions, essential for the consolidation of practices and the advancement of knowledge about the different phenomena of trafficking in human beings.

In particular, the Headway Project may be considered effective because it successfully accomplished three main results. Firstly, good practices implemented in the field of counter-trafficking were collected and shared. Secondly, a proposal on how to develop a monitoring system on human traffic was developed, which can be a future reference point for policy makers intending to set up a comprehensive and regular system for monitoring and assessing the different aspects of trafficking. Thirdly, a database of the services available to trafficked persons in many European and non-EU countries has been set up. This is an innovative tool that could greatly contribute to the improvement of existing services and the development of comprehensive transnational policies to support trafficked persons. Time will show if the Headway partners have succeeded in setting up workable conditions for regular use of the tools developed by the national DPs.

Finally, in the Annexes section, descriptions of the national DPs are provided, with their contact details.

¹ Activity 10 also includes the TCA Secretariat. Within the *Headway – Improving Social Intervention Systems for Victims of Trafficking* project the following activities were also undertaken: Transnational meetings and conferences (*Activity 7*); Publication and dissemination (*Activity 8*); Identification of human resources for transnational exchanges for training activities in Portugal (*Activity 9*).