

MINUTES

*of the meeting of the Anti-Trafficking Task Force (ATTF on THB),
chaired by the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combating THB (PS of NC CTHB),
State Chancellery*

Meeting details			
Date	26.12.2024		
Time	09.00 -12.00		
Co-Chairs	IOM Mission to Moldova, Public Association International Centre "La Strada"		
Rapporteur	Permanent Secretariat (PS), IOM Mission to Moldova, Participants		
Email	lilia.pascal@gov.md ; ddonoaga@iom.int , elena.botezatu@lastarda.md ; comunicare@lastrada.md , valeriu.berlinschi@gov.md , tfomina@lastrada.ma , egorgosmeps@yahoo.com		
AGENDA			
Nr/r	Time	Topics for discussion	Facilitator
1.	09:00-09:30	Registration of participants. Welcome coffee	
2.	09:30 – 9:40	Opening remarks	Permanent Secretariat IOM Mission to Moldova IC „La Strada”
3.	9:40 - 9:55	Evolution of the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings in 2024, identified forms of exploitation.	Ministry of Internal Affairs Prosecutor General's Office
4.	9:55-10:10	Cross-sectoral cooperation between central and local authorities in order to identify alleged victims of trafficking in human beings, including among foreigners.	Ministry of Internal Affairs Ministry of Labor and Social Protection

5.	10:10 – 10:50	Conclusions and recommendations of the study: "Situational analysis on the functionality of the Territorial Commissions for combating trafficking in human beings in the Republic of Moldova"	Ecaterina Berejan, IOM Consultant
6.	10:50-11:20	Research on trafficking incidents, trends, risks and vulnerability to human trafficking in Moldova in the context of the war in Ukraine - preliminary conclusions	Kiril Sharapov, associate professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Edinburgh Napier; Coordinator of the Migration and Mobility Research Network;
7.	11:20 -11:50	Analytical study on the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking in human beings and related crimes.	Diana Ionita, national expert
8.	11:50 - 12:00	Final conclusions. Closure of the sitting.	Permanent Secretariat
	12:00	Coffee break	

Relevant information and links

www.antitrafic.gov.md; Safe migration and anti-trafficking Hotline 0800 77777; <https://www.migratiesigura.md>; information portal www.newsmaker.md;

Participants:

Lilia Pascal, PS, SC	Olesea Borta, ANOFM	Pleșca Cristian, IGPF
Diana Certan-Donoagă, IOM,	Teleşco Natalia, MMPS;	Liuba Todica, CAP
Vitalie Bînzari, ISM	Cirimpei Pavlina, CPPVPP	Viorel Nartea, IGPF,
Vitalie Psenicinîi, CCTP	Rodica Moraru-Chilimari, MMPS	Igor Lambă, PG
Natalia Nicula, UNODC	Online Participants	Diana Pasal, AGSSÎ
Victoria Gortolomei, Amasada USA	Alexandru Donos, CNFACEM Tatiana Fomina, IC La Strada	Frînea Nadejda, IOM

Cavcaliuc Liuba, IGM	Kiril Sharapov, associate professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Edinburgh, Napier;	Viyaleta Volkava, IOM
Bivol Octavian, INJ	Cristina Triboi,” Terre des hommes Moldova”	Ecaterina Berejan, IOM
	Veronica Lupu, Association of Women in Legal Careers, Moldova	Diana Ioniță, IOM

Summary of discussions/proposals and recommendations/action points

Agenda	Discussions	Recommendations/ Actions
2. Opening remarks	<p>Lilia Pascal – Head, Human Rights and Civil Society Cooperation Directorate, State Chancellery welcomed the participants, mentioned that the proceedings of the meeting are translated into English and Russian, encouraged the participants present online to be active and participate in the discussions on the topics of the Agenda, a very interesting agenda, which focused on the studies and research carried out in the previous period. She also stressed that being at the end of 2024, approaching 2025 it is very important to discuss about achievements, challenges, which will facilitate the planning for the next year.</p> <p>As major elements, she mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the US Department of State questionnaire in the field of child exploitation was completed as in December additional questions for completion/coordination were received in this regard; she also thanked everyone for their involvement, which made possible the conclusion of this exercise successfully; - we are currently in the process of completing the US Department of State Questionnaire on the THB domain, the deadline was December 31, but upon request it was extended until January 14, 2025. She made clarifications to the methods of working further on this questionnaire. - she announced that they have received the GRETA’s Draft Evaluation Report, fourth round, which will be distributed to the institutions to answer the questions/concerns on this project, after 10-12 of 	

January. Only the relevant institutions will participate, according to the procedure. GRETA experts will then review the responses, finalise the Report and it will be placed on the CoE website.

She thanked everyone once again for their dedication, professionalism in implementing the National Action Plan in the field for 2024. She stressed that a meeting of the NC CTHB (CN CTFU) was held but specified that 4 meetings of the Anti-Trafficking Task Force (ATTF) (including for refugees) and 4 meetings of the Technical Coordinating Group of the Permanent Secretariat of the NC CTHB (CN CTFU) were held, during which the most pressing topics were discussed.

She offered the word of greeting to Mrs. Diana Certan-Donoagă, co-chair of the meeting.

Diana Certan-Donoagă - Programme Coordinator, IOM Mission to Moldova. She greeted the audience and mentioned the studies (two, in line with the Agenda), which were supported by the IOM. One was financially supported by the Government of Sweden and the other with the support of the US State Department (INL). She hopes that the results and recommendations of experts on these studies will be relevant and useful for improving national policies in the field.

She also stressed that IOM has supported the activity of the ATTF, and hopes that the TF can be further organized with less financial resources, in light of the finalization of the project.

Lately, IOM has supported the holding of 2 events:

- a 2-day workshop for prosecutors and police officers from Ukraine (13 specialists) and Moldova. The workshop was very productive and strengthened the cooperation of specialists from both countries;
- 4 trainings for prosecutors and border police (of 25 people each) and 5 more trainings are to be carried out to involve as many specialists as possible and she also hopes that the national report for 2024 will reflect a higher number of asset seizures, as a result of these trainings.
- the trainings (5 workshops) in collaboration with the MMPS of the specialists (Multidisciplinary Teams), who work in the implementation of the MNRV are ongoing.

She wished success to the smooth running of the meeting and congratulated the participants on the eve of the winter holidays.

Tatiana Fomina (online) – Analytical expert, PA IC "La Strada". She congratulated the participants on the eve of the holidays on behalf of the organization she represents and reviewed the most important activities carried out by IC "La Strada":

- it contributed to the development of the JTiP and GRETA reports in 2024, responding to the questionnaires developed to collect data on countries' efforts in preventing and combating THB.

In addition, the "La Strada" expert conducted an analysis of the jurisprudence in the Republic of Moldova on TFU, for the period October 2020 - June 2024. The assessment focused on addressing

	<p>the vulnerability associated with THB. The conclusions of this analytical report have been integrated into the country's assessment report, prepared by GRETA experts, which will include recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Moldova on improving the national response to THB;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it contributed to the development of data and research and promoted them in advocacy initiatives at national and international level; - it provided support to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) in the implementation of the Program for the creation and development of the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection and Assistance of Victims of Crime (NRM) - “La Strada” expert, in collaboration with MLSP and IOM, developed the draft Guide on the identification of victims and alleged victims of THB within the social assistance system. The need to update the previous guide was determined by the reform of the social assistance system "RESTART" and the changes in the institutional framework of the NRM; - the “La Strada” expert was invited to support the development of the concept of "accompaniment/support services", provided for in point 69 of the NRM Programme. In this context, based on an agreement with MLSP, it was decided to carry out a feasibility study, which would analyze possible scenarios for organizing the accompaniment of crime victims, comparing them and formulating recommendations for choosing the most efficient model. - “La Strada” representatives participated as trainers in training and information sessions on the identification of victims of crimes and the functioning of the NRM, organized by the SC, MLSP and IOM for specialists involved in combating THB, including members of the territorial multidisciplinary teams. <p>She mentioned that the Agenda is a very interesting one, which proposes to present the preliminary or final results of 3 very necessary studies. She wished success in conducting the meeting.</p> <p>Lilia Pascal – moved to the realization of the Agenda and gave the floor to the first speaker, but proposed to introduce the participants to the meeting, including those who participate online and then the Agenda will be presented.</p>	
<p>3. Evolution of the phenomenon of trafficking in</p>	<p>Vitalie Pșenicinîi - Acting Director of the CCTP, reviewed the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 53 criminal cases were registered (in the 11-month period of 2024), which is an increase of 20% compared to last year. Of these, child trafficking – 63% of the cases belong to sexual exploitation, 	

<p>human beings in 2024, identified forms of exploitation.</p>	<p>followed by exploitation through labor and exploitation through begging. For adults: labour exploitation 33%, sexual exploitation – 21% and begging – 12%. As new forms of exploitation: the use in criminal activities of persons (primarily men) to transport migrants in the EU area, who arrive from the Middle East and Asia, they move to Bulgaria, Croatia, Austria, Hungary illegally – there are 9 criminal cases (collaboration with EUROPOL). Another form is using women as surrogate mothers – 1 criminal case, in Greece. A similar criminal case on 5 people, a group of women from Uzbekistan, but they came from Ukraine to Moldova during pregnancy and were going to go back to give birth to children. On this cause, we are collaborating with our counterparts in Ukraine. There are cases related to the internal labor exploitation of foreign and national citizens. The total number of victims for 2024 is not yet finalized. These data will be reflected in the national report, 2024.</p> <p>Lilia Pascal – mentioned the importance of exchanging data and information during the meeting in order to have a better analysis and planning for 2025. The social field has also faced great challenges lately in the field, one being the implementation of the RESTART reform, which requires a series of legislative and regulatory adaptations, but also the training of new specialists entering the system. She then gave the floor to the MMPS.</p> <p>Rodica Moraru-Chilimar – presented the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 43 specialists have been hired to assist victims of crime (42 are currently employed). The specialists, including the Multi-Disciplinary Teams from the National Referral Mechanism, have been trained with the support of IOM. There is also an Action Plan for the implementation of the NRM. - (assistance to foreigners) there are 2 centers in Chisinau for victims or alleged victims, including foreigners, at the level of the republic there are also centers for refugees, even if they are not in some beneficiary centers. We insist that their activity be maintained in order to have these opportunities. 	
<p>Discussions/Debates from Participants</p>	<p>Lilia Pascal – 2 questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will a large number of beneficiaries be responded to (the previous cases)? - has the quality of the victim identification and referral mechanism been improved by hiring new specialists and how is the collaboration with the police and other institutions concerned within the NRM? <p>Rodica Moraru-Chilimar – to the first question – there is no definitive solution today, but the example of Bangladesh was solved with the support of the IOM. And at the moment there is an agreement with the Medical Center where people from Bangladesh have been placed to provide us with temporary support in placement in case of need. She also mentioned the launch of the victim supervision/accompaniment service, which will have a positive impact for victims.</p>	

	<p>With reference to the second question – she mentioned again the initiation trainings, which took place according to a new curriculum for all specialists (MDT), who benefited from a common approach to strengthen their capacity. She also mentioned the activity of the CC of the NRM, who also discussed the quality indicators for the field. These indicators will also be correlated with the EUROSTAR indicators.</p> <p>Lilia Pascal – mentioned the importance of knowing the new challenges, but also opportunities for an improvement in planning, even if we have a National Anti-Corruption Program (HG 715/2023) for a period of 5 years.</p> <p>Vitalie Pșenicinii – mentioned the case of the victim with physical disabilities and her placement in the center for the elderly, because the CAP (Centre for Assistance and Protection) is not adapted for such cases and this placement brought impediments in the investigation, but also their maintenance during the investigation. He proposed examining and creating conditions for placement in specialized services for such cases as well.</p> <p>Rodica Moraru-Chilimar – replied and explained in detail the case discussed. The current services have been evaluated and their reprofiling is planned and the CAP will be adapted for such cases. This will be possible with the support of the IOM.</p>	
<p>7. Analytical study on the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking in persons and related crimes.</p>	<p>Diana Ioniță – presented some technical aspects: 100 files were examined. A form was developed on the basis of which the study was carried out. <i>The presentation is attached.</i> The study was conducted by 4 contracted experts in the field of preventing and combating THB/practitioners (1 prosecutor, 2 lawyers and 1 judge from the Supreme Justice Court): Diana Ioniță, Sergiu Russu, Elena Cobzac, Tatiana Catană. The analysis was carried out dynamically and by comparison with the data of the previous Study. The study was possible to carry out with the support of IOM.</p> <p>It was observed that Moldova, that was once a country of origin, has now become both a transitional and a destination country. The forms of exploitation, the profile of the victims have also changed. Regarding the recruitment methods, they have also undergone changes: the position of vulnerability and deception remain a priority.</p> <p><i>The objectives of the study were:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of 100 files with final solutions of TFU and related crimes adopted in the period 2015-2021 (art. 165, 168, 206, 220, 302 of the Criminal Code); 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying specific current trends in THB for Republic of Moldova previously predominantly as a country of origin. Particularities of manifestation of internal THB (methods used, exploitation purposes...); - identifying up-to-date profiles for the victims of TFU and the traffickers; - identification of the reasons for the reclassification by the prosecuting authorities or courts, including of different levels of jurisdiction from the TFU/CT in a related crime; - identifying whether the victim of TFU has benefited from the entire package of possible/accessible assistance (medical, psychological, social, legal, etc.) during the criminal proceedings. <p><i>Procedural Aspects/Criminal Prosecution:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notification/self-notification/denunciation; - Investigation method (reactive/pro-active); - Procedural actions (recognitions, hearings, confrontations, searches, expertises...); - Treatment of the victim in the proceedings; - Protection measures; - Special conditions for hearing the victim and witnesses (Articles 109, 110, 110/1 of the Code of Crimina Procedure); - The victim's access to services, to qualified legal assistance; - Interdepartmental, international collaboration; - Seizures, confiscations; - Deadlines (criminal prosecution, procedural qualities/suspected/accused/preventive measures...) <p>Indictment...</p> <p><i>Trial of cases:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The assignment of the case (by considering art. 30 of the Code of Criminal Procedure), the nature of the hearings, preliminary hearings; - Special procedures (art.364/1 of the Code of Criminal Procedure); - Examination deadlines, lucrative meetings, postponements; - Treatment of the injured parties, consideration of the hearing procedures at the criminal prosecution. - Classification of actions, penalties applied (Articles 79, 90, 109 of the Criminal Code); - Seizures, confiscations, compensations; - Quality of judicial documents, references to international acts pertinent to the prevention of THB and exploitation; - Objections, appeals, reviews; - Separate opinions, interlocutory conclusions... 	
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<p>Discussions/Debates from participants</p>	<p><i>Victim Assistance and Protection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing the treatment of the victim in criminal proceedings (whether the procedural rights have been explained and respected, whether re-victimization has been admitted, the application of protection measures, etc.). the applicability of Para. (4) art. 165 CC.); - Fair satisfaction of the victim (related to the aspects of compensation from the perpetrator and compensation from the state); - Specialized services available and provided to victims; - Minor victim; - Qualified legal assistance for the victim; - The legal classification of the act and the status of the victim; - Problems of severance of causes and impact on the victim; - The victim's security, interactions with the perpetrator during the proceedings.... <p><i>The target group of the study was:</i></p> <p>Criminal investigation bodies, prosecutors, magistrates, social workers, other interested members of the multidisciplinary team, NGOs, International Organizations.</p> <p>The purpose of this study is expressed in a Final Report that will also contain Recommendations, which are to be thoroughly examined by the courts of law and government institutions in order to make adjustments and additions in the planning and implementation of policies to prevent and combat THB, but also of the specialized protection of victims during the investigation, criminal prosecution of cases, but also compensation for their damages.</p> <p>Lilia Pascal – thanked the experts very much, but also IOM for their support. She mentioned her interest in the study and that the presentation would be sent to the participants. The final report will be presented in a smaller working group where all identified gaps and expert recommendations will be examined. She recommended that the Report should also be presented and examined during a meeting of the Coordinating Group of Law Enforcement Bodies along with the Prosecutor General. The study is a resource for social institutions as well.</p> <p>Igor Lambă – GPO periodically makes analyzes and for the most part many of the conclusions stipulated in the study are similar to those of the analyzes performed by GPO. He proposed that these conclusions should also be taken into account when finalizing the report.</p> <p>Diana Certan-Donoagă - personally thanked the expert, along the other 3 who did a considerable work. She also stipulated that as a result of the recommendations and shortcomings identified, the training curricula at the NJI will be reviewed later (this was also a purpose of the study) and training for prosecutors and criminal prosecution officers will be carried out.</p>	
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	<p>Economic poverty: Continued withdrawal of aid can leave vulnerable populations unprotected.</p> <p>Adaptation failures: Increased desperation and declining adaptive capacities among refugees can lead to risky choices.</p> <p>Roma and marginalised groups: those left outside support systems, who face disproportionate risks.</p> <p>Continuous monitoring: Continuous observation of vulnerabilities and risks is essential.</p> <p>Future research: targeted studies are needed to address: the gap between the vulnerability thresholds and the allocation of aid/assistance; labour exploitation in specific sectors (including unregulated post-conflict reconstruction in Ukraine); specific risks for marginalised groups, such as Roma communities; risks associated with specific activities (irregular border crossings);</p> <p>Holistic monitoring: While trafficking remains a serious crime, other forms of abuse, violence, and exploitation that do not involve trafficking must also be constantly pursued.</p> <p><i>Questions and comments can be sent to: k.sharapov@napier.ac.uk</i></p> <p>Lilia Pascal – thanked the expert for the presentation and mentioned the need for this research, even if no victims were identified among the ranks of refugees from Ukraine. It is important to take into account the stipulated conclusions, in particular to draw attention to the vulnerability of these persons. The final report will be presented on this platform, but also on other platforms as needed and requested.</p> <p>Viyaleta Volkava – thanked the expert and thanked the partners for their participation and presentation of useful information in the research and collaboration between all the actors involved. The results of the research aim to make the protection of victims safer and more adequate.</p>	
<p>5. Conclusions and recommendations of the study: "Situational analysis on the functionality of the Territorial Commissions for combating trafficking in</p>	<p>This study was carried out by Iurii Podarilor, an expert, and Viorelia Rusu, an expert, being contracted by the OSCE Mission to the Republic of Moldova. The preliminary report was presented on June 3, 2024, at the meeting of the Working Group for Criminal Techniques of the PS and the Final Report was presented at the OSCE coordinating technical meeting on December 6, 2024. The presentation will be distributed to the participants. Only some conclusions and recommendations of this study have been presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving the regulatory framework related to the activity of the Territorial Commission (TC) by adjusting the Framework Regulation of the activity of the TC, the clear delimitation in the attributions of the TC and ATAS/STAS (the specialist for preventing and combating domestic violence and the 	

<p>human beings in the Republic of Moldova"</p> <p>Discussions/Debates from participants</p>	<p>rehabilitation of victims of crimes) related to the coordination of the activity of preventing and combating TFU at the level of APL II, which have become a necessity, following the implementation of the RESTART reform;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration/updating of the normative and methodological framework in the field of assistance and protection of victims of crime in the context of the provisions of the NRM Program (implementation of the Law 137/2016), which would specify the synergy/connection with the TC mandate; it is proposed that the position of the TC Secretary be assigned to the Specialist in the field of domestic violence and rehabilitation of victims of crime within ATAS/STAS, with the inclusion of the task in the Job Description; - Developing the program to increase the professional capacities of TC members (initial and continuous training), increasing methodological support and facilitating the process of exchange of good practices between TCs; - Providing the support of the Permanent Secretariat of the CNCTFU (National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking) in the elaboration of information materials for the population/students/alleged victims regarding the TFU, new trends and existing services; videos, including video spots; lesson modules for different target groups; supporting and promoting the services of the National Hotline for Safe Migration and Anti-Smuggling; providing support to educational institutions by providing information panels; - Developing projects and initiatives to support local leaders/economic agents in the legalization of the workforce, as a measure to prevent THB (mapping existing sheepfolds and helping economic leaders in the field of sheep farming to be able to continue their activity, but under legal and safe conditions for its employees); - Monitoring the TC activity and archiving the TC activity documentation; - Supporting and strengthening local NGOs with activities to prevent and combat THB. 	
<p>8. Final conclusions. Closure of the sitting</p>	<p>Lilia Pascal - She mentioned that there are gaps in the cooperation mechanism with APL (Local Public Administration) institutions in the field of THB. The recommendations of the study will be taken into account in the policy planning by the specialists of the institutions responsible for implementing the national anti-trafficking policy.</p> <p>Diana Certan-Donoagă – asked to establish the topics for the next meeting, but also for the CN CTFU (National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking) meeting.</p> <p>At the same time, she informed the audience about the activities already planned for the next 3 months:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Seminars for police officers and prosecutors in Chisinau;- the NJI (National Justice Institute) Training Curricula will be updated;- in collaboration with MLSP, 10 workshops will be held for newly hired specialists and health specialists:- rehabilitation of 2 centers (CAP and one more center within MLSP)- information/awareness activities in densely populated localities with Roma people;- a workshop will be organized at the level of the APL in the Soroca city.- trainings will be organized for new specialists in the field of child rights protection (2 days). <p>Lilia Pascal - pointed out the need for the cooperation of institutions and partners during the planning period in order to exclude duplication of activities or the omission of some urgent needs. She thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting and the beautiful collaboration throughout 2024.</p>	
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