



PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Sveriges Riksdag Stockholm, Sweden

FRIDAY 15 MARCH 2013

Venue

The ninth seminar of the *Parliamentarians Against Human Trafficking* project took place in the Andrakammarsalen Room, Riksdagen, Stockholm and was hosted by the Justice Committee of the *Sveriges Rikstag* (Swedish Parliament).

Participants

Over 32 participants from 9 countries took part in the conference, including 11 parliamentarians, together with European NGOs, police, prosecutors and other law enforcement representatives and internationally recognised experts in the field of child trafficking.

Attendance at the seminar of 11 parliamentarians constitutes **11%** out of the final target which is to directly reach 100 parliamentarians. They came from **9** countries which is **60%** of the final target of 15 countries. With 6 new MPs attending the seminar we reached a total of **69** MPs who have taken part in different PAHT activities thus far. This constitutes 69 % 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 Polish Embassy, hosted by Ambassador Adam Halaćński. The Ambassador underlined the importance of tackling the problem of human trafficking and referred to importance of international and regional cooperation to combat this crime. He emphasised that Poland is deeply involved in national and international anti-trafficking networking and the decision to host a reception by the Polish Embassy stressed this involvement. Baroness Butler-Sloss stated that she was delighted to be there. She remarked “by hosting the reception, Poland shows its commitment and dedication to solving the problem of trafficking in cooperation with other countries”. The reception provided a great opportunity for networking and for meeting Swedish representatives from law enforcement, non-governmental organisations, together with representatives from Embassies of the countries involved in the PAHT project..

Programme

The seminar was opened by Susanne Eberstein MP, Deputy Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, followed by Anthony Steen, Chairman of the Human Trafficking Foundation, Johan Linander MP, Vice Chairman of the Justice Committee of the Swedish Parliament and Caroline Szyber MP, member of the Justice Committee. The Swedish hosts briefly outlined the work and role of Swedish Parliament focusing on anti-trafficking activities and initiatives. They underlined the importance of regional and international cooperation, bringing the example of the cooperation within The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The CBSS is an overall political forum for regional intergovernmental cooperation which addresses five priority areas of the environment, economic development, energy, education and culture, civil security and human dimension, including trafficking in human beings. Other organisations attending included the Nordic Council and the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. Anthony Steen, Chairman of Human Trafficking Foundation, emphasised the process of developing anti-trafficking structures within national parliaments involved in the PAHT project and called upon continuing this process in other parliaments. He underlined the need for strong anti-trafficking structures that are stable bodies and independent of the electoral success of MPs. A strong European network of parliamentarians will rely upon the continuation of strong national groups.

The keynote speech “The role of regional cooperation of the police and law enforcement in preventing and combating human trafficking - priorities, tasks and challenges” was delivered by Patrick Cederlöf, National Coordinator against prostitution and human trafficking in Sweden. He highlighted that the states of the Baltic Sea Region are all affected by trafficking in human beings. Women, men and children are trafficked to, through or from the CBSS Region for the purpose of exploitation. Furthermore, the region is subject to



constant changes in the patterns of human trafficking, particularly due to global economic changes and the inventiveness of organised crime structures. The Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings has been introduced. It is composed of experts from relevant Government ministries in all the CBSS capitals. The work of the Task Force is coordinated by the Senior Advisor and her staff at the CBSS Secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden. The main objectives, the mandate and actions of TF-THB were also presented. The mandate of the TF-THB is to fight against trafficking in human beings and all of its forms of exploitation. Its actions aim at strengthening assistance to victims, promoting cooperation, abolishing gaps in existing approaches and improving legislation.

The keynote speech was followed by a Q&A session facilitated by Baroness Butler-Sloss. Participants asked for more details of the trafficking situation in Scandinavia. Then Baroness Butler-Sloss led a short round where MPs from nine countries presented an overview of the situation in their countries. The representatives 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. We were pleased to hear that since the last seminar in Madrid in January 2013, an anti-trafficking parliamentary group in Estonian parliament has been established, whereas in Lithuanian the All Parliamentary Group on Trafficking has been formed. In Poland the anti-trafficking subcommittee is likely to be created in April 2013.

The morning session followed with a panel discussion on “Aspects of police cooperation: evidence gathering, work with victims and witnesses of human trafficking”. The panel was facilitated by Johan Linander MP, Swedish Parliament. It started with a joint presentation by two Swedish prosecutors - Anna Lena Nilemar and Sara Lindquist, representing the International Public Prosecutions Office. They provided an overview of the structure, objectives, operation schemes and activities, with a special focus on cooperation on the national and regional level. In the following panel discussion, representatives from three countries involved in different regional structures presented their work. Participants listened to Mr Andre Oktay Dahl from Norway, in his capacity as a delegate of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference. Ms. Heike Rudat, Head of Human Trafficking at Criminal Investigation Department, Berlin, Germany illustrated the most important components of the police anti-trafficking work, with special focus on cooperation among regional networks of which Germany is an integral part.. Maria Stenberg MP, as a member of the Nordic Council contributed with a Nordic perspective, as well as from the Swedish point of view.

Following lunch and a short tour around Swedish Parliament, the afternoon session commenced with a country overview presentation by Senator Vanessa Matz from Belgian Parliament, the first intervention by a Belgian parliamentarian in the PAHT network thus far. Senator Matz presented a comprehensive outline of different anti-trafficking legislative measures in place in Belgium. Participants then asked questions and wanted to learn more about situation in Belgium and cooperation within the Benelux countries.



Next, the Parliamentarians' panel focused on: "How can MPs ensure better regional and cross-sector cooperation?". Panelists represented four countries: Frank Field MP (UK Parliament), Senator Vanessa Matz (Belgian Parliament), Caroline Szyber MP (Swedish Parliament), and Robert Biedron MP Polish Parliament. The panel was facilitated by Angie Bray MP, UK Parliament. Frank Field emphasised that the establishment of the independent National Rapporteur on Trafficking in all countries will significantly contribute to the improvement of cooperation between EU member states in various means.

The last part of the seminar was dedicated to the role of NGOs. Helena Karlen from ECPAT Sweden presented the organisation and its work, also in the context of ECPAT International networking activities, as well as the ways in which NGOs in Sweden and Scandinavia are involved in cross- sectoral cooperation.

Impact

As the project is coming closely to its end we can already observe improving communication and networking amongst participants, not only during the project events but also between the meetings. We can also notice that parliamentarians are increasingly taking ownership of the project- noticeable during both informal and formal events. For instance, during the networking reception, MPs discussed their vision for possibilities of continuation of the PAHT project after June 2013. They created their own proposals and initiatives, beyond PAHT project outlines. The following measurable outcomes of the PAHT project are also:

- Better communication between the MPs and their fellow MPs about PAHT project activities. After the Madrid seminar, many MPs and also NGOs participants shared their feedback, completed the questionnaire and contributed to country reports collated by the project staff. MPs were keen to present the findings of Madrid to their groups in national parliaments.
- Two Estonian MPs involved in the PAHT project led the initiative and succeeded in establishing an anti-trafficking parliamentary group in Estonian Parliament in February 2013; this progress is a direct result of relationships established and knowledge gained through the PAHT project.
- Furthermore, in February 2013, the Lithuanian Parliament formed an All Parliamentary Group on Trafficking. This initiative has been inspired and led by MPs who are part of the PAHT network. They stated that the basis for this group came from discussions as part of the PAHT network. In Poland the Anti-Trafficking Subcommittee – as part of the Committee on Justice and Human Rights of the Polish Parliament - is likely to be created in April 2013.
- There is considerable movement in the establishment of anti-trafficking parliamentary groups in at least six countries.
- The Romanian Parliament's Group on Fighting Trafficking in Persons finalised a series of hearings with national civil society organisations and public institutions active in anti-trafficking fields and is planning to release a Progress Report. The process of establishment of the Group can be clearly attributed to Anthony Steen and his contribution towards the PAHT initiative.



- 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 continues in several countries. Some of the UK parliamentarians advocated for this independent institution during the last seminar and were echoed by some other countries.
- MPs from Slovenia and Estonia will pay a working visit to their Latvian MP colleagues to advise her in establishing the anti-trafficking parliamentary group in Latvia.
- 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 the Portuguese model is being frequently discussed. Numerous parliamentarians presented their opinions on how to start this pan-European initiative. This will be the main topic of the upcoming seminar in Vilnius, on 19 April 2013.

We can observe the increasing impact that 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. During the second year of the project we have started to observe the creation of a formal mechanism for promoting anti-trafficking legislation, with appropriate structures, involving partnerships etc. with NGOs, with the aim of creating a final network across EU member states – *Parliamentarians Against Human Trafficking*.

Conclusions

Participants highlighted the police and prosecutor presentations as being particularly beneficial. During this seminar we observed increased networking of participants. Swedish NGOs representatives who were invited to the seminar underlined that it was a first time ever that they had been invited to the Swedish Parliament and praised the PAHT project for the opportunity to interact with MPs and other NGOs from Sweden and other countries. Leaders of three Swedish NGOs - Foundation Against Trafficking, TALITA and the Foundation Young Women Shielding organised a round table meeting with UK parliamentarians the day before seminar, hosted by the Foundation against Trafficking.

We are looking forward to the last (remaining) seminar and final conference to complete the activities listed in the calendar of the PAHT project (a seminar on creating a pan-European system of mapping and



data gathering, and the final conference). The organisation of the seminar has been kindly offered by the Lithuanian Parliament, and will be hosted by the Human Rights Committee. The seminar will take place on 19 April 2013. The most important part of the seminar will be preparatory work for the final conference. The conference, which will conclude the two year project, will be held in Bucharest in June/early July 2013 and will be organised by one of the project partners – Asociatia High Level Children's Group. Prior to the conference, a preparatory meeting of all project partners will be held in London in April 2013.

The project is grateful to HE Ambassador Adam Hałaciński and the Embassy of Polish Republic in Stockholm for their assistance in providing a venue for and organising a networking reception, and also to Johan Lindander MP, Caroline Szyber MP and the Committee on Justice of the Sveriges Riksdag for their help in planning, organising and facilitating the seminar.

Dr Stana Buchowska

Project Coordinator

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