

**TASK FORCE ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, TF Tip
PROTECTION AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
22.6.2023, 10:00**

Palisády 29, Bratislava

Attendees:

In person:

Zuzana Čáčová (IOM), Oľga Pietruchová (UNHCR), Tatiana Zlatos (IOM)

Online:

David Baker-Price (European Labour Authority), Petra Bležejová (Migration Office), Katarína Božík (IOM), Barbora Burajová (Institute for Labour and Family Research), Kamila Džurňáková (Ministry of Interior's Office, Crime Prevention Department), Alexandra Filčáková (IOM), Soňa Grauzlová (Information Centre for Fight against Human Trafficking and Crime Prevention), Martina Grošaft Cebecauerova (IOM), Katarína Levčíková (Mareena), Katarína Kožuchová (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR), Darina Luščíková (Slovak Humanitarian Council), Simona Majerníková (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic), Petra Melikantová (People in Need), Nina Pauleňová (IOM), Peter Piso (Caritas Slovakia), Martina Pussová (Information Centre for Fight against Human Trafficking and Crime Prevention), Gabriela Šaturová (U.S. Embassy in Bratislava), Marek Šimon (The office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma communities), Zuzana Špinderová (IOM), Miroslava Vrábellová (Ministry of Interior of the SR)

Zuzana Kianičková (interpreter), Miroslav Kováč (interpreter)

Agenda

- Approval of the minutes from the last meeting (Minutes from the last meeting are attached) and also the presentation from IOM UA from the previous work of the TF
- ELA, European Labour Authority, David Baker Price, Labour exploitation
- US Embassy in Bratislava, Gabriela Šaturová, 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report
- Regular update of partners: situation on borders, trainings focusing on prevention and beneficiaries: Update of the Situation from Information Centre, Department of Crime Prevention, Office of Minister of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, Caritas Slovakia - Program for support and protection of victims of human trafficking
- AOB (Any other business)

Ms Zuzana Čáčová (IOM) welcomed participants and thanked them for attending the eighth meeting of TF on TiP. She opened the floor to **Mr David Baker-Price** who presented the overview of the work of **ELA**. ELA deals with labor mobility issues across the EU (abuse of posting of workers, bogus self-employment and bogus temporary agencies, fraudulent letterbox companies, labor exploitation, undeclared work, etc.). The authority supports cross-border inspections – f.e. if there is a suspicion of exploitation at restaurant chain in several countries, they can conduct a coordinated inspection simultaneously in several members states. Everything happens on voluntary basis of members states and state authorities, and on principle of confidentiality. For these cross-border inspections, ELA provides conceptual, logistical and technical support, and, where appropriate, legal expertise, if

requested by the Member States concerned. Benefits of these cross-border inspections include bringing together investigative powers, expertise and resources; discussing background information and evidence; joint action planning; exchanging practices and building of network; tackling cross-border issues. Some examples of cross-border inspections supported by ELA include concrete and joint inspections of business premises in Netherlands and Bulgaria, where truck drivers were exploited. Another example is an inspection conducted in meat industry where workers from Poland, Romania and Ukraine were exploited in the Netherlands and lived in overcrowded place with mold, lack of heating in winter and fire risks - authorities from Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania inspected this case together. ELA is currently working on cases in Slovakia as well. **Upon providing information of suspected exploitation, ELA can investigate the situation.**

Ms Zuzana Čáčová (IOM) thanked **Mr David Baker-Price** and opened the floor to **Ms Gabriela Šaturová** from the **US Embassy in Bratislava** who presented the annual Trafficking in Persons report, released on June 15th 2023. The report utilizes a tier system to rank countries and evaluate each government's actions to combat trafficking assessed against specific criteria outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. It is based on 3Ps principle: Prosecution, Protection, and Prevention + Partnership. Slovakia remained on Tier 2 – countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards. Although more suspected traffickers were investigated and prosecuted, significantly less traffickers were convicted and all of them received suspended sentences. Training for judges and prosecutors is inadequate and needs significant improvement to prevent this trend. Currently, there is an amendment to the criminal law currently in the second reading in the parliament, which proposes an increase in the minimum sentence for trafficking from 4 to 5 years. It also increases the penalty rate for child trafficking and criminalizes the knowing use of the services of people who are victims of trafficking. There has been an increase in formally identified victims as well as in the number of victims receiving aid through the victim assistance program. However, gaps in identification persist, including inadequate identification of foreign nationals or Slovak victims within Slovakia. Moreover, only one victim was awarded compensation in the last year, court did not order restitution to any trafficking victims. As far as prevention is concerned, efforts focused on refugees from Ukraine are ongoing, including awareness campaigns and trainings. However, no foreign victims have been formally identified. Risk areas that the report identifies in context of Ukraine: the two main areas of vulnerabilities in government-subsidized accommodation and fraudulent labor recruitment. **Ms Zuzana Čáčová (IOM)** thanked **Ms Gabriela Šaturová** and opened the floor to regular update of partners.

Ms Oľga Pietruchová updated Task Force participants on the work of **UNHCR**. As part of the Protection and inclusion working group, **UNHCR** issued recommendations in the area of gender-based violence. Slovakia received within the framework of CEDAW recommendations related to gender-based violence and human trafficking. These recommendations include criminalizing payment for sexual services with victims of human trafficking, capacity building of judges and prosecutors and improved prevention of human trafficking for women within Roma communities. Both documents will be sent to task force.

Ms Martina Pussova followed with an update from Information Centre for Fight against Human Trafficking and Crime Prevention. New National Plan for Fight against Human Trafficking for 2024-2028 is being prepared – a facilitated meeting of an expert group in this field took place in May and will be followed by second facilitated meeting in the last week of June. Information Center organized as well a two-day workshop for the main counter-trafficking actors in Slovakia, with the aim of finding intersection and the border between work exploitation within the framework of trafficking and poor

working conditions, the main actors in this topic participated. Information center continues with educational activities - training of professional groups.

Ms Kamila Džurňáková updated Task Force participants on the activities of the **Crime Prevention Department**. As part of the awareness campaign of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, an open day is held every week in information offices for victims of crimes (each week in a different regional city) - the campaign "A thousand reasons to help". The aim of the campaign is to make victims and potential victims of crime aware of the help available. Today, June 22, 2023, it is Information Office Košice, which, since the outbreak of the war conflict in Ukraine, has provided assistance to clients from the ranks of war refugees from Ukraine. In this context, the premises of the large-capacity center in Michalovce were allocated to the employees of Information Office Košice.

Ms Miroslava Vrábelová followed with an update from the **National Unit for the Fight against Illegal Migration**. Between 8th and 15th May, a joint action days focused on sexual exploitation were carried out, during which more than 20 business entities and more than 300 people were checked. No victim of human trafficking was identified. In the past days, action days again focused on labor exploitation were carried out - the results of these days are currently being processed.

Mr Peter Piso from **Caritas Slovakia** updated Task Force participants on the **Program of support and protection for victims of human trafficking**. In recent months, they implemented preventive and educational activities aimed at people who work in the field with refugees from Ukraine. As per information from Caritas workers, refugees continue to be employed illegally or under very poor salary conditions, bullying of children at school is an ongoing problem. Mental state of many clients calling on the National hotline is very serious. UA victim identified. In this period, many students call before travelling abroad.

Ms Zuzana Čáčová (IOM) thanked participants and closed the eight meeting of TF on TiP.