



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Comité Migration sur les droits des personnes
migrantes**

Migration Committee on the Rights of Migrants

18 OCTOBER 2022

European Day on Human Trafficking

On the subject

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FLIGHT FROM CONFLICT

Impact of the war in Ukraine

Concept Paper

October 18th is designated the European Anti-trafficking Day. This concept paper proposes a hybrid seminar/webinar to be held on the afternoon of Tuesday October 18th 2022, to mark this event.

The theme of the event will be the impact of the war in Ukraine on refugees and internally displaced people, in the context that most are women and children and are at increased risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24th February, the United Nations states that at least 12 million people have fled their homes. Of these, 5.2 million have been recorded as having left Ukraine, with more than 3.5 million applying for temporary residence in another country.

The neighbouring countries of Poland, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, saw the majority of those leaving Ukraine for the west, but as a result of the EU granting Ukrainians the automatic right to stay and work, for one year (EU Temporary Protection Directive), refugees are now found in all 27 of the member states of the EU.

Most of these refugees (90%) are women and children, as the men of fighting age are required to remain in Ukraine. For many of these women and children the war has resulted in a heightened risk of human trafficking, exploitation and abuse, as emphasised by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Dunja Mijatovic, in a memorandum on the human rights consequences of the war in Ukraine 8th July 2022.

The Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025), recognises that refugees are at particular risk of insecurity, trafficking and violence especially at border crossing points; transit hubs; reception centres and shelters. It recommends the early identifications and protection of victims and persons vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

Many volunteers and NGOs became engaged in providing support and relief for refugees, especially at border crossings. Whilst needed and welcomed, this vast influx of helpers did open the path for

traffickers. Those officials and NGOs with experience in the field of trafficking quickly recognised the risks and took steps to educate others and to raise awareness amongst the refugees themselves and those helping them.

The Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, produced a Guidance Note (GRETA (2022) 09) addressing the risks of trafficking in human beings related to the war in Ukraine and the ensuing humanitarian crisis. This guidance note provided practical advice for all those involved in the care of refugees to ensure that agencies, NGOs, the private sector and the general public are aware of the risks of trafficking in human beings for different forms of exploitation, in their dealings with people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The event planned for October 18th is intended to bring together the experiences of those involved in the provision of services for those fleeing the war both inside Ukraine and across Europe. Many of the NGOs involved in work supporting these refugees, are represented in the Conference of INGOs. This event will have inputs from Council of Europe departments, Representatives of local and regional assemblies; NGOs, Law enforcement bodies.

The aim of the event is to learn about the work being done to protect those vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation and abuse in the current situation, and to hear the steps being taken to identify and prosecute perpetrators, and potential abusers.

Care and resettlement of refugees is mainly carried out by NGOs and Local authorities in partnership. We will plan to involve both the INGOs and the Congress of Regional and local authorities in this event.

Programme

14.00 – 14.30 hrs Introduction and welcomes

President of Conference of International NGOs

Secretary General of Council of Europe

GRETA

14.30 – 15.10 Session 1

Theme - **Leaving Home Suddenly.**

– vulnerability of women and children faced with fleeing war zones.

4 Speakers to include Caritas Ukraine;

Europol;

Greta;

ICRC.

15.10-15.30 Discussion/Questions

15.30 – 16.10 Session 2

Theme - **Settling in Safely**

- Supporting refugees in transit and arrival and reducing risks of exploitation.

4 Speakers to include - representative of a local authority,

NGOs involved in protection and resettlement of refugees

Organisation against exploitative work (Netherlands)

16.10 – 16.30 Discussion/Questions.

16.30 Conclusion.