

## The fourth seminar of the Parliamentarians against Human Trafficking project

Warsaw, 18 April 2012

### NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM

#### Venue

The seminar took place in the Polish Parliament (Sejm) in the Deputies House Conference Room and was hosted by Mr Ryszard Kalisz MP, Social Democrats (SLD), the Head of Justice and Human Rights Committee of the Polish Parliament. It was co-hosted by Mr Krzysztof Kwiatkowski MP, former Minister of Justice, from Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska) (ruling party).

#### Participants

There were **45** participants from **8** countries attending the seminar. Of them, there were **14** Members of Parliaments, including MPs from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia and UK. The topics of the seminar attracted many other representatives. There were also representatives from the Police, Border Agency, Prosecutors' Office, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, academia representatives, international organisations (OSCE/ODIHR), and NGOs from Lithuania, Poland, Romania and the UK. Additionally, representatives of the British Embassy in Warsaw, parliamentary clerks and assistants, interpreters, parliamentary staff and project staff took part in the seminar. We were delighted by the fact that former Polish Prime Minister, Mr Leszek Miller, who led Poland to the NATO and EU accession in 2004, greeted participants of the seminar during the lunch break.

#### Outcomes

The addition of three new countries at the Warsaw seminar (Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovakia) has extended the reach of the network, so that we now have parliamentary contacts in 16 EU countries. Another positive outcome of the seminar was the participation of a significant number of experts, professionals, academics, NGOs and representatives of the business community.

#### Programme

The meeting kicked off with a welcome address from Mr Krzysztof Kwiatkowski MP, former Minister of Justice, who addressed the seminar to commend the work being done across Europe in tackling human trafficking. He was then joined by Jessica Glover, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy



Warsaw, and Anthony Steen, Chairman of the Human Trafficking Foundation, who emphasised the importance of mobilising MPs across the EU to fight human trafficking.

Mariana Katzarova, Senior Advisor on Anti-Trafficking Issues, ODIHR/ OSCE, delivered the keynote speech on “How the National Referral Mechanism contributes to better protection and assistance to victims of trafficking ?”. ODIHR first introduced the concept of the National Referral Mechanism to the international anti-trafficking arena.

The morning session also included a parliamentary panel discussion chaired by Baroness Butler-Sloss (UK). As part of this ‘countries overview’ session, parliamentarians from Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and the UK shared information about the National Referral Mechanism in their countries. During this session, parliamentarians from the Czech Republic and Slovakia announced their intention to create a national group of MPs in their countries against human trafficking.

The panel discussion was followed by a Q&A session, featuring contributions from experts, academics and NGOs.

The afternoon session was chaired by Stana Buchowska, Project Coordinator. The session provided participants with the opportunity to learn about good practice in implementing the NRM through an examination of the Polish model. Various aspects of co-operation between different stakeholders in referral of victims of trafficking – chiefly NGOs and law enforcement representatives – were examined in detail. Contributions came from Mr Piotr Mierecki, Director of Department of Migration Policy, Ministry of the Interior, Mr Marcin Kulas, representative of the Central Anti Trafficking Unit of the Police Headquarters, Colonel Tomasz Semeniuk, Director of Investigative department of Headquarters of Border Guard and Ms. Irena Dawid-Olczyk, KCIK, National Consulting and Intervention Centre for the Victims of Trafficking.

The seminar was concluded by Ryszard Kalisz MP, Baroness Butler-Sloss and Stana Buchowska.

### **Media coverage of the seminar**

There was considerable media coverage of the event in Warsaw. During a press conference held in the parliamentary media suite, Baroness Butler-Sloss, Anthony Steen, Ryszard Kalisz MP and Stana Buchowska gave a short briefing relating to the PAHT project and the Warsaw event. This was followed by a short Q&A session with journalists from TV, radio, newspapers and internet media. Consequently, coverage of the PAHT project and the Warsaw event was broadcasted by the Polish Press Agency (PAP), and in turn by a number of newspapers and leading parts of the electronic media (at least 15 separate outlets). Additionally, the recorded webcast of the seminar is available to view via the Polish Parliament website.



## Networking reception

The networking reception was held the night before seminar, and was generously hosted by HM Ambassador Robin Barnett in his Warsaw residence. It was attended by more than 30 participants.

## Outcomes

Although many outcomes will only be visible in the long run (e.g. a raised level of knowledge and awareness amongst decision makers and the general public, increased support for the EU Directive and other anti-trafficking initiatives, enhanced cross-border and international cooperation, a network of MPs across Europe), outcomes already visible are:

a. **raised awareness among participants** – including parliamentarians - about the concept of the national referral mechanism and the EU Directive's recommendations on this subject. Participants have learned about the situation in other countries and shared good practice of NRM implementation in Poland

- Two new MPs from the Czech Republic and Slovakia declared to establish a national subgroup of PAHT, whilst all MPs confirmed that they will continue to build a European network of Parliamentarians Against Human Trafficking and will actively participate in the network.

- the seminar contributed to awareness raising amongst society and public opinion, the other MPs in Poland and other institutions and organisation through the wide media coverage of the event

b. **increased cooperation between MPs, NGOs and public authorities**

- all MPs exchanged views and shared experience with the NGOs representatives, police, border guards, prosecutors, academics and NGOs representatives.
- Parliamentarians and other participants from Portugal and Romania declared their political and organisational/logistic support in organising the next project events

c. **The seminar enhanced the grounds for the future MPs network covering the most of EU countries.**

With the 3 new countries involved we have exceeded the target of 15 countries, reaching 16 countries instead. There is a significant chance to have at least 8 additional countries involved during the following project seminars and conferences.

## Conclusions



After the success of this seminar, we are looking ahead to the Lisbon seminar on data protection that will be held during the second half of June 2012. The commitment of MPs from 8 European countries, who are interested in working to raise awareness of human trafficking and to prevent it, is really encouraging. This was the fourth of 10 events planned across Europe that will enable parliamentarians to learn good practice, share information and expand their contact with specialist NGOs, experts and business leaders in Europe.

