



# HORIZONTAL FACILITY FOR WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

## Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

As part of the European Union and Council of Europe programmatic framework “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey” (Horizontal Facility), the Council of Europe will implement the action “Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings” in North Macedonia, in close partnership with the National Co-ordinator for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the State Labour Inspectorate, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice as well as civil society organisations.

The action will support the national authorities in preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, by addressing the legislation, policy and practice in particular fields. Expert advice will be provided with respect to reviewing existing trends on trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation in the country. Based on the findings of this research, activities to enhance the capacity of labour inspectors, law enforcement officials, trade unions and other stakeholders to detect, identify and assist victims of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation will be carried out. In addition, efforts will be made to improve the legal framework and practice related to ensuring access to compensation for victims of human trafficking. Finally, the action will seek to facilitate safe return and reintegration of victims of trafficking in human beings by improving transnational co-operation and exchange of information.

The action, which started on 1 October 2016 and will finish on 23 May 2019, has an overall budget of 455,000 Euros.

### The objectives of the action

The **aim** of the action is to contribute to reducing trafficking in human beings in the country, in line with the European standards.

The action intends to accomplish the following **objectives**:

- ✓ Improve detection and identification of, and assistance to, victims of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation by enhancing the adoption of a multi-disciplinary approach;
- ✓ Strengthen the framework for effective access to compensation for victims of trafficking;
- ✓ Facilitate safe return and reintegration of victims of trafficking.

Accordingly, the objectives of the action will be achieved through the realisation of the following **expected results**:

- ✓ Increased knowledge about trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation among the relevant national authorities;

- ✓ Enhanced capacity of labour inspectors, law enforcement officials, trade unions and other stakeholders to detect, identify and assist victims of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation;
- ✓ Enhanced knowledge of the competent authorities on existing good practices to establish a State compensation fund;
- ✓ Improved capacity of law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges to facilitate access to compensation for victims of trafficking in human beings;
- ✓ Strengthened capacity for efficient transnational co-operation and exchange of information between responsible authorities and civil society organisations regarding identification and referral of victims of trafficking.

## Background information

On 11 April 2016, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, and the European Union's Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, announced a new co-operation initiative of the two organisations aimed at supporting South-East Europe and Turkey in their efforts to comply with European standards. The initiative is called the European Union/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey (Horizontal Facility). It is a three-year programme (May 2016 – May 2019), focusing on three themes: ensuring justice, fighting economic crime as well as combating discrimination and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups. It has a budget of €25 million, of which €20 million has been provided by the European Union and €5 million by the Council of Europe. Through the Horizontal Facility, the European Union and the Council of Europe will assist beneficiaries in South-East Europe and Turkey to comply with Council of Europe standards and the European Union *acquis*, through a complementary two-fold approach of technical co-operation and the provision of expertise. The Horizontal Facility relies on the Council of Europe's unique working methods, whereby tailor-made technical co-operation activities are based on conclusions and recommendations of the Council of Europe's monitoring bodies, which highlight areas where improvements are needed in legislation and policies of the beneficiaries to comply with the Organisation's standards.

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The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

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