



TRACE

TRafficking as A Criminal Enterprise



Project acronym: TRACE
Project title: Trafficking as A Criminal Enterprise
Grant number: 607669
Programme: Seventh Framework Programme – Security Research
Objective: SEC-2013.6.1-3
Contract type: Coordination and support action
Start date of project: 01 May 2014
Duration: 24 months
Website: www.trace-project.eu

Deliverable D7.4: **The proceedings of the project's final conference**

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Dissemination level: Public
Deliverable type: Final
Version: 1
Submission date: 04 May 2016

Change Records

Issue	Date	Description	Author (Company)
0.1	1.5.2016	Draft Report Completed	Julia Muraszkiewicz (VUB)
0.2	04.05.2016	Internal Review	Anna Donovan (TRI)
0.3	04.05.2016	Final Revision and Submission	Julia Muraszkiewicz (VUB)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The TRACE project held the final conference on 28 April 2016. The final conference: “understanding the business of human trafficking” took place in Brussels, Belgium at the Federal Public Service of Justice. Various stakeholders including law enforcement officials, policy makers, practitioners, and civil society representatives were invited to discuss the business of human trafficking. The aim of the final conference was to present major findings from the TRACE project, as well as further information relating to its briefing papers and its handbook. The handbook (Figure 1) was presented and distributed amongst all participants.

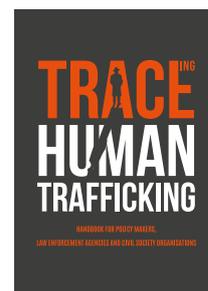


Figure 1

2 THE CONFERENCE

It was decided at the outset that the format of the conference would focus on the business of human trafficking – namely the environment of the trafficking business, the traffickers, the impact that technology has on the business, and new challenges that those fighting human trafficking face. The aim was to foster rich interaction and topical discussion regarding the work of the TRACE project. Several European human trafficking experts from different countries and organisations were approached and invited to present their experiences and recommendations in four panel sessions of the conference. All presentations are available on the TRACE project slide share account (http://www.slideshare.net/trace_eu).

The workshop was advertised on the TRACE website, on social media (Twitter, LinkedIn), in the TRACE newsletter, by word of mouth as well within the networks of the consortium partners. Altogether 53 persons were present. The following organisations attended the workshop:

Organisation	Country
The Université libre de Bruxelles	Belgium
Ulster University	N. Ireland
Swedish Platform Civil Society Against Human Trafficking	Sweden
Greater Manchester Police – Modern Slavery Corodination Unit (x2)	United Kingdom
Victim Support Finland	Finland
Pro-tukipiste ty	Finland
NGO HopeNow	Denmark
Centre for Cybercrime & Security Innovation, Leeds Beckett University	United Kingdom
Stop the Traffik	United Kingdom
The Medaille Trust	United Kingdom
Delta Consulting and Training	South Sudan
UNODC	Austria
Latvian Police	Latvia
West Yorkshire Police (x2)	United Kingdom
EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)	Austria
Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe	Belgium
Vrije University Brussel (x3)	Belgium
FairWork	The Netherlands
Warsaw University, Human Trafficking Research Centre	Poland
European Commission - REA	Belgium
ANITP (x2)	Romania
MetaStory Productions	The Netherlands
Trilateral Research Ltd. (x2)	United Kingdom
Ministry of the Interior	Finland
IOM	Belgium
NATO Parliamentary Assembly	Belgium
Leiden University	United Kingdom

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University of Bologna	Italy
AIRE Centre	United Kingdom
Tilburg University (x3)	The Netherlands
CBSS (X2)	Sweden
Catlica Global School of Law	Portugal
ECPAT X2	Belgium
Animus Association Foundation	Bulgaria
TR:UST Lancaster (x2)	United Kingdom
Europe External Policy Advisors (x2)	Belgium
Foundation Against Trafficking Sweden	Sweden
Nationaal Rapporteur Mensenhandel en Seksueel Geweld Tegen Kinderen	The Netherlands
La Strada International	The Netherlands

Table 1: List of participants (including TRACE consortium members)

The participants received: (i) a Conference briefing paper, (ii) a TRACE USB with copies of all the deliverables produced and (iii) a copy of the TRACE Handbook.

3 OPENING PRESENTATIONS

The conference was opened by Mr. Jean-François Minet from the Federal Public Service of Justice. Mr Minet spoke about the situation of trafficking in Belgium, the importance of looking at who the traffickers are and their relationship with trafficked persons. He also highlighted that the impact of the migration crisis in Belgium is as yet unknown but it is clear that the situation makes migrants more vulnerable to exploitation.

Ms Anna Donovan (TRI) introduced the TRACE project to the workshop participants and launched the project handbook. Ms Donovan explained that the handbook targets three key stakeholders: policy makers, law enforcement agencies, and civil society organisations who work to disrupt, combat and prevent human trafficking. She highlighted that the publication examines various aspects of the criminal enterprise in order to provide the stakeholders with up to date information, on what and how social, political and economic factors facilitate the human trafficking enterprise; how to identify and assist trafficked persons and prevent other persons from being trafficked; and ultimately provides recommendations for ways in which different aspects of the criminal enterprise can be addressed to effectively combat and prevent incidents of human trafficking.

Professor Jan Van from Dijk (Member of GRETA & Tilburg University) delivered an insightful Keynote speech. His presentation focused on three issues: (i) the continuing struggle with the definition on human trafficking; (ii) new methods of measuring human trafficking – namely, multiple systems estimations; (iii) that combating human trafficking requires specialised prosecutors and judges.

4 PANELS

Panel 1: Environment of the trafficking business

Speakers: Julia Muraszkwicz (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) & Albin Dearing (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights)

Ms Muraszkwicz summarized TRACE findings on the environment of human trafficking. In particular she drew on lessons learnt from WP1 and WP3. She emphasized that when aiming to understand the crime we should apply a diverse range of frameworks that can compliment each other; economic theories and social network theories.

Mr Dearing focused his presentation on the increasingly identified forms of severe exploitation of foreign workers. He showed how in many sectors of the economy foreign workers run a serious risk of falling victim to criminal forms of exploitation in the EU. Mr Dearing presented the SELEX project, which covered both exploitation of EU citizens as workers in another EU Member State (than the country of their origin), as well as exploitation of third-country nationals in the EU. The SELEX project developed five key recommendations:

- Strengthen (complete) the criminal law framework protecting the rights of workers to fair and just working conditions
- Improve workplace inspections, enhance cooperation of inspectors with the police
- Empower victims, encourage victims to report
- Create a climate of zero tolerance of severe labour exploitation in all economic sectors
- Inform consumers (e.g. branding of products as a means of prevention)

Panel 2: Understanding the traffickers

Conny Rijken (Tilburg University) & Fabrizio Sarrica (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

Both presenters focused on research carried out with respect to increasing our understanding of who are the traffickers. Ms Rijken presented the findings of the TRACE project (WP3) and Mr Sarrica did the same for the UNODC.

Both studies found that the majority of the traffickers are male, that they are citizens of the country in which they are convicted and that they tend to operate in small scale groups or as individuals, as oppose to the mafia type organizations that are usually suggested by popular media. In addition, Ms Rijken focused on the character of the trafficker: lacking empathy, arrogant and unlikely to see much wrong with their actions. She also highlighted that detailed discussions were available in the TRCE deliverables. Mr Dearing also presented a typology of the organization of trafficking in persons (Table 2).

Small local operations	Medium subregional operations	Large transregional operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic or short-distance • One or few traffickers • Small number of victims • Limited investment and profits • No travel documents needed for border crossings • No or very limited organization required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the subregion or neighbouring subregions • Small group of traffickers • More than one victims • Some investments and some profits depending on the number of victims • Border crossings with or without travel documents • Some organization needed depending on border crossings and number of victims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long distance between different regions • Traffickers involved in organized crime • Large number of victims • High investments and high profits • Border crossings always require travel documents • Sophisticated organization needed to move large number of victims long distance

Table 2: Typology on the organization of trafficking in persons presented by UNODC

Panel 3: Technology

Anna Donovan (Trilateral research) & **Selam Kidane** (University of Leiden).

Ms. Donovan provided a comprehensive overview of the findings relating to the role of technology in human trafficking, based on research carried out in WP4 of the TRACE project. She highlighted that it is necessary to consider how technology is used both within the human trafficking process as well as in the fight against human trafficking.

Ms Kidane explained how there is a new form of human trafficking that emerged circa 2009; namely human trafficking for ransom. The same was first recorded in the Sinai region. Here the objective of the traffickers is to benefit and profit from ransom payments. The extortion is achieved by forcing human beings held in captivity to contact relatives, family and friends by mobile phone and demand their support to pay ransoms for the release. The pressure on relatives, family and friend is exacerbated by torture. Between 25,000 and 30,000 people passed through the Sinai as victims of human trafficking in the period 2009 – 2013 and it is estimated that 20%-33% of the people held captive died as a result. \$600 million of ransom was collected in the period 2009 – 2013. Ms Kidane explained that technology is a key tool used by the perpetrators:

1. Intelligence gathering

- Information on law enforcing authorities (police, security agents etc) and their plans and activities are being monitored by the Human Traffickers and smugglers and their collaborators and accomplices and information is exchanged within and among the networks using these technologies.
- locating, monitoring and tracking refugees being smuggled or trafficked by others

2. Ransom demands and collections

- The torture is almost exclusively orchestrated for the objective of extortion with the telephone carrying the pain and humiliation right to the very villages and the homes
- ITCs are also used to coordinate the fund raising, collection and transfers of ransoms demanded by the Human traffickers and smugglers. Without the ICTs, there is no way the families and friends of the victims could raise the money demanded by the captors
- Availability of mobile money

Panel 4: Challenges in Human Trafficking

Vineta Polatside (Council of the Baltic Sea States), **Irina Todorovska** (International Organisation for Migration) & **Michele Levoy** (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)

The final panel focused on challenges facing the fight against human trafficking; in particular challenges emerging from the on-going migration situation. Ms Polatside reminded participants that trafficking and smuggling are part of today's mobile worlds. Due to the lack of legal channels for migration, migrants are compelled to turn to smugglers, where the potential for human trafficking is increasing. Ms Polatside also stated that vulnerability should not become a norm.

Ms Todorovska presented the current Global and EU migration trends, highlighting that the EU-28 as a whole received over 1.2 million new asylum claims in 2015, more than double the number of asylum claims in 2014 (most of these claims were made in Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Italy and France). She also emphasized the diversity of the population movements: refugees, economic migrants, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants, unaccompanied migrant children, stranded migrants, migrants moving for environmental reasons. The key conclusion to draw from this status quo is that different migrants require different approaches (pre-departure, upon arrival and long term). The current vast movements of persons is described as an emergency and Ms Todorovska explained that human trafficking may flourish in emergencies because of the:

- Increased vulnerability of affected populations
- The breakdown of traditional support structures, and
- Weakened state infrastructures and social service support systems.
- But, sadly, efforts to combat the problem are rarely given priority in emergency relief operations”.

In her presentation she also highlighted that the response to human trafficking should be considered as a life-saving protection activity. Moreover she noted that prevention should include creating opportunities in the communities and

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countries of origin (addressing the root causes of trafficking) as well as creating opportunities for legal migration channels (study, work, family reunification, international protection etc).

Ms Levoy expressed concern that of the 40% of asylum seekers that are rejected we do not know how many are returned, and what generally happens to them. We are aware that many remain in the country as undocumented persons, who are not entitled to benefits and thus seek jobs in the informal economy. In turn the likelihood of their exploitation increases. This is happening against a backdrop of demographic issues, where in the coming decades the EU's workforce will decrease. Ms Levoy recommended the regularization of undocumented migrants workers, creation of regular channels for migrations (especially in sectors with a lot of exploitation, including agriculture, construction, hospitality, domestic work.). Ms Levoy also referred to the PICUM position paper: Undocumented Migrants and the Europe 2020 Strategy: Making Social Inclusion A Reality For All Migrants In Europe.¹

5. CONCLUSION

The summary captures a one-day conference that concludes the TRACE project. The event brought together numerous experts and officials from 15 countries to review the business of human trafficking. It also provided a valuable networking opportunity and set the stage for future cooperation amongst stakeholders working in the field of human trafficking.

¹ PICUM, Undocumented Migrants and The Europe 2020 Strategy: Making Social Inclusion A Reality For All Migrants In Europe, November 2015, available at: http://picum.org/picum.org/uploads/publication/Undocumented%20Migrants%20and%20the%20EU2020%20Strategy_FINAL.pdf