



PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

SEMINAR ON CHILD TRAFFICKING

FRIDAY 18 JANUARY 2013

Congreso de los Diputados, Madrid, Spain

Venue

The eighth seminar of the *Parliamentarians Against Human Trafficking* project was hosted by the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Congreso de los Diputados (the lower Chamber of the Parliament). The seminar welcomed attendees to the Ernest Lluch Hall to discuss different aspects of the child trafficking and ways of effective cooperation in preventing and combating this crime.

Participants

There were over 50 participants from 11 countries taking part in the conference, including 15 parliamentarians from 10 countries, together with European NGOs, police and law enforcement representatives, researchers and internationally recognised experts in the field of child trafficking.

The attendance to the seminar of 15 parliamentarians constitutes **15%** out of the final target which is to directly reach 100 parliamentarians. They came from 10 countries which is **66%** of the final target of 15 countries. With 6 new MPs attending the seminar we reached a total of **71** MPs who have taken part in different PAHT activities thus far. This constitutes 71 % of the final target for 100 members of parliament to be reached during the whole project.

Reception

The evening before the seminar, delegates were invited to a welcoming reception at the British Ambassador's residence, hosted by HM Ambassador to Spain, Giles Paxman. The Ambassador reaffirmed the commitment of the UK Government to fighting human trafficking and commended the work of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group, notably its Chairs Peter Bone MP and Baroness Butler-Sloss. The reception was a great opportunity for networking and for meeting Spanish representatives of law enforcement, academia, media and non-governmental organisations.



Programme

The programme started with opening remarks by Juan Carlos Aparicio Pérez MP, Chairman, Home Affairs Commission, and an introductory speech by Carmen Quintanilla MP, Chairman, Equal Opportunities Commission. She presented evocative statistics detailing an estimation of the number of trafficked persons in Spain and provided information about the main Spanish anti trafficking efforts and institutions active in fighting child trafficking. She called for better coordination between governmental agencies and other anti- trafficking actors on a national and international level.

Anthony Steen, Chairman, Human Trafficking Foundation in his welcoming remarks underlined the need to create anti trafficking structures within the respective national parliaments within the EU member states and brought as an example the UK APPG which is a cross-party group.

The keynote speech “Standards concerning preventing and combating trafficking in children: recommendations and obligations of the EU member states” was delivered by Lars Lööf, Head of Children’s Unit Council of the Baltic Sea States. Lars highlighted a number of relevant policies and anti- trafficking measures, such as the institution of a legal guardian, cited in the EU Directive on ‘Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

The morning session followed with a presentation on practical experiences of trafficking, notably a case study on child trafficking presented by Colin Walker from ECPAT UK and the experience of a legal guardian assisting child victims of trafficking in Belgium presented by Katlijn Declercq from ECPAT Belgium. The practical experiences created an animated discussion on the different aspects and implications of assistance to victims of child trafficking.

Following lunch, the afternoon session commenced with discussion themed on “How to share and promote the work of the PAHT project in national parliaments” which was led by Anthony Steen, Chairman of Human Trafficking Foundation. The session provided important contributions from the perspective of the further development of the PAHT network from its current base. In the course of discussion, participants presented initiatives from the national parliaments of Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia. The representatives of these six countries described their efforts to create an appropriate structure in their national parliaments – committees, subcommittees or inter-committee groups - which will carry out work on anti-trafficking initiatives by parliamentarians.

Two country overviews were presented during the last session of the afternoon programme. Comisario Jose Maria Moreno, senior representative of the Police Headquarters in Madrid, and Marta Gonzalez Vazquez MP, provided information about the current situation in Spain. The country overview of Estonia was presented by Mr Kalle Laanet MP. Both presentations were followed by Q & A sessions.

Impact

We can already observe the impact of the project in some measures, especially with regard to the following points:



- Better communication between the MPs and their fellow MPs about PAHT project activities. After the London conference, many MPs were eager to share information and present the findings of the conference to their groups – committees or subcommittees - in their countries
- The Polish MP submitted an “open letter” to his fellow MPs of the Polish Parliament where he is presenting the PAHT project, encouraging his colleagues to join up to this initiative and to create sub-committee
- The same Polish MP presented the PAHT project to the forum of PACE – the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- There is considerable movement in the establishment of anti-trafficking parliamentary groups in at least six countries
- Parliamentarians are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of implementing the EU Directive on Trafficking in Human Beings
- Discussion on the establishment of the National Rapporteur is being continued in several countries
- MPs involved with the PAHT project for several events have introduced their new colleagues to the project. Former MPs are securing the continuing involvement of their parliaments by engaging new parliamentarians with the PAHT project
- Improved communication and cooperation between MPs and NGOs and professionals/experts at national levels (confirmed by several MPs and NGOs)
- A new initiative to create a pan-European mapping system/observatory based on a Portugal model is being discussed. On the request of PAHT MPs, this will be discussed during the seminar in Vilnius in April 2013.

These early impacts will contribute towards the long-term outcomes of the project, namely a raised level of knowledge and awareness amongst decision makers and the general public, increased support for EU Directive and other anti-trafficking initiatives and 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 etc. with NGOs and at the end a network across EU member states – *Parliamentarians Against Human Trafficking*.

Conclusions

In evaluation of the seminar, participants graded the quality of the event as high. 40% of respondents evaluated the seminar as “excellent” and 60% as “good”. Participants found the following issues most relevant: *“the practical experience presented were very illustrative”, “the seminar provided to me the opportunity to experience the strength of feeling with Parliamentarians to deal with these issues”. “It is rare to attend such a well organised conference (time in sessions, high quality and relevance of presentations and speakers) and excellent networking plus range of countries. Many thanks!”*

After the success of this seminar, we are looking ahead to the two remaining seminars and the final conference to complete this section of the project. The project’s calendar comprises of a good practice exchange that will take place in Stockholm in March 2013 (TBC) and will concentrate on “The role and importance of **regional cooperation** in



preventing and combating human trafficking". The meeting will bring together representatives of various European networks active in the anti-trafficking field and provide a platform for sharing their good practices. The following event will be a seminar, including a workshop section on promoting the pan-European mapping and evidence gathering system. The organisation of this seminar has been kindly offered by the Lithuanian Parliament and will take place in April 2013. Lastly, the final conference, which will conclude the two year project, will be held in Bucharest, in June 2013 and will be organised by the one of the project partners – Asociatia High Level Children's Group.

The project is grateful to HM Ambassador and the British Embassy in Madrid for their assistance in providing a venue and organising a networking reception, and also to Marta Gonzalez Vazquez MP and the Committee on Equal Opportunities of the *Congreso de los Diputados* for their help in planning, organising and facilitating the conference.

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Project Coordinator

London, 23 January 2013



With the financial support from the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme of the European Union,
European Commission – Directorate-General Home Affairs

the
Tudortrust

and the Tudor Trust