



## Concept Note

# Vienna Conference on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings

## TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS – A PRIVATE MATTER?

17 October 2024

Vienna School of International Studies

Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings remains a global phenomenon that requires intensive collaboration between governmental and non-governmental entities. Interdisciplinary cooperation, awareness raising and proactive efforts on the national, regional and international level are essential in this context. One of the most meaningful preventive measures is the professional exchange of expertise among anti-trafficking practitioners. The need for action is urgent in light of current global conflicts, leading to an ever-increasing number of displaced persons, and the shift of global crime to virtual platforms. The annual Vienna Conference on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings, which brings together national and international experts, remains a proven communication platform and strategic tool in combatting human trafficking.

The event takes place in connection with the annual EU Anti-Trafficking Day. The EU has set new standards with the adoption of a revised Anti-Trafficking Directive, including new criminal offences related to forced marriage, surrogacy, and illegal adoption, as well as the knowing use of services provided by victims exploited through human trafficking, all of which intrude into the private sphere.

This year's conference, under the heading "**Trafficking in Human Beings – a private matter?**", focuses on the personal aspects that human trafficking regularly entails. Trafficking in human beings is not just a widespread crime, but also a deeply personal attack that profoundly encroaches on the lives and dignity of its victims. In many cases, a close relationship between the perpetrators and the victims precedes this attack. Often it is people close to the victims who exploit their trust and prey on dependencies, created by the perpetrators. Due to the advancement of information technology, the methods as well as the nature of human trafficking itself are changing and therefore must be addressed through new prevention strategies. In many aspects of human trafficking, from prevention, victim identification, their support in protection, residence and legal proceedings, to fair compensation, it is crucial to ensure that no one is left behind and to call upon society to demonstrate effective solidarity.

Because of their unique experience, former victims of human trafficking have an understanding of this multifaceted phenomenon and thus have the potential to contribute significantly to the development of new strategies in order to ultimately combat trafficking in human beings. Due to high victimisation among minorities, the inclusion of former victims can also ensure special consideration for particularly vulnerable groups. As survivors, they play an increasingly significant role in efforts to provide sustainable victim protection.

At this year's OSCE Alliance Conference against Trafficking in Persons, there was a noticeable consensus among speakers and participants to involve survivors in the development of preventive measures to generate methods from their experiences and thereby more effectively counteract trafficking in human beings. Survivors themselves had the opportunity to contribute to the debate, such as Malaika Oringo, who set new benchmarks with her NGO "Footprint for Freedom", and who will deliver the Keynote Speech at this year's Vienna Conference on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings.

The fight against human trafficking has been one of the main priorities of Austria's foreign policy since the establishment of the Task Force on Combatting Human Trafficking in 2004. The Task Force has organised the annual conference since 2007 in cooperation with various partners, including the Principality of Liechtenstein, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the OSCE.

The afternoon workshops, which form an integral part of the conference, will set thematic priorities and allow for a detailed examination of relevant topics.

### **Workshop 1**

**No way without a perspective.**

**Civil Society and Police together against trafficking in human beings.** (German and English)

*Organised by the Criminal Intelligence Service Austria*

*Experts: Gerald Tatzgern (Criminal Intelligence Service Austria), Robert Klug (Criminal Intelligence Service Austria), Horst Schiller (Criminal Intelligence Service Austria), Warner Ten Kate (Attorney General for Human Trafficking in the Netherlands), Illias Chatzis (UNODC), Representatives of a Moroccan Delegation, Survivors*

Human trafficking is a serious human rights violation that must not be tolerated. Even if human trafficking occurs in secrecy, in the shadows or within specific settings, it is not a matter for law enforcement authorities alone, but for society as a whole to take responsibility to watch and act.

The workshop aims to explore the responsibilities and limits of civil society in participating in the investigation of human trafficking cases. To what extent can or should an individual contribute to the support of victims to escape from their exploitative situations without becoming a potential victim of violence oneself? How does civil society rise to this challenge, and where does police intervention begin?

### **Workshop 2**

**Family as a safe place?**

**The role of parents between protection and exploitation.** (English)

*Organised by End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography & Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes ECPAT Austria and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Fundamental and Human Rights LBI*

*Experts: N.N. (Criminal Intelligence Service Austria), N.N. (ECPAT Philippines), Laurent Ziegler (Survivor)*

*Moderation: Astrid Winkler (ECPAT Austria) and Helmut Sax (LBI)*

Many forms of exploitation in human trafficking take place in secret. This applies in particular to sexual exploitation of children. The fact that it is a taboo of the „private sphere“ makes it more difficult to help the children concerned and benefits the exploiters and criminal networks. There are even more obstacles to child protection when the exploitation of children takes place in the context of family structures. The workshop will analyse the role of parents and guardians – as sentinels for the protection and well-being of children – as well as situations in which parents are actively involved in the exploitation of their own children. Furthermore, the general framework and state responsibilities for the effective prevention of child trafficking on the basis of the rights of the child will be examined.

### Workshop 3

#### **Male vulnerability and exploitation: “Private failure” or social responsibility? (German)**

*Organised by the International Organization for Migration IOM and the Victim Protection Organisation for Men MEN VIA*

*Experts: Manfred Buchner (MEN VIA), N.N. (Public Employment Service Vienna), N.N. (Neunerhaus), N.N. (Vienna Social Fund – Disability Support), Mariella Jordanova-Hudetz (AmberMed)*

*Moderation: Katie Klaffenböck (IOM Austria)*

The workshop will explore the multifaceted interplay between individual life situations and seemingly „private“ consequences of exploitative practices with the social responsibility that affects us all. Particular attention will be paid to the social integration of vulnerable groups and current challenges in victim protection. The workshop will focus on the areas of economic, health and social consequences of exploitation for trafficked persons and the support services for trafficked men.

### Workshop 4

#### **Behind closed doors.**

#### **Risks of multiple forms of exploitation in private homes. (English)**

*Organised by LEFÖ-Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women LEFÖ-IBF*

*Experts: Simona Ďurišová (IG24 – Verband zur Förderung der Interessen der 24-Stunden-Betreuer\_innen in Österreich)*

In Austria, about 15% of the victims supported by the Intervention Centre for Trafficked Women, LEFÖ-IBF, have been women exploited in domestic work. Without a concrete suspicion of human trafficking, law enforcement authorities do not have access to private households, which increases the risk of exploitation to occur covertly and with impunity.

A case study illustrates how domestic work creates dependencies that lead to exploitation: What methods do perpetrators use to build a personal relationship with the victim developing multiple dependencies and subsequent exploitation? The gradual process in this specific case highlights how one form of exploitation leads to multiple simultaneous forms including a reversal of the perpetrator-victim relation.

The workshop focuses on the vulnerabilities of individuals working in private households and explores the various dimensions of exploitation.