



**EU - CoE Joint project
Supporting Malta in the Design and Implementation of a New
Anti-Trafficking Strategy**

FINAL CONFERENCE

15 January 2025, Radisson Blu Hotel, St Julians, Malta

Concept Note and Agenda

Concept Note

Co-organisers: Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Division, European Commission's Directorate General for Structural Reform (DG REFORM), and Human Rights Directorate (Malta)

Participants: National anti-trafficking authorities, civil society and international organisations

Countries: Malta, Greece, Portugal, Bulgaria, Romania, Spain

Estimated number of participants: 100

Introduction and context

Trafficking in human beings (THB) is a global criminal phenomenon which requires a coordinated national and international response. It is also an offence to the dignity and the integrity of the human being, and failure to prevent and punish it results in violations of human rights, as repeatedly found by the European Court of Human Rights.

As stated in the Preamble of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter the 'Anti-Trafficking Convention'), trafficking in human beings constitutes a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity and the integrity of the human being.

Recognising the magnitude of this issue, Council of Europe countries continue to strengthen their mechanisms and actions to counteract the spread and impact of THB. The Anti-Trafficking Convention, which entered into force on 1 February 2018, and is currently in force in 48 countries, provides a comprehensive framework for combating THB.

In line with the requirements of the Anti-Trafficking Convention, State Parties must adopt a coordinated and multidisciplinary approach, incorporating the prevention of THB, the protection of victims' rights and the prosecution of traffickers. The Convention provides for a series of rights for victims of trafficking, in particular the right to be identified as a victim, to be provided with adequate assistance and protection, and to receive compensation for damages suffered.

Since 2008, Malta has been a Party to the Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Convention. The Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), which monitors the implementation of the Convention, has conducted three evaluations of Malta. The third evaluation, focusing on trafficking victims' access to justice and effective remedies, took place in 2020 and GRETA's third report on Malta was published in November 2021.

GRETA reports highlighted gaps to the identification of victims of trafficking, in particular amongst asylum seekers, migrants and unaccompanied children. GRETA noted that in addition to the statistics on formally identified victims (44 in the 2017-2020), there were a number of presumed victims who refused to enter into contact with the police, but were nevertheless assisted by NGOs. There were only four formally identified child victims of trafficking.

National Anti-Trafficking Strategy and Action Plan (2024-2030)

Since 2020, the Human Rights Initiatives Unit (HRIU) within the Human Rights Directorate (HRD), under the Office of the Prime Minister, European Funds, Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue (OPM-EES), has been entrusted to lead the reform of the anti-trafficking system and policy and to streamline co-ordination with ministries, national authorities, social partners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. In this context, the HRD has led the development of the first National Anti-Trafficking Strategy (2024-2030) and Action Plan which provide Malta with a comprehensive framework for action against human trafficking. The Strategy was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 1 August 2024.

The Strategy was developed under a Joint Project between the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform support (DG REFORM) and the Council of Europe entitled “**Supporting Malta in the design and implementation of a new national Anti-Trafficking Strategy.**” The project was launched in September 2022 and ends in January 2025. The action was co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument and implemented by the Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Division, in close collaboration with the HRD.

The preparation of the Strategy involved the setting up of four Working Groups (WGs) on Anti-Trafficking Supporting Framework (WG1), Prevention and Protection (WG2), Prosecution and Investigations (WG3), and International Partnerships (WG4). The recommendations made by victims and survivors of human trafficking based on their lived experiences were also taken into account.

The Project supports Malta in designing the Strategy's implementation tools, including the Coordination Guidelines, the Theory of Change and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach to combating human trafficking. These tools aim to guarantee that all efforts are aligned with clear objectives and measurable outcomes, fostering a victim-centred approach while enhancing accountability and transparency.

The Final Conference of the Project

Within the framework of the Project, a final conference is organised to present the outcomes of the Project, namely the National Strategy and Action Plan as well as its supporting tools. The conference serves also as a forum for discussing key issues through three focused workshops:

- 1. Establishing a functional National Referral Mechanism (NRM):** This workshop explores the steps necessary to design and implement a functional NRM in Malta, ensuring clear processes for victim identification, referral, and support. The experience of other countries, such as Greece and Portugal, will be shared.
- 2. Collaboration between law enforcement and civil society:** This session will address the need for collaboration between law enforcement and civil society to ensure a victim-centred approach in anti-trafficking efforts. The workshop will explore strategies for building trust, improving communication, and ensuring that interventions prioritise victim safety, dignity, and rights while enhancing investigative efforts.
- 3. Principles of engaging with survivors:** This workshop will focus on the importance of engaging with survivors to ensure that policies and practices are responsive to the needs and rights of persons affected by trafficking. The event will also explore ethical and trauma-informed methods of working with survivors and will share the perspectives of persons with lived-experience.

In addition, a **side event on “Participation of Children in Designing Child-Friendly Anti-Trafficking Tools”** will also be organised on the following day. It will highlight the importance of integrating children's perspectives into the design of child-friendly materials and processes.

The conference will bring together key anti-trafficking stakeholders, including government officials, law enforcement officers, social and child protection workers, civil society organisations and international organisations. Representatives of other countries will also be invited, offering hence an opportunity for knowledge and experience sharing.

Agenda

Wednesday, 15 January 2025	
09.00 – 09.25	Registration
<p>Opening remarks and presentation of Malta’s National Anti-Trafficking Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Alexia MANDUCA, Manager I, Human Rights Directorate, Office of the Prime Minister, European Funds, Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue</p>	
09.30 – 10.15	<p>Welcome and opening remarks</p> <p>Ms Rebecca BUTTIGIEG, Parliamentary Secretary for Equality and Reforms, Office of the Prime Minister, European Funds, Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue</p> <p>Ms Petya NESTOROVA, Executive Secretary, Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA and Committee of the Parties)</p> <p>Mr Kjartan BJÖRNSSON, Deputy Director and Head of Unit, DG REFORM, European Commission – <i>Online</i></p>
10.15 – 10.45	<p>Presentation of the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy and Action Plan and next steps</p> <p>Mr Michael CAMILLERI, Director, Human Rights Directorate, Office of the Prime Minister, European Funds, Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue</p>
10.45 – 11.15	<i>Coffee break and group photo</i>
<p>Coordination and implementation of the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Alexia MANDUCA, Manager I, Human Rights Directorate, Office of the Prime Minister, European Funds, Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue</p>	
11.15 – 11.30	<p>Roadmap to improve the roles of the National Coordinator and the National Rapporteur in Malta</p> <p>Ms Kamelia DIMITROVA, Consultant engaged by the Council of Europe</p>
11.30 – 12.00	<p>Tools and processes to efficiently implement the Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory of Change and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework - Coordination guidelines - Communication strategy and action plan <p>Ms Kathryn Michelle BALDACCHINO, Consultant engaged by the Council of Europe</p>
12.00 – 12.30	Q&A session
12.30 – 14.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
<p>Parallel workshops on (1) Establishing a functional National Referral Mechanism, (2) Collaboration between law enforcement and civil society, and (3) Principles of engaging with survivors</p>	

14.00 – 15.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Workshop 1: Establishing a functional National Referral Mechanism</u> Moderator: Mr Manuel ALBANO, National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, Portugal Rapporteur: Ms Catheryn BALDACCHINO, Consultant engaged by the Council of Europe With the participation of: Ms Jane LASONDER, Vice-Chair of OSCE-ODIHR International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC) - <u>Workshop 2: Collaboration between law enforcement and civil society</u> Moderator: Mr Colin CARSWELL, Consultant engaged by the Council of Europe Rapporteur: Mr Ramon BONETT SLADDEN, Lawyer, Prosecution Unit, Office of the Attorney General With the participation of: Ms Marta GONZALEZ MANCHON, Coordinator, Fundación de Solidaridad Amaranta, Spain - <u>Workshop 3: Principles of setting up survivors' panels</u> Moderator: Ms Vanessa SIMONI, Director of Mission d'intervention et de sensibilisation contre la traite des êtres humains (Mist), France Rapporteur: Ms Maria CATANIA, Manager II, Human Rights Directorate, Office of the Prime Minister, European Funds, Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue With the participation of: Ms Maria KIRDAN, Member of OSCE-ODIHR International Survivors of Trafficking Advisory Council (ISTAC)
15.30 – 16.00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
16.00 – 17.00	Presentations by workshop rapporteurs and discussion
17.00 – 17.30	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Mr Jonathan VASSALLO, Permanent Secretary for European Funds, Office of the Prime Minister, European Funds, Equality, Reforms and Social Dialogue</p> <p>Ms Petya NESTOROVA, Executive Secretary, Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA and Committee of the Parties)</p> <p>Mr Angelos BINIS, Rule of Law Head of Sector, Public Administration and Governance, DG REFORM, European Commission</p>