



# Role of cities in addressing trafficking and exploitation of migrants in the Baltic Sea region

---

Anniina Jokinen

Council of Baltic Sea States Task Force against Trafficking in Human beings

# STROM-project (2014-2016)

- “Strengthening the Role of Municipalities in the Work against Trafficking in Human Beings in the Baltic Sea Region”
- Coordinated by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia
- Partners: NGO “Living for Tomorrow” in Estonia, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security in Norway, the Ministry of Interior in Poland, and the County Administrative Board of Stockholm in Sweden.
- Guidelines are based on country assessments and international expert meeting organised in Riga in 2015.



# Guidelines (2016)



# Aim of guidelines

- promote victims' rights
- improve awareness of human trafficking among local actors
- highlight some of the promising practices that have been developed in the region and beyond where municipalities and/or local authorities play a prominent role in addressing trafficking and protecting victims
- address common challenges and provide specific action points to overcome the problems and to improve the counter trafficking measures



# Mapping the local situation

- Trafficking as a local phenomenon - huge variety in forms of exploitation (sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced begging & criminality, sham & forced marriages, benefit fraud etc.)
- Tables on questions to be considered at the local level
- Who are the vulnerable groups?
- What are the relevant locations?
- Who can identify victims?
- The mapping is the basis for setting local priorities, targeting resources and thus improving identification, assistance and prevention.



# Indicators of human trafficking

- Indicators of different forms of trafficking-> mixed forms of exploitation (e.g. combination of sex and labour trafficking)
- Human trafficking is a process rather than a single event, the situation of the person can change over time.
- It is important to pay attention to the totality of the situation and elements that render the victim unable to leave the situation he/she is in -> cases are often complicated and difficult without “an ideal victim”



# Persons seldomly self-identify as victims

- She/he is unwilling to be labeled as a victim or stigmatized
- Unaware of her/his rights and the concept of human trafficking or that her/his experience constitutes human trafficking
- Unaware of the assistance granted to a victim of trafficking
- Having feelings of guilt or shame about her/his exploitative situation
- Afraid of retributions to her/his family or her/himself
- Afraid of imprisonment, deportation or monetary fines
- Dependent on the abuser (“Stockholm Syndrome”)
- Regarding her/his situation as “better” than her/his previous (unemployment, extreme poverty, violence, conflict and similar scenarios)



# Identification of victims

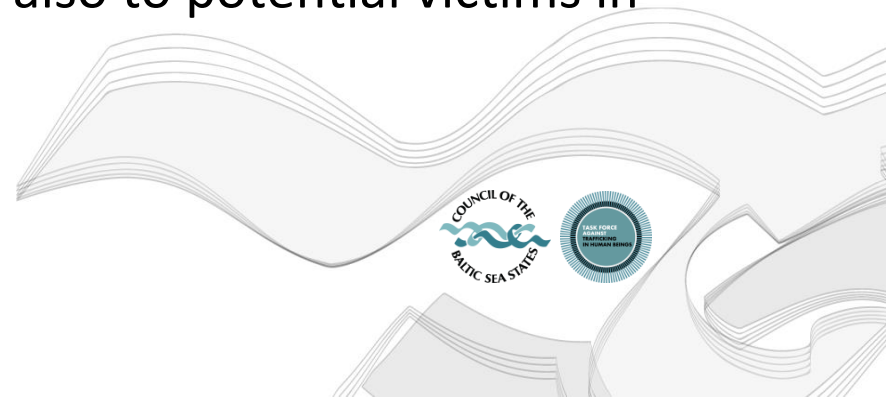
- ▶ Cities should focus on early identification, as this serves the needs of the victims best -> also cost effective!
- ▶ Training of professional groups working with migrants and other vulnerable groups -> eg. social and health care sectors
- ▶ Outreach work and offering services to support and empower vulnerable groups is very important.
- ▶ To respond to the needs of most vulnerable groups (e.g. undocumented migrants) it is important to offer services together with NGOs, churches, trade unions or local associations and migrants' own organisations.





# Referring persons to assistance

- Map out services available for (potential) victims within the municipality and actors providing or actors who could provide these services (considering person's background, gender, age, ethnicity etc.)
- Assign clear areas of responsibilities on actors taking part in the process of identification and referral, flexible cooperation with NGOs and authorities.
- Provide unconditional and rights based assistance not only to formally identified victims of human trafficking, but also to potential victims in vulnerable and unprotected situations
- Scheme of assistance



# Prevention of human trafficking

- Awareness raising (general and targeted initiatives)
- Expanding the target groups for prevention work beyond the conventional ones, for example to taxi drivers, librarians, health inspectors etc.
- Offering and implementing outreach activities to support and engage with populations at risk
- Including ethical criteria and social clauses in public procurement to prevent exploitation when purchasing goods and services



# Conclusions

- Resources are often limited or scarce -> set priorities and focus actions accordingly
- Include the diagnosis of trafficking situation into existing crime prevention strategies, or make sure the topic is covered in policies that address e.g., social exclusion, violence against women or integration of migrants
- Cooperation & multidisciplinary partnerships are the key to success!



# Thank you!

► Guidelines soon available online:

<http://www.cbss.org/safe-secure-region/tfthb/>

[anniina.jokinen@cbss.org](mailto:anniina.jokinen@cbss.org)

