

Side event

Out of the Shadows: Addressing Trafficking in Persons Belonging to Minorities, including National Minorities

Date

Thursday, 3 October 2024 from 8.30 to 9.30 CET/CEST.

Location

Belweder Room– Sofitel Victoria Warsaw Królewska St. 11, 00-065, Warsaw

Audience

Policy-makers from across the OSCE region, national anti-trafficking authorities, national human rights authorities, international organizations, NGOs, academics and experts working on minority issues.

Format

Panel presentations followed by a Q&A panel.

Objectives

This event, jointly organised by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and by the Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB) aims to present the OSCE's new publication "[Out of the Shadows: Trafficking in persons belonging to minorities, including national minorities](#)," which sheds light on the specific challenges and nuances in combatting trafficking in human beings (THB) for these vulnerable groups.

Held on the margins of the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, the event will bring together interested parties from across OSCE participating States to discuss and increase engagement with the publication, and prompt continued consideration of the relationship between THB and racial and ethnic discrimination.

This event follows up to the official launch, held in Vienna on 11 September 2024.

Background

While the connection between THB and racial and ethnic discrimination has been acknowledged in the OSCE region for almost twenty years, it has seldom been thoroughly examined or addressed. Most OSCE participating States lack disaggregated statistics on race and ethnicity in relation to THB, but there is a range

of data which suggests that individuals from minority groups, including national minorities, are overrepresented among trafficking victims when compared to the general population.¹ This implies a disproportionately high risk of THB for these communities and individuals.

Research has shown that those victims are also less likely to be detected and assisted as a result of language barriers, racial and ethnic stereotypes, low trust in public authorities, lack of cultural competency, as well as fear of retaliation or exclusion from their own communities. Although these barriers are not necessarily specific to minorities, the enduring impact of deep-rooted racial and ethnic discrimination, combined with inadequate representation in decision-making processes that hinders the ability of these groups to advocate for their specific needs, ultimately compound to heighten the vulnerability to human trafficking of individuals from minority groups and create barriers to protection services and justice.

Based on extensive research on the intersection between THB and minorities across the OSCE region, this joint paper between OSR/CTHB and ODIHR aims to strengthen the evidence base of the specific issues faced by minorities as victims of trafficking and provide an overview of a highly complex and nuanced issue. It aims to highlight how minorities are affected by trafficking and to what extent legal standards, policy frameworks, and anti-trafficking measures integrate concerns associated with minorities.

Introductory remarks:

- Dr. Tea Jaliashvili, ODIHR First Deputy Director
- Dr. Kari Johnstone, OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB)

Brief research presentation

- Ms. Catherine Barnshaw, Assistant Project Officer, OSR/CTHB

Panel Speakers

- Ms. Itohan Okundaye, ISTAC survivor leader
- Ms. Mariaam Bhatti, ISTAC survivor leader
- Dr. Joanna Talewicz, President of the Towards Dialogue Foundation from Warsaw
- Representative, OSCE participating State (TBC)

¹ See for example European Roma Rights Centre and People in Need, *Breaking the Silence: Trafficking in Romani Communities*, March 2011, p. 11: Table 1: Estimated Representation of Roma by Trafficking Purpose and Target Country. See also *Racial Disparities, Covid-19, and Human Trafficking*, Polaris Project and *Racial & Gender Disparities in the Sex Trade*, Rights4Girls.

Moderation:

- Ms. Alessia Vedano, Anti-Trafficking Adviser, ODIHR