



Minutes of the First Expert Meeting of the project on

Joint Efforts of Police and Health Authorities in the EU Member States and Third Countries to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings and Protect and Assist Victims of Trafficking

Payoke, Antwerp, 23&24 April 2012

The meeting was the first in the series of three Expert meetings to be held in the framework of the ISEC project. It was attended by 12 experts representing the governments, NGO's and international organisations. The meeting was focused on "Victims Identification" and was aimed at providing subject matter expertise in this field, setting the basis for the development of training curricula. The distinguished participants provided valuable analyses and opinions on enhancing cooperation between Law enforcement and Public Health authorities which could result in a more efficient identification of trafficked victims.

The main conclusions of this meeting may be summarised as followed:

Payoke experience and procedures were thoroughly explained as a model of victims' identification. The approach is based on a "Coffe and cookies" method, providing a comfortable, friendly atmosphere where the victim feels relaxed and confident to tell her story. Dealing with trauma and addressing the victims psychological needs are the principal elements of the first encounter with the victim. Afterwards she is accompanied to the shelter for the maximum 3 months after which the Payoke social worker looks for an appropriate housing. Payoke, in cooperation with police, social services and administrative authorities provides all necessary support for the victims' stay and accommodation. Although the victim does not confront directly the police and is not obliged to witness at the court, her account of the events is transmitted to the police who is then able to start action against the perpetrators. The approval of the residence permit is conditioned by the victims' cooperation and willingness to provide the details of her ordeal, which can help law enforcement to track traffickers. Payoke is also providing support for victims' integration, allowing the victim to attend school, learn the language of the country and eventually find a decent work. The aim is to allow the victims to stand on their own feet and resume normal life. All processed victims get a code and are registered into a data base run jointly by Payoke, Pag-asa and Sūrya, the three main Belgian NGO's providing support to the trafficked victims. These date collected since March 2012 provide analyses of new trends and patterns of THB. Close cooperation with the Eurojust is ensured to develop contacts with countries of origin and transit. Supported by about 30 volunteers (former professors, language teachers,

choreographers etc.) Payoke has last year alone being able to successfully deal with 24 cases of victims of trafficking.

Recommendation: to institutionalise the “the cookie and coffee” approach into a regular practice, providing for victims psychological and post trauma support while getting the victims’ testimony of her trafficking ordeal thus allowing the law enforcement and prosecutors to begin action against traffickers.

FRONTEX has developed a training manual for law enforcement. The difficulties arise during implementation, as different countries have different national and judicial standards and practices. Equally, local governments, NGO’s and shelters have different needs which should be appropriately addressed.

Recommendation: to devise common Training manual that can be adapted to specific national circumstances. The victims’ interview and identification should be at best carried out by the first and second line law enforcement officers. They should be trained to recognise and identify trafficking indicators, that together with material evidence and interview results may provide solid basis for the victims’ identification.

Beyond looking at the trafficking signs it is important that the project devises measures that are compatible and adaptable to the daily work context of law enforcement, border guards and health authorities.

Recommendation: Developing Common Acceptable Standards that fit into the overall context/ structural background and provide basis for the next steps. These standards should be specific and generic in order to be applicable to concrete situation

One of the most important elements of devising effective and efficient training curricula is the definition of the end users, their profile, grade and function within the institution they represent. Training should target the right level in the hierarchy that can impact the grass root/filed officials at the bottom as well as policy makers on the top. It should be shaped in a way to raise awareness, improve capacity building and increase the chances for implementation. It concerns police employees, border guards, prison staff, health services, social workers and labour inspectors and is important in order to provide more efficient intervention strategy, improved and quicker victims identification, health care as well as improved prosecution. Raising awareness and learning how to recognise the victim is the most important but also the most difficult step in the process. The example of the NL raising awareness of the clients and the raise in their reporting of the trafficking cases is the case in point.

Recommendation : Targeting managerial level (senior) as the most appropriate training group seems to be the best option as they may exert their influence and have impact on both the field and policy making level within their institution. For health practitioners and other field practitioners coming into the direct contact with the victims, the most appropriate will be to develop **Pocket cards** with concise information on THB indicators and practical steps to be taken, with information adapted to each participating country.

Because of the panoply of training materials available in the field of THB the project should avoid producing yet another manual which will be shelved without being properly utilised, due to the different national circumstances, administrative barriers and other elements impeding its effectiveness.

Recommendation: to develop training material that complements the existing trainings and is embedded in the existing structure, making an additional part of it.

The aim of the project is not to develop national referral mechanism, as every country has its specific system. One option would be to use the Netherlands Barrier model consisting of information on entrance, identity, housing, labour and health.

How to raise interest in training was the question raised during discussion. Participants agree that it has to be user- friendly, practical and perceived as useful in a day-to-day work. Raising the issue of costs may be a useful argument.

Recommendation: to develop Standard Operating Procedure SDP, as part of NRM and to appoint Focal points in Hospitals and elsewhere that will overview the implementation. The pyramid up-down pattern should consist of Protocol-SOP-Pocket Cards

Training curricula should be tested by law enforcement and health officials in both separate and joint sessions. Training for the doctors should be delivered by police and NGO's. In the longer term, beyond the project life time, training should become part of a regular University Curricula.

Recommendation: support the training curricula by the case studies in order to identify gaps and needs, raise key issues and share available information