



## FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

London, 16 and 17 October 2012

#### Venue

The *Parliamentarians Against Human Trafficking* annual conference was hosted by the APPG on Human Trafficking in the UK Parliament and held in the Houses of Parliament in London.

#### Participants

There were over 80 participants from 16 countries taking part in the conference, including 31 parliamentarians from 12 countries, together with European NGOs and experts in the field of trafficking representing 15 European countries and Israel.

31 parliamentarians constitute **31%** out of the final target which is to directly reach 100 parliamentarians. They came from 12 countries and which is **80%** of the final target of 15 countries. With 10 new MPs attending the London conference we reached the total of **65** MPs who took part in different PAHT activities thus far. This constitutes 65 % of the final target for 100 members of parliament to be reached during the whole project.

#### Programme

Following welcoming remarks from Chairman of the Human Trafficking Foundation and project partner Anthony Steen, the packed conference room heard an address from Rt Hon William Hague MP, Foreign Secretary. The Minister reiterated his ongoing commitment to



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the fight against trafficking and underlined his support for the *Parliamentarians Against Human Trafficking* project.

The Foreign Secretary also paid tribute to the organisations behind the project, adding that he “would like to make special mention of ECPAT UK and its director Christine Beddoe, and Baroness Nicholson, who is the Chairman of the Asociatia Children’s High Level Group in Romania, the project’s third partner”, as well as commending with work of Anthony Steen. He also underlined that *“these events can genuinely help to increase the pressure on Governments across Europe to improve national and international anti-trafficking efforts. We must work collaboratively wherever possible. That means better cooperation between our law enforcement agencies, better sharing of intelligence, closer working between border agencies and business, governments and NGOs working as equal partners to tackle this scourge”*.

Christine Beddoe, Director of ECPAT UK, provided the keynote speech on an EU strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings. Christine underscored the importance of the UK’s implementation of the EU Directive on Trafficking in Human Beings.

Next followed progress reports from three countries that have played a pivotal role in the first year of the project. Joana Daniel Wrabetz, Director of the Observatory on Trafficking in Portugal, gave a demonstration of interactive software being developed in Portugal which displays maps of patterns in trafficking. Then followed a progress report from Italy delivered by Senator Maritati, who outlined the Italian Parliament’s approach to working closely with other agencies in the fight against trafficking. Finally, Arminas Lydeka MP provided an explanation of the Lithuanian situation, especially with regard to his Parliament’s approach to fighting trafficking.

### **Networking reception and dinner**

The first day of the conference ended with a reception held in the IPU Room and followed by two events - a European Parliamentary Network Dinner hosted by Anthony Steen at the Royal Automobile Club and a networking dinner held at the Swan restaurant, The Globe.

The second day of the conference started with a keynote speech by Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. It sparked a great deal of interest amongst participants, who asked many questions concerning European anti-trafficking strategies and tackling the most urgent problems of the anti-trafficking activities Europe wide. Before breaking into to three working groups, participants listened to Prof. Gary Craig, the Project Evaluator, who delivered his evaluation of the first year of the project. The evaluation brought many



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questions and provided food for thought for the participants, who were subsequently divided into three working groups to discuss various aspects of the project, namely strengthening national level PAHT groups, activities during the project's second year and the most relevant content areas that need to be covered, as well as discussing key ideas to form the basis of a declaration which all parliamentarians involved in the project will sign at the final conference in Bucharest in 2013.

The conference concluded with a plenary session, discussing the results of the working groups. One of the important conclusions of the group working on content and future activities was a proposal to take the Portuguese model of mapping and evidence gathering to member states national levels and to advocate for the creation of a pan-European model of mapping. Towards the close of the conference, Mark Harper MP, the new Minister for Immigration, provided a brief address to participants, underlining his involvement and support for anti-trafficking work by MPs within the EU.

The presence both of the Rt Hon William Hague MP, Secretary of State and Mark Harper MP, Minister for Immigration is indicative of the continued high level of support for PAHT project initiatives since its launch at 10 Downing Street in 2011.

## Impact

Early impacts of the conference and work of the first year of the PAHT project can already be observed through better communication between parliamentarians and NGOs (confirmed by several MPs and NGOs). In several countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Finland) as a follow up on the PAHT events, parliamentarians and NGOs have started to cooperate more closely on the national level, to participate in common events and, in two cases, to implement a new common project.

We noticed amongst MPs the beginning of a discussion about National Rapporteurs, National Referral Mechanisms and, most recently, a new discussion on mapping and evidence gathering systems. This final point has met with especial enthusiasm – they would like to carry the discussion out further and even to consider an endorsement of the idea of the pan-European mapping on trafficking. We can see these early impacts as those that will lead towards the desired long-term outcomes, stated as a raised level of knowledge and awareness amongst decision makers and the general public, increased support for EU Directive and other anti-trafficking initiatives, enhanced cross-border and international cooperation. After the second year of the project, and also after its completion, we will hopefully observe the creation in each country of a formal mechanism for promoting anti-trafficking legislation, with appropriate structures, involving partnerships



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etc with NGOs, and at the end a network across EU member states – *Parliamentarians Against Human Trafficking*.

## Conclusions

After the success of this conference, we are looking ahead to the second year of the project's implementation with three smaller events and a final conference. The project's calendar comprises of a good practice exchange meeting which will focus on child trafficking and is planned to be held in Madrid in January 2013. The second good practice exchange will take place in Bucharest in March 2013 (TBC) and will concentrate on the role of the law enforcement and the importance of cooperation with them in combating human trafficking. The third event will be a seminar, including a workshop section on promoting the pan-European mapping and evidence gathering system. The organisation of this seminar was kindly offered by the Lithuanian Parliament in April 2013. The timing here is really important as the first six months of the 2013 marks the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU. This will also help to keep the activities of the project high on the EU political agenda. Lastly, the final conference, which will conclude the two year project will be held in Bucharest, in May 2013 and organised by the one of the project partners – Asociatia High Level Children's Group.

The project is grateful to the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for their assistance in providing a venue for the conference and to the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking for their help in planning and facilitating the conference.

Stana Buchowska

Project coordinator

London, 25 October 2012



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