

## **Monitoring mechanisms in the fight against human trafficking**

### **15 October 2010 - Introduction**

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests, dear friends

Any self-respecting society should do everything in its power to ensure that the five P's, *prevention, protection, prosecution, punishment and partnership*, are a constant and integral part of anti-trafficking policies. And not just in policies but also implementation in practice. Together these P's form the cornerstone of the efforts in the fight against human trafficking. That was also the message conveyed by the European Court of Human Rights in its judgement in the case of *Rantsev v. Cyprus and Russia*, earlier this year. Trafficking in human beings, whether within the sex industry or in other sectors, is a violation of art 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights. With this ruling and the admonitions to the states that are party to the European Convention, the European Court set out to become perhaps the most important monitor of Trafficking in human beings.

The conference today, as well as the expert meeting yesterday, both mark the tenth anniversary of the Dutch National Rapporteur. Marking ten years of independent monitoring of the joint efforts in the Netherlands to combat Human Trafficking.

Since 1 April 2000 the Netherlands has had a National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings (NRM). I am happy to see that Mrs Anna Korvinus, who was the first Dutch Rapporteur, is here with us today. The appointment of the first Rapporteur was the direct result of the (EU) Hague Declaration of 1997, which called upon member states to appoint national rapporteurs in order to report on trafficking to their respective governments. Ten years of monitoring by an independent rapporteur have resulted in a total of exactly 200 recommendations.

The recommendations cover a wide range of issues, - all the five P's - and have been directed at various key actors. The recommendations were based on research, on knowledge.

One of the key elements in a successful counter trafficking strategy is knowledge. Knowledge is power; power as a dynamic concept to approach and tackle the problem efficiently and effectively, and to improve the fight against it, in policy making and in the practical application of the law. Solid research and analysis therefore form the basis of effective anti-trafficking measures that governments should take.

It is widely recognised that knowledge about trafficking in human beings is crucial to tackling this issue in an adequate manner. We need to know more about human traffickers and how they work, but also about victims: how do they cope when they are being victimised, and in the period following this? If they are brave enough to tell their story, to what extent are they offered the necessary assistance and support, and which interventions in the fight against human trafficking and in relation to victim support are truly effective? At the same time, it is clear that is very difficult to collect reliable information, for which there are various reasons.

Let me name a few

- exploitation partly occurs in hidden sectors such as the (unlicensed) sex industry, the informal economy and behind closed doors in private households, making it difficult to detect;
- victims of sexual and labour exploitation are reluctant to come forward.

Therefore, and also because exploitation does not, generally speaking, cause any visible disturbance, cases remain undiscovered. It is unknown how large this 'dark number' is. After all, as we all know, trafficking is easily overlooked if you do not want to see it. My report that

is to be presented this afternoon will show that in general, authorities in the Netherlands have wanted to see.

But again as the European Court made perfectly clear in the Rantsev case, in the end it is the results that count. Therefore a significant proportion of the recommendations deal with putting into practice what has already been set down in black and white. With capacity and priorities. For this purpose, in 2007 I recommended the creation of a task force, involving all of the partners in the chain. This recommendation was adopted.

The Hague Declaration of 1997, also encouraged national rapporteurs to cooperate on a regular basis.

It is good to see that national rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms have been established in other countries, and that they have formed an informal network within the EU. I believe that this network is a big step forward to promoting the exchange of best practices and sharing experiences at national and European level. They can thus be an important impetus in the realm of collecting internationally comparable data. As I said, information and knowledge are the pillars for successful counter trafficking action. Acquiring and exchanging internationally comparable data on trafficking is therefore of paramount importance.

### *Results*

This afternoon I will present the eighth report on ten years work of the Dutch national rapporteur. The report reviews the recommendations made on all important topics and their reception.

This afternoon I will also further elaborate on the results of the ten years of recommendations. At this moment I will confine myself to saying that many have been fully adopted or partly acted upon, the importance of some has receded and others have been regularly repeated. But as we all know, the work is never done.

### *Yesterday's expert meeting*

Yesterday an expert meeting took place to exchange views and information on good practices, and to further contribute to strengthening anti-trafficking policies. Topics included monitoring and rapporteurship, involving the judiciary, victims, partnership and labour exploitation. These topics are relevant in every country.

### *Today's conference*

Today's conference also covers many issues. We have aimed at providing a comprehensive approach, including all the necessary 'P's'.

I thank the Dutch House of Parliament for co-organizing this conference and for their hospitality. And I want to emphasize the importance of Parliament as a checking mechanism also where trafficking in human beings is concerned. I trust that my reports over the past ten years have been a source of knowledge for them.

I wish you a very fruitful conference.

Thank you.