

TASK FORCE ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Meeting Details	
Date	20/12/2023
Time	10:30-12:30
Co-chairs	Permanent Secretariat, IOM, UNHCR
Reporting	Permanent Secretariat, IC "La Strada", All participants
Email	diana.doros@gov.md ; bogdeva@unhcr.org ; ddonoaga@iom.int , diana.comerzan@gov.md , valeriu.berlinschi@gov.md , comunicare@lastrada.md

Agenda			
Meeting Agenda	Time	Topics for discussion	Facilitator
	10:30 – 10:45	Welcome remarks	Permanent Secretariat UNHCR IOM
	10:45 – 11:10	National anti-trafficking Program 2024-2028	Permanent Secretariat
	11:10 – 11:35	Report on the implementation of the Action Plan of Moldova regarding the prevention and combating of human trafficking in the context of the Response Plan to the Situation in Ukraine for the period 01 July 2022-01 July 2023	Permanent Secretariat
	11:35 – 12:00	The results of the information campaign carried out by La Strada	IC "La Strada"
	12:00 - 12:30	Update on the recent development and activities on countering	all participants

		Trafficking in Persons and joint activities for 2023	
Information collection and relevant links			
www.antitrafic.gov.md ; Safe migration and anti-trafficking Hotline 0800 77777; portal https://www.migratiesigura.md ; information portal www.newsmaker.md ;			
Participants			
Valeriu Berlinschi, Permanent Secretariat	Olesea Borta, NEA	Adrian Pascal, CAPV	
Diana Comerzan, OIM/Permanent Secretariat	Elena Căpățină, IC "La Strada"	Vitalie Bînzari, State Labor Inspectorate	
Diana Certan-Donoaga, IOM,	Victoria Rotaru, NASA	Olga Chisca, OSCE	
Martina Bogdeva, UNHCR	Vasile Harea, GIM, MIA	Natalia Albina, Hope 4	
Victoria Klimova, IOM	Angelina Bezu, MES	Christopher Lomas, Hope 4	
Sergiu Russu, General Prosecutor's Office	Tatiana Pîrvu, MFAEI	Ecaterina Berejan, OIM	
Vitalie Psenicinii, CCTP	Mihail Lazar, GIBP		

Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion	Agreements/ Actions
Welcome remarks	Valeriu Berlinschi - The Co-Chairs welcomed the participants to the last meeting of 2023 and reviewed the Agenda of the meeting. Offered the word of greeting to other speakers. Diana Certan_Donoaga, Mission of the IOM in Moldova - Thanked the participants for	

	<p>opening and participating in the meeting. She has expectations from this meeting, but she will also present, during the meeting, some results obtained in collaboration with other institutions Martina Bogdeva, UNHCR - mentioned that it is very important that the meeting was organized and held, just a few days before the winter holidays, she wished success.</p>	
<p>2. National anti-trafficking Program 2024-2028</p>	<p>The national anti-trafficking program 2024-2028 – was presented by Valeriu Berlinschi (the presentation will be distributed to the participants). He thanked his colleagues and especially the IOM for their involvement, for their support and Mrs. Diana Comerzan who was fully involved in the elaboration and finalization of this document and emphasized the importance of this document. The program was approved by Government Decision no. 715 of September 26, 2023 and will enter into force on January 1, 2024. The program contains 5 General objectives and each has specific objectives to achieve them. Each specific objective has Impact Indicators. This Program focuses on the unresolved issues in this field and on reaching to the EU standards. Therefore, the Action Plan regarding the implementation of this Program, represents an essential tool to contribute to the prevention of this phenomenon, with an emphasis on vulnerable groups, to protect victims of THB by creating a viable mechanism for the rehabilitation and (re)integration of victims and presumptive victims of THB, with a victim-centred approach, to criminalize new forms of THB, punish traffickers and create sustainable partnerships with counterparts in other countries. The program is harmonized and will be implemented in collaboration with the implementation of the Program for the creation and development of the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection and Assistance of Crime Victims (MNRV) GD no. 182/2022 and other relevant national policies.</p>	

3. Report on the implementation of the Action Plan of Moldova regarding the prevention and combating of human trafficking in the context of the Response Plan to the Situation in Ukraine for the period 01 July 2022- 01 July 2023

The Report was presented by **Diana Comerzan** (the presentation will be distributed to participants). She mentioned that most of the actions in the plan were included in the "Prevention" compartment, actions were taken to inform, to mitigate the risks of TFU in the online environment, to mitigate risks by following the registration and insurance process of safe migration routes, but also distinct actions to prevent child trafficking. With the support of implementing partners, a number of informative materials were developed and distributed, including for refugees in the Ukrainian language. Useful information for refugees has been distributed on the websites of public authorities and partners. Many training activities were carried out for specialists and the Information Note will be published on the website www.antitrafic.gov.md. During the implementation of the plan, protection, criminal investigation, partnership and coordination actions were taken.

The following were mentioned as conclusions:

The plan was an instrument focused on the situation of refugees in Ukraine and the provision of joint support by public authorities, civil society organizations and international organizations.

- ✓ Most of the actions in the Plan have been carried out, some of them will also be carried out in 2024 within the Program for the prevention and combating of human trafficking for the years 2024 - 2028 and the Action Plan regarding its implementation.

- ✓ Informational materials intended for refugees from Ukraine were produced (approx. 70,000 informational leaflets and posters distributed with informational content on the risks of THB, ways to reduce risks and access to support and 12,000 informational materials for refugees from Ukraine regarding the first signs of THB).

- ✓ On 18.01.2023, Government Decision no. 21 on granting temporary protection to displaced persons from Ukraine (in force from 01.03.2023).

- ✓ During the implementation of the Plan, training was carried out for front line specialists.

- ✓ Through platforms and coordination mechanisms (the operative working group on THB, technical coordination meetings of the OSCE, the Coordinating Council of legal bodies with attributions in the field of combating THB under the Prosecutor General, etc.) the current priorities in the field were discussed combating THB with focus on refugees from Ukraine, recent challenges, initiatives in the field and needs for collaboration.

Most of the actions were carried out during the reporting period and some will be carried out

<p>Discussions/Debates from the participants and trafficking trends</p>	<p>within the National Anti-trafficking Program 2024-2028 and its Action Plan. He encouraged the authorities to come up with additional information for the finalization of this Report.</p> <p>Sergiu Rusu, GPO - mentioned that there is still another platform, within the IGPF, where transnational or cross-border risks and TFU are discussed, and at the beginning of December 2023 these topics were discussed in the context of illegal migration, criminal phenomena. The IGPF is an important actor in counteracting these phenomena, which at the moment are a priority. Another moment would be the need for a more agile connection of the Ministry of Justice in promoting proposals to amend the legislative framework (CP, CPP). Checking the additional changes, since today the economy salary would be over 700 euros, which would turn our country into a destination country.</p> <p>Tatiana Fomina, CI "La Strada" - drew attention to the current trends and risks, referring to the OSCE Conference (70 participating States) in Vienna, where the issues related to the exploitation of refugees from Ukraine, which will become over time, were discussed about a big risk (from empathy to exploitation). Another aspect is the operation of hot lines on THB, which are not financed by the State institutions, which represents a high risk of stopping these lines.</p> <p>Vitalie Pșenicinîi, CCTP – mentioned the development of standard operating procedures related to the investigation of THB. This project has been forwarded to the GIP for review and approval. The instructions are intended not only for CCTP collaborators, but also for all police employees, which will lead to the efficiency of actions to identify and counter the criminal phenomenon on the dimension of THB. On December 12, 2023, training in this field was carried out in Otaci.</p> <p>Sergiu Rusu, GPO - The war continues and a new mobilization has been announced, which will cause a new wave of refugees. So we cannot afford to relax, but we must be prepared for these challenges.</p>	
<p>4. The results of the information campaign carried out by IC "La Strada"</p>	<p>Elena Căpățînă, CI "La Strada" - presented the "Results of the information campaign carried out by La Strada" (the presentation will be distributed to the participants). The purpose of the Campaign was: To inform both the refugees and the host community about the risks of migration, the prevention of human trafficking and labor exploitation of citizens from risk groups, the resources available in our country that they can turn to for support, as well as the services they can benefit from. The specific objectives were:</p>	

<p>Discussions/Debates from the participants and trafficking trends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Informing foreign citizens, especially Ukrainians, temporarily on the territory of the Republic of Moldova as war refugees, about the risks of migration; ✓ Promotion of the Safe Migration and Anti-Trafficking Hotline 0800 77777 as a free, confidential service available 7 days a week, 8:00-20:00 as a first source of information to prevent human trafficking and labor exploitation, as well as intervention service in SOS cases; ✓ Promotion of the migratiesigura.md portal as an official, reference platform in the field of preventing human trafficking and labor exploitation of citizens from risk groups. <p>Summary results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 25,750 calls to the Safe Migration and Anti-Trafficking Hotline (January –November 2023), compared to 24,987 calls in the same period in 2022; ✓ 22,689 views of the www.migratiesigura.md platform (January – November 2023), compared to 19,139 views in the same period in 2022; ✓ 1,201,594 impressions on Viber of the electronic banner; ✓ 1,715,827 impressions of the video spot within the promotion on google ads; ✓ 1,251,880 listeners of the HIT FM and Radio Relax stations, during the reporting period; ✓ 2,804,801 listeners – the estimated audience of the national public station Radio Moldova, in the reference period; ✓ 450 thousand travellers use the trolleybus daily in the city of Chisinau; ✓ About 120 thousand passengers travel by bus in the capital every day. <p>Diana Donoaga – asked if exist an analysis of the increase in calls, including from Ukrainians, after the Campaign was available.</p> <p>Elena Căpățină – 2023/2022 -25750/24987, i.e. it is a small increase and the view on social media sites 22689/19139.</p> <p>Tatiana Fomina – Every year the number of calls to the hotlines decreases, but the number of calls through social networks increases. Regarding refugees, yes it has increased. A few cases of potential exploitation were even identified (salaries not paid or delays in salary payments)</p> <p>Diana Donoagă – asked if CCTP is seeing an increase as a result of the Campaigns and other prevention actions? How do we report results to the donors?</p> <p>Vitalie Pșenicinîi - there is a certain increase in addresses to the CCTP, notifications, but not specifically THB. There was a case, which was mentioned, child trafficking. Of the Ukrainian</p>	
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refugees who applied to the CCTP, they did not prove themselves as THB, but violations of labor law.

Tatiana Fomina - The information that is presented by the callers, through calls or other types of addresses, is very superficial and does not reflect a clear picture of the real situation. She mentioned that their hotline specialists have a good collaboration with CCTP and therefore CCTP informs the situation on a case-by-case basis.

Vasile Harea, General Inspectorate for Migration - completed what Mrs. Fomina said with reference to the cases of Ukrainians, the employers pay the salaries in full and later the people change their deposits and it is difficult to classify as THB. He mentioned that the legislative framework is being changed, as a result refugees will have the right to employment without having a residence permit, and they will be able to change jobs and do not have a permanent place. The situation is very dependent on the situation in Ukraine, which is a difficult process.

Vitalie Bînzari, State Labor Inspectorate - the person whose working conditions are violated already has the right to report, and non-payment of salary is allowed for up to 2 months. He explained the provisions of the legislation regarding the possibility of sanctions in relation to situations of litigation between the employer/employee. It is less often seen as labor exploitation, mostly sanctions are applied.

Ecaterina Berejan, IOM consultant – She presented the result of the Information Sessions in educational institutions and emphasized the fact that 95% of the audience answered that after completing their studies they will go to look for a job abroad. This category of citizens is a risk group and it is necessary to carry out information actions for a safe migration.

Christopher Lomas, Hope 4 - He mentioned that it would be good to leave migration aside and focus on the living conditions, the opportunities offered at home, which would radically change the situation of migration as well. He recently talked with Mr. Cuscă, State Secretary of the LSP, and they agreed that it would be a solution to attract investments at home, because the emigrants' qualifications are low, without work experience, our citizens agree to non-contractual work. Example: in Great Britain, Germany, etc. much lower wages are paid to migrants and not that it is exploitation, but the qualification and quality of the work is different. These problems must be addressed at a higher strategic level and ensure a decent living at home, especially since Moldova is in the process of joining the EU. It is possible to create good life conditions for about 2.5 million people in a small country. Integration is an

	<p>opportunity, but also a risk of population emigration.</p>	
<p>5. Update on the recent development and activities on countering Trafficking in Persons and joint activities for 2023</p>	<p>Valeriu Berlinschi - moved to the last topic of the Agenda and urged the participants to come up with brief information about results and opportunities for achievement in 2024.</p> <p>Sergiu Rusu - presented the results and the importance of trainings in Romania on the topics discussed, there was an exchange of information, challenges, the participating officials had the opportunity to get to know each other personally. He thanked IOM for this opportunity. He also mentioned the activities of harmonizing national legislation with the EU Directive. Do the colleagues from Romania have collaboration and can ensure the connection with SIPAG member countries? because we already have citizens from Asia, exploited in Moldova.</p> <p>Tatiana Pirvu, MAEIE – On December 15, she recently participated in the meeting of the meeting of the state’s parties to the GRETA, EC Committee of Experts and emphasized the following: the need to ensure state-guaranteed compensation for victims, favourable conditions for labor inspectors. With reference to the next state evaluation cycle, Moldova cycle 4, possibly GRETA experts will visit the country in the second half of 2024, but there will be additional information.</p> <p>Martina Bogdeva, UNHCR - reported information about the implementation of the projects at the national level. They carried out actions to create the Task Force group in Ukraine as well, for a better collaboration of specialists from Poland, Romania, Ukraine, and Moldova.</p> <p>Diana Donoaga – in the context of the creation of the NRMV, several set groups were created, which will work for the MMPS, developing several documents to ensure the legality of the MNRV and the specialist training modules. The first meeting of the NRMV Coordinating Council took place. When the training modules are ready, the training of the groups of specialists from the LPA (MDT; Territorial Commissions, and other groups) will begin</p> <p>Ecaterina Berejan – mentioned the need to strengthen the institutional coordination and monitoring mechanism also in the context of the RESTART reform. He also drew attention to the need to strengthen the coordination unit of the NRMV. He completed with some actions for the year 2024.</p> <p>Diana Donoaga - mentioned that, for the first time, the trainers of the information sessions and workshops were financed by the State Chancellery and she welcomed this initiative. Also,</p>	

the MLSP provided for the employment of the specialist within the NRMV, which will be a strong point in the creation and development of this mechanism.

Valeriu Berlinschi - mentioned that these resources were planned in the budget and in the past years, but as a result of the frequent reforms that took place within the department, due to the lack of staff and time (reduced capacities), it was not possible to capitalize on them and thanked IOM for providing support by hiring Ms. Berejan, who achieved this goal. He hopes for collaboration in the coming year as well.

Victoria Climova, IOM Mission – Trainings were carried out with specialists from CCTP, IC "La Strada", IOM, local NGOs, as was already mentioned in Otaci. He asked that these trainings be continued at the APL level. Things are good in Chisinau, but further it is necessary to support the specialists there. He also mentioned the financial aid that was offered to the refugees, because it is also a prompt and necessary aid. It will be necessary to provide this help in the next period as well.

Actions to ensure the activities of the Task Force with the support of international organizations and local NGOs will be supported.

Martina Bogdeva - congratulated Moldova for starting the accession process to the EU, she knows that it is an important but also challenging process. She remembers what it was like in Bulgaria. She thanked all the actors of the anti-trafficking community for their collaboration and invited the participants of the meeting to a joint picture.

Diana Donoagă - thanked Martina for her collaboration, dedication and involvement. Martina is leaving the UNHCR mission and wished her good luck.

Valeriu Berlinschi –also thanked everyone and especially Martina and the UNHCR team for their collaboration and support. He wished happy winter holidays.