

GREECE

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I. Introduction

Greece is situated at the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula. It borders with Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria to the north, and Turkey to the north-east and east. It is surrounded by the Adriatic Sea to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the south and south-east.

Traditionally, Greece has been a country of origin of migrants. This role was reversed in the early 90s when it became a country of destination for migrants (regular and irregular). Regrettably it has also become a country of destination for victims of human trafficking coming from countries of SE and E. Europe, as well as from Africa and to a lesser extent from Asia. The trafficking trade has flourished in Greece primarily because of its geographic position, its economic prosperity and its status as a member state of the European Union. Other factors contributing to the development of trafficking were the social, economic and political upheavals in neighbouring countries following the fall of the Berlin Wall. According to official data provided by the Greek Ministry of Public Order⁵⁸, the majority of the victims of trafficking come from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Moldova and the Ukraine.

Even though this data does not differentiate between the various kinds of victims, NGOs providing assistance and support to victims claim that the majority of identified victims are women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Official statistics provided by the Ministry of Public Order: in 2003, among the 93 identified victims of human trafficking, 31 were from Russia, 14 from the Ukraine, 10 from Moldova and 10 from Romania; in 2004, among the 181 identified victims, 50 were from Russia, 41 from Romania, 21 from the Ukraine, 10 from Bulgaria, 10 from Moldova and 9 from Albania; in 2005, of the 137 identified victims, 53 were from Romania, 28 Russia, 12 from the Ukraine and 9 from Bulgaria; of those 137 victims, 104 were women, 29 men and 4 minors. Relevant data available at: www.ydt.gr

⁵⁹ Interviews with representatives of the following NGOs: *KLIMAKA* (Dafni Kapetanaki) on 15.02.2006, *EKKYTHKA* (Anda Koublommati) on 03.04.2006, *KATHV* (Fani Galatsopoulou) on 02.05.2006 and *SOLIDARITY* (Katerina Trakaniari) on 25.05.2006. All these NGOs are running shelters for victims of trafficking in human beings.

According to the Greek Ministry of Public Order⁶⁰ and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)⁶¹, a new phenomenon so-called "*happy trafficking*" is on the rise, where victims enjoy a degree of limited freedom and a small financial reward for their services. As a result, as the level of the victims' consent increases, the possibility of testifying against their traffickers diminishes.

II. National Legal Framework

A. National law

Until 2002 the legal framework to combat trafficking in human beings in Greece was particularly weak and ineffective. Since 2002, however, three basic legal documents have been adopted, aiming at reforming counter-trafficking legislation: Law 3064/2002 amending the relevant articles of the Criminal Code; the Presidential Decree 233/2003 providing for assistance and support structures for victims of trafficking; and Law 3386/2005 providing for residence permits.

The most significant points of the reformed legal framework are the following:

- The Greek legislation is now aligned with international and European Union standards. **All forms of trafficking in human beings** are addressed, including trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation, trafficking for the removal of organs and trafficking for military purposes.
- Trafficking in human beings is a **felony**. Offenders are punished with imprisonment up to ten years, in addition to a fine. In cases of further aggravating circumstances (juvenile victim, abuse of authority, heavy bodily harm or death of the victim, trafficking exercised as profession), trafficking is punished with at least ten years of imprisonment and a fine up to 100.000 euro. The new legislation also provides for the punishment (imprisonment for at least six months) of those who intentionally use services provided by victims (*clients*).

⁶⁰ Interview with Tonia Andreakou, representative of the Central Anti-trafficking Police Unit of Athens, operating under the Greek Ministry of Public Order, on 11.05.2006

⁶¹ Presentation by the Head of IOM-Mission in Greece, Daniel Esdras, in the IOM 'Conference on Repatriations of Victims of Trafficking', held in Athens on 15.05.2006.

- According to the Law, the Prosecutor is the competent organ for the identification of the victims. Once victims of human trafficking are identified as such, the Greek Law provides for their **protection**, in particular, shelter, as well as medical, social, psychological and legal **assistance**. A list of social and psychological support and assistance services is included in the Annex of the Presidential Decree 233/2003.
- Special protective provisions have been adopted for **children victims**.
- Potential victims of trafficking are entitled to **one month reflection period**, which is provided by the competent prosecutor, in order for the victims to decide whether they will cooperate with the Authorities for the prosecution of the traffickers. During this period they cannot be deported and they enjoy all privileges provided to identified victims, with the exception of the issuance of residence permits. This provision has been proven useful to avoid deportation of victims of trafficking before they have been identified as such.
- Identified victims who *cooperate* with the Authorities for the prosecution of their traffickers are entitled, under Greek legislation, to a one-year, renewable, **residence permit**, without obligation to pay the required fee; this permit is also valid as a work permit providing victims with access to the labour market. Victims are entitled to renewal of their residence permits until the penal procedure has been completed. Thereafter, they can apply for a residence permit under a different status (marriage, work, etc).
- Greek legislation does not provide explicitly for a **formal referral mechanism**. The **Inter-ministerial Committee**, established to monitor the implementation of anti-trafficking legislation has set up an informal referral system coordinated by the National Centre for Social Solidarity-EKKA (see p. 110).

Comments

- There is no legal provision in Greek legislation providing explicitly for the suspension of prosecution of identified victims of trafficking. As a result, victims may be prosecuted together with their traffickers for violating immigration law provisions.
- NGO representatives, who deal with trafficking victims, have criticised the one month reflection period as being inadequate to allow victims to fully escape from their

traffickers' influence.⁶²

- Limiting the issuance of residence permits only to victims that cooperate with the authorities for the prosecution of their traffickers has been criticised for failing to provide full human rights protection to all victims.
- Although the law provides for the punishment of the user of the victim's services (client), it is difficult to provide solid evidence of the defendant's knowledge and intention. Therefore, usually the client is not punished.
- The referral system is weak, while effective coordination among NGOs, State and international actors has not yet been achieved.

B. Bilateral agreements

Greece has concluded the following Bilateral Agreements with neighbouring countries:

- **Bilateral Agreement with Albania** on the repatriation of unaccompanied minors, addressing the particularities of trafficking of children from Albania to Greece, as well as the increased need for the protection of children victims. The Agreement aims at ensuring appropriate reception of repatriated children victims in Albania.
- **Memorandum of Understanding** for the operation of the *Centre Against Human Trafficking* in Avlona, Albania (Law 3298/2004). The purpose of the Centre is to function as a point of collecting and distributing information on cases of trafficking, as well as promoting and managing at the same time police cooperation between the countries involved. The Memorandum was signed by **Greece, Albania, Germany and Italy**.

Comments

- The Bilateral Agreement with Albania is an important tool for the protection of children victims. However, its conclusion was excessively delayed.
- Similar Agreements should be concluded between Greece and other neighbouring countries in order to strengthen cooperation in SE and E. Europe.

⁶² Discussion regarding the issuance of residence permits to victims of human trafficking, *Diplomatic Forum Third Meeting*, organised by IOM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, 21.02.2006.

C. National Action Plan

A comprehensive **National Action Plan** (NAP) to combat trafficking, addressing prevention and prosecution of traffickers as well as the protection of victims, was adopted in August 2004. It was drafted by the **Inter-ministerial Committee** (see p. 107), composed by the Secretaries-General of nine competent Ministries (Ministries of Justice, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Public Order, Education, Interior, Employment, Health and the General Secretariat for Equality operating under the Ministry of Interior). This Committee is charged with the implementation of the NAP, which covers a whole range of actions relating to trafficking (prevention, protection, and prosecution).

In the context of the work of the Inter-ministerial Committee and its cooperation with the NGO community, a **Memorandum of Cooperation** was signed in December 2005, establishing the framework of cooperation between state actors, IOM and NGOs in order to counter the various aspects of the phenomenon more effectively.

III. General Framework

A. Capacity building

1. Education of judges and public prosecutors

According to Greek anti-trafficking legislation, prosecutors and judges hold a key-role in prosecuting traffickers as well as in identifying and protecting the victims. To meet the need of raising awareness and training of prosecutors and judges, special courses have been included in the Curriculum of Studies of the **National School for Judges**.

Taking into account that the above courses are of a general nature and therefore not sufficient, educational seminars for judges in active service are organised annually in Komotini by the National School for Judges.

Greece participates in the implementation of **AGIS I** (2003-2005) and **AGIS II** (2005-2007), which are EU funded programmes, aiming at creating a cooperation network of NGO and State actors for the elaboration of a comprehensive anti-trafficking strategy. Training of judges and prosecutors in identifying, protecting and supporting the victims by using effectively the tools of criminal procedure, is a key element of the AGIS project at its present phase. Its methodology is based on the *train the trainers* approach via case studies, role-playing

presentations, exchange of good practices and the organization of round tables. In the framework of AGIS, apart from judges and prosecutors, other professionals who come in contact with victims of trafficking are also involved, such as psychologists, social workers, high-level police officials and lawyers. A comprehensive manual, as project output, will be issued for use by trained professionals to train their colleagues at the national level (train-chain).

2. Education of police personnel

The role of the Police, under Greek Law, is crucial in anti-trafficking policies, especially in the **identification** of victims of trafficking. The Prosecutor, who is the competent authority for the identification, decides on the basis of evidence obtained and provided by the police officers who investigate the case. Only in the case of identification of a person as a victim of human trafficking, protection and assistance are rendered under the Law. It is, therefore, imperative that special, interactive training aimed at safeguarding the human rights of the victims is provided to police officers.

In addition to the above, the presence of NGO representatives during the phase of preliminary investigation is considered necessary in order to avoid deportation of the victims, who often are fearful when dealing directly with the police.

In the academic years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 the **Police Academy** included in its curriculum the issue of Trafficking in Human Beings (combating the phenomenon, identifying victims, providing assistance and protection to victims) and organised special seminars for police officers. Additionally, in 2005 the Greek Section of the International Police Association (IPA) organised **awareness raising seminars/lectures for police officers** in eight cities of Greece (Ioannina, Komotini, Rhodes, Trikala, Heraklion, Pireus, Thessaloniki, Tripoli). Furthermore, the Alternative Seat of the Stability Pact in Thessaloniki is coordinating local and regional initiatives, which aim at training police officials, at fostering cooperation with local NGOs, such as ARSIS, the Greek Section of the International Police Association, IOM, the National School of Judges etc.

Cross-border training programmes for police officers between Albania and Greece were also organised by IOM (December 2005).

Comments

- Practice shows that training of prosecutors and judges in identifying and protecting victims of trafficking has not been sufficient or effective.⁶³
- The initiatives aiming at training police personnel have also been criticised as rather insufficient and ineffective.⁶⁴
- Enhancing the role of NGOs and, in particular, the participation of NGO representatives in the procedure of victim identification is considered necessary.

B. Analysis, research and monitoring mechanisms

No official, thorough or systematic **research and evaluation system** exists in Greece for reporting on the situation of trafficking in the country.

The **Inter-ministerial Committee** (see p.105) meets twice a month and is presided by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice. Its mandate is to coordinate the implementation of the various provisions of Law 3064/2002 and Presidential Decree 233/2003. The Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of anti-trafficking legislation, in close cooperation with IOM and 12 NGOs implementing anti-trafficking projects. The Committee also appoints the **National Coordinator** for counter-trafficking activities.

Since April 2001, under the auspices of the **Greek Ministry of Public Order, a Special Committee** has been established, as a coordinating institution, with the mandate to develop a comprehensive counter-trafficking policy and to monitor the effectiveness of anti-trafficking legislation, as well as of counter-trafficking operations that are being undertaken by the Greek State. This Committee (**People Trafficking Interdiction Unit-OKEA**) is composed of the Chief of the Greek Police (President of the Committee), an IOM representative, and representatives of the Ministries of Health, Employment and Interior, high-level police officials and social scientists.

⁶³ Interview with Maria Malouhou, appointed prosecutor to follow-up on trafficking related cases, on 12.05.2006.

⁶⁴ Interviews with representatives of the NGO *KLIMAKA* (Dafni Kapetanaki) on 15.02.2006, the NGO *EKKYTHKA* (Anda Koublommati) on 03.04.2006, the NGO *KATHV* (Fani Galatsopoulou) on 02.05.2006; interview with Maria Malouhou on 12.05.2006; interview with IOM representative responsible for the repatriation procedure, (Angela Courniachtou) on 18.05.2006.

Comment

At the beginning of its operation OKEA was effective, but this has not been the case in recent years.

C. Cooperation and networking at the regional and national levels

At the inter-State level, as mentioned above, the Greek government has concluded bilateral Agreements with countries of origin of the victims of trafficking. It participates in regional initiatives, such as **SECI** (Southeast European Cooperation Initiative) and **B-SEC** (Black Sea Economic Cooperation). Under these initiatives, awareness raising activities are taking place, aiming at combating trafficking as a form of organised crime. The Greek government has been also cooperating with the **Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe** and the **Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe** in combating trafficking in human beings, considered as a priority in their agendas.

At the regional level, the **ARIADNE Network against Human Trafficking in SE and E. Europe** was established in 2005, on the initiative of the Human Rights Defence Centre (KEPAD). Members of the Network are 17 NGOs from 12 countries of the region. Its objective is the development of close and coordinated activities for combating human trafficking by undertaking joint activities aiming at providing assistance and protection to the victims and preventing the phenomenon (see p. 114).

At the national level, on the initiative of IOM, a **diplomatic forum** was established in the end of 2005. The forum is composed of representatives of competent Ministries, International Organizations, diplomatic authorities of countries of origin and NGOs. Its mission is to establish close cooperation among all actors involved in combating trafficking, and to coordinate their activities. IOM organises the meetings of the forum on a systematic basis, focusing on contemporary challenging issues (see p. 114).

D. Mobilization of resources

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece (Hellenic Aid-YDAS) is the main source of funding of the anti-trafficking activities undertaken by International Organizations and NGOs. The funding is part of the Ministry's policy to provide financial support for

Development and Humanitarian Aid Projects. For the years 2004-2006, the total Ministerial budget for counter-trafficking activities reached approximately 5.000.000 euro.

USAID, the American humanitarian aid institution, has been very active in the Balkan region during the past decade. One of its policy priorities is to fund anti-trafficking activities. Several Greek NGOs have received funding from USAID for the implementation of anti-trafficking projects.

The EU has developed funding programmes (PHARE, STOP, DAPHNE, AGIS, EQUAL, etc.) to counter organised crime, as well as trafficking in human beings. These funds are not only awarded to EU Member States, but also to EU neighbouring countries (accession countries, candidate countries for accession, etc). International Organizations, State actors and NGOs based in Greece have benefited from this funding to develop anti-trafficking activities.

The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of **Norway**, the **Netherlands** and **Canada** also fund Greek NGO initiatives for counter-trafficking activities in the region of SE Europe.

IV. Implementation of Anti-Trafficking Laws

A. Prevention and awareness

Awareness-raising campaigns, aiming at providing information on trafficking to the public, have been organised in Greece only during the last three years. The General Secretariat for Equality, under the Greek Ministry of Interior, has organised public information campaigns and has used TV spots to raise awareness. Its main implementation agency is the Research Centre for Gender Equality, which operates in five Greek cities. Awareness raising campaigns have also been organised by IOM and some NGOs (*STOP NOW*, *ARSIS* and *European Women's Lobby* etc.) using radio and TV spots.

Since 1998, the NGO *ACT-UP* has implemented an awareness raising/prevention project focusing on providing **information** to vulnerable social groups (migrants, victims of trafficking, prostitutes etc.) on **HIV/AIDS** and other sexually transmitted diseases. The innovative element of this project is that ACT UP members reach the persons belonging to the target-groups in the places where they usually gather/offer their services such as bars, brothels, etc. (*ad hoc* prevention).

Awareness raising activities are also being undertaken in the framework of the *ASPIDDA programme: **Combating exploitation–Creating perspective*** under the EQUAL Community Initiative carried out by IOM, the University of Athens, the NGOs *EKYTHKKA*, *KATHV*, *Solidarity* and *KEPAD*, the Institute of Migration Policy (IMEPO) and the European Profiles.

B. Protection and assistance

1. Shelters and telephone lines

According to the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by the competent Ministries, IOM and NGOs, the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) operates as the coordinator/main referral agency between state agencies and NGOs for the protection of victims of trafficking.

EKKA, supervised by the Greek Ministry of Health, runs a **telephone helpline (197)**, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, aiming at providing direct assistance to victims of abuse and trafficking. It also operates four shelters, one of which is for identified victims of trafficking and provides short-term accommodation, counselling and psychological support to women and children victims of abuse and/or trafficking. Identified victims of trafficking, after being accommodated and treated for a brief period, are directed to NGO-run shelters.

NGO-run shelters, accommodating victims of trafficking, are the following:

- **EKKYTHKA** (based in Ioannina) runs, since May 2004, a 13-bed shelter, for women and children victims of trafficking (identified or/and potential), as well as for victims of domestic violence. The shelter, which also provides medical and psychological support and legal counselling has already accommodated 41 victims. EKYTHKA also runs a telephone helpline (26510-78810) offering direct assistance to victims.
- **KATHV** (based in Thessaloniki) runs, since the end of 2004, a ten bed shelter, for women and children identified or potential victims of trafficking, and victims of domestic violence. The shelter, providing also psychological support and legal counselling, has already accommodated 13 victims.
- **KLIMAKA:** (based in Athens) runs, since 2005, a 12-bed shelter for non-Greek women victims of trafficking (potential or identified), victims of domestic violence and/or torture. The shelter also provides medical, psychological and legal support and counselling, as well as vocational training. It

has already provided accommodation to five victims of trafficking.

- **SOLIDARITY** (based in Athens) runs since January 2006, a 15-bed shelter (with the possibility of extension) for women and children victims of trafficking (potential and identified) and victims of family violence. The shelter also provides medical, psychological and legal support and counselling, as well as courses on the Greek language and computers. It has already accommodated seven victims of trafficking. Solidarity also runs a free telephone line (800-11-37-777) for direct assistance to victims of trafficking.

The following NGOs also run shelters that accommodate women victims of abuse, domestic violence and trafficking in human beings: *European Women's Lobby*, *Centre for the Support of Family (DESO-Shelter Mother)* and *Shelter of Abused Women and Children (Storgi)*. *Medecins du Monde* used to run a shelter for victims of trafficking, which was closed down in August 2005 due to lack of funds.

Comment

Municipal authorities have also been involved in the protection of abused women by providing shelter and social care (e.g. the Municipality of Athens). However, due to lack of trained personnel, they rarely handle cases of victims of trafficking.

2. Legal assistance

The *Greek Helsinki Monitor* and the *Greek Council for Refugees* are implementing projects providing free legal assistance to victims of trafficking. Free legal aid is also provided by numerous *Bar Associations* in Greece to all persons who claim and prove that they cannot afford legal representation.

3. Street work

The following NGOs implement street work projects aiming at providing protection and assistance to victims of trafficking:

- **ARSIS** - since 1998, it has implemented programmes aiming at combating child trafficking, in cooperation with *Terre des Hommes*, an international humanitarian organization, and other NGOs. Their methodology consists of: (a) **Street work** by teams of two specialised professionals aiming at tracing and providing support to children in danger or children victims of trafficking and exploitation. (b) **Support and**

protection by using all legal institutional tools for the provision of protection and support to children. (c) **Registration of cases and social research** by conducting background social research on a case-by-case basis. (d) **Voluntary repatriation** in cooperation with the police, the special prosecutor for juveniles and partner NGOs in countries of origin.

- **ACT UP** - reaches victims of trafficking in places where they are usually exploited (bars, brothels, etc.) and provides them with immediate free medical treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, *ACT UP* approaches in the same areas *clients* of the victims' services, raising awareness and providing information on trafficking in human beings.
- **NEA ZOI** - traces victims of trafficking in places of exploitation and provides them with information on support and assistance structures. It keeps contact with traced victims and offers psychological and social assistance.

4. Repatriation

Identified and potential victims of trafficking who declare that they wish to return to their countries of origin, are subject to the **repatriation procedure**, developed and implemented by IOM, in cooperation with the Embassies of the countries of origin of the victims. IOM provides the victims with valid travel documents (passports or *laisser-passer* documents, according to the national legislation) and tickets for their return. The means of transportation are chosen with a view to secure a safe and short return journey. The victims are received by IOM Missions in their country of origin and are assisted to reach their final destination. In the period 2003-2005, IOM assisted the repatriation of 55 women victims of trafficking.⁶⁵

C. Prosecution

As mentioned above in section II.A, according to Law 3064/2002, **prosecutors** are responsible for the identification of a person as victim of human trafficking. Once victims are identified, they are entitled to protection and assistance. With regard to unaccompanied children, the prosecutor of juveniles is appointed by law as their legal guardian.

⁶⁵ Interview with IOM representative Angela Courniachtou, responsible for the repatriation procedure, on 18.05.2006.

In 2004, **a prosecutor was appointed** by the Head of the Prosecution Office, in Athens (Maria Malouhou) to follow up on trafficking-related prosecutions and convictions. According to official data provided by the Secretary-General of the Greek Ministry of Justice⁶⁶, since the new anti-trafficking legislation entered into force, 412 prosecutions have been initiated and 216 trafficking cases have been brought before the Greek Courts; in 284 cases out of 327, defendants were found guilty.

In September 2002 the **Central Anti-trafficking Police Unit** was established in the General Police Directorate of Attica, under the Security Directorate. At present, **14 Anti-trafficking Police Units** are operating throughout Greece under the coordination of the above- mentioned Central Unit. In addition, two new **Departments on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings** are operating in the framework of the Organised Crime Department. These Units maintain a close cooperation with INTERPOL, EUROPOL, EUROJUST and various foreign Embassies and Consulates and their police links.

All police stations of the country are required to provide potential victims of trafficking with a special **manual for victims**, that is distributed by the Ministry of Public Order and contains information on the rights of victims of trafficking in 14 languages. Police stations have also the obligation to refer suspected trafficking cases to the nearest anti-trafficking units.

Comments

- Police actions to capture traffickers are criticised⁶⁷ for not being sophisticated enough or well organised. As these actions take place without the necessary research, they often result in the parallel prosecution of both traffickers and victims.
- Psychological intervention for the support of the victim is important at all stages of the prosecution in order to guarantee both the protection of victims and the effectiveness of the traffickers' prosecution. Such a procedure should be institutionalised.
- Although a witness protection system has been developed, it is not activated unless there is solid evidence that an or-

⁶⁶ Data provided by the Office of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice in Document No. 36190/12.04.2006.

⁶⁷ Interview with Maria Malouhou, appointed prosecutor to follow-up on trafficking related cases, on 12.05.2006.

ganised crime network is involved. Since it is rather difficult to trace such cases, witnesses and victims are not always protected effectively.

V. BEST PRACTICES

- The **Memorandum of Cooperation**, signed in December 2005 between the competent Ministries, IOM and 12 NGOs, is an important step towards a more coordinated counter-trafficking policy. It formalises a framework of cooperation among anti-trafficking agents and strengthens their collaboration. It further facilitates their work by avoiding duplication and by establishing a referral system, that remains, however, unofficial. It is the first step towards a closer and more effective cooperation and coordination among all competent agents.
- The **ARIADNE Network against Human Trafficking in SE and E. Europe** was established in June 2005, on the initiative of the Human Rights Defence Centre (KEPAD), with its seat in Athens. Members of the Network are 17 NGOs from 12 countries of SE and E. Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia (and Kosovo), Turkey and the Ukraine). The objective of the Network is the development of close and coordinated cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination of the trafficking victims for undertaking joint action to combat the bane of human trafficking in the region. The Network has become an important regional tool for joining forces with the aim of combating and preventing the phenomenon, providing assistance to victims in dealing with their problems and needs, and protecting their human rights. The Network holds regular sessions (workshops), twice a year, with the participation of all partners, who exchange their views and experiences and decide on the priorities for joint activities to be undertaken (www.ariadnet.net). The establishment and the activities of the Network are sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece (Hellenic Aid), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and other agencies.
- The **Diplomatic Forum**, which was established by IOM, has been very useful for close cooperation among key representatives of state institutions, NGOs, International Organizations and foreign state agencies, which are actively engaged

in countering trafficking in human beings. The added value of the Forum is that it establishes a systematic dialogue among all actors involved, including, for the first time, representatives of governments of countries of origin, stressing the importance of cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination. The Forum hosts discussions in order to elaborate and resolve challenging issues that may occur while protecting and supporting trafficking victims, such as cases of lost passports, repatriation procedures, problems relating to the issuance of residence permits etc.

- Participants in the **AGIS II** project have underlined the significance of this *train the trainers* programme for a holistic and effective counter-trafficking strategy.⁶⁸ The training sessions are interactive and have helped raise awareness among professionals who frequently come in contact with victims of trafficking. Furthermore, as the completion of the project requires further dissemination of acquired information and knowledge, comprehensive professional training is scheduled to take place in the near future.
- The **residence permits** issued for identified victims of trafficking provide them with access to the labour market. This element is very important for the effective and durable social reintegration of the victims who decide to remain in the country of destination.
- The **Manual for Victims of Trafficking**, distributed to all police stations across the country, is an exceptionally useful tool, provided it is systematically and accurately used. It can be helpful for the effective identification of victims of trafficking. Translated into 14 languages, it contains a list of the rights of the victims, as well as a list of characteristics that distinguish trafficking cases. The manual can be of use both to police officers and potential victims.
- National Operational Plan '**ILAEIRA**': It is an international, multi-sectoral, inter-ministerial large scale project, under the coordination of the Greek authorities and the auspices of the European Union. It aims at countering trafficking in human beings through comprehensive planning based on the coordination of all involved agencies in the countries of SE

⁶⁸ Interviews with Maria Malouhou, appointed prosecutor to follow-up on trafficking-related cases, on 26.06.2006, and with Angela Courniachtou, IOM representative, responsible for the repatriation procedure, on 04.07.2006.

Europe and the Balkans. The Operational Plan envisages the development of a two-fold common action in the countries involved: on the one hand, it focuses on prevention through operational actions against transnational organised crime and the liberation of victims and on the other hand, it aims at providing rehabilitation to the victims (assistance, sheltering, repatriation, medical support, asylum etc.). The overall aim is to address the phenomenon comprehensively.

VI. DEFICIENCIES

- Lack of effective coordination among the relevant actors.
- Lack of effective training of police and judicial authorities, as well as of other professionals, who come in contact with victims, such as doctors, social workers, psychologists.
- The legal framework and its implementation do not fully guarantee that victims will not be prosecuted alongside their traffickers and that deportation will be avoided.
- Police actions to capture traffickers are not preceded by thorough research; this results often in prosecuting victims together with their traffickers.
- The role of NGOs has not been adequately recognised and the competent Authorities have not sufficiently benefited from their valuable experience in dealing with victims, including in the identification process.
- The one month reflection period, which is provided to victims to decide whether they will cooperate with the authorities, is considered inadequate.
- Provision of residence permits only to victims who cooperate with the authorities leaves victims that are afraid to prosecute their traffickers unprotected.
- Weak referral system and lack of formal, analytical and systematically updated database.
- The witness protection system is only used to protect victims and witnesses testifying against traffickers in the rare cases that involve organised crime networks.

VII. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Taking into account the deficiencies and comments contained in this report and the need for improvement of the situation, a list of recommendations is provided below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Greek government should **ratify** the **UN Trafficking Protocol** and the **Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings** as soon as possible.
2. The law should explicitly provide for the **suspension of prosecution of victims** for as long as the criminal procedure against the traffickers lasts.
3. More **Bilateral Agreements** need to be concluded with neighbouring countries in order to strengthen the regional cooperation for the protection of victims at State level.
4. **Training of police officers** will be more effective if organised in an interactive form, rather than in the form of lectures or seminars. The methodology of the AGIS programme can be followed for achieving the desirable results (see p.105-106).
5. An **official system** should be established to provide evidence, register new trends and conduct needs assessments. This system could operate under the auspices of the Inter-ministerial Committee or OKEA (see p.107).
6. A **formal referral system**, replacing the existing weak informal mechanisms, should also be established.
7. **Police actions** to capture traffickers should be undertaken after thorough investigation in order to avoid prosecution of victims together with the traffickers. In this context, the Health Inspector could visit places where exploitation of victims is suspected to take place (see p.113).
8. A **Special Prosecutor's Seat**, with exclusive powers for dealing with trafficking cases and for coordinating the relevant work of other prosecutors, should be established. This can be achieved by following the example of the Anti-terrorism Prosecutor, who has exclusive powers in cases of terrorism.
9. The role of **NGOs** in the implementation of the anti-trafficking legal framework should be **further reinforced** and, more specifically, **it should be formal**. A useful step towards this end is the *institutionalisation* of their role in the identification process, in order to further guarantee the protection of the human rights of the victims and to help avoid their deportation (see p.106). The role of NGOs in raising awareness and in prevention should also be reinforced.

10. The **witness protection system** should be revised. Bearing in mind the difficulty to collect evidence for organised crime networks, witness protection should be extended to cases for which there is no solid evidence that are linked to organised crime (see p.114).
11. **Psychological intervention** for the support of the victims in all stages of the prosecution procedure should be institutionalised, strengthening the valuable contribution of NGO experts (psychologists, social scientists) in the criminal proceedings.
12. The role of **Municipal Authorities** in protecting victims should be enhanced, as by definition they have first hand knowledge of social problems and some of them already possess the necessary infrastructure (see p.111).
13. Introduction of **human rights education** courses at all levels of schooling, starting from the primary school, is imperative for Greece, as well as for all countries of origin and destination of trafficking victims, in order to enhance respect for human rights.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT-UP	Greek NGO
AGIS I, AGIS II	European Union funded programmes for law-enforcement cooperation
ARSIS	Greek NGO
ASPIDDA	Development Partnership for Combating Discrimination in the Labour Market
B-SEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
DESO	Centre for the Support of Families
EKKA	National Centre for Social Solidarity
EKYTHKKA	Greek Centre for Research and Support of Victims of Abuse and Social Exclusion
EUROJUST	European Union Judicial Cooperation Unit
EUROPOL	European Police Office
GCR	Greek Council for Refugees
IMEPO	Institute of Migration Policy
INTERPOL	International Police
IPA	International Police Association
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KATHV	Centre for Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture and Other Forms of Abuse
KEPAD	Human Rights Defence Centre
NAP	National Action Plan
OKEA	People Trafficking Interdiction Unit
OSCE	Organization for the Security and the Cooperation in Europe
SECI	Southeast European Cooperation Initiative
SPSE	Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YDAS	International Development Cooperation Department/Hellenic Aid

