



GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ambassade en Belgique



EFSC EUROPEAN FEDERATION
FOR STREET CHILDREN

PRESS RELEASE

FINAL CONFERENCE

of the EU anti-trafficking project CATCH & SUSTAIN - European Cross-Actors Exchange Platform for Trafficked Children on Methodology Building for Prevention and Sustainable Inclusion” (HOME/2012/ISEC/AG/THB/4000003940)

26th of March 2015 – Brussels, Embassy of Luxembourg

The European Federation for Street Children (EFSC) organized in collaboration with its project partners, the final conference of its two-year EU project titled CATCH & SUSTAIN (“European Cross-Actors Exchange Platform for Trafficked Children on Methodology Building for Prevention and Sustainable Inclusion”) carried out from 2013 to 2015 under the EU-programme ISEC, on 26th of March 2015 at the Embassy of Luxembourg in Brussels

The project had the following objectives:

- to improve the knowledge on children groups at risk for human trafficking;
- to train multi-professional staffs (introducing preventive methods based on identification and risks assessment, empowerment and a life-skills education approach and data collection through a participatory research;
- to design and test in the countries involved with children and operators an anti-THB intervention programme targeted to vulnerable children such as street children, unaccompanied minors, Roma children, children left behind, , early school leaving children, children from poor dysfunctional families, children living in institutions;
- to strengthen networks within civil society organisations, service providers of the child protection systems, police forces, judiciary departments to support the establishment of stable local multi-agency coordination platform targeted to anti-trafficking prevention and intervention to protect children.

The Final Conference gathered more than 50 participants, including MEPs, Representatives from European and national child rights NGOs, regional and local authorities, Member States representations to the EU, experts, media and the CATCH & SUSTAIN project partners.

The event has been the opportunity to give an insight into the different phases of the project and to disseminate its results, as well as to present its main output: an EU-wide transferable intervention programme to better prevent and protect children at risk against trafficking.

A round table was organised on the theme: “The protection and prevention of vulnerable children against trafficking as a challenge to the EU and the Member States: Child participative and multi-professional intervention methods between EU policy concepts and local constraints” It gathered representatives of child rights NGOs from the EU and national levels, the MEP Mrs. Mary Honeyball, researchers and representatives from national institutions. The round table came to a number of results and requirements towards the EU and national level policy, in particular:





- ▶ Further work needs to be done on identification of THB victims, especially regarding males who are under-identified due to the lack of training to recognize other forms of exploitations than sexual exploitation involving more girls and women; helping them to identify themselves as being trafficked.
- ▶ The lack of “reliable, comparable and official data” (EU Agenda on the Rights of the Child) existing still in the field of child trafficking must be rapidly overcome by targeted policy measures to ensure an evidence-based anti-trafficking policy at national and EU level. This includes the elaboration of cross border applicable specific indicators.
- ▶ NGOs active in the field of protecting children against trafficking must be stronger involved in the post process
- ▶ While the Anti-Trafficking Directive of 2011 had certainly an impact on the national level, key requirements to the Member States such as a professional and child-participative assistance to child victims of trafficking, the appointment of qualified guardians for such children after identification by the authorities and the assistance and support to families of such children, in particular unaccompanied minors in criminal investigations and proceedings, are still far from being implemented.
- ▶ NGOs feel to be not sufficiently involved by the Commission and the Member States in the follow-up process of the THB Directive and the EU 2012-2016 Strategy on Trafficking in human beings which would in particular necessitate a much closer co-operation between the national reporting authorities/mechanisms to the EU and the NGOs.
- ▶ In spite of the existence of an organizational unit of the Anti-Trafficking Coordinator in DG Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission, NGOs feel that both at EU and national institutional level the policy areas affected by the different aspects of children victims of trafficking, especially regarding social integration, health and migration, are too much split. A coherent, overarching strategy involving all policy areas is lacking.
- ▶ EU institutions, especially the Commission should put more pressure on the Member States to put into practice a stronger multi-actors-cooperation for THB prevention and protection in particular at the local level.
- ▶ National authorities should give more consideration to the origin countries and establish permanent working structures with them both regarding detection and re-integration of children victims of THB.
- ▶ The increasing competition effect between NGOs regarding public sources of funding for anti-THB projects leads to strong negative consequences; instead holistic and overarching action programmes should be developed both by national authorities and the European Commission in order to create efficient project alliances between different NGOs and other relevant stakeholders.

