



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



REPORT

Regional Conference

“Ten years of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings: Results and Perspectives in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine)”

29 - 30 September, 2015, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

The Regional Conference „Ten years of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings: Results and Perspectives in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine)” was held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, on September 29-30, 2015. The event happened within the framework of the Programme against Human Trafficking in Eastern Europe, funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-funded by the U.S. Department of State under the project “Strengthening criminal justice response to trafficking in persons, guaranteeing legal assistance to victims and potential victims and preventing domestic violence and hate crimes in Moldova”.

The Conference brought together over 100 representatives of governments and NGOs from various states, including Romania, Serbia, Czech Republic and the United Kingdom, along with the representatives of the EU anti-trafficking coordinator and Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, among many other distinguished guests. Over two days of the event 3 working sessions were held, during which the participants covered the current issues regarding the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter the Convention), shared the best practices in tackling the four Ps¹, and analyzed the role of NGOs within the national referral mechanisms (NRMs). They shared their experiences and national best practices concerning the legal aid and the special protection measures that the legal systems of various states offer to identified victims of trafficking, as well as the judicial remedies, which can efficiently reinstate the victims into their rights. These topical issues have been addressed within one opening session, where the best regional

¹ Prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership related activities.

practices and policy trends were introduced. Additionally, three working sessions took place: national counter-trafficking coordination mechanisms, effective protection and access to justice for trafficked persons, and the changing role of NGOs in the counter-trafficking area.

Opening remarks

Within the opening remarks session, the high guests welcomed the participants and reiterated their commitment towards generating more efforts regarding the fight against trafficking in human beings (THB). **The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, Ms. Daniela CUJBA**, speaking on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration - Chair of the National Committee for Combatting THB, highlighted the importance of the common efforts in combating the THB phenomenon, whereas the Convention has marked the most successful period as concerns the fight against THB in the region. Moreover, Ms. Cujba reiterated the commitments of the Moldovan Government regarding the subject, as well as stated that fighting THB remains a top priority in the Government's agenda. **The Minister of Labour, Social Protection and Family – Deputy Chair of the National Committee for Combatting THB, Mr. Mircea BUGA**, expressed his worry regarding the ever-existing phenomenon of THB as a modern form of slavery. He reassured the participants of the Government's commitment to strengthen its anti-trafficking response. In addition, Mr. Buga spoke about the importance of partnerships between state agencies, civil society and international organizations when it comes to fight THB. He referred to the beneficial impact of the National Referral Mechanism to ensure the proper identification, referral, assistance and protection of trafficked persons, created in the Republic of Moldova nine years ago, whereas the commitments of the Ministry he represented as concerns uprooting THB. **The Chief of the IOM Mission to the Republic of Moldova, Mr. Antonio POLOSA**, reiterated the importance of the commitments undertaken by the States under the Convention. Moreover, he highlighted the human rights dimension of Convention, the latter being designed to fight the human rights violations in their "ugliest and most primitive forms". Mr. Polosa underlined the pivotal role of NGOs and international organizations, as well as of the commitment of the IOM Mission to Moldova towards consolidating the Government's capacities regarding the development of a sustainable partnership framework, as well as supporting the prevention and protection practices. **The representative of the Royal Norwegian Embassy to the Republic of Moldova and Romania, Mr. Herman BASKÅR**, highlighted the importance of the fight against the THB crime, referring to it as a global threat and the world's second largest illegal economy. Mr. Baskår restated the commitment of Norway towards the financial and institutional support to the police and judicial system, as well as to strengthen the rule of law principle in the Republic of Moldova so that the criminal groups cannot buy protection or exemption from prosecution. **The Ambassador of the USA to the Republic of Moldova, Mr. James D. PETTIT** highlighted the top priority of combatting THB and emphasized the commitment of the Government of the United States to support the Republic of Moldova and other Eastern-European states in their efforts to fight THB. His Excellency emphasized the importance of an efficient prosecution of the THB crime. Finally, he expressed his sincere hope that the ideas generated during the Conference would have practical consequences for the region.

OPENING SESSION

During the first session current approaches with regards to the prevention and combatting phenomenon of THB, the challenges faced by the policy-makers on the regional level, as well as the role of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and the Office of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator were discussed. Moreover, the regional trends in evolution of THB phenomenon were discussed from the perspective of the IOM Regional Office in Vienna. The presentations were delivered from the standpoint of their relevance for the Eastern European Region.

An overview of *the GRETA experience* concerning the implementation of the Convention by the states - Parties was provided by Ms. Gulnara SHAHINIAN. The GRETA representative highlighted the human rights aspect of the Convention, which contrasted at the time with the common criminal law approach in tackling THB. The cooperation between diverse state and non-state bodies underpins the whole system of protection provided under the Convention. GRETA, as a supervisory body was created to observe the fulfilment of obligation by the Parties under the Convention. The importance of the National Referral Mechanisms cannot be underestimated, and the system to assist and protect the rights of trafficked persons set up in Moldova has been referred by GRETA as a good practice in the region. However, GRETA experts consider that in general the most neglected aspects of the Convention are the root norms underlining its human rights influenced spirit. Notwithstanding the decade of efforts brought under the auspices of the Convention, the complexity of THB phenomenon and its multifaceted nature still proves that many more challenges are to be subdued, among them being: access to justice and restoration of dignity; the irrelevance of the victim's consent; the identification of THB victims; the efficiency of the multidisciplinary bodies performing the identification; the identification of children and other vulnerable groups tends to an acute issue; the non-punishment of the victims; impunity or disproportionately low punishments; the efficiency of the protection against potential retaliation or intimidation; the confiscation of criminal assets and the compensation of the victims. Another aspect which deserves special attention is the analysis of data, whereas only eight countries have comprehensive data collection mechanisms in place.

In a similar fashion, *the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator* representative – Ms. Zoi SAKELLIADOU pointed out the EU anti-trafficking legislation and policies as a top priority for EU external policy, with a special role within the Eastern Partnership. THB is seen as a transnational danger, since over 30.000 victims were identified in the EU within the period 2010-2012. Human trafficking is tackled rather as a human rights violation, which also underlines the shift from a regular criminal law approach. All persons found under EU's jurisdiction benefit from anti-trafficking protection first and foremost under the EU Charter, thus the victims and the potential victims are rather seen as rights holders; whereas the *EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims* provides for the unconditional support for victims. The protection afforded within the legal and policy frameworks should be gender specific, child sensitive and have a multi-disciplinary approach. The *EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings* focuses on five priorities, which the EU Member States should focus on in order to address the issue of THB: identifying, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking; stepping up the prevention of THB; increased prosecution of traffickers; enhanced coordination and cooperation among key actors and policy coherence; and finally- increased knowledge and effective response to

emerging concerns. THB has to be tackled in a multi-disciplinary manner, whereas the root causes, namely the demand for different forms of exploitation have to be eradicated. The EU tends to have a special partnership framework, which ensures the financing and functioning of more than 100 NGOs, including from non-member states.

The ***IOM Regional Representative*** – Ms. Denise LASSAR highlighted the current regional trends in human trafficking, among them: the demand for cheap labour and goods, and the general increase in trafficking for purposes other than sexual exploitation; and a steady increase in children and male trafficking. The modus operandi of the traffickers increasingly includes more subtle means of control, while the internal (domestic) trafficking has a growing share. Moldova and Romania were identified among the main countries of origin, whereas Russia continues to be the main country of destination. Among the main challenges for the actors involved in the fight against THB are: limited data research, mixed flows of migrants, under-identification of victims, fear of collaboration with the authorities, cultural barriers, limited access to legal assistance; inadequacy of national partnership frameworks; and lack of capacity of criminal justice institutions. Within its 36 projects the IOM Regional Office in Vienna manages, activities include data analysis; designing and implementing information, education and communication strategies; encouraging customers to buy responsibly; supporting the public and private employers in maintaining standards in the workplace that promote the dignity of migrant workers; increasing the capacity of the criminal justice system to respond appropriately to the new THB challenges; as well as offering direct assistance to the victims and potential THB victims. The IOM representative recommended to stakeholders to manifest a more proactive approach towards the male victims of trafficking, who are often seen as mere irregular migrants; whereas the involvement of a wider range of practitioners is necessary (such as social service and medical practitioners). Special services for the vulnerable groups must be created, whereas the demand for cheap labour should be targeted in the first place.

SESSION 1

The first session of the conference tackled the coordination for the joint activity as one of the main pre-conditions for an efficient fight against THB. The existing models and methods of coordination were analysed as well as their shortcomings.

The key-presentation of session one, delivered by Ms. Tatiana FOMINA, was focused on the main international documents and theoretical aspects regarding the necessity for cooperation in fighting THB, as well as the theoretical aspects of coordination of anti-trafficking efforts of state and non-state stakeholders. The current issues of the national coordination mechanisms were highlighted, such as the lack of conceptualization, along with the unclear regulation of competence of the national coordinators. The presenter tackled the modern theory of coordination and its practical application in anti-trafficking area, as well as the necessity of development of coordination mechanisms' components (such as determination of common goals, capacity building, standardization of activities etc.). Further, ***the Ukrainian experience*** has been represented by Ms. Elena FARYMETS, speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine. The main aspects of the international and Ukrainian counter trafficking legislation have been addressed. Furthermore, the Ukrainian model of coordination was presented, along with the relevant normative framework. The coordination mechanism is created within the Ministry of Social Policy, whereas each local administration has a social care official responsible for submitting the

application for THB victim status to the Ministry of Social Policy. Local multidisciplinary CT councils, which coordinate CT policy and activities on a local level, are in place in all the Ukraine's regions. The mechanism created within the Ministry of Social Policy exercises the coordination both on vertical (monitors the performance of the directly subordinated bodies) and horizontal levels (maintains constant communication with the relevant central and local authorities). The Ukrainian representative has also highlighted the risks and challenges related to the current armed conflict. ***The Moldovan experience***, delivered by Ms. Ecaterina BEREJAN, was revealed by presenting the historical development of the national coordination mechanism, starting with the first strategic initiatives in 2001. Additionally, a general overview of the national institutional, legal and regulatory framework of the national coordination mechanism was provided. At present, the Republic of Moldova has an extended coordination mechanism, which includes different types of coordination bodies created on different levels of public administration, as well as standards procedures/regulations of joint activities of state and non-state actors, approved by Government. The efficient function of the national coordination mechanism is supported by data collection and reporting activities performed by the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combatting THB involving different anti-trafficking actors, such as the General Prosecutor's Office, the Centre for Combatting THB of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and other state structures, as well as IOM and NGOs, active in anti-trafficking field. The national anti-trafficking policy/national plan to prevent and combat THB is elaborated on periodical basis for 2-3 years by democratic means, taking into consideration proposals of all state and non-state stakeholders. ***The Belarusian experience***, as presented by Mr. Andrei TARANDA, is marked by an increasing progress in the creation of national mechanism deemed to prevent THB and provide help for the victims of THB. Belarus has become the first non-member state of the Council of Europe to ratify the Convention, along with other fundamental international documents, thus committing to prudently fight the THB phenomenon. Until now there were four state programmes that involved the fight against THB, where a shift from the criminal law perspective to the protection of victims is fairly noticeable. In 2015 at the initiative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Regulation on identification of victims of THB was drafted and approved by the Government. This document includes several questionnaires designed to benefit the victims, by means of advanced and uniform identification procedures. In 2012 a set of normative acts was officially approved that regulate the provision of legal, social and medical aid, inter alia for the victims of THB. In 2011, the multidisciplinary groups were established on local level, whereas the national coordination is efficiently performed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. ***The Serbian experience***, presented by Mr. Mitar ĐURAŠKOVIĆ, was explored in the light of the specific institutional structure of the Serbian national referral mechanism, which is planned to be reformed in the near future, given the existence of a new national strategy for prevention and suppression of human trafficking for the period 2015-2022. Currently the National Coordinator is the Head of subdivision of the Border Police Directorate within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The new strategy proposes to create the national coordinator's office as separate entity that will cooperate with NGOs and anti-trafficking multidisciplinary teams. After 2020 the office might be shifted under the Serbian Ministry of Labour.

SESSION 2

Within the second session of the Conference, the participants discussed the current developments as concerns the efficient state response to the crime of THB, in particular the prevention, identification,

protection, and various kinds of assistance provided for the victims and potential victims of THB along the common international and regional standards.

The **key speaker**, Ms. Maryna LEGENKA addressed the access to justice as one of the basic issues for the victims of THB. The Ukrainian legal provisions related to the legal redress for THB victims are contained in the general criminal, civil and procedural provisions, as well as the provisions regarding the delivery of free-of-charge legal aid. The issues related to the legal redress are: the unwillingness of the victims to obtain redress from the law enforcement and judicial bodies due to high corruption and the low level of trust towards them. Furthermore, the compensation of the moral damages tends to be low, whereas the judicial decisions are not executed in 70% of cases. During the process the basic privacy and security provisions have to be enforced, so that the victims are not afraid to speak and cannot be influenced by the perpetrators. The consequences of the conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine upon THB have been raised as an acute issue again. The **Moldovan experience**, presented by Mr. Eduard BULAT and Ms. Tatiana CATANA, highlighted the necessity to change the perception of the officials towards the victims of THB, namely to curtail the practices of secondary victimization, given the general lack of confidence in law enforcement bodies. Although the national legislation expressly provides for measures designed to guarantee the private life, security and impunity of the THB victims, many issues are still in place, such as the non-observance of the right to a speedy trial and the poor communication with victims because the provision of social services ceases before the end of the trial. In addition, THB victims face a variety of personal issues (e.g. within their families and communities), which impede their efficient participation in the criminal process. The quality of the state guaranteed legal aid still has room for improvement, whereas the general policy regarding the compensatory claims has to be reformed. **The Belarussian experience**, delivered by Mr. Vitalij LAEVSKIJ is marked by the evolving national legal framework related to the protection of victims of THB. The fight against the phenomenon of THB in Belarus began in the beginning of 2000s, thus acknowledging the social and economic dangers posed by the crime. The Republic of Belarus has ratified the majority of the international treaties related to the fight against THB; however, its national legislation remains slightly inclined towards the criminal law model, thus the specific protection afforded to the victims of THB still undergoing important amendments. The current Law on some aspects of the fight against THB provides that both males and females may become victims of THB, whereas the internal trafficking is regulated as well. The Belarussian legislation also makes a slight shift from the common perception of victims of THB by respecting the will of those deceived, but who have not suffered serious injuries consequently to their exploitation. The compensation remains available under the general rules of civil law. According to Mr. Taras BONDARINA, **the Ministry of Interior of Ukraine** underwent serious structural changes until 2013, when a department specialized in combatting THB emerged, which ensures the observance of the criminal justice policy inasmuch it concerns the offense of THB. The efficiency of the department has been marked by an increasing number of investigated related to THB. The protection of THB victims is ensured by means of victims-witness protection and prioritizing victims safety during interviewing procedures within the criminal process. Furthermore, given the support of international donors, new technologies designed to improve the privacy and security of the victims are implemented within the criminal proceedings. On the other hand, the procedural law allows the victims to obtain compensation within the criminal proceedings without requiring them to have the legal state of victim. **The Romanian experience**, as presented by Mr. Dan CRISTEA is marked by the direct influence of

acquis communautaire and EU anti-trafficking policies. Victims tend to be rather unaware of the expressly provided situations of impunity, thus they tend to be afraid of addressing the THB crime to law enforcement bodies because of the assumed risk to be prosecuted for potential corruption-related or other offences committed while the crime of THB was performed. However, the Romanian national legislation expressly provides for the special physical, psychological, identity-related, legal and social protection for the THB victims, whereas minors and women benefit of special protection. Moreover, state financed legal aid is expressly provided, which is rather a novelty as compared to the previous systems. The free legal aid is provided for direct and indirect victims of THB.

SESSION 3

The Director of the Human Trafficking Foundation in the UK, Ms. Tatiana JARDAN, in her key-presentation has provided a general overview of the role of NGOs and the relevant state of affairs in the United Kingdom. The NGOs have traditionally stepped in where the governments failed to act, thus bringing change for less fortunate groups of individuals (thus leading to the development of referral mechanisms multi-agency partnerships), raise awareness, provide assistance to victims and lobby for change. They provide assistance to THB victims in both the countries of origin and destination. The cooperation framework is expressly provided under several international and regional instruments, among them being the Convention, the Palermo Protocol, as well as the discussed EU legal and policy framework documents. NGOs tend to have a special approach towards victims, namely - they ensure equality and nondiscrimination, confidentiality and safety, transparency and accountability, non-stigmatization and victim centered approach. *In Belarus*, according to Ms. Katsiaryna LIALEKA, lawyer within La Strada Ukraine, the history of NGO activity began in 2001, at the time there being a lack of cooperation mechanisms with the state and a feeling of lack of trust from the part of service users. However, it was highlighted that most of the THB victims have received assistance from NGOs, whereas in 2011, at the initiative of the Belarussian Red Cross the first multidisciplinary teams have been set up, since then several cooperation memoranda having been signed. In Belarus the role of cooperation mechanisms is, among others, to support information campaigns, to support joint research activity, to support the NGOs' work with the victims and potential THB victims. The NGOs in Belarus are still undergoing important changes, whereas the intra-sectorial collaboration has become more intense, the steady communication and exchange of experiences in place, and, most importantly, the quality standards of the services provided are continuously increasing. Finally, the NGOs see the state as an important actor in cooperation mechanisms. *The International Center "La Strada", Moldova (NGO)*, represented by Ms. Daniela MISAIL-NICHITIN, sees the NGOs as the main promoters of change, where they, in addition to the functions previously stated, participate in developing the national policy documents (such as the national action plans and strategies regarding the THB phenomenon). On the other hand, NGOs provide direct quality services to trafficked persons and risk groups and facilitate their recovery. Furthermore, they have an important role in the collection and processing of data, consequently drafting analytical report in the field of THB. Their role of a watchdog is empowered by the fact that La Strada performs independent evaluations as concerns the implementation of the policy documents and contribute to the international monitoring mechanisms. Positive changes have been achieved: The Permanent Secretariat (PS) has an active role in coordination of all activities on national level ensuring a transparent process, NGOs and service providers (public institutions) are strategic partners for the Government in anti-trafficking policy

implementations, authorities have undertaken many anti-trafficking activities initially implemented only by civil society organizations. However, new challenges have emerged. For instance, the existing assistance programs are rigid towards the new target groups, the NGOs financed directly from the state budget is problematic, whereas there is a general lack of an efficient mechanism for financing NGOs. Ms. Ecaterina BEREJAN, speaking on behalf of *the representative of the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings*, after providing an overview of the general cooperation schemes in Moldova, underlined the involvement of NGOs in anti-trafficking activities, thus 74 out of total 120 activities envisaged in the national action plan for 2014-2016 have to be implemented in cooperation with NGOs and international organizations. In addition, the Memorandum of Cooperation undergoes the review proceedings, it having been foreseen that the role of NGOs will be extended. *The representative of “La Strada” Ukraine*, Ms. Lyudmila KOVALCHUK, considered that the role of NGOs embodies lobbying, participation in the development of national strategies, facilitating the creation of national institutions (NGOs possess institutional memory) designed to fight THB, the joint realization of the existing national action plans, along with the monitoring of state institutions and training specialist in the field of THB. The current role of NGOs in Ukraine is underpinned by the increasing role of state agencies, the former ousting towards the mere provision of services, whereas there is a general decrease of interest towards them. Hence, the development of new cooperation and partnership models is necessary. Among other issues were mentioned the dominance of foreign experts who are not sufficiently sensitive towards the Ukrainian realm, whereas the programs are either not tailored to the Ukraine’s needs, or they tend to require only short-term results, which is not always realistic. *The Czech NGO experience*, delivered by Ms. Markéta HRONKOVÁ is marked by a unique combination of services, advocacy and awareness, as the representative of the Czech NGO “La Strada” sees it. Although the state still has not signed the Convention, there is a high degree of partnership between state bodies and NGOs in place. NGO “La Strada” takes part in all the discussions regarding the adoption of bills, strategies and institutions. However, there are still many issues in place, as identified under the Participatory analysis of multidisciplinary cooperation in THB. The national legal system provides for the ways of fulfilment of rights of THB victims, however, the whole system tends to be complicated for them. In some cases, the rights of the victims are repetitively fulfilled by more than one institution, in other cases there are no ways of fulfilment, whereas without legal aid it seems practically impossible for the victims to assess their rights and the ways of claiming them. Notwithstanding some degree of regular cooperation between some state and non-state actors, there is a general lack of information stream, the NGOs are still not well known, whereas awareness raising and increasing the competence and accessibility of state provided legal aid is much recommended.

CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The closing of the **First Session** was underpinned by the requirement of the Convention to set up efficient coordination mechanisms, as one the most important prerequisites for a quality fight against THB both on national and transnational levels. In all the discussed jurisdictions, interdepartmental coordination bodies were created, designed to facilitate the partnership and cooperation between state, NGOs and International Organizations, active in the anti-trafficking field. Along with their establishment, the main trend is drafting specialized policies (national action plans, strategies, programs) and specialized procedures/regulations, which set the common goals and priorities in the field of combatting THB, as well

as common standard operating procedures, taking into consideration the role of non-state anti-trafficking stakeholders. In each jurisdiction, decentralization processes were detected, which resulted in shifting the functions of the National Coordinator from the government to specialized ministries. The increasing number of signed Memoranda of Cooperation between state and non-state stakeholders had been perceived as a positive tendency. However, several shortcomings of the existing systems of coordination have been identified. Firstly, the communication streams between the various stakeholders have to be improved and new electronic communication means are recommended to be established, along with the improvement of cross-border information sharing and communication. Secondly, all the actors in the THB field should be stimulated by means of policies so that all of them can fight THB on a competitive basis. In addition, the potential of the latter has to be increased, especially on the local levels, due consideration having to be given to the multidisciplinary approach, i.e. the creation of specialized groups and the facilitation of capacity building within them. Furthermore, the development of common budgets has to be done in accordance with the priorities set beforehand, so that the already limited resources available are spent in the most efficient way. The problematic regions that mostly lack control from the side of authorities of the jurisdictions discussed should generate new solutions to be adopted with respect to anti-trafficking activities, whereas the underidentification of victims has to be curtailed to the greatest extent possible. Further, the discrepancies in the currently available statistical data on the victims of human trafficking show a necessity to establish an aggregate approach in the collection and analysis of statistics/data. On a more general note – the general financing framework between the donors and other stakeholders does possess a degree of complexity that might bar certain stakeholders from applying for grants, which in its turn might result in less services being provided for those in need.

The **Second Session** highlighted the progresses and shortcomings surrounding the existing legislative frameworks regarding the rights and interests of the THB victim and how these are implemented. Although the international treaties and the basic laws of most of the discussed jurisdiction indeed do formally provide a set of rights designed generally and specifically to protect the THB victims, there are still many shortfalls when it comes to their practical implementation. Thus, there is a general problem of lack of access to justice, which is mainly due to the low level of trust in law enforcement bodies, hence a reform in this respect is recommended in all the discussed jurisdictions. The victims of THB are often unaware of their rights, whereas the complexity of the proceedings and their length discourages them from active and steady participation. The compensation for moral damages is problematic in most of the discussed states, thus the low amount of afforded damages, the hardship of burden of proof and the seldom enforceability of the decisions should lead to reforms in those respects. In addition, the active participative approach within criminal proceedings is recommended to be established where it is still not in place, as opposed to a merely passive role of victims. Specific regulations are recommended for the most vulnerable groups of victims, such as minors, a special approach being necessary in their case. The socio-economic rights of the THB victims have to be enforced along the whole legal process. For instance, the establishment of state guaranteed compensatory mechanisms is perceived as a good practice. The victim safety and confidentiality have to be ensured not only on institutional level, but also as concerns the victims' perception of the proceedings, for which the steadfast assistance of social services is necessary. On a more general note, states have to contribute to the biggest extent possible to the decrease of demand for various goods and services produces under exploitation.

The **Third Session** of the Conference unveiled the fundamental role of non-governmental organizations in the mechanism of fight against THB. All the representatives of the NGOs active in discussed jurisdictions acknowledged the importance of cooperation between the state agencies and NGOs, international organizations and other relevant structures, thus developing joint strategies deemed to combat THB. The participants provided an overview of the basic functions of the NGOs in modern societies generally, among them being: the role of watchdog, i.e. of the citizens' protection against state abuses; of a filter against the raw state policies before they reach the lives of the people; of an informal institution meant to advocate for the rights of individuals, initialize capacity building and awareness raising about the issues of social importance etc. And indeed, NGOs do cover a wide area of activities, which should normally be exercised by the state. All the covered jurisdictions display different models of multispectral cooperation and financing, however, the efficiency of the financing mechanisms remains the main challenge for the former. In the recent years, many cooperation agreements have been signed between NGOs and state agencies, which have improved the quality of the services provided from both sides. At the same time the furthering of cooperation is necessary in order to abolish the duplication of activities, thus ensuring the improvement of quality of specific services. At the same time, a clear, transparent a flexible mechanism of the NGOs' financing is necessary to be established in all the discussed jurisdictions. Given the new developments of the THB phenomenon in the region, the changing roles of NGOs and relevant state bodies have to be coordinated. On the other hand, strengthening of the good governance principle is necessary in the implementation of anti-trafficking policies on local levels by means of deepened partnership. Finally, the financial autonomy of NGOs has to be ensured while deepening the cooperation with state bodies.

The fruitful dialogue between the representatives of the civil society, governmental agencies and international organizations tackled the current issues with regards to the interaction between various actors involved in prevention, protection and prosecution activities intended to benefit the victims and potential victims of THB. The governments tended to be genuinely concerned about their current position within the partnership framework with other actors, as well as about their own efforts in tackling the root causes of the destructive phenomenon. The civil society highlighted the practical issues as concerns the protection of the trafficked persons, yet they were understanding of some of the current difficulties the governments are struggling with. Given the complex and multispectral nature of the phenomenon of THB, the conference has proven to be a great forum for discussing the current trends from the legal and policy perspectives.