



European  
Commission

# Study on **prevention**

initiatives on trafficking  
in human beings

*Executive summary*



Migration and  
Home Affairs

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EU has undertaken numerous efforts to address trafficking in human beings (THB) based on a comprehensive, victim-centred and gendered approach, and by focusing on three **key principles**: (1) the prevention of trafficking activities, (2) the protection and support of victims, and (3) the efficient prosecution of perpetrators.

The **EU directive on trafficking in human beings** <sup>(1)</sup> defines trafficking in human beings as ‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those 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’ <sup>(2)</sup>.

The **EU directive on trafficking in human beings** has signalled the EU’s focus on a victim-centred approach to addressing trafficking in human beings. Article 18 of the directive notably introduces a provision directly concerned with the prevention of trafficking in human beings. It obliges Member States to take appropriate measures, such as information and awareness-raising campaigns, research and education programmes, and regular training for officials who are likely to come into contact with victims of trafficking (e.g. regarding the identification of victims), in order to discourage and reduce the demand for goods and services provided by victims of trafficking in human beings. It further urges Member States to consider criminalising those who knowingly use the services of victims of trafficking.

In June 2012 the European Commission took an additional step by adopting the EU strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings (2012-2016), with prevention as one of the five objectives of the strategy.

The objective of this study as per the EU strategy is to ‘systematically evaluate the impact of anti-trafficking prevention initiatives, in particular awareness-raising activities (including online activities), as well as educational programmes, measures to reduce demand, measures specifically targeting root causes as these are directly linked to trafficking in human beings’.

Based on desk research and the available information, the study team has selected 43 prevention initiatives targeting prevention actions as per their project description, for which a minimum amount of information (e.g. staff responsible and contact details) was available online with the aim of ensuring a good mix of prevention initiatives in terms of types and geographical coverage in order to be able to analyse as comprehensive a sample as possible. Of the 43 prevention initiatives analysed as part of this study, 17 were — at least partially — concerned with prevention in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. This corresponds to a share of 40 % of all prevention initiatives analysed. Of the total of 43 prevention initiatives, the sample also contains 10 projects that were not implemented exclusively in EU Member States but also in non-EU countries. The sample of prevention initiatives covers different types: information and awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-building measures, prevention activities in research and education programmes, as well as initiatives concerning victim assistance and support. The figure shows that 38 prevention initiatives (i.e. close to 85 %) in the given sample deal with information and awareness-raising measures. Capacity-building and prevention activities in research and education programmes are part of 22 and 17 initiatives respectively (50 % and 42 %). Activities concerning victim assistance and support are only part of six initiatives (16 %) within the sample.

This study indicates that more can be done in terms of research and education with regard to the organised crime nexus and the supply/demand dynamics, as well as the training of police officers, judges and prosecutors with regard to capacity-building initiatives. Further research into the nature of this issue would enable better targeting of prevention policies, while additional training of stakeholders who are likely to come into contact with potential victims would enable the identification of more victims. More generally, this study has shown the importance

<sup>(1)</sup> Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA; see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:101:0001:0011:EN:PDF>; Last accessed 23, March 2015

<sup>(2)</sup> Article 2(1), Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

of Member States fully implementing Article 18 <sup>(3)</sup> of Directive 2011/36/EU, by dedicating sufficient resources to implementing prevention initiatives in order to contribute to addressing trafficking in human beings. In this context, the prevention initiatives should promote and support the implementation of the legislation in place in the different Member States that notably targets the reduction of demand and promote a zero-tolerance culture to exploitation of all forms.

One of the key findings of this study is in fact that a comprehensive system needs to be in place to ensure that prevention initiatives complement each other. For instance, an initiative designed to provide assistance to victims might have dimensions related to the prevention of re-trafficking. An initiative is **therefore only successful if integrated within a comprehensive support system covering prevention, protection and prosecution.**

At the level of individual projects, this study has shown that the effectiveness of prevention of trafficking in human beings depends on a variety of **external factors** that need to be defined within the boundaries of each initiative's own playing field, together with the relevant stakeholders. Project promoters are often confronted with a number of issues in the design or implementation of their initiatives, some of which are making efficient use of needs analysis and defining objectives in order to be able to more carefully reflect on the given circumstances and to take better decisions. Additionally, it was assessed that networking between relevant stakeholders could be improved, and that project-specific evaluations mostly fall short in terms of grasping results and impacts as they cannot easily be observed within a narrow time span. **Hence, project promoters apply what they perceive as an evaluation rather as a monitoring and a review of outputs than an analysis of results and impacts.** This said, the lack of evaluation is neither something that can be easily overcome within a short time frame, nor at the level of individual prevention initiatives. It is, however, possible to evaluate the overall impact of prevention from a macro-perspective in complementarity with specific contributions of initiatives.

When taking funding decisions about prevention initiatives, it is **therefore critical to take into consideration the context in which they are being carried out.** Factors such as the socioeconomic environment, the population, demographics, education levels or the types of stakeholders which are targeted, as well as migration policy have a preponderant influence on the results of an initiative. There is **no universal gold standard** for anti-THB initiatives to be implemented in a particular effective and impactful fashion. Initiatives that properly reflect external dimensions and factors as part of their development and implementation process are expected to yield better (that does not necessarily mean more tangible) results than initiatives that have been implemented for the sake of it, without relation to their environment.

The **decision to fund a specific initiative should be taken based on the process which it has followed**, which includes answering questions such as the following.

- Has a comprehensive needs analysis been carried out to ensure that the actions proposed are appropriate?
- Are the expected outputs relevant to effectively reach the targeted audience and generate results? Is there a specific plan on how this will be achieved and monitored?
- Has the initiative reviewed what has been developed by other initiatives, in order to capture lessons learnt and potentially reuse specific approaches or deliverables?
- Has the initiative set out a specific approach to ensure that project outputs and results will be sustainable beyond the project end?
- As from the beginning of the initiative, is an evaluation mechanism planned in order to ensure the initiative is successful over time in the particular context in which it was deployed?

A step-by-step model for prevention initiatives was thus developed within the scope of this study to guide project promoters in the design of their initiatives.

<sup>(3)</sup> Article 18 stipulates that the Member States have to take the necessary actions to prevent trafficking in human beings, including by discouraging demand and taking measures to establish the use of services which are the objects of exploitation as a criminal offence.

This study has shown that funders should remain **flexible** when deciding upon which types of initiatives to fund, as all types of initiatives can potentially generate positive results and contribute to addressing trafficking in human beings, if they are designed adequately and implemented efficiently. Apart from contextualising each initiative, funders should consider that their expectations are proportional to what can be achieved.

At the strategic level, in addition to ensuring that a **comprehensive system** is in place so that initiatives do not operate in a vacuum, but within their given context, the existing database of projects in the horizontal EU anti-trafficking website: <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/> could be further developed so as to actively guide project promoters to reuse deliverables, which could be relevant to them. This would ensure that projects do not re-invent the wheel.

Finally, a **central communications strategy around the EU's response to THB** could be designed, as currently many brands and logos are used across the EU. The Commission could sponsor an EU-wide awareness-raising campaign, providing this could be adequately funded, had a clear intervention logic, and could be sustained over a period long enough to make an impact. The tool(s) or channel(s) to be used in this campaign will have to depend on what is appropriate, given the target group, and the local context.





