

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; thematic consultation on Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery, including appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims; Vienna 4 to 5 September 2017

Speech by the delegation of Finland during the third panel in 5th September 2017 given by Mr. Veli-Pekka RAUTAVA, Chief Senior Advisor, National Anti-trafficking Coordinator

Human trafficking and its attendant abuse is considered one of the greatest challenges facing human rights today. Human trafficking is a serious offence and a violation of an individual's dignity and integrity.

Although internationally a majority of human trafficking is believed to be related to transnational migration, it is increasingly occurring within countries. One of the characteristics of human trafficking is the subordination of a person under control of another person. Contrary to popular belief, human trafficking is in all cases related to organised crime, organising illegal immigration, illegal residence in a country or illegal employment. Many identified victims of human trafficking were legal residents within a country and employed legally. The perpetrators might be family members, friends or acquaintances of the victim.

The Finnish government actively works against human trafficking in the framework of government anti-trafficking structure, including also the government Anti-trafficking coordinator, which started to function in 2015. According to the current government Anti-trafficking action plan strive in addition to the national actions to participate actively to international anti-trafficking cooperation, of which this meeting forms an important part. We also feel engaged to contribute to the definition of international recommendations and practices on human trafficking. In this respect we all should promote the rights of women and girls in particular.

The Finnish government firmly supports the common European positions as presented by a representative of the European Union. The Finnish government wishes to contribute by sharing best practices to support the process for a global compact. What comes to the national anti-trafficking structure of Finland we may see at least two distinctive characteristics. One is the inclusion of also non-governmental organizations to the coordination. We are currently working with an NRM (National Referral Mechanism) and this intensive work includes also representatives of the core anti-trafficking actors such as the representative of the core authorities and NGOs. The other construction of which we are very proud of is the Finnish National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings.

National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings

In Finland the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman is the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and as such is one of Finland's foremost experts in human trafficking. The National Rapporteur is a part of the Finnish human rights architecture aiming to enhance the protection of human rights, especially of those who are most vulnerable in society, as well as to improve egalitarian and democratic values in society. The Rapporteur monitors actions against human trafficking in Finland, human trafficking at large, compliance with international obligations and the effectiveness of national legislation.

The Rapporteur issues suggestions, recommendations, statements and advice and follows the realisation of the rights of victims. The Rapporteur may also provide legal counseling and, in exceptional cases, assist victims in court cases. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman submits a report on human trafficking and the related phenomena to the Government each year, and to Parliament at four-year intervals.

In her capacity as National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman has the right (confidentiality provisions notwithstanding) to receive information from the authorities, from providers of services and support for victims of human trafficking and from bodies that receive government assistance for action against human trafficking.

The Assistance for Victims of Trafficking

The victims of human trafficking are entitled to receive assistance and protection. In Finland, victims of human trafficking can receive assistance from the national assistance system for victims of trafficking coordinated by the Joutseno Reception Centre which is part of the Finnish Immigration Service. This includes residential arrangements, social and health care services, legal advice and assistance, security arrangements and other support measures required by the victim. The assistance system is able to help men, women, children, families, and groups of people. Even suspicion of being the victim of human trafficking is sufficient for being admitted to the assistance system.

Victims with a municipality of residence in Finland can receive the necessary basic services from their home municipality. Even in this case, the national assistance system for victims of trafficking gives advice and guidance to the municipalities on the best ways to assist the victim. Finally, the government Anti-trafficking Action Plan includes also new measures to develop training for professionals in the social welfare and health care sector in the recognition of and assistance for victims of human trafficking.