



Programme to Support the Development of Trans-national Referral Mechanisms (TRM) for Trafficked Persons in South-Eastern Europe

First Steering Group Meeting, 25 September 2006, Skopje

CONCLUSIONS

The First Steering Group Meeting to launch the two-year *Programme to Support the Development of Trans-national Referral Mechanisms (TRM) for Trafficked Persons in South-Eastern Europe (SEE)* took place on 25 September 2006 at the MARRI (Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative) Regional Centre in Skopje, Macedonia. Senior government officials and National Anti-trafficking Co-ordinators from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and the UN-administered territory of Kosovo participated in the meeting. Mrs. Gordana Jankulovska, Minister of Interior of the Republic of Macedonia, also took part in the event and expressed support for this joint effort to fight trafficking in persons in South-Eastern Europe.

The *Programme to Support the Development of Trans-national Referral Mechanisms (TRM) for Trafficked Persons in South-Eastern Europe* is funded by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and implemented by ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development) in partnership with the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria, the MARRI Regional Centre in Skopje, and ACTA (Network of NGOs against Human Trafficking and Corruption). The countries/territories participating in the programme are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and the UN-administered territory of Kosovo.

The ICMPD Programme Team presented the implementation and management plan to the Steering Group outlining that the programme's objective is to design, pilot and endorse a trans-national referral mechanism for victims of trafficking on the basis of identified victims' needs and good practices already existing in SEE.

It was agreed that the Steering Group should meet three times, at programme inception, at mid-term and at the end of the programme. The main function of the Steering Group is to secure political commitment to the programme implementation. To this end, the SEE members of the Steering Group agreed to nominate programme implementation teams/working groups that will participate in all programme activities as well as ensure follow-up activities at national level, in accordance with the work plan. Moreover, the

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Steering Group will review the programme implementation as well as make recommendations for changes, if any, to be implemented subject to donor approval.

Furthermore, during the meeting it was stressed that a trans-national approach to tackle trafficking in human beings is indispensable since trafficking in human beings is a trans-national crime that does not stop at borders and none of its aspects - neither investigation nor referral of victims - can be dealt with at the national level solely. Therefore, complementing and building upon already existing efforts in SEE to enhance the fight against trafficking, this programme seeks to contribute to combating and reducing trafficking in persons in the region of South-Eastern Europe and, in the long run, to empower trafficked persons to restart a self-determined life.

The meeting was concluded with the signature of co-operation agreements between ICMPD and the National Anti-trafficking Co-ordinators of the participating countries/territories, who thus reassured their commitment to the implementation of this regional initiative against trafficking in persons.

Vienna, September 2006