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- Recommendations from the ACP-EU experts' meeting on trafficking in
human beings and smuggling of migrants

ACP-EU Dialogue on migration and development

Trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants

Recommendations elaborated by the Expert's meeting on 9/10 July 2014 and validated by the Ambassadors' meeting on 28 January 2015

Experts of the EU and the ACP countries met on 9 and 10 July 2014 in Brussels to discuss their respective policies in the field of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants and identify concrete areas of cooperation in order to tackle both phenomena in a spirit of shared responsibility. The meeting has demonstrated the shared will to address those challenges and the necessity to deepen the cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination including in a south-South perspective. The experts of both sides agreed on the following operational conclusions:

1. Where relevant, enacting comprehensive legislation on both trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, stressing the differences between both phenomena, and in line with the UN Protocols on Trafficking in Persons and Migrants smuggling supplementing the United Nations convention against Transnational Organised Crime (the Palermo Protocols) and the EU legislation.
2. Effectively implementing national legislation on both trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants is key. Currently, the vast majority of the victims are neither identified nor protected and by the same token, most of the criminal networks act in impunity and are neither dismantled, nor prosecuted. A proper implementation also means to effectively tackle the different forms of exploitation (for example exploitation in the field of sport, schooling activities or sexual tourism). It is also of utmost importance to properly involve non-governmental organisations especially as regards the relations with the victims of criminal networks.

3. Raise awareness regarding trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants among all the persons that are in a position to identify victims or collect hints leading to the dismantlement of criminal networks. Proper information and, if necessary, training should be provided not only to judiciary and law enforcement authorities, but also to health care workers and labour inspectors, among others. It is also crucial to stress the role and practices of criminal networks.
4. Promote cross-border and international cooperation among the countries of origin, transit and destination with a specific focus on the sometimes ignored South-South dimension of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants. Encourage the conclusion of bilateral Memoranda of Understanding between countries, both North-South and South-South.
5. Improve the collection of data on both trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants as this is a prerequisite to define efficient policies and concrete actions.
6. Promote a victim centred approach thereby protecting the victims from a human rights and gender perspective and foment all the necessary means to properly identify them. For those purposes, it is of the essence to involve non-governmental organisations as they are better placed to enter into a relation of trust with the victims. It is also important to further promote the case of victims of smuggling of migrants as, despite the consent given, they are in a vulnerable situation.
7. Step up efforts to dismantle criminal networks and prosecute criminals, both traffickers and smugglers, as they represent a direct threat to the lives of migrants. Trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants are first and foremost about making money, about benefitting from the vulnerability of others. For that purpose, setting up systems of financial tracking and conducting proper financial investigations going beyond the freezing of assets are of the essence. Tackling corruption among public officials and other relevant bodies should also be an effective part of the strategies to dismantle and prosecute criminal networks.

8. Improve at national level the coordination among the different services involved in the field of trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants. Given the horizontal nature of both phenomena and the high number of bodies involved, proper mechanisms of inter-service coordination are key to obtain concrete results.

 9. Addressing the demand side is also part of the answer to combat smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, especially the latter. The involvement of the private sector (supply chain, awareness raising, liability) should also become a priority for national, regional and international authorities.
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