

UNODC XCE/S50 Project: "Enhancing operational capacity to investigate and disrupt Human Trafficking activities in the Western Balkans"

Meeting / Workshop

Tirana, Albania
23-25 February 2009

Meeting Report

1. Purpose

As part of the German funded extension of the UNODC Project: "Enhancing Operational Capacity to Investigate and Disrupt Human Trafficking Activities in the Western Balkans", a Regional Workshop involving Judges, Prosecutors and Law Enforcement Officers from the Project Beneficiary Countries was held in Tirana, Albania from 23-25 February 2009. This followed on from previous regional meetings in Belgrade, Serbia on 15 November 2007 and Ohrid, FYR of Macedonia on 6 and 7 May 2008 (both involving Law Enforcement only) and in Stubičke Toplice, Croatia on 17 and 18 November 2008 (involving Law Enforcement and Prosecutors).

The principle aim of the meeting was to discuss the recommendations made at the previous meeting in Croatia and the draft Phase II of the Project with a view to finalising the Phase II Project Idea and subsequently seeking the formal backing of the proposed Project Beneficiary Countries. As part of the workshop, presentations were delivered by various International and Regional organisations working in the Western Balkans in the area of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SOM), followed by round table discussions, in order to ensure that the proposals for Phase II did not duplicate or conflict with activities already taking place in the region. There were also presentations for the Albanian Joint Investigative Unit (JIU) in the area of Financial Crime and Corruption and from the UNODC about International Cooperation and Mutual Legal Assistance.

2. Background

The opening remarks were made by:

- Ms. Iva Zajmi, Deputy Minister of Interior/Anti-Human Trafficking National Coordinator, Government of Albania;
- Ms. Sheila Bramley, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the United Kingdom in Albania;
- Mr. Rainer Harms, Liaison Officer, representing the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Albania;
- Ms. Carla Ciavarella, UNODC Regional Programme Coordinator for South East Europe

The Project Beneficiary Countries were each represented by a Judge, a representative of the Prosecutors' office and the project Operational Focal Point (OFP), in each case a Law Enforcement officer, who had been involved from the outset in the project implementation. The exceptions to this were UNMIK/Kosovo and Croatia and Albania who were represented only by their OFPs and Prosecutors. All representatives were specialists in, or dealt regularly with THB and SOM investigations and prosecutions.

There follows a list of the presentations delivered:

Experiences from investigations of human trafficking and new challenges, both nationally and internationally, From a Norwegian perspective: Mr. Geir Svae, Detective Superintendent, National Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS), Norway

SEE Regional Cooperation Framework in Fighting Organized Crime especially Human Trafficking: Mr. Virgil Ivan-Cucu, Senior Expert on Justice and Home Affairs, Head of Justice and Home Affairs Unit, Regional Cooperation Council

Addressing new challenges of trafficking in human beings: Mr. Virgil Silviu Pitran, Ministry of Interior of Romania in its position of presidency of the BSEC Working Group of Combating Crime

UNODC work in the area of Anti-Human trafficking and smuggling of migrant: Ms. Tejal Jesrani, Associate Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, UNODC HQ, Vienna

Strengthening international and regional cooperation – the mutual legal assistance and extradition request writer tools: Ms. Tejal Jesrani, UNODC HQ, Vienna

The Palic process experience: Inter-state Co-operation in War Crimes Proceedings: Mr. Ivan Jovanovic, OSCE Mission to Serbia

The role of MARRI (Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative) and partnership in regional programmes for combating human trafficking: Mr. Saša Kragulj, State Official – Bosnia and Herzegovina, MARRI Regional Centre

The Police Assistance Mission of the European Community to Albania (PAMECA), the International Law Enforcement Coordination Units (ILECU) and multidisciplinary work in the UK: Mr. Richard Bone, PAMECA, Mr. Mark Bradley, PAMECA

An Overview on the work of PROSECO (Prosecutors' Network in South-Eastern Europe) : Mr. Arben Kraja, Prosecutor at General Prosecution Office, Albania

The role of SECI (SouthEast European Cooperative Initiative, Regional Centre for Combating Trans-Border Crime) in fighting human trafficking: Mr. Corneliu Alexandru Dragne, criminal analyst, SECI Center

The South East Europe Police Chiefs Association (SEPCA): Mr. Stanislav Bezobsky

The Albanian Joint Investigative Unit (JIU) in the area of financial crime and corruption: Altin Dumani, Prosecutor and Head of the Unit.

3. Outcomes

One of the main recommendations for the previous meeting in Croatia had related to the setting up of Multi-Disciplinary Units to investigate and prosecute cases of THB and SOM. After further discussion around this topic – it emerged that each country already established such units on an ad hoc, case by case basis, and did not see a need for their permanent establishment. However, support for the operation of such units, and regional co-operation between them, was considered important and worthy of UNODC support. A full list of the recommendations for future UNODC activities provisionally agreed by the participants (subject to circulation by email for detailed consideration and consultation with superiors) is attached in a separate document.

4. Follow-up Actions

- The Recommendations agreed verbally in Tirana to be circulated to all Participants, via the OFPs, for detailed study and discussion, as necessary, with senior officers. **Action:** UNODC (*Recommendations attached in a separate document, circulated to all participants*)
- Following consideration by Participants (and senior officers as necessary) – Recommendations to be agreed or amendments suggested. Any proposed amendments to be circulated, via OFPS, until a final version is agreed by all Participants. **Action:** UNODC, OFPs, Participants.
- Once the Recommendations have been finalised, following the above consultation process, relevant changes to be made to the S50 phase II Project Proposal, which will in turn be shared among national institutions for feedback and inputs. **Action:** UNODC