

Council
of Europe
Convention
on Action
against
**Trafficking
in Human
Beings**

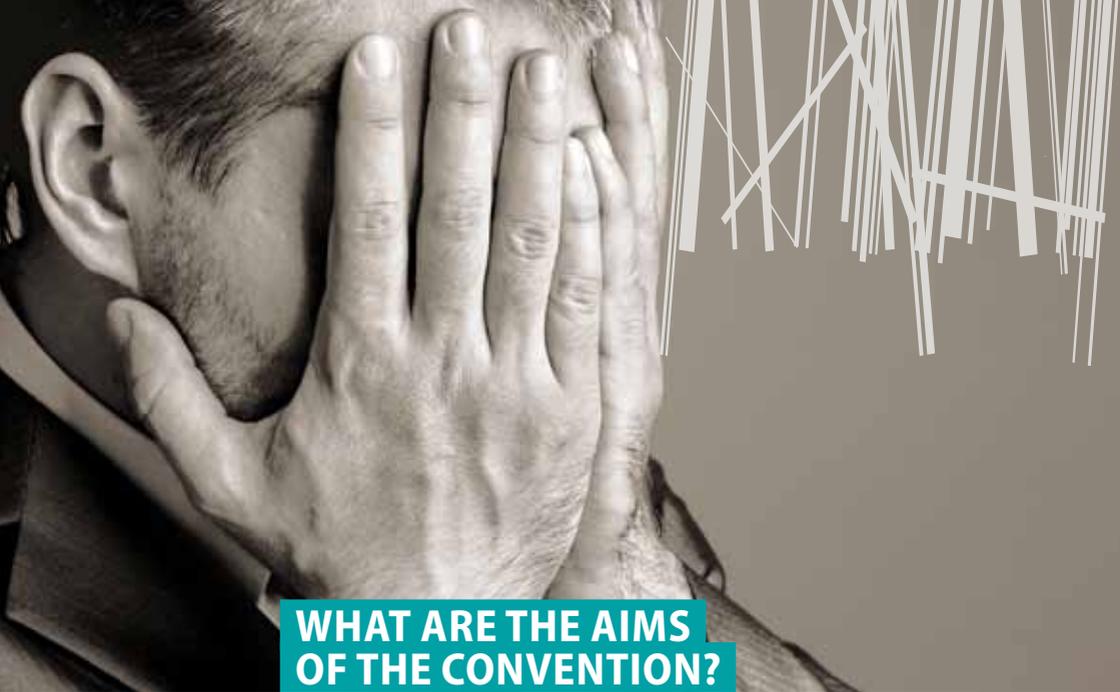


Monitoring
mechanism

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE CONVENTION?

■ The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which entered into force on 1 February 2008, aims to **prevent** trafficking in human beings, **protect** victims and **prosecute** traffickers. It encompasses all forms of trafficking (whether national or transnational, whether linked to organised crime or not) and covers all victims of trafficking (women, men and children), as well as all forms of exploitation. The convention also includes measures to **promote partnerships** with civil society and international co-operation.

■ The main added value of the convention is its focus on **human rights** and victim protection. The convention defines trafficking as a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being. This means that the national authorities are held responsible if they do not take action to prevent human trafficking, protect victims and effectively investigate trafficking cases.

■ Trafficking in human beings is a **worldwide phenomenon** which knows no borders, which is why the convention is relevant for countries throughout the world and is open to all of them.



HOW IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION MONITORED?

— The convention set up an **independent monitoring** mechanism to assess how well its provisions are put into practice. This monitoring mechanism, which is seen as one of the main strengths of the convention, consists of two pillars: the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (**GRETA**) and the **Committee of the Parties**.

What is GRETA?

— The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is responsible for evaluating the implementation of the convention by the countries which have ratified it. GRETA is composed of **15 independent and impartial experts** from signatory countries. They come from a variety of backgrounds (legal professionals, law-enforcement officials, psychologists, doctors, civil society representatives, etc.) and are selected on the basis of their professional experience in the areas covered by the convention. The term of office of GRETA members is four years, renewable once.

How does GRETA carry out its monitoring work?

■ GRETA's monitoring activities are divided into rounds. At the beginning of each round, GRETA defines the provisions of the convention which are to be monitored and determines the most appropriate way to carry out the evaluation.

■ In carrying out its monitoring work, GRETA uses a variety of methods for **collecting information**. As a first step, GRETA sends a **questionnaire** to the authorities of the country undergoing evaluation. The information provided in the response is analysed by GRETA and, if necessary, GRETA requests additional information to clarify or supplement the reply.

■ In addition, GRETA carries out a **visit** to the country concerned. Such visits allow for in-depth discussions with government officials, police officers, prosecutors, parliamentarians and other relevant stakeholders.

■ Evaluation visits are also an opportunity for GRETA to visit facilities where assistance is provided to victims of trafficking. Thus GRETA may ask to **visit crisis centres** or shelters for victims of trafficking managed by public bodies or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), centres for irregular migrants or asylum seekers, border posts or hospitals. These visits make it possible to check on the effectiveness of measures taken to implement the convention.



THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

■ An important source of information for GRETA is civil society. During its evaluation visits, GRETA holds meetings with representatives of NGOs and other civil society representatives (for example, trade unions, bar associations, academia) involved in action against human trafficking. GRETA may decide to address its questionnaire or any other request for information to NGOs and other members of civil society which have access to reliable sources of information and are capable of verifying this information as appropriate.

GRETA REPORTS

■ GRETA's country evaluation reports contain an analysis of the situation in each country regarding action taken to combat trafficking in human beings and suggestions on how to strengthen the implementation of the convention. The reports are drawn up in a co-operative spirit and are intended to assist states in their efforts.

■ GRETA examines **draft evaluation reports** at its plenary sessions. The draft reports are then sent to the relevant government for **comments**, which are taken into account by GRETA when drawing up its **final report**. This final report is transmitted to the authorities concerned, who are invited to submit any final comments. The report of GRETA, together with any comments from the authorities, is then **made public**.

COMMITTEE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION

■ The second pillar of the monitoring mechanism, the Committee of the Parties, is composed of national representatives of countries which have ratified the convention. On the basis of GRETA's reports, the Committee of the Parties may adopt **recommendations** addressed to individual countries concerning the measures which should be taken to implement GRETA's findings.



FROM MONITORING TO SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

■ The value of the monitoring work carried out under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings is threefold:

- ▶ it **assesses** and **stimulates** compliance with the far-reaching obligations under the convention;
- ▶ it provides tailor-made **guidance** for each country on how to overcome obstacles; and
- ▶ it constitutes a forum for **international co-operation** where information and good practices can be shared and the international community alerted to any new trends, thus stimulating **joint action** to prevent and address problems.

■ The results of this monitoring work are available online and have become a reference for all those involved in the fight against trafficking in human beings. The Council of Europe also supports governments in the implementation of the convention and the recommendations emerging from its monitoring process.

For contacts and further information

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