

Declaration of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions against Human Trafficking and sexual exploitation

Budapest 18th & 19th OCT 2017

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, dear members of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions,

Human trafficking and particularly trafficking of women and children along the Danube for the purpose of prostitution and sexual exploitation is a real existing problem, incompatible to the fundamental European values.

In order to that, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) has also put the issue on its agenda. Priority Area 11 addresses security matters in the Danube Region, defining under Target 1, Action 1 explicitly the aim "to foster the cooperation in the field of countering smuggling and trafficking in human beings".

In this respect the Cities and Regions coming together here in Budapest for the 10th Conference of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions (CoDCR) are officially declaring their strong disapproval and condemnation of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, committing themselves to put this topic on the political agenda on a cross-border basis.

Especially on the level of cities and regions the negative impacts of human trafficking and sexual exploitation can be observed. At the same time measures against sexual exploitation and human trafficking are very effective on the level of cities and regions.

The undersigning cities and regions of this statement declare their will to intensify cooperation in the fields of prevention, sensitization and victim protection. Moreover, the signing cities and regions declare their commitment to support actions for combating sexual exploitation, helping those in need, aiming for a strong cooperation between justice, police and community organizations/volunteer groups on cross-border basis.

The existing cooperation and bonds of friendship along the Danube Region, demonstrated in various fields of cooperation, projects and conferences shall be used in order to establish partnerships and cooperation on local and regional level in this important issue.

However, it needs to be underlined that this is not the sole problem of one or two states or regions, but of all members of the EU and the Danube Region. We are all affected by the situation and its consequences, so in order to make a change here, the members of the EU and the Danube cities along with civil society have to combat the issue of human trafficking and sexual exploitation with united strength.

In this respect we deeply hope for your commitment.

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Gunter Czisch in black ink.

Gunter Czisch

Lord Mayor City of Ulm

Handwritten signature of Gerold Noerenberg in black ink.

Gerold Noerenberg

Lord Mayor City of Neu-Ulm

Deklaration aller Städte und Regionen entlang der Donau anlässlich des Jahresforums der EU-Donauraumstrategie in Budapest am 18./19.10.2017 gegen Menschenhandel und Zwangsprostitution

Menschenhandel und vor allem der Handel mit Frauen und Kindern entlang der Donau zum Zweck der Prostitution ist ein real existierendes Problem und mit den europäischen Grundwerten nicht vereinbar.

Die anlässlich des diesjährigen Jahresforums der EU-Donauraumstrategie versammelten Länder verurteilen auf das Schärfste jede Form von Menschenhandel und Zwangsprostitution und verpflichten sich, das Thema länderübergreifend auf die politische Agenda zu setzen. Damit verbunden ist die Einleitung konkreter Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung und zur Hilfestellung für die Betroffenen im gesamten Donauraum.

Die Auswirkungen von Menschenhandel und Zwangsprostitution sind vor allem in den Städten und Kommunen greifbar. Und hier kann auch wirkungsvoll mit Hilfs- und Gegenmaßnahmen angesetzt werden.

Die Unterzeichner erklären, verstärkt in die Bereiche Prävention, Sensibilisierung, Opferschutz und Gegenmaßnahmen zu investieren, und streben eine engmaschige Zusammenarbeit von Justiz, Polizei und Hilfsorganisationen an.

Die bestehenden guten Verbindungen entlang der Donau, die in zahlreichen Konferenzen, Festen und Projekten zum Ausdruck kommen, werden genutzt, um auf kommunaler Ebene Partnerschaften und Zusammenarbeit im oben genannten Sinne aufzubauen und Ansprechpartner zu benennen. Erste Initiativen werden für 2018 geplant und nach Möglichkeit umgesetzt.

Die Unterzeichner

Oberbürgermeister Stadt Ulm

Oberbürgermeister Stadt Neu-Ulm

The following pages try to describe and set a common vision on the issue, and also show why it is of great importance to jointly come up against human trafficking and sexual exploitation in the Danube Region.

Human Trafficking and Sex Trafficking in the EU

What is Human Trafficking and how it is connected to Sex Trafficking (sexual exploitation).

The EU Directive 2011/36/EU provides the following definition of human trafficking:

"The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, including exchange or transfer of control over that person, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation."

- "A position of vulnerability occurs when the person has no real or acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved."
- "Exploitation shall include, as a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, including begging, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the exploitation of criminal activities or the removal of organs."

The EU definition is almost identical to the definition in the UN protocol on trafficking in persons that says:

"Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."

The victims

Trafficking in human beings is a hideous human rights violation and one of the most lucrative activities for criminal organizations worldwide. **In Europe, trafficking for sexual exploitation** is by far the most widespread form. As for Germany we have 416 recorded victims in 2015 that were trafficked for this purpose. According to the Bundeslagebild 2015 Menschenhandel, most of them came from within the EU, such as Romania (98), Bulgaria (71) or Hungary (44) (number of victims in brackets). The majority of victims of human trafficking are women or girls, but in some cases also transgender and transsexual, and a high proportion of them are sexually exploited. Therefore, the "Ulmer Bündnis gegen Menschenhandel und Prostitution" needs to expand and continue its work for the affected women. Since most of the victims are from states bordering the Danube, the involvement of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions / CoDCR is crucial. Having once been the initiator of the network along the Danube, the City of Ulm still plays an important role in the EUSDR affairs.

How to fight human trafficking?

"Efforts to tackle trafficking in human beings have intensified in the last decade but remain insufficient. As transnational trafficking represents the greatest part of this phenomenon, harmonization of legal standards and effective international co-operation in criminal matters are crucial to succeed in the fight against human trafficking. In addition to law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations play an important role in identifying, protecting and supporting those at risk." ¹

"It was the non-governmental organizations that put the issue on the political agenda decades ago," says Naile Tanis, KOK's Executive Director. And, it's the NGO groups that now often accompany victims on visits to doctors, lawyers or the authorities, especially when those trafficked want to return to their country of origin, for example.

In this respect the "Ulmer Bündnis gegen Menschenhandel und Prostitution" is an example for actions additionally to the existing governmental activities. By providing services – such as accompanying victims on important appointments or free medical examinations – trafficked people could be reached and supported.

¹ <http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-en.asp?FileID=20559&lang=en>
Doc. 13446 from 20 March 2014

Report on "Prostitution, trafficking and modern slavery in Europe", Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination Rapporteur: Mr José MENDES BOTA, Portugal, Group of the European People's Party

Moreover, transnational programmes like the “OPEN - Orientation, Perspectives and European Network” are implementing practical actions in order to tackle the problem. OPEN is an international prevention, mentoring and accompanying programme for young women.²

The EU Strategy and the EUSDR Strategy

The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 sets the policy framework and identifies five priorities the EU should focus on. It also outlines a number of actions which the European Commission proposes to implement during 2012-2016 in concert with other actors, including Member States, European External Action Service, EU institutions, EU agencies, international organizations, third countries, civil society and the private sector.

Those priorities are as follows:

- Identifying, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking
- Stepping up the prevention of trafficking in human beings
- Increased prosecution of traffickers
- Enhanced coordination and cooperation among key actors and policy coherence*
- Increased knowledge of and effective response to emerging concerns related to all forms of trafficking in human beings

In order to that, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region has also put the issue on their agenda. Under Priority Area 11 which deals with security matters in the Danube Region it says:

- **Target 1:** Enhancing police cooperation with the aim of improving security and tackling serious and organised crime in the EUSDR countries and strengthening the efforts against terrorism threats.
- **1. Action:** To foster the cooperation in the field of countering smuggling and trafficking in human beings

Responsible partners for Priority Area 11 are the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria and the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, for Building and Transport.

* Basing on this principle a strong network of cooperation among NGOs, sexual counselling centers, authorities and the police within the Danube Region is crucial. This may also be fostered by an international, cross-discipline symposium on the matter of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in the Danube Region.

² <http://www.open-for-young-women.org/de/unser-projekt.html>

Prevention

Includes measures to:

- Discourage demand for trafficking (employers hiring trafficked persons and clients buying sexual services from trafficking victims)
- Promote training – both for victims and officials likely to come in contact with them (border police, police, social workers, healthcare professionals, labor inspectors, etc.)

Victim protection and support

Includes measures to:

- Set up national mechanisms for identifying and assisting victims early on, based on cooperation between law enforcement and civil society bodies
- Provide victims with support (shelter, medical and psychological assistance, information and interpreting services)
- Ensure victims are treated appropriately as soon as there's an indication they have been trafficked, and are given assistance before, during and after criminal proceedings

Sources:

https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/publications/prostitution-trafficking-and-modern-slavery-europe_en

<http://www.dw.com/en/human-trafficking-the-eus-dirty-secret/a-17412036>

<https://theexodusroad.com/2012/09/human-trafficking-prostitution-difference/>

<http://www.open-for-young-women.org/de/unser-projekt.html>

http://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/eu-studie-zu-menschenhandel-prostitution-und-zwangsarbeit-steigen-sprunghaft-an-in-europa_aid_960034.html

<https://www.trafficking.eu/eu-strategy>

<https://www.danube-security.eu/targets>

<http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-DocDetails-en.asp?FileID=20559&lang=en>

[Menschenhandel Bundeslagebild 2015](#)