



# Background information

# Team Work!

## **Strengthening multidisciplinary cooperation against trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation**

**18 - 19 January 2016**

Victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) for labour exploitation are forced to work by means of (for example) threats or violence and can find themselves in abhorrent circumstances, working very long hours for very little pay, living in horrible conditions, and so on. These victims deserve the chance to leave the trafficking situation behind and to regain control over their lives. However, in many countries, including the Netherlands, the fight against THB for labour exploitation is still less advanced than that against THB for sexual exploitation. This is illustrated by the fact that the recent Study on case-law relating to trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation published by the European Commission only found a limited number of cases from the reference period (2009-2013)<sup>1</sup>. As this study shows, greater efforts need to be made to address THB for labour exploitation, so that the traffickers who put victims through this ordeal are prosecuted and convicted and measures are put in place to prevent THB for labour exploitation.

Multidisciplinary cooperation is essential for a comprehensive approach to address THB for labour exploitation to be effective. Different organisations can come into contact with different aspects of the trafficking process. In order to build a complete picture of cases of THB for labour exploitation, these organisations need to combine their information. They can then take joint or complementary measures to investigate cases of THB for labour exploitation, to prosecute the traffickers, to protect the victims and to prevent more cases from occurring.

This conference will therefore focus on strengthening multidisciplinary cooperation against THB for labour exploitation. The Netherlands, in cooperation with Luxembourg, the Slovak Republic and Malta, has been working on a manual on this topic which will be presented during the conference. Expertise and ideas from experts from the Member States were collected during workshops organised to prepare the manual and through questionnaires. We would like to extend our gratitude to everyone who has helped us with texts, examples and ideas for the manual. Thanks to their efforts, the manual contains expertise from all over the European Union.



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<sup>1</sup> In 11 member states (MS) less than 6 cases per MS were identified from this period; in 6 MS no case-law was identified at all. The study suggests these low numbers could be due to either a low level of prosecution or difficulties in accessing case-law. See [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/publications/study-case-law-trafficking-purpose-labour-exploitation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/publications/study-case-law-trafficking-purpose-labour-exploitation_en)



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## **The multidisciplinary approach to tackling serious and organised crime**

Disrupting serious and organised crime is one of the priorities in the European Agenda on Security. This Agenda also stresses that organised crime often thinks globally but acts locally. It highlights that serious and organised crime can only be addressed effectively using a multidisciplinary approach. The multidisciplinary approach to tackling serious and organised crime is an overarching theme for the Netherlands EU presidency.

A multidisciplinary approach needs to be as inclusive as possible, take into account the different aspects of preventing and countering organised crime and should ideally be formatted in an overall strategy. It should include all relevant partners and should in particular address issues such as the exchange of information between the different partners. Instead of limiting cooperation to law enforcement and criminal justice authorities only, it should include, for example, tax authorities, customs authorities, border guards, local and regional (administrative) authorities, health-, social and employment authorities and immigration authorities.

It is important that relevant partners cooperate pro-actively. By sharing information at an early stage between various partners and streamlining and aligning this information, crime patterns become visible and government bodies gain a fuller understanding of the scope, methods and composition of criminal organisations. This enables them to improve the overall strategy for addressing organised crime.

This overall strategy can be defined by the various partners together. They can also decide together which actions must be undertaken in individual cases and by whom, to effectively hinder the criminal activities in order to dismantle the criminal organisation.